



Weekly Newsletter 2025-6

Dear Families & Parents,

It has been a pleasure to welcome our students back to school this week. I must praise them for their conduct; our classrooms are already filled with a calm, purposeful atmosphere and a clear sense of focus.

Our primary focus this term is a "Fresh Start" for attendance. Following a difficult December impacted by seasonal viruses, we are encouraging students to "reset" and measure their success against this term specifically. Our goal is for every student to achieve 98% attendance or higher between now and Easter. We ask for your continued support in encouraging your children to "give it a go" and, where possible, booking medical appointments outside of school hours.

Regarding the curriculum, this is a pivotal time for several year groups. Year 9 families will soon receive information regarding the Options process, including details for the Options Fayre on 5 February. Meanwhile, Year 11 students are entering a critical phase of coursework and mock exam preparation. We urge all Year 11 students to ensure they are in school every single day to make the most of the opportunities on offer.

Our commitment to enrichment remains strong. We are working hard on our upcoming production of *The Addams Family* at the end of the month and will share details regarding our two-day Enrichment Week in February.

Finally, please take note of our upcoming Parents' Evenings for Years 11, 10, 9, and 7 scheduled throughout the term. Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing you at these events over the coming weeks.

Best wishes

P Balkwill



Key Information

Key Dates

22 January- Year 11 Parents evening

28 January-29 January- School Production

2 February- Year 9 Parents evening and Options Fayre

12 February- Year 10 Parents Evening

Key Information

School closures

There may be occasions when a school closure takes place due to extreme weather such as snow and ice. If the school is forced to close we will try to make a decision as soon as possible before liaising with the bus services and Local authority. Families will be notified of any decision via our Facebook page and our website.

Keeping Warm

As we move into the colder months, we would like to remind all students of the importance of dressing appropriately for the weather. We strongly encourage every student to wear a suitable warm, waterproof jacket to school to ensure they stay dry and comfortable during their commute and break times. Please be advised that hoodies and other casual outerwear are not considered suitable for the school environment and should not be worn.

Students are permitted to wear a plain V-neck sweater underneath their school blazer. We would also like to reassure parents and students that we will be ensuring the school site is well-heated and maintained at a comfortable temperature throughout the day.

Finally, for health and safety reasons, we must ask that students do not bring flasks or thermos cups into school.

Weekly Attendance Update

MNSP

MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.

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

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%	76	0	0	Perfect
2	98% to 100%	74	4	20	Excellent
3	96% to 98%	73	8	40	Good
4	93% to 96%	71	14	70	Requires Improvement
5	90% to 93%	68	38	190	Concerning
6	Below 90%	67	40	200	Persistent absence

As we start a fresh calendar year, it's the perfect time for an "**Attendance Reset**." We know that Terms 1 and 2 were particularly tough for many families; seasonal viruses and winter bugs hit hard, and we understand how frustrating it was for students who wanted to be in school but were held back by illness.

If your child's attendance percentage dipped below their usual banding due to a period of absence, please remember: one bad term doesn't define the year. By focusing on consistency from this week forward, those percentages will quickly "bounce back."

5 Reasons to Prioritize Attendance This Term

As we look toward the spring, here are five reasons why being in school every day makes a world of difference:

1. **The Year 11 Countdown (Revision & Mastery)** For our Year 11s, every lesson is now a building block for success. Teachers are moving from delivering new content to crucial revision and exam techniques. Missing just one day can mean missing a core concept that links an entire topic together. Being present means being prepared.
2. **The Power of Social Connection** School is about more than just curriculum; it's where friendships are built and maintained. Regular attendance helps students feel "in the loop," reducing the anxiety that can sometimes come with trying to reintegrate after a long absence.

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3. Beyond the Classroom: Enrichment This term sees the relaunch of many of our extra-curricular clubs, sports fixtures, and creative workshops. These opportunities for enrichment are only available to those through the door, helping students develop talents and interests that last a lifetime.

4. Beating Your Personal Best We are encouraging every student to compete against their own previous stats. There is a huge sense of individual achievement in seeing your attendance percentage rise from December to March. It's a tangible way for students to see the rewards of their own resilience.

5. Building Life Habits Reliability is a "super-skill." By showing up even on the days when the bed feels extra warm or the weather is grey, students are practicing the discipline and grit that will serve them in college, university, and their future careers.

A Fresh Slate

Let's work together to make this term a success. If there are any barriers preventing your child from attending school, please reach out to their tutor. We are here to support you in making 2026 a year of high achievement and consistent growth.



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





Welcome Back



Welcome to Term 3

It was great to be back this week, hearing about the adventures everyone has been on during the break.

Students enjoyed being back with their peers. Break time sports resumed, the library was full and it was good to pick up our studies where we left off in December. Here's to an excellent term ahead.





PE Calendar



Below is the new PE timetable for Term 3 (you will need to zoom in for the information you need). Tutors will all be sent a copy of this timetable to share with their tutees and it will also be displayed in the PE corridor as usual.

