

July 2022

Headlines

Dear Parent/Carer

Ofsted

As you know, we recently had a visit from Ofsted, which we were expecting to be either towards the end of this term or early in the Autumn term. The heat was on – quite literally as the weather was hot and students were in their PE kits! The students looked immaculate, behaved exceptionally well and were on time both to school and to lessons so thank you for your support with that – it was much appreciated. Thank you also to those parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and particularly those who wrote supportive comments.

We are unable to reveal the outcome currently, as the report has to be checked and quality assured before the final copy is released and this is likely to happen during the summer holidays. I look forward to sharing this with you in September.

Home Learning

Next academic year we are trialling a change to the consequences for students who fail to complete Home Learning. We believe that Home Learning is an entitlement and that your child will achieve much more highly if they do it. Prep (another word for Home Learning) is a strong feature of all independent schools, whose students are competing with our students for places at university, for jobs and leadership positions in our country. We are committed to ensuring our students have the same opportunities and entitlements as their peers who attend private schools.

We want our students to view Home Learning as a privilege and an entitlement and therefore, we will not sanction students who fail to complete. If they choose not to do it, then they are choosing to achieve less highly than their potential and choosing to allow their peers to get ahead of them at work and in the world. Teachers will still track the completion and will inform you if your child is not regularly completing it so that you know this is the choice they are making and the impact this will have on their progress and outcomes.

Any student who does not complete Home Learning regularly cannot be awarded higher than a 3 for Attitude to Learning which means they will not be eligible for voluntary school trips, the Rewards trip or the Prom (Year 11).

Instead, we will reward students who complete Home Learning with House points with those who complete to a high standard being entered into a termly prize draw for Amazon or Cinema vouchers.

Persistent failure to complete Home Learning may lead to students being banned from using Show My Homework and losing the entitlement to Home Learning. I realise this is very radical and when it was suggested to our student leaders, they were a bit shell-shocked! This is a new strategy which we have seen working at another school and we will monitor it closely. Our aim is to change the culture so that students see Home Learning as a positive rather than a negative thing. We will survey students and parents after the first term to assess the impact.

Message for Year 10 going into Y11 – English text

Your child will be studying Willy Russell's Blood Brothers in Year 11 and will be required to purchase their own copy of the play either online, or from our main reception for £8.20. If an older sibling has a copy of the play, or if you find a cheaper used version online, these are fine also. If you have any financial concerns about this, then please email the Head of English at nwatson@dorcan.co.uk.

Changes to the behaviour policy in September

We are making some changes to our behaviour policy from September which will be available on the academy website following the next Trustees meeting in the new academic year. A summary of the pertinent points are detailed below and you will be notified again when the new policy is published.

Firstly, you may have noticed that we have stopped using the term 'isolation' and started to use the term 'removal' to the reflection room. This is because we are proactively encouraging students to reflect on their actions and supporting them to become ready to learn again. It may be necessary at times for students with a uniform infringement that cannot be rectified through no fault of their own to remain in the reflection room; in this case, it will be referred to as supervision and students will leave at 3pm with no after school detention.

In the reflection room students will be given work to do that relates to the lessons on their timetable. If they fail to complete the work to a suitable standard, rather than sanctioning the student through warnings for non-completion, they will have an additional lesson added on to the time. Warnings will be given for disruption and refusal to follow other instructions. Refusal to go to the reflection room will result in a suspension (or an internal suspension until 4:30pm at the Headteacher's discretion); but will always be followed by a day in the reflection room on return. Students are required to take part in a restorative conversation with the teacher demonstrating that they are ready to learn before returning to lessons.

In addition to a text from the school to inform you that your child is in the reflection room, the teacher that issued the removal will contact you by telephone **or e-mail** to notify you of the reasons for the removal. Should you wish to discuss the matter further you are welcome to e-mail the teacher back.

Central detentions are always served after school from 3pm – 4pm or 4:30pm. Alternative arrangements will only be agreed to in extenuating circumstances, by myself or Mrs Morley (Deputy Head).

We are also in the process of changing our graduated response to allow for interventions and support for students to have time to impact on their behaviour before moving them up to a higher stage. More details to follow.

