

Dear Parents and Carers

15 July 2022

As we approach the end of the school year, I am writing to inform you of a few changes around attendance, core values and car parking as well as to remind you of our expectations in plenty of time for the next school year. As of September, our numbers will have increased to over 460 students with a waiting list of students wanting to join us; as our numbers grow, it is even more important that we all understand and meet expectations so that the school runs smoothly to allow excellent teaching and learning to take place so that all students have the best possible outcomes during their time with us. We do appreciate your support in helping your child meet these expectations; all of us working together results in a positive experience for staff, students and parents.

The School Day

As you know, we are required to add five minutes to our school day to meet the government's requirement for students to be in school for 32.5 hours per week. Following our consultation of staff and parents, the majority are in favour of school starting five minutes earlier and ending at the usual time of 3.15.

Therefore, from September 2022, morning registration will take place at 8.45 am. This means that **all students should be on site by 8.40 am** to ensure that they are punctual for the morning register to be taken. We are returning to our pre Covid system of using the side gate by the Lucas Block for students to enter and leave school so that they can be punctual to tutor rather than having to walk around the back of the Sports Hall. Staff will be on hand to direct students to the right entrance from the start of term.

The First Day of Term

Please note that year 7 and our Head Students will be the only students in school on Monday 5th September. All other students should be on site by 8.40 on **Tuesday 6th September**. Timetables and planners will be issued on Tuesday 6th.

Car Park

You will be aware that we have a new building going up in the grounds of the school; we have been advised by County that the contractors will need to use the top car park as their base and therefore only school buses and taxis will be able to come onto site to drop off and pick up children. If your child can walk to school, it would be helpful if they could do so; if you need to drive them in, please note that you will need to pull over and drop them off at a safe point and not come onto the school site until the building works are finished. The area in front of the school gates may not be used as a drop off point as this will cause a hazard. The work starts on **JULY 19th** and so please be prepared not to bring your car on site from that date. This will be in place for the majority of the school year. Please allow for this in your timings for the school run so that your child is punctual to school.

Attendance

During the pandemic, attendance at all schools was severely affected. Attendance in school is vital to ensure your child's progress in learning, developing friendships and accessing extra-curricular opportunities. Developing the habit of having good attendance is also a life skill for when your child moves on from St Dunstan's and into college or the workplace. Now that we are no longer in a situation where lockdowns are

likely, as well as the rules around Covid absence having changed, all students are expected to be in school every day that it is open. It is parents' legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school every day so that they can access their full educational entitlement. Leave during term time will not be authorised and may lead to legal action.

We have been advised that under new attendance procedures, we are only allowed to keep registers open for 30 minutes after the start of the day; anyone arriving after 9.15 will be U coded which is classed as an unauthorised absence for the whole session - this code negatively affects attendance and repeated instances will lead to attendance procedures being initiated.

Behaviour

One of the most wonderful things about the St Dunstan's experience is the sense of community and the fact that everyone is treated with respect. We expect all students to do as they are asked first time and to follow the rules that are in place to keep everyone safe. We also expect everyone to be fully engaged in their learning so that we can all have a positive experience and students can make excellent progress. Our school is renowned for its caring approach - we are proud of that and expect students to appreciate the hard work and commitment of our staff.

Students need to follow three simple rules - do as you are asked first time, treat everyone with respect and give 100% to all aspects of school life. I look forward to celebrating successes with students throughout the year.

Uniform

It has been good to see the improvement in uniform during Term 6 - thank you for your support in this matter. As I stated in my last letter to you, wearing the correct uniform with pride is very important as it will:

- Show our students being proud to be part of our community.
- Allow the wider community to see our wonderful students in their very best light.
- Enhance the reputation of our lovely school even further.

Please note that, we insist on the correct uniform for all students - this includes **knee length** skirts that are **NOT** made of stretchy fabric, black socks or tights, black school shoes - **not trainers** - and a single stud in each ear being the only jewellery that is permitted. **Facial piercings are not allowed** (for students or staff), please do not permit your child to have a facial piercing during term time as they will be asked to remove it. Nails should be short and nail varnish is not to be worn. **False nails are not allowed** and students will be asked to remove them if they are worn into school. I have attached the uniform leaflet with this letter so that there is no confusion. Students wearing incorrect uniform will be loaned the correct item for the day and will be expected to purchase the correct item for future use.

If in doubt, please contact your child's tutor or the pastoral team to check before purchasing uniform items. If you are struggling with the cost of purchasing a uniform, please contact the pastoral team for advice and support.



The vast majority of our students are in the correct uniform every day; please ensure your child is one of them so that we can get on with the job of providing a high standard of education rather than spending time dealing with incorrect uniform.

Core Values

We have reviewed and revised our core values in conjunction with a panel of students. We have agreed that our core values going forwards are **Truth, Resilience, Ambition, Community, Kindness**. We feel that our value of awareness sits within kindness, that ambition is a key element of our school and that our sense of community is the feature that makes St Dunstan's such a special place to teach and learn. These are not just words to us; we live our values every day and they are woven through everything we do. We instil these values in our students and staff, celebrating when we exhibit these values and adhering to them to ensure that we all stay on TRACK.

Vaping

As you will no doubt have heard there is a rise in the number of young people using vapes across the country. I would remind you that it is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to purchase or use vapes or e-cigarettes of any sort. St Dunstan's, the same as all public buildings, is a non-smoking site; this includes vapes and e-cigarettes. Anyone bringing in or using vapes in school will be subject to sanctions as outlined in our policy. Please ensure that your child understands this and that they understand the potential health risks around vapes. If you think your child is vaping, please contact the pastoral team and we will be happy to arrange support to help them stop.

We are looking forward to a great year under more normal conditions. As long as we all follow the school rules, meet expectations and attend well, the next year will be very positive.

Thank you, as always, for your support, have a great summer and we will look forward to seeing everyone on site at **8.40 on 6th September**.

Yours sincerely

Lynda Bevan
Headteacher