Core PE lesson timetable - JAN/FEB 2025/26

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5
Mon A	9X2 - JWA 9X1 - CPE Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - BASKETBALL	8X1 - JWA 8X2 - CPE 8X3 - TNO Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - BASKETBALL Mixed - FOOTBALL	7X1 - JWA 7X2 - CPE 7X3 - TNO Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - BASKETBALL Mixed - FOOTBALL		
Tues A	7Y1 - JWA 7Y2 - CPE Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - BASKETBALL	8Y1 - JWA 8Y2 - CPE Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - BASKETBALL	9Y1 - JWA 9Y2 - CPE Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - BASKETBALL		10Z1 - JWA 10Z2 - CPE 10Z3 - SGR Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - NETBALL Mixed - BASKETBALL
Wed A	9X2 - JWA 9X1 - CPE Boys - BASKETBALL Girls - NETBALL	9Y1 - JWA 9Y2 - CPE Boys - BASKETBALL Girls - NETBALL	8X1 - JWA 8X2 - CPE 8X3 - HWA Boys - BASKETBALL Girls - NETBALL Mixed - FOOTBALL	11X1 - JWA 11X2 - CPE Boys - INVASION GAMES Girls - INVASION GAMES	11Y1 - JWA 11Y2 - CPE Boys - INVASION GAMES Girls - INVASION GAMES
Thurs A	7X1 - JWA 7X2 - CPE 7X3 - TNO Boys - BASKETBALL Girls - NETBALL Mixed - FOOTBALL		7Y1 - JWA 7Y2 - SGR Boys - BASKETBALL Girls - NETBALL		10Z1 - JWA 10Z2 - CPE 10Z3 - SGR Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - NETBALL Mixed - BASKETBALL
Fri A			8Y1 - SGR 8Y2 - CPE Boys - BASKETBALL Girls - NETBALL	11X1 - JWA 11X2 - CPE Boys - INDIVIDUAL SPORTS Girls - INDIVIDUAL SPORTS	11Y1 - JWA 11Y2 - CPE Boys - INDIVIDUAL SPORTS Girls - INDIVIDUAL SPORTS

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5
Mon B	9X2 - JWA 9X1 - CPE Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - BASKETBALL	7X1 - JWA 7X2 - CPE 7X3 - TNO Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - BASKETBALL Mixed - FOOTBALL		8X1 - JWA 8X2 - CPE 8X3 - TNO Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - NETBALL Mixed - BASKETBALL	8Y1 - JWA 8Y2 - CPE Boys - FOOTBALL Girls - BASKETBALL
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Frid B	11Y1 - JWA 11Y2 - CPE Boys - INDIVIDUAL SPORTS Girls - INDIVIDUAL SPORTS			11X1 - JWA 11X2 - CPE Boys - INDIVIDUAL SPORTS Girls - INDIVIDUAL SPORTS	7Y1 - JWA 7Y2 - CPE Boys - BASKETBALL Girls - NETBALL

Truth

Resilience

Ambition

Community

Kindness



PE Announcement



PE Kit Reminder – This Term's Sports in PE Lessons

This term, students will be taking part in the following activities:

Netball

- Usual outdoor kit
- LONG socks
- Trainers

Football

- Usual outdoor kit
- LONG socks & shin pads
- Studded boots

Basketball

- Usual indoor kit
- WHITE trainer socks
- Trainers



After school clubs this term

They run from 3:15–4:15pm and no sign-up is required – just turn up with your PE kit and enthusiasm.

Weekly Schedule

Monday

KS4 Netball

KS4 Football

Year 9–11 Gym

Tuesday

No clubs

Wednesday

All Years Badminton

Year 9–11 Gym (girls only)

Thursday

KS3 Netball

KS3 Football

Year 9–11 Gym

Friday

All Years Basketball

Year 9–11 Gym

Where: Meet at the PE changing rooms



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 🎤 Verse & Prose Speaking
- MICROPHONE 🎤 Public Speaking
- CLAY MIMICRY 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! ❤️



Bronze DofE



Well done to our Bronze DofE students! This week they worked on their menu choices and started their practice expedition route planning.

Great teamwork and preparation all round.



THE BOOK NOOK

What a lovely start to 2026.... Lots of new books thanks to our wonderful PTA and some much needed resources for Quest Club! Thanks to the PTA, Dungeons and Dragons now has enough dice for each group and some new handbooks and resources to help make the game extra magical and exciting. As our most popular club, they will be well used and loved!

As for books, we now have a great selection of new romance and horror books for the students as well as some manga, ready to get them hooked on reading in 2026. This is the National Year of Reading so if you haven't found yourself reading over the holidays, now is a perfect time to pick up a brand new read... Thank you PTA!



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 Children's Commissioner 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



OPEN EVENTS

BRIDGWATER COLLEGE | Wed 14 January | 6pm - 8pm

TAUNTON COLLEGE | Thurs 15 January | 6pm - 8pm

STRODE COLLEGE | Tues 20 January | 6pm - 8pm

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