



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

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

Parking- A big thank you to everyone for your continued support and patience during the busy afternoon collection period. It makes a real difference to the safety and flow of the school day.

We would like to kindly remind parents parking in the surrounding area to remain mindful of our neighbours. Specifically, please be extra considerate on:

- **Cox's Close & Wells Road**
- **Underwood Road & Austin Road**

To help us maintain a positive relationship with our community, please ensure you are **not blocking driveways, using private permit spaces, or causing obstructions** that might prevent residents or emergency vehicles from passing.

Parents Evenings'- to set yourself up on our new booking system, please use the link below

<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 & Families

We are all too aware of how the recent cost-of-living increases may affect our local community, and we want to encourage you to access appropriate mechanisms of support. The Pupil Premium and Free School Meals funding allows schools to creatively support students. This funding is confidential and used to support your child. If your child is eligible for 'free school meals' and you register them for this, we will receive extra funding called 'pupil premium'. We use this extra money to improve the educational provision and resources at the school.

What is Pupil Premium funding?

Pupil premium funding from the government is given to schools to help pupils reach their full potential, regardless of their background or financial situation. It's provided for pupils who:

- Are registered for free school meals
- Have been registered for free school meals at any point in the past 6 years
- Are, or have been, in care
- Have parents in the armed forces

How is the Pupil Premium funding spent?

Schools have the freedom to spend the Premium in a way they think is best to support the raising of attainment. Funding is given to schools and is spent according to a budgeted plan across three areas.

These include:

1. High-quality teaching, such as staff professional development.
2. Targeted academic support, such as tutoring.
3. Wider strategies to address non-academic barriers to success in schools, such as attendance, behaviour and social and emotional support.



Key Information

Parents do not receive this money from schools and there is not a budget to spend per student. Schools are expected to formulate a plan to use the overall funding, this must be based on evidence based research and approved by the Governing body. How do I register?

To register, please visit the following web page.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/free-school-meals/>

Similarly please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions or would like to update us about your child and their eligibility for funding.

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%	85	0	0	Perfect
2	98% to 100%	83	4	20	Excellent
3	96% to 98%	81	8	40	Good
4	93% to 96%	79	14	70	Requires Improvement
5	90% to 93%	77	38	190	Concerning
6	Below 90%	76	40	200	Persistent absence

Attendance in the Toughest Weeks – Brighter Days Ahead

This point in the year is always one of the hardest for attendance. Dark mornings, cold weather, long weeks, and tiredness all add up — and nationally, these weeks are known for attendance dipping. If it's felt harder to get going lately, you're not alone. But here's the shift -**Spring is coming**. The days are getting longer. The mornings are getting lighter. The weather will soon be brighter and warmer. And with that often comes more energy, better focus, and a fresh push towards the end of the half term. Hang in there - 3 more weeks until half term. We are halfway through Term 3!

The January 100% Club

We're heading towards our **next 100% Club draw for the month of January**, and there are still plenty of students who can get themselves onto the "Random Wheel of Names" next Friday.

Every day you're in school counts.

Every morning you arrive on time, matters.

New Challenge: The 1% Shift

We're launching a new attendance challenge before half term: Can you improve your attendance by just 1%?

St Dunstan's School

GLASTONBURY

Weekly Attendance Update

MNSP

MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.

MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.



Discover the benefits of consistent attendance

PERFORMANCE

Consistent attendance leads to improved academic performance and higher grades over time.



TEAMWORK

Regular attendance fosters better teamwork skills, enhancing group dynamics and collaboration among peers.

RELIABILITY

Consistent attendance builds a reputation for reliability, making you a valued member of any team.



BE PRESENT

Commit to showing up for success and growth.

ON
TRACK

Your attendance shapes your future!

We will let you know how many days you need to be in school in order to shift your attendance by 1%.

That small shift can make a big difference — moving you into a higher attendance band and helping you get more out of lessons.

Two important rules:

Rule 1: Be on time - If you want to be *in it to win it*, you can't be late to school.

Rule 2: Be consistent - Consistency means every day. Not some days. Not most days. **Every day**.

We know school isn't always easy, and support is there when it's needed. But sticking with routines, showing up consistently, and pushing through the toughest weeks now really does pay off — especially as the days get lighter and spring takes hold.

Let's finish this half term strong!



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





The Addams Family



The Addams Family

SCHOOL EDITION

Meet the Cast!

With just over a week to go for the start of our production of The Addams family, here is the start of our meet the cast posts.

Erin and Oren in Year 10 are playing the fabulous Gomez and Morticia. Come along on Wednesday 28th and Thursday 29th January to see their excellent performances of these well known characters.

Tickets are on sale now from reception!

Introducing our cast...



*The
Addams
Family*
MUSICAL

Gomez is played by Oren in Year 10'

'I'm enjoying the challenge of becoming Gomez for my last Production at St Dunstan's.'

Morticia is played by Erin in Year 10

'Morticia is a very confident character who is completely herself all the time, and I am excited to portray that and bring it to life.'



