

St Dunstan's School

GLASTONBURY



Weekly Newsletter 2025-6

Dear Families & Parents,

This weekly newsletter is your essential guide to supporting your child. It is packed with important dates, event details and information. Please take a few minutes each week to read it so you don't miss a thing.

We look forward to sharing all the great news with you this academic year. If you have any good news stories or student achievements you'd like to share, please feel free to reach out to us!

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes

P Balkwill

Headteacher





Key Information

Key Dates

Wb 19 January- Year 11 Food Final Food Practicals

21 January- Poetry Live Trip

22 January- Year 11 Parents evenin

28 January-29 January- School Production

5 February- Year 9 Parents evening and Options Fayre

Visiting Author Years 8 & 9

12 February- Year 10 Parents Evening

13 February- Half term

Wb 2.3 Year 11 Mock exam window opens

Key Information

Safeguarding & PSHE Update- Please take the time to read the information letter regarding Online safety later in the newsletter. There are some important updates following the news stories this week related to Grok AI.

Parents Evenings'- we have now moved to the School Cloud booking system for all evenings. We will write to families in advance of these with more information. In the meantime, please follow the link below to see guidance on how to get yourselves set up/.

<https://www.midsomernortonschoolspartnership.com/uploads/files/parent-guide-to-parents-evening-bookings.pdf>



Key Information

Dear Parents & Carers

Year 7 Parents' Evening Update

Due to updates to the school calendar, we have had to amend the date for our Year 7 Parents' Evening. The event will now take place on **Thursday 12th March**.

The event will be held at **St Dunstan's School** from **15:50 to 18:45**. Booking instructions will be sent closer to the date.

Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this change may cause, and thank you for your understanding.

Yours sincerely

Mr Armstrong-Vickers

Assistant Headteacher



Key Information

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we begin the new calendar year in 2026, we would like to take this opportunity to remind parents and carers of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education that has been ongoing since September, and to outline the key topics students will continue to study over the coming months.

As the year progresses, PSHE lessons address some challenging yet extremely important topics that are carefully planned to be age-appropriate, inclusive and supportive. This year, our focus across year groups is as follows:

- **Year 7:** Safety and awareness
- **Year 8:** Discrimination
- **Year 9:** Respectful relationships
- **Year 10:** Healthy relationships
- **Year 11:** Communication within relationships

These topics meet the *Relationships* strand of the statutory PSHE and Relationships Education government guidance and are designed to help students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to navigate the world safely, respectfully and confidently. Alongside our planned curriculum, we will also continue to explore and respond to relevant topics that emerge in the news, ensuring lessons remain current and meaningful for students.

One topic that parents may have heard discussed recently in the media is **Grok AI**. Grok is an artificial intelligence chatbot that can generate responses to questions and prompts, similar to other AI tools that young people may encounter online. As you may be aware from the media this week, there are significant concerns about some of its capabilities.



Key Information

We advise all families to check their child's phones and monitor their activities online to ensure that your child is not exposed to or interacting with content that could be unsafe or inappropriate.

In our PSHE lessons, we will address this topic sensitively by helping students understand what AI is, how such tools can be used responsibly, and the potential risks associated with misinformation, inappropriate content and over-reliance on technology. Our focus will be on digital literacy, critical thinking and safe, ethical online behaviour.

Although PSHE is not a GCSE-graded subject, its importance should not be underestimated. PSHE plays a vital role in supporting students' personal development, wellbeing and preparation for adult life. Students are assessed by reflecting on what they know and understand at the beginning and end of each topic, allowing us to measure progress and ensure learning is meaningful.

We strongly encourage parents and carers to speak with their children at home about PSHE topics. Open conversations help reinforce learning and allow students to feel supported when engaging with complex or sensitive issues.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to working in partnership with you throughout the year to support your child's growth and development.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs N Watson
Assistant Headteacher of Safeguarding and Personal Development

Ms H Warner
Teacher of PSHE and PB

Weekly Attendance Update

MNSP

MOMENTS
MATTER,

ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.

What does my attendance look like so far? Term 3 Week 2

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%	81	0	0	Perfect
2	98% to 100%	79	4	20	Excellent
3	96% to 98%	77	8	40	Good
4	93% to 96%	75	14	70	Requires Improvement
5	90% to 93%	73	38	190	Concerning
6	Below 90%	72	40	200	Persistent absence

Building on a Strong Start

The first two weeks of term have been extremely positive, with students returning to school focused, settled, and ready to learn. Classrooms have been purposeful, routines have been re-established quickly, and it has been encouraging to see students engaging so well with their learning and with each other after the break.

As we look ahead to next week, the focus will be on building momentum and maintaining these high standards. This can sometimes be one of the more challenging points in the term, particularly as the weather remains unsettled and mornings are still dark and cold. Maintaining good routines, punctuality, and attendance will be especially important in helping students start each day positively.

