

July 2022

Headlines – Good News and Events

Dear Parent/Carer

We have reached the end of another school year and I never thought we would find ourselves having to close early due to hot weather!! Thank you for your understanding with this; having an old building which has large windows which are largely south facing and no air-conditioning, the classrooms were several degrees hotter than outside. Our students have conducted themselves really well despite this and have continued to work hard and engage in lessons, but we wanted to ensure everyone's safety prior to the summer holidays.

Rewards trip 2022

It was lovely to be able to run our annual rewards trip to Brean Sands this year. We had 7 coaches of fantastic students that had all met the criteria (as set out by our student council) and deserved a special treat. It was a brilliantly sunny day which allowed the students to take full advantage of the range of fair rides; many opting for the log flume when they needed to cool off. The smiles were broad, the behaviour exemplary and the ability to get on rides without hours of queuing is a reason why the day was so successful. Well done to all students who were invited!

Rewards trip, voluntary trips and the Prom 2023

Next year, to **guarantee** a place on the Rewards trip, other voluntary school trips and for Year 11, **the Prom**, students will need to be in Horsforth quadrants 1 or 2 (meaning they have a positive attitude to their learning across all subjects at the end of Term 5), have 95% attendance and not be on any Stage of our graduated response for behaviour. This is an achievable goal for everyone because it is not set based on progress but is a reward for all those students who have demonstrated our Dorcan values by being kind, showing respect and doing their best both at school and with their Home Learning.

Year 7 Camp 2022

The annual Year 7 Camp trip was yet another huge success this year. Over the course of the week 135 students camped under the stars and participated in a wide variety of challenging activities that built their teamwork, resilience, ingenuity and creativity whilst having an enormous amount of fun!

Each group starts with a walk to Prinknash Abbey on the first afternoon, stopping for wonderful ice creams before the return trek. Students cooked their own food on the first evening and served up some wonderful culinary delights, although the washing up was not quite so well received! An introduction to camp song favourites like 'Great Big Moose' and 'Singing in the Rain' was had before hot chocolate and very excitable campers had to settle down and sleep. There was lots of chatter, torchlight and snacks from home before an early start on day two. Students cooked their own breakfast of bacon and eggs after cereal and cups of tea, fuelling up before an action-packed day ahead.

The second day saw the students take part in a carousel of events with hardly a minute's breath. Problem solving with the pipes and plates, manhunt in the woods, orienteering on the common taking in the beautiful views and of course everyone's favourite activity, 'The Vaccine' assault course, dams and legendary 'Mars Bar Challenge'. After a full-on day two it was barbeque time cooked by the staff, prior to an evening of brilliant camp entertainment led by Mrs Barton, Mrs Sutton and their trustee helpers. Mr Roke and Miss Booth added some acoustic tunes to the entertainment which will live in the memory - singing at the tops of our voices, group songs and of course the Mars Bar awards. Chubby Bunnies were a highlight and caused a great deal of laughter as always.

The camp was enriched by the attendance of Year 10 work experience students who played their part in making it a memorable and well organised event. Without a dedicated team of staff who are willing to commit unselfishly to a full-on week of activity it could not run. It is a really challenging few days for all concerned and I would like to say a personal thank you to all the staff, who worked tirelessly all week to give the students an amazing opportunity, made possible because of their enthusiasm, energy, patience, and dedication. The Year 7s fully embraced camp and will have taken many lifelong skills and some very happy memories home with them. A huge well done to everyone. You are now part of the Year 7 Dorcan camping legends!

Year 10 work experience

Between the 4th and 8th July, The Dorcan Academy celebrated a week of work with students in Years 8, 9 and 10 all learning skills to help prepare them for the workplace.

Over one hundred Year 10s attended a workplace with students engaging in a wide range of activities including: retail, childcare, car repair and law. Teachers spoke to the employers to find out how the students performed, with several students offered employment at the organisations they visited. For the students that were unable to find a placement, they had the opportunity to take part in The Dorcan Academy Virtual Programme designed to help them understand the skills required by employers in the workplace.

