



15 July 2026

Dear Parents & Families,

As we come to the end of a busy, eventful, and successful term, I want to pause a moment to celebrate some of our highlights from this past year.

Firstly, a huge well done goes to our Year 7's who have now completed their first year in secondary school. September probably feels like a lifetime ago when our students and families first arrived at the gates to be greeted on their first day. Since that day, the year group has gone from strength to strength, achieving 112,000 On Track points and averaging nearly 95% attendance for the year.

Last week, it was a real pleasure to participate in the Year 11 celebration events culminating in Prom. Looking back over the past year, this cohort has a lot to be proud of. Their conduct and maturity during the final exam period was brilliant, and their engagement in out-of-hours revision was equally commendable. Often, Year 11 is a time of stress and worry, and I have no doubt that as families you experienced this too. However, the way in which they stepped up and embraced the challenge of the year is something each and every individual should be very proud of. We wish them the very best for the future and look forward to seeing them all again for Results Day in August.

I would also like to congratulate Year Groups 8 to 10 for their achievements this year. Well done to Year 10 for successfully completing the Year 10 trial exams, their first taste of what the GCSE exams will look like. I have also been reflecting on the overwhelmingly positive feedback and praise given by the mock interview panel about the confidence and poise of their responses. It has also been great to hear about the work experience opportunities students have had this week and how they are successfully participating in these workplaces.

Congratulations also to our Year 9 students for their participation in the DoE (Duke of Edinburgh) Bronze scheme, and all Year Groups on competing in the MNSP sports event alongside other sports fixtures, as well as their continual commitment to studies.

A core theme this year has been around the importance of attendance. Consistent attendance is crucial for every child's academic and social success, and we deeply appreciate your support in promoting this. Each and every week, month, and term, we have celebrated and recognised our students for improved and consistent attendance. Even with the spread of the flu bug in November and the challenges linked to the heat wave, we are pleased to report an overall improvement in school attendance this year.

Last Monday, it was a joy to see the students with staff participate in the second Celebration Carnival. This was intended as a celebration of not only attendance but positive engagement in our 'On Track' point's scheme which has gone from strength to strength. Our final total has reached 446,235 points, averaging 858 points per student. This total is over double the total of 2024-5 and over four times the total of 2023-4,



demonstrating that day in and day out our students are working hard and are recognised by staff for their efforts. Well done to you all.

Our Performing Arts Department continues to put on exceptional shows for the community. This year's Addams Family performance was one of my personal highlights, and the performances of our musicians at events such as the summer showcase and celebration events demonstrate our students at their very best.

Our enrichment programme is also something to be proud of. This year, our students have had opportunities to participate in Duke of Edinburgh schemes; a Guardian newspaper visit, university trips, theatre and music performances; computational thinking and mathematics competitions, public speaking such as Youth Speaks; numerous sports activities and events; visiting authors and guest speakers; the Cybercon trip, Millfield mental health days, the Young Chef of the Year competition; Normandy trip; the Swanage trip; Youth Parliament and the MNSP book awards. This list does not include the range of activities and opportunities on offer this week and the weekly activities and clubs each term. My thanks as always, go to every single member of staff who has been involved in the organisation or coordination of these trips and opportunities, and without whom, all these events would not have been possible.

At this point of the year, it is very typical for us to say farewell to a number of colleagues who will be leaving. Our best wishes go to Holly Smith (Specialist TA), Shelly Atton (Main Reception), Matt Gunton (EAL Tutor), and Dominic Pridham (DT teacher). I am sure you will join me in thanking each and every one of them for their work and support. We wish them well for the future.

It goes without saying that in a letter of this length, it is impossible to cover everything, and in many ways this is a credit to our fantastic students and staff - we have so much to celebrate and be proud of. My goal is for St Dunstan's to be a place where thousands of moments of success are created, providing the opportunities our students need to become their best selves. There have definitely been plenty of these moments this year, and every week it is my absolute privilege to share these with you!

I wish everyone a restful and relaxing summer. Thank you for your continued support, and we very much look forward to welcoming everyone back in September for even more moments of individual and collective success in the new academic year.

Best Wishes

Mr P Balkwill
Headteacher