We are also very aware of the ongoing roadworks around Clarks Village, which are causing delays for many families during the morning commute. We appreciate the patience shown so far and would encourage families, where possible, to allow a little extra time and set off earlier in the morning to help students arrive on time and avoid unnecessary stress at the start of the day.

Weekly Attendance Update



Attendance across the school has been encouraging, with Year 7 continuing to maintain the highest attendance of all year groups. They are closely followed by our GCSE year group this last week, and it has been fantastic to see these students stepping up to the demands of the year—engaging positively in lessons, committing to revision, and working hard alongside their teachers to prepare for upcoming assessments.

Lessons will continue to challenge and support students across all year groups, and expectations around behaviour, effort, and organisation will remain consistent. For students in examination years, this remains a key period to stay focused, manage deadlines carefully, and seek support early where needed.

We encourage all students to approach the coming week with a positive mindset, building on the excellent start they have already made. Thank you to families for your continued support during what can be a tricky time of year. We look forward to another productive and successful week ahead.





On Track Update

<u>Organised</u>	Equipped, on time, and completing homework
<u>Neat</u>	Smart, well presented books demonstrating your best work.
<u>Try hard</u>	Trying your hardest and rising to the challenge.
<u>Responsible</u>	A role model to others in your appearance, actions and words
<u>Active</u>	Listening, responding, and participating in lessons
<u>Community</u>	Supporting staff and other students to create a positive learning environment for all.
<u>Knowledgeable</u>	Knowing key information, concepts and terminology for each subject/unit





Year 11 Parents' Evening



We look forward to welcoming Year 11 parents and carers to our upcoming Parents' Evening at St Dunstan's School on Thursday 22 January, from 3:50pm to 6:45pm.

This is a great opportunity to meet subject teachers, discuss your child's progress, and ask any questions about their education. Students should attend with you.

Location: Assembly Room

Appointments: 5 minutes each (a bell will sound to help with timekeeping)

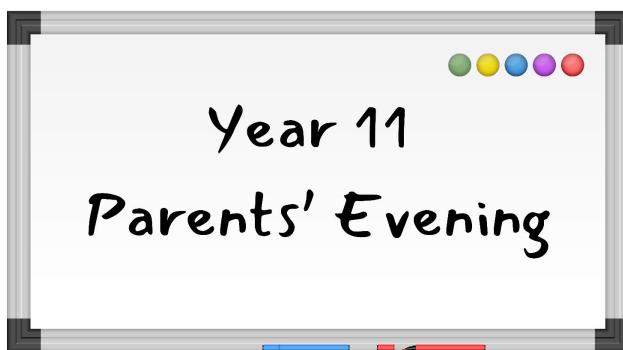
Booking appointments will be done online via SchoolCloud. An email has been sent to all of our parents with a link to the software, along with a guide on how to book.

Opens: Wednesday 14 January at 12:00pm

Closes: Wednesday 21 January at 5:00pm

Please note: if a teacher teaches your child in more than one subject, please book one appointment only so all families have the chance to attend.

We look forward to seeing you there!





Collaborate Digital, an association run by the Somerset Violence Reduction Partnership in partnership with the police, visited our KS3 students today to deliver important assemblies and workshops on personal safety.

Students learned practical strategies to help keep themselves and others safe, including how to spot the warning signs of violence before it happens and how to be an active bystander.

Discussions also explored standing up against issues such as the harassment of women in public spaces, which can often lead to violence and compromise personal safety.

The workshop also covered how online issues can escalate into real-life situations and how to prevent this from happening, alongside many other valuable life lessons about safety and supporting those who may need help.

Year 9 students even had the opportunity to create their own podcast! A big thank you to Collaborate Digital for visiting and delivering such an impactful session.





School Garden Update



Our garden is thriving! We've harvested some delicious - and wonderfully shaped - carrots , and the seeds we collected over the summer from our crops have already started to sprout.

Before we know it, the school will be blooming with beautiful sweet peas.

Such a joy to see our hard work growing - literally!





St Dunstan's Library presents...

THE BOOK NOOK



It's the National Year of Reading!

2026 has been officially named the national year of reading and it is a year of appreciating the importance of reading in our lives and the benefits it brings.

Reading opens career doors ; helps academic achievement; gives us a place to go when we need a break from our lives and is necessary for every day functioning.

Our Key Stage 3 groups have joined the Reading Challenge, along with several other local schools to see how many books we can read over the course of the year . There are prizes for miles stones and library teachers will be competing with their classes to see who will lead the way.

Please support us by encouraging reading and discussing the reading that you are enjoying. It is as important in school as it is at home!

More to come on what else we are doing to go all in for this year's national reading scheme.

Proud to support
The National Year
of Reading 2026.





