

# St Dunstan's School

GLASTONBURY



## Weekly Newsletter 2025-6

Dear Families and Parents,

This weekly newsletter is your essential guide to supporting your child, packed with key dates, event details, and school information. Please take a few minutes each week to read through it so you do not miss a thing.

A huge well done to our Year 11 students who began their second round of mock exams this week. These assessments are vital; they serve as essential preparation for the final exams and provide a benchmark to show exactly where students are and what they need to focus on to improve. As the exam window continues through next week, we urge students to use this weekend to find a healthy balance—prioritising rest alongside their revision and study.

It has also been fantastic to see a noticeable improvement in attendance for many year groups and individuals since Monday. As the winter months subside, we are hopeful that attendance will continue to rise. This week's newsletter contains key updates regarding the specific ways we intend to support you and your child in achieving this.

Over the coming weeks, we look forward to sharing more highlights from this academic year. If you have any "good news" stories or student achievements from home that you would like us to celebrate, please feel free to reach out.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Balkwill', located below the 'Best wishes,' text.

P. Balkwill

Headteacher

Truth

Resilience

Ambition

Community

Kindness

# Week Commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Don't miss out on...



**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>** – Year 11 Macbeth Trip.

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>** – Duke of Edinburgh Bronze meeting (students only) 3:15pm – 4:30pm.

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>** – World Book day.

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup>** – Deadline for Year 7 Blue Peter Music badge forms.

**We will also have:**

Year 11 Mock Exams

After School Clubs continue and our Year 11 Power Hour will be taking place on Monday, Wednesday & Thursday.

New Attendance Rewards Initiative to promote improved and good attendance to be launched including 100% Club winners for February.



**MOMENTS  
MATTER,  
ATTENDANCE  
COUNTS.**



Truth

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## Weekly Newsletter 2025-6

### Key Dates

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

Monday 2 March- Friday 13 March- Year 11 Trial Examinations continue

Tuesday 3 March- Year 11 Macbeth Theatre Trip

Thursday 12 March- Year 7 Parents' Evening

Friday 20 March- Red Nose Day- arrangements to be shared in coming weeks

Wb 23 March- French Speaking Exams (final trial)

Thursday 26 March- Year 10 Mock Interview Day

Thursday 26 March- Year 11 Information 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.

#### Parent View

If you have not had a chance to complete the parent survey sent out in February, please follow the link below to share your views.

<https://forms.gle/D1m66Y4cKD6QvQwz7>

# 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.



Your attendance shapes your future!



## Weekly Attendance Update

What does my attendance look like so far? Term 4 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%	105	0	0	Perfect
2	98% to 100%	103	4	20	Excellent
3	96% to 98%	100	8	40	Good
4	93% to 96%	98	14	70	Requires Improvement
5	90% to 93%	95	38	190	Concerning
6	Below 90%	94	40	200	Persistent absence

We hope you all had a fantastic half-term break. It has been wonderful to see our students back in the building, settling into their routines with such positive energy. As we begin this new term, we want to emphasise the critical link between **consistent attendance** and your child's success.

To ensure every student reaches their full potential, please take note of the following key pillars of our attendance policy:

### The "7-Day Rule"

While we understand that seasonal illnesses are sometimes unavoidable, every absence impacts a student's record. **Just seven days of absence** over the academic year puts a student at risk of falling below our minimum **96% target**.

- **Appointments:** Please arrange medical appointments outside of school hours or during lunch breaks whenever possible.
- **Holidays:** We strongly urge families to avoid term-time holidays or weekday events.
- **Monitor Progress:** We ask that you review your child's weekly attendance email/certificate. Just like a credit card limit, it is vital to know how close you are to the threshold so you can put support in place.



## Weekly Attendance Update

### Friday Absences

Data shows a higher proportion of absences on Fridays than any other day. Every school day carries equal weight. In employment, consistent Friday absences carry serious consequences; we aim to help our students build the reliability they will need for their future careers.