We are not allowing SMART watches to be worn for school as, like mobile phones, they have the potential to disrupt learning and students are not able to wear them for examinations. Where mobile phones/SMART watches are confiscated and parents are unable to collect, the items will be issued back to students on the last Friday of each half term.

Uniform infringements will not be authorised without medical evidence (a note from a parent although helpful will not suffice); and in any case alternatives should be discussed and agreed with the school to ensure that as far as possible, the school's high standards are met. We are allowing the wearing of white socks now following a request from students. We are not allowing **any** jewellery apart from one small ear-ring in each ear lobe. If worn, jewellery will be confiscated and taken to student reception for students to collect at the end of the day. We do not allow any other piercings or the wearing of clear plastic bars, retainers or studs.

In terms of hairstyles, they should avoid the extremes of fashion, in style and colour, including asymmetrical cuts, shaved or part shaved heads, skin-fades, steps and tramlines. No unnatural/obvious hair colourants. Please ask in advance if unsure.

Our uniform requirements are listed on the academy website with examples of what is and isn't allowed. Just because a shop labels the uniform as 'school uniform' does not mean that it meets our requirements.

If you are buying a calculator as part of the equipment, please purchase the Casio fx-83GT PLUS as this is the one that everyone uses and has all the necessary functions needed for the exam.

Free haircuts

We are aware of the cost of having your hair cut and have found that cuts seem to be getting shorter simply because they take longer to grow back! For this reason, we are arranging for a professional barber/hairdresser to come to the school on Thursday 1st and Friday 2nd September, to offer FREE haircuts. No appointment necessary, just turn up to the bungalow and we will ensure you have a free cut that meets the academy regulations. If this takes off, it could be something we continue to offer at the start of each new school term.

Pre-loved uniform donations

If you have any pre-loved uniform that can be redistributed to other students, please bring it into school. We would really appreciate it.

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.

Staff leaving us

We are very sorry to be saying goodbye to five members of teaching staff and one Teaching assistant at the end of this academic year; Miss Sutton (Dance), Miss Creed-Miles (Science), Mr Needham (PE), Miss Parker (TA), Mr Hammonds (English) and Mr Baker (Music). We wish them all the best as they move on to pastures new.

New staff for September

We are delighted to be welcoming some fantastic new staff to the academy in September. They are: Mrs Jones (Assistant Head Teaching and Learning); Miss Smith and Mr Cronin in Science; Miss Barton and Mr Thomas in English. We also welcomed Miss Durston as our new Head of Music in July.

Emergency procedures

During the first week back in September we will be rehearsing our fire and lockdown procedures; please do not be alarmed if students come home and tell you that they have had to hide under the tables or barricade themselves into classrooms. This is part of our safety procedures which we hope we will never need but it is best to be prepared.

End of Year Rewards totals

The House totals for the end of the year are as follows:

- **Osprey: 93,260**
- Eagle: 91,887
- Kingfisher: 89,313
- Falcon: 72,182

Which means that Osprey have won the House cup for the first time ever!! Well done Osprey!! A non-uniform day will be coming your way.

Message from Swindon Borough Council – Summer Reading Challenge

The Summer Reading Challenge is all about children enjoying reading throughout the summer holidays – and it's here! Running from now until Saturday 10 September, it is completely free to join in. Children just need to be a member of the library - which is also free. Staff in any of [Swindon's 13 libraries](#) can help children and families join or they can [join online](#). They can also register for the Challenge in any Swindon library and collect a free goodie pack for a fun summer of reading (while stocks last).

Summer Reading Challenge Activity Sessions

Libraries will also be holding a number of free, drop-in activity sessions:

Thursday 18 August, 10am - pm, Park Library

Friday 19 August, 10am - 1pm, Central Library

Monday 22 August, 10am - 1pm, West Swindon Library

Tuesday 23 August, 10am - 1pm, Highworth Library

Wednesday 24 August, 10am - 1pm, North Swindon Library

As well as activities, volunteers and staff will be on hand to talk to children about their book choices and the Challenge. Children who have already completed the Challenge will be able to collect their certificate and medal from 18th August. You can also find out more on the [Swindon Libraries Summer Reading Challenge webpage](#) and from this short video, which can be played to classes and assemblies.

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