St Dunstan's School
GLASTONBURY

Weekly Newsletter 2025-6

Dear Families & Parents,

As we reach the end of February, I would like to celebrate another fantastic half term filled with significant individual and collective achievements.

Firstly, a huge well done to our Year 11 students, who have successfully completed the first two weeks of our new after-school revision initiative, 'The Power Hour.' My thanks go to the staff members whose hard work and support has made this launch such a success.

Over the past few months the DfE recently updated its performance tables. I am very pleased to share that our 2025 GCSE outcomes for students achieving a strong pass in English and Maths combined placed us in the top five schools in the county and one of the highest in the Mendip area. Furthermore, I was proud to receive a letter from Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson, congratulating us on the exceptional outcomes achieved by our Pupil Premium students last year, which places our school among the very best nationally.

Our focus on positive praise and recognition continues to be a bedrock of our day to day approach. I am delighted to report that the school has now surpassed 280,000 'On Track' points, eclipsing previous yearly totals in just 20 weeks. I look forward to seeing this total grow as we continue to celebrate student success in all its forms.

Since January, our enrichment offer has continued to thrive. Students have benefited from:

- The DfE Bronze Scheme
- The introduction of LAMDA sessions.
- Collaborative digital workshops on personal safety in Key Stage Three.
- The Poetry Live! theatre trip
- Visits from inspiring authors.
- Numerous sports activities & fixtures
- Fundraising initiatives led by our Prom Committee.

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The absolute highlight of the term was undoubtedly our production of *The Addams Family*. As our third production in three years, it did not disappoint. Our students truly lit up the stage, and it was wonderful to see the community come out in such force to support them. My thanks go to the staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes.

I often remark that this term feels like a sprint, made more challenging this year by the particularly cold and inclement weather. I am very proud of our students for their resilience, hard work, and perseverance over this period. As we look forward to the promise of lighter spring evenings, I want to thank you for your support over the past six weeks and wish you all a restful half term break ahead of what promises to be an equally busy spring term.

Best wishes

P Balkwill

Truth	Resilience	Ambition	Community	Kindness

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Key Dates

Please be advised of the following important dates for your diaries-

Monday 2 March- Friday 13 March- Year 11 Trial Examinations
Thursday 12 March- Year 7 Parents' Evening
Wb 23 March- French Speaking Exams (final trial)
Thursday 26 March- Year 10 Mock Interview Day
Thursday 26 March- Year 11 Evening
Thursday 2 April- End of Term
Wb 13 April- Year 11 Easter Revision sessions

Important Information

Updates to the Calendar
We would like to make all families aware of two additional INSET days, which will be taking place in July 2026. Thursday 16 and Friday 17 July 2026 will now be INSET days, with the school closed to students on these days.

For students involved in the residential from Monday 13 to Friday 17 July this will continue as planned. Our Year 10 work experience will take place from Monday 13 until Wednesday 15 July, however some placements may continue until Friday 17 July. For more information regarding work experience please liaise with Mrs Watson or Miss Kench.

Year 9 Key Stage 4 Choices Update

Mr Armstrong will begin building initial timetable models after the February half-term, so it is essential that students complete the Google Form in advance. The deadline for form completion is **13 February 2026**.

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MNSP
MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS.

Weekly Attendance Update

Band	Percentage	Number of days attended this year to date	Potential Days of Absence across the year if this continues	Potential hours of lost learning	Classification
1	100%	**100**	**0**	**0**	Perfect
2	98% to 100%	**98**	**4**	**20**	Excellent
3	96% to 98%	**96**	**8**	**40**	Good
4	93% to 96%	**93**	**14**	**70**	Requires Improvement
5	90% to 93%	**90**	**38**	**190**	Concerning
6	Below 90%	**89**	**40**	**200**	Persistent absence

Be Aware of the Number 7!

Now that we are 20 weeks into the school year and have officially crossed the halfway mark, it's time for a little mid-term pulse check. While a day off here or there might feel ok in the moment, attendance is a bit like a credit card—those small charges really start to add up when you aren't looking.

Specifically, we want every family to keep a watchful eye on one number: **7**.

The Math of Success (and the Danger Zone)

In the world of school attendance, the gold standard is **96% or above**. It's the level where students stay in the loop, social circles remain intact, and nobody is staring blankly at a whiteboard wondering when the teacher started speaking Ancient Greek.

However, the margin for error is slimmer than you think-

- **7 full days of absence** (or 14 individual sessions) is the "tipping point."
- Once you hit 7 days, you are officially at risk of falling below that 96% mark.

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Weekly Attendance Update

Think of those 7 days like the last few cookies in the jar—once they're gone, they're gone, and we still have a long way to go until the summer holidays! We encourage all families to review attendance certificates this week to see where your tally stands.