### Term 4 - Six Weeks- 29 Days

The next six weeks will decide your child's final attendance figure. Once we reach the final 12 weeks of the year, percentages become much harder to move. High attendance in Term 4 is an **investment for the rest of the year.**

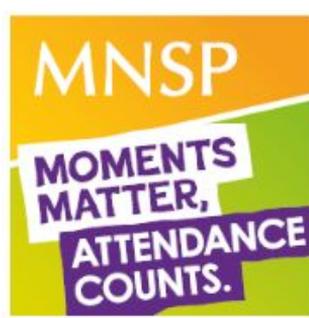
### Exams, Assessments, and Course Options

All year groups will face end-of-term assessments shortly. For our **Year 9 students**, attendance is a key factor in the options process. Courses with high coursework demands, such as Art or Business, require excellent attendance to keep pace; therefore, low attendance may impact a student's suitability for these subjects and impact their option choices..

### Earn Your Place: Celebration Events

Our end-of-term celebration events and the Summer Carnival are highlights of the year. Please note that **only students with 96% attendance or higher** for terms 4-6 are eligible for invitations. We want as many students there as possible—so encourage your child to "turn up, earn it and celebrate it!"

To support our students in meeting these targets, we are launching several new initiatives this term to celebrate consistency and provide a "fresh start."



## Weekly Attendance Update

- **The Attendance Reset:** We are resetting attendance tracking for the second half of the year. This gives students who fell below 96% a clean slate to reach the threshold and improve on their first half of the year.
- **The "29-Day Challenge" (Key Stage 3):** All KS3 students are challenged to achieve **29 unbroken days** of school, tracking their progress weekly with their tutors.
- **Rewards and Recognition:** We will continue our drive for excellence through the **"100 Club" award** for perfect monthly attendance, as well as specific recognition for students showing significantly improved attendance and targeted incentives for meeting specific thresholds.
- **Tutor Group League Table:** We are running a weekly league table for tutor groups. The groups with the highest attendance will receive **weekly prizes and rewards**.
- **"On Track to Prom" (Year 11):** For our Year 11s, high attendance this term is the primary criteria for invitations to the **Year 11 Prom** and end-of-year celebrations.
- **Communication & Support:** We will continue to contact families on days of absence to help **remove barriers** to attendance. If a student's attendance falls below 90%, we will increase our frequency of contact to ensure we can work together on a rapid improvement plan.

We recognise that for a small group of students, absence is truly unavoidable due to ongoing medical or personal reasons. If you are already working closely with us to ensure your child's attendance is as high as it can possibly be given their circumstances, please be assured that **we take this into account**. Our goal is to ensure every child receives the support, encouragement, and rewards that are appropriate to their specific journey.

Attendance is a partnership. We are here to support you, and we look forward to seeing our students thrive as they build these vital habits for their future success.



On Track Update

## CONGRATULATIONS STUDENTS!



# 300,000 POINTS ACHIEVED

SINCE SEPTEMBER

You've surpassed last year's  
total of 277,000 points!

**KEEP UP THE  
AMAZING WORK!**





## 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.



A reminder that the following steps need to be followed for a successful login to the app:

### 1. Initial Web Login

**Students must first log in to Arbor using a web browser** (on a laptop or desktop) to activate their account, ensuring their password is current.

2. Students should use their school email address and password to log in (e.g. 3sleigh@stdunstans.mnsp.org.uk).

### 3. Download the Arbor Student App

The app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store by searching for "Arbor Student".

4. Log in to the App, using the same login and password they use for the browser.

After logging in, they can enable "Remember Me" to use fingerprint or face recognition for quicker access in the future.

Please be aware that students need to follow all the instructions shared to be successful in utilising the app in full, and whilst we are able to provide this information and can remind students of their school login, the Arbor help centre is the most appropriate source of further assistance should it be required. Arbor is not a platform owned or managed by St Dunstan's School.

The Arbor Student App is intended for use outside of school only. When in school, students should access Arbor via a school computer if needed.

Once again, we appreciate your support in helping students become more independent in managing their learning and school responsibilities.

For further guidance, please follow the link below-

<https://youtu.be/QN6j66N6N94>



# 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.

**Young Somerset**

## Talking to your young person

TINT PROGRAMME

- Learn how to talk with and understand your young person better
- Help your young person to manage their emotions
- Teach your young person to manage conflict and prevent behaviour problems
- Create a closer more connected relationship with your young person

**Young Somerset are offering a six week programme completely FREE to parents**

If you are interested you can find out more by attending an informal meet and greet