Student Spotlight



We love celebrating student success, whether in school or outside. Just before the holidays, Jessie and Tilly in Year 9 were involved in Moonlight Theatre Productions Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs performance at The Meyer Theatre, in Street. They were fantastic and had a wonderful time treading the boards. Well done Jessie and Tilly!

If you have a student spotlight story, please email secretary@stdunstans.mnsp.org.uk





LAMDA lessons



LAMDA

Acting lessons
Speech and Drama
Public Speaking



Duo or Solo
30 min weekly sessions
Term time



LAMDA lessons

St Dunstans School

Confidence • Communication • Creativity

Helping young people find their voice.

Subjects Offered

- 🎭 Acting
- 🗣 Verse & Prose Speaking
- 🗣 Public Speaking
- 🎭 Mime

Why parents choose LAMDA:

- ✓ Builds confidence and self-esteem
- ✓ Improves speaking & presentation skills
- ✓ Supports English & Drama learning
- ✓ Develops focus, memory & resilience
- ✓ Encourages creativity & emotional intelligence

Ideal for confident children and quieter ones alike.

Give your child the gift of confidence, clear communication, and self-belief through **LAMDA (London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art)** lessons taught in school.

LAMDA qualifications are nationally recognised and support young people to speak, perform, and present with confidence — in the classroom and beyond.

About the Teacher

Lessons are taught by **Emmaline**, an experienced educator and LAMDA teacher with a background in Drama, English, and performance. Her approach is encouraging, structured, and confidence-building, helping students thrive while working towards clear goals.

Examinations

Students are prepared for LAMDA examinations at an appropriate grade.

Examination fees are charged separately.

Email: emmaline.maxwell@gmail.com



Production Request



Our School Production of The Addams family is coming up at the end of the month and in preparation for this, we are looking for raffle donations.

Perhaps you have some unwanted Christmas presents at home, or you have some boxes of chocolate that you don't need? If you have anything to donate for our raffle, please hand in at reception.

Performance dates are Wednesday 28th and Thursday 29th January. Tickets will be on sale soon!

St Dunstan's School

RAFFLE PRIZES ♦ NEEDED! ♦

We're holding a Raffle during the interval of

The Addams Family

Do you have any raffle prizes you'd be willing to donate?

- Gifts
- Bottles
- Vouchers
- New or unused items

All donations are very gratefully received and help support our school production.

Thank you for your support! ❤️

Safeguarding Spotlight

Parenting today can feel overwhelming — especially when childhood looks so different from what we grew up with. There's no manual, and it can be hard to keep up with the fast-changing digital world your child moves through every day. This guide aims to make those conversations easier and help you support your child with confidence.

For more information and lots of useful tools to help, please check out the interactive PDF below:

[PDF Parent Guide - What I Wish My Parents/Carers Knew](#)



INTRODUCTION

Parenting today can feel overwhelming — especially when childhood looks so different from what we grew up with. There's no manual, and it can be hard to keep up with the fast-changing digital world your child moves through every day. This guide aims to make those conversations easier and help you support your child with confidence.

YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT OR CARER

Being a parent or carer is both a responsibility and a privilege. Children tell me they need you to guide them — and that you can make them feel safe when things aren't clear-cut.

Parents today face a challenging dilemma:

- Allow your child online and risk exposure to harm.
- Or hold them back from a space that is vital to how young people socialise, learn and play.

It's understandable that parents are regularly confronted with constantly changing guidance and complex platform controls. But you are not supposed to be your child's friend.

WHAT THIS GUIDE EXISTS

The last guide I produced for the Office of the Children's Commissioner focused on sexual harassment online. This one is broader, reflecting the fast-moving digital world we're living in, where everyday digital habits are shaping children's lives.

ITS PURPOSE IS:

- Diversify start and sustain open conversations with your child.
- Help you set regular, realistic boundaries.
- Help you stay up to date with what can go wrong, and rarely what can go right, in the world of being online.

Technology companies still have a long way to go. But they are making progress. This guide offers clarity while work to address safety continues.

Why talking about digital life is hard for kids ...

... and how to make it easier.

Parents and carers don't know enough

- Talk about both the good and the bad of life online**
- Be involved early and collaborate on key decisions**
- When in doubt, ask your child**
- If you're still unsure, speak to a teacher or trusted professional**

CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER



Careers Spotlight



Bridgwater Campus Open Event

Bridgwater Campus

Wednesday 14 January 2026 6:00pm -
Wednesday 14 January 8:00pm



Strode Campus Open Event

Strode Campus

Tuesday 20 January 2026 6:00pm - Tuesday
20 January 8:00pm



Taunton Campus Open Event

Taunton Campus

Thursday 15 January 2026 6:00pm - Thursday
15 January 8:00pm



Cannington Campus Open Event

Cannington Campus

Saturday 24 January 2026 10:00am - Saturday
24 January 1:00pm



Student Spotlight



If you have a student spotlight story, please email
secretary@stdunstans.mnsp.org.uk