How to Defeat the Number 7

Staying under the 7-day limit requires a bit of strategy. Here is how to keep those attendance numbers looking healthy:

- **The "Morning Hero" Strategy:** If your child has a dentist appointment, try to get them into school for the morning mark first, then whisk them away.
- **The Sniffle Test:** We've all been there—the "I have a tiny tickle in my throat" plea. Unless there is a fever or something contagious, send them in. If they truly wilt by lunchtime, we promise to give you a call.
- **Tactical Appointments:** Try to aim for the "Golden Window"—late afternoon appointments from 2:30 onwards
- **The Holiday "No-Go":** We know those mid-week flights and term time breaks are cheaper, but those 3 days away could use up nearly half of your yearly "safety net" in one go.

We aren't just being "mean" about the numbers; we genuinely miss your children when they aren't here. Every day counts and makes a difference, especially in the final half of the year.

Thank you for your continued support and have a great half term!

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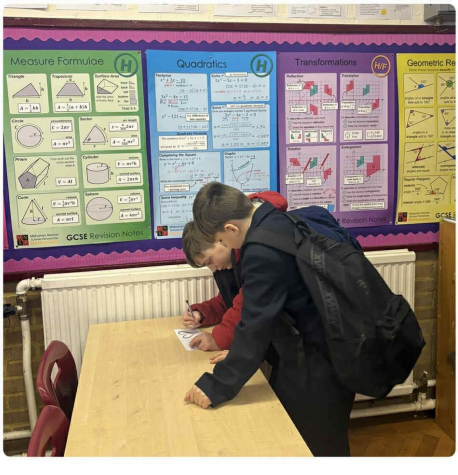
On Track Update

ON TRACK

Valentine's Day

Valentine's Delivery Gifts have been floating around this week.

This week our Prom Committee have been selling love heart sweets with a message which they will deliver to anyone in school for just 50p! They have been raising money for prom whilst spreading the love around the school, between friends and sweethearts alike, with messages written to brighten someone's day.



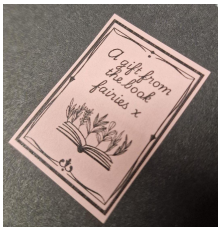
St Dunstan's Library presents...

THE BOOK NOOK

Saturday 14th of February is not just Valentine's Day, it is also International Book Giving Day!

As reading is such an important part of St Dunstan's, the book fairies have been very busy.

Mrs Morris and Mrs Gregory have spent weeks collecting books to gift to every member of staff and with the help of Mrs Manning, they gifted 70 books on Friday, each with a book tailored to the staff member, from teachers to the site team, no one was forgotten! It was a lovely way to prepare for half term.



The book fairies also hid books around the school, wrapped and ready for students to find and keep! And if anyone found a book that wasn't to their taste, they could gift it to a friend and keep the book giving day going! It was great fun and a lovely way to celebrate reading!

Safer Internet Day

This week saw Internet Safety Day and all year groups had an assembly about the dangers that the internet can pose.

The assemblies were facilitated by our senior student team, who all read true stories from young people around the country.

Quiz Night

Tickets are available on Arbor now (under the 'school shop' section). We are pleased to announce that Mrs Gregory and Mrs Manning are returning as our Quiz Masters!
There will also be a special prize for the best student team so grab your friends and sign up!

Local Events

National Trust

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Join us for a blossom adventure

At Glastonbury Tor on Saturday February 28th

Orchard Ranger Tours

10.30am & 12.30pm

Explore the Tor's Avalon Orchard and hedgerows, learn about their history, wildlife, and care.

In partnership with

BLABBERMOUTH
COMMUNITY STORYTELLING

Family Storytelling

11am & 1pm

Gather round for tales and songs rooted in local myth, orchard lore, and the changing seasons.

Activty Tent

10am - 2pm

Blossom themed activities including crafting, music and story-making

Hedgefest at Glastonbury Library

10am - 4pm

Get creative with Blossom poetry and paper crafts. Hear from our Community coordinator about the importance of hedges as vital habitats for wildlife.

Festival of Blossom is supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery with funds awarded from Postcode Earth Trust.

PEOPLE'S POSTCODE LOTTERY

POSTCODE EARTH TRUST

Find out more: nationaltrust.org.uk/glastonbury-tor

Safeguarding Spotlight

We would like to inform you of an exciting opportunity that has been organised in partnership with Young Somerset and the Mental Health Support Team (MHST), titled ***Tuning into Teens.***

This is a free and highly valued programme designed to support parents and carers in strengthening communication and emotional connection with their teenagers. Parents and carers are invited to attend a series of 6 after-school sessions held at St Dunstan's on Wednesdays from 3.15pm till 5.15pm beginning after the half-term break. These sessions take place in a supportive and confidential environment and are facilitated by experienced practitioners from Young Somerset and the MHST.

If you have any questions or would like to confirm your attendance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.