On Track to Prom



On Track to Prom – Year 11

Last week, Year 11 students were introduced to our On Track to Prom initiative in assembly and it started this week. It will run across the next three half terms, supporting students to finish Year 11 positively and stay focused on what really matters

- ❖ Being On Track to Prom is all about:
- ❖ Good attendance & punctuality.
- ❖ Positive behaviour.
- ❖ A committed approach to learning and revision.

Prom is a chance to celebrate the hard work of our Year 11s and make those final school memories.

Thank you to parents and carers for your continued support during this important time!





Poetry Live Trip



What an incredible day! 43 of our Year 10 and 11 students had the amazing opportunity to attend 'Poetry Live!' in Bath this week and witness some of the UK's most celebrated poets perform their work live. The line-up included: John Agard, Simon Armitage, Imtiaz Dharker, Carol Ann Duffy, Liz Berry and Daljit Nagra.

Not only did the students get to experience their powerful poetry firsthand, but they also had the chance to ask questions and engage with these renowned poets! Mrs Gregory was lucky enough to get a photo with top poet, Carol Ann Duffy which was just one of the highlights.

We are so proud of how our students behaved! They were a credit to the school and we know opportunities like this make all the difference to the study of a text.

gcse poetry **live!**





Year 7 Food and Nutrition



During this term's Food and Nutrition rotation, Year 7 students have been working hard to develop their understanding of hygiene and kitchen safety.

Students have impressed staff by demonstrating professional chefs' knife skills, successfully practising a range of classical cutting techniques, including julienne, brunoise, macédoine, jardinière and paysanne.

Mrs Potter has been extremely impressed with the high level of skill and focus shown by students and is looking forward to beginning the practical cooking lessons.

Well done Year 7!





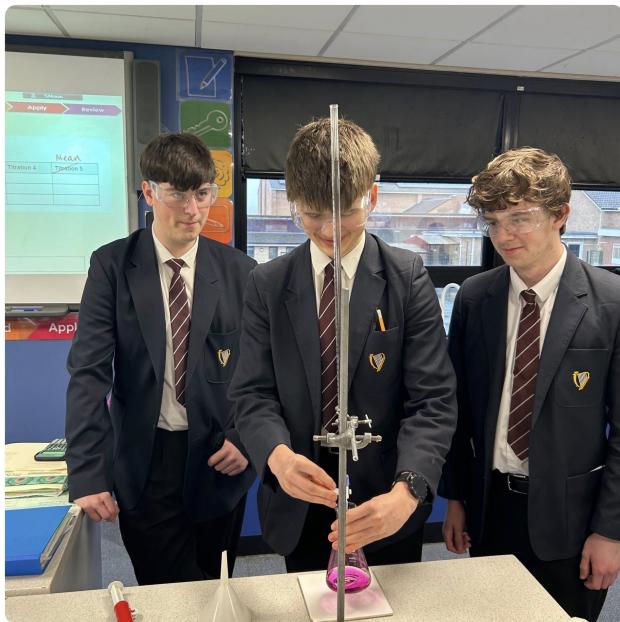
Year 11 Science



Our Year 11 chemists showed outstanding scientific skill, precision and dedication in our Triple Science titration practical.

This quantitative chemistry practical is notoriously difficult to achieve the final end point, but our students rose to the challenge and proved themselves to be true chemists in action.

Mrs Moon is incredibly proud of them!





Student Spotlight



Libraries are for everyone to use and you might be surprised about the things you can access. While we're lucky to have a brilliant library at school, our local public libraries are fantastic places to visit. You can loan 20 books at a time (including manga and graphic novels), use free wifi, borrow iPads and use computers... but libraries need our help! Go out and get yourselves a free library card and visit your local library to keep them running.

We're very proud that three of our students were involved in the making of this video from Somerset Libraries and we're especially happy to see them since it is the National Year of Reading. Well done!



[Full YouTube Video from Somerset Libraries](#)

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

THE BOOK NOOK

The National Year of Reading has officially launched!

Children and young people are **not** falling out of love with reading itself, but rather not enjoying prescriptive reading, or situations they do not find relevant.

That is why the most important thing is **CHOICE!** If students choose their own book to read, whether in library lessons, in school or at home, it vastly improves their relationship with reading!

The school library is open Mon-Thurs for students to loan a wide range of books, but we have just launched a **book swap shelf in Pastoral** where students can take a book to **keep** to make sure everyone has access to books! Once finished it can be returned to the shelf for others to read, or kept to reread over and over again!

We hope this helps spread the love of reading even more widely..

We'll be sharing recommendations and news about our new reading challenge next week...

“

Stories are like footprints that can never be washed away... The story moves into someone else's head. It finds a new place to live.

Ellie McNichol

”

LOST PROPERTY

We have lots of lost property at the moment including coats, bags and water bottles.. Someone must be missing them! If you think something in here might be your child's, or they've lost something, please encourage them to visit the Uniform Hub (next to Room 2) to check.

Items left uncollected will eventually be donated.



PTA Announcement



easyfundraising

Over £1.7m raised from holiday bookings in 2025

Get an average £50 donation per family holiday!

Do you want to help raise money for the PTA without giving up hours of your time?

Doing some online shopping or booking a holiday?