Year 9 students took part in a Dragon's Den activity on Thursday 7th and Friday 8th July. The students had to prepare a presentation on how they would respond to a scenario given to them by Fortem. Students had to present their pitch to the whole year group and answered questions posed to them by the Dragons.

On Monday 4th Year 8 students had the opportunity to design their own company before pitching the business to their peers and people from The Platform Project. The finalists had a chance for one final pitch in front of the whole year group with the winners praised for their ability to respond to questions raised during a Question and Answer session.

New College trip

Fifteen of our Year 9 students were invited to take part in a Study Higher "Core Beliefs and Raising Aspirations" day run by Oxford Brookes University at New College. The students were put in groups to discuss issues surrounding understanding strengths and confidence, motivation and vision. The students were helped to evaluate how they can take control of their own lives and shape their own future. The students discussed life at school - what they like and dislike, what they can change and what they can control. We hope this helped them to set life goals and to have the energy and determination to achieve them. At The Dorcan Academy we believe that we need to help prepare our students for life beyond the classroom as well as getting the best GCSEs they can. The session started with a press-up challenge..!

We hope that this day helped strengthen their self-belief and their ability to facilitate change. As usual they represented Dorcan well, looking smart and showing exemplary behaviour. Well done Y9! --

Year 7 Swindon Schools' Cricket

Last week, the Year 7 cricket squad took part in their first ever tournament. The 8-a-side pairs format of the game enabled all students the opportunity to bat, bow and field in every game. For most of the squad, this was their first taste of competitive cricket after only a couple of months of training. For most it is also the first time they have represented the school in a sporting capacity. The students involved were a credit to the academy and demonstrated resilience, courage and teamwork in spades. Facing more experienced opposition, containing many club players, the team unfortunately finished second in each game, but developed their skills and love of the game. We will be back stronger next year!

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Throughout the year the Duke of Edinburgh students have demonstrated excellent dedication and commitment to the award. Each student has given up their own time to complete the three sections of the award - volunteering, physical and skills. They have each made a valuable contribution to the local community, broadened their own experiences and learnt new skills.

This has been a particularly busy term as we are completing the expedition season. Our Year 9 Bronze students completed their qualifying expedition in the Cotswolds, walking from Northleach to finish at Kemble station. Our Silver year 10 students have had a delayed start to their expedition due to the extreme temperatures and will be out in the Brecon Beacons for the end of term. Our Gold students are currently undertaking the incredible challenge of walking 5 days, 4 nights in the Black Mountains.

For each expedition students have been completely self-sufficient, carrying all they need to eat, sleep and use for 2 to 5 days, depending on the level they are completing. They have truly demonstrated the core Dorcan principles of perseverance, purpose and achievement. A huge well done to everyone involved!

Year 7 first day reminder

Year 7 will need to arrive in their **PE kit** on their first day, Monday 5th September as they will be taking part in some House team building activities and the day is so action packed that there won't be time to change. We appreciate that you will want to see them looking pristine in their uniform on the first day, however, we want to make it fun and memorable and don't want them feeling restricted in their activities or arriving home on their first day with their lovely new uniform looking a mess! Please view Tuesday 6th September as the first day for the full school uniform and be prepared to take your photos (which you can then remind them of in Year 11!!) We will also take their individual photos in school.

Year 7 will need to arrive at the main entrance at the front of the school on Monday where they will be directed to the basketball courts. However, on Tuesday all students will use the Student entrance, where they can enter and exit safely without going near the car park. Tutors will ensure that students know where to go before they end the day on Friday. On Wednesday 7th September, PE kit will again be worn as this suits the activities for the day and then from Thursday onwards, it will be full school uniform.

Years 8 – 11 - Start of term arrangements

Years 8 – 11 will start school on **Tuesday 6th September** at the usual time and should arrive in their **full school uniform**. Years 9 and 11 will have their individual photos taken on this day. On **Wednesday 7th September**, students need to wear their **PE uniform** as there will be a carousel of activities, one of which will involve physical fun, and there will not be time built in to change. From Thursday 9th onwards, full school uniform will be worn.

Finally, we wish you a relaxing and safe holiday and look forward to seeing everyone again in September (on 5 September for new Year 7 and 6 September for other years)

Yours sincerely



Mrs Sherryl Bareham