



Weekly Newsletter 2025-6

Dear Families & Parents,

As the autumn term concludes, I would like to congratulate our students on a busy and successful start to the academic year. Their hard work is clearly reflected in our recognition data, with over 200,000 reward points amassed since September—more than double last year's total. This positive momentum was celebrated at our recent events, where over 250 students were recognised for meeting our high standards for points and attendance. Furthermore, I am delighted to announce Margot (Year 7), Frankie (Year 10), and Ena (Year 10) as the first recipients of the new Headteacher's Award for exemplifying our core values.

In terms of academic progress, our Year 11 students completed their first mock exams in November. While we celebrate those who achieved great results, we remind those seeking improvement that there are 15 school weeks remaining to refocus and access support. Our school's overall trajectory remains exceptionally strong; provisional DfE data for 2025 confirms that St Dunstan's achieved some of its best results to date, positioning us as one of the highest-achieving schools in the Mendip area and well above the national average.

Consistent attendance remains vital, and despite the challenges of the flu season, we have seen an overall improvement in school attendance this year. Beyond the classroom, our dedicated staff have provided a wealth of enrichment opportunities, from the Royal Albert Hall concert and The Guardian visit to various sports fixtures and Duke of Edinburgh schemes. We have also invested significantly in our campus, modernising the assembly hall, reception, and PE facilities, while improving student life with a new canteen service and enhanced safety measures.



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Finally, I would like to thank our tireless PTA for their fundraising success, notably our second Silent Disco.

As we head into the holidays, we send our best wishes to Ms. J Greter and a warm welcome to Ms. J Lindon, Mrs. C Smith, and Miss H Smith. Thank you for your continued commitment to our school community. I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a successful 2026.

Best wishes

P Balkwill

Headteacher





Key Information

Key Dates

5 January- Inset day. School closed

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

There is a letter outlining key updates for families in advance of the new term. Please follow the link below for more information-

<https://www.stdunstansschool.com/all-letters-home.htm>

Reports

We have published student reports. These were emailed to parents/guardians. They also available on the Arbor Platform via the Progress tab. If you require any support please contact the school via secretary@stdunstans.mnsp.org.uk and we will be more than happy to assist you in your inquiry.

Inset

A polite reminder that the school will be closed on Monday 5th January. We will reopen on Tuesday 6th January 2026.

Weekly Attendance Update

MNSP

MOMENTS
MATTER,

ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.

What does my attendance look like so far? End of Term 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%	72	0	0	Perfect
2	98% to 100%	70	4	20	Excellent
3	96% to 98%	69	8	40	Good
4	93% to 96%	67	14	70	Requires Improvement
5	90% to 93%	65	38	190	Concerning
6	Below 90%	64	40	200	Persistent absence

As we come to the end of another busy term, we want to take a moment to recognise just how well our students have managed their attendance. This term has brought a significant amount of flu and seasonal illness, yet it has been fantastic to see how quickly students have returned to school once well, showing real resilience and commitment. By coming back promptly, they have continued to build strong friendships, reconnect with staff, and catch up confidently with their learning. This determination makes a real difference, and we are proud of how our students have supported one another throughout the term. We wish all our students and families a happy, restful and healthy Christmas break.

We would also like to celebrate a brilliant attendance achievement this term: 272 students successfully completed a three-week attendance streak. It was lovely to be able to recognise their commitment with celebrations including lucky dips, Amazon vouchers and plenty of Track points. In addition, tutor groups who took part in the Christmas quizzes have now received their chocolate prizes — a great example of “being in to win” and showing that regular attendance really does pay off.

Another highlight of this term has been the success of our 100% Attendance Club across the autumn months. In September, we celebrated an impressive 282 students who achieved 100% attendance for the month. This grew to an incredible 312 students in October, followed by 242 students in November, and we rounded off the calendar year in December with a similar number of students reaching this goal. It is a truly amazing achievement for so many students to meet the challenging target of not missing a single day of school.

Weekly Attendance Update

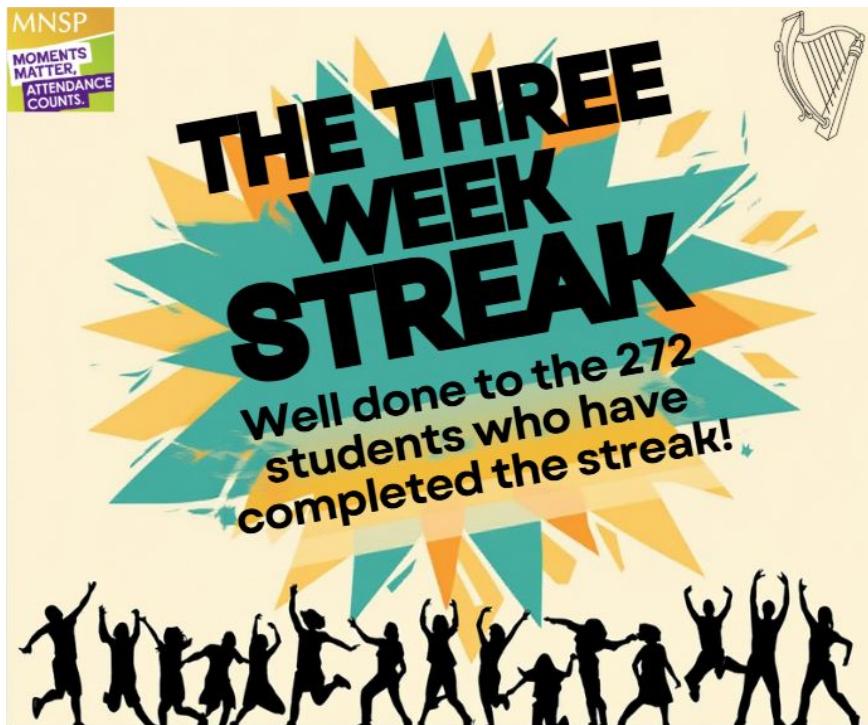
MNSP

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We fully recognise that illness, hospital appointments and other family circumstances can sometimes make this impossible, and for some children these absences are completely unavoidable. We are very grateful to parents and carers for their continued support in ensuring that their child attends school for as much of the time as they are physically able to and for keeping us up to date with important information.

Looking ahead to the spring term, we know that the "January Blues" can sometimes impact attendance. However, with only 12 weeks until Easter