If you sign up (for free) to Easy Fundraising and select our PTA as your chosen donation, the school will receive up to £50 per holiday booking! Without costing you anything extra...

It only takes a few minutes but could make the world of difference to the PTA and therefore to our students! The link to register is below:

[Easy Fundraising St Dunstan's Link](#)

If you have any questions about this for the PTA, or want to get more involved, please email stdunstanscommunitypta@gmail.com

Thanks from the PTA



THANK YOU!

We are very lucky to be surrounded by such generosity at St Dunstan's and the PTA have a few thank yous to celebrate.

Firstly, a huge thank you to Burns the Bread who regularly donate loaves for our breakfast club. We are constantly grateful for the continued support and contributions, they go a long way with our students!

Thank you also to the Wookey Hub who again raised £186 for the PTA through their Christmas Tree sales over the festive period. We're so grateful! Thank you for taking the time to support us and the school.

Thank you also to our PTA from us for donating lots of breakfast items for breakfast club. The club runs daily from 8am in the Learning Hub and is open (and free) for anyone to attend.



LAMDA lessons (updated)



LAMDA

Acting lessons
Speech and Drama
Public Speaking



Duo or Solo
30 min weekly sessions

NEW! After school
Group sessions
Tuesdays
3.15 - 4.15

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



Staff Spotlight



Congratulations to Mrs Potter and Mrs Manning, who successfully completed their Lowland Leader Assessment last weekend.

The assessment took place over four days and also required them to complete around 100 hours of walks, each lasting three hours or more.

An incredible achievement - well done!





Staff Spotlight



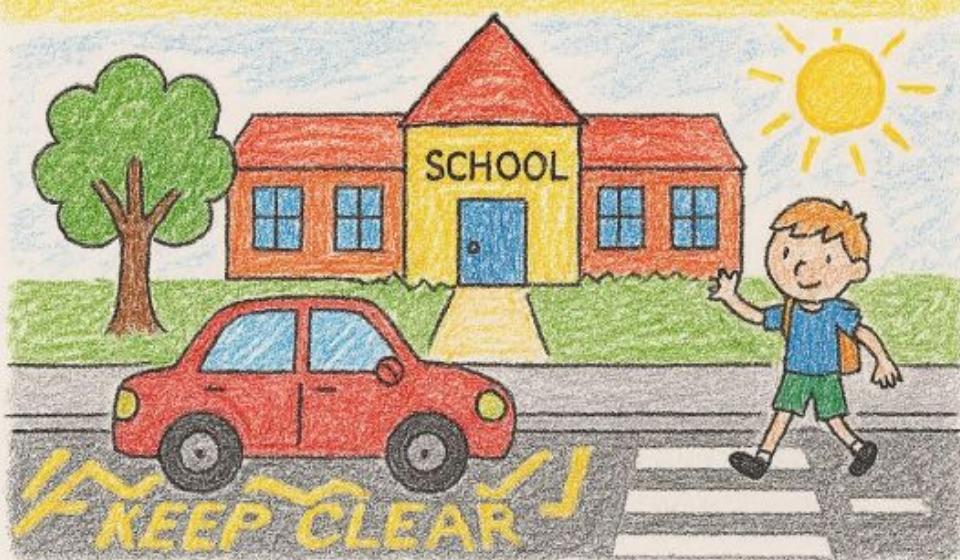
Congratulations to Miss Sheppard, our office manager, who this week celebrates 30 years working at St Dunstan's!

Thank you for everything you do Miss Sheppard - your dedication and hard work are truly appreciated and you help keep St Dunstan's running smoothly, every day!





PARK SAFELY OUTSIDE SCHOOLS



SAFETY REMINDER:

- No parking on single or double yellow lines
- No double parking
- No stopping, dropping or parking on the School Keep Clear yellow zig zags
- No stopping, dropping or parking on the pedestrian crossing white zig zag lines
- No parking on corners or junctions, especially near the school entrance

PLEASE DO NOT BLOCK DRIVEWAYS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!



PARENTS, LET'S TALK ABOUT KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE!

Social media is a huge part of our children's lives – but it comes with real dangers we can't ignore. Protecting them starts with YOU. Here's how:



Talk Openly – Have honest conversations about online behavior, privacy, and respect. Make sure they know what's safe and what's not.



Stop Sexting Before It Starts – Explain that sharing intimate content can lead to emotional harm, bullying, and even legal trouble. Once it's online, it's out of their control.



Set Strong Boundaries – Agree on screen time limits and safe apps. Use parental controls when needed, but build trust through communication.



Lead by Example – Show healthy online habits yourself. Kids learn from what they see at home.



YOUR GUIDANCE IS THEIR PROTECTION.
A CONVERSATION TODAY COULD PREVENT
A SERIOUS PROBLEM TOMORROW.



Safeguarding Spotlight



Capstone
foster care

Thinking about Fostering?

Your spare room has
more to give

Turn it from a boring office, laundry
room or simply a dumping ground
to something much more.

Make it into a new opportunity, a
new home, a safe space, a new
start for a child or young person.



To find out more call:

0800 012 4004 or visit fosterwithus.co.uk

