

20 October 2023

## Headlines

Dear Parents/Carers

**The Dorcan Academy**

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Headteacher: Mrs S Bareham MBA GRSM

We are almost at the end of what has been an action packed half term which started with welcoming our new Year 7 students. Their induction days included House team competitions, Character workshops and the visit of an external company, 'Talk the Talk' who supported our students to develop their confidence in oracy as well as enabling them to learn about each other and get to know their teachers. We also ran our Year 8 Rewards trip. Then our WOW transition days were upon us for our Year 6 prospective students followed by our Open evening, which received excellent feedback and was really well attended. In addition, there has been a trip to Hampton Court and a Geography trip to Burnham for Year 7, and as I write, many of our Year 9 students are at Pencelli!! I was also delighted to be able to attend our Duke of Edinburgh Bronze celebration evening which saw our Year 9 students delivering presentations about all the activities they had taken part in relating to the DoE award – it was truly inspirational.

The last day of this term is our Growth Mindset day where we do things a little differently, designed to push us out of our comfort zone but enable students to develop their character and have a go at new things, as well as having a lot of fun. Details of all these events will be in our Dorcan Newsletter which we will send out at the end of the first big term.

## Term dates

Please be mindful that we break up for Christmas on **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December** at midday. This is later than the Swindon Borough Council dates and students return on **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January**. Parents were first notified of this in early October last academic year and since then we have sent several reminders. The reason for this change was because the Christmas holidays seem to be getting earlier every year and we were struggling to fit in all our Christmas events, such as our Christmas concerts, House Christmas dinners etc. without going back into November! Additionally, the slight change in October half term dates enabled us to ensure all subjects had a full 6 weeks on the curriculum before breaking up to allow for the completion of schemes of learning. Wherever possible, in future we intend to stay in line with the published dates, however, this year to do that would have had a negative impact on our Dorcan events and curriculum. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a growing opportunity for students when they leave Dorcan and may offer a more suitable alternative option to attending university, depending on career aspirations. Our annual apprenticeship evening takes place on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November between 17:30 and 19:00. It is open to all years and provides you and your child with an opportunity to hear from several apprenticeship providers. We do hope you will be able to attend.

## Academic Prep policy

As you already know, we have introduced our new Academic Prep policy this year where we informed students that, at Key Stage 4, failure to complete would lead to an after-school detention of 60 minutes. This is because when we removed detentions last year, many students took that to mean that Prep wasn't important and put themselves at a disadvantage. We had decided that at Key Stage 3, we would make some allowance for slippage and only set detentions after the 3<sup>rd</sup> missed piece, to be reset each term. Unfortunately, we are already noticing some students 'playing the system' and working out how many pieces they can miss without receiving a detention – this is clearly not in the spirit of the policy! We are, therefore, making a further amendment: at KS3 detentions in each subject will still be set after the 3<sup>rd</sup> missed piece but this will not be reset each term. Each missing piece after the 3<sup>rd</sup> missed piece will receive a detention. In addition, to clarify, for subjects where students start their GCSE qualification in Year 9, detentions will be set for every missed piece, as in KS4. As this is a change to what was originally said, we will be resetting after October half term but then there will be no further resets. We trust that you will support us in this as we really want your child to benefit from Academic Prep which is designed to aid students' long term memory of curriculum content and support them to do well in their exams.

## Reminder

Please ensure that over the half term break your child does not do anything that will contravene our uniform policy and prevent them from attending lessons on their return. We want students in lessons learning but we are not prepared to lower our high standards. We hope you have a lovely break.

Students return on **Thursday 2 November 2023** which is a normal school day. Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> is a Teacher INSET day.

## House points total

As at 13 October house points totals were as follows:

Eagle	Falcon	Kingfisher	Osprey
218352	19337	209904	216703

Yours sincerely



Mrs Sherryl Bareham  
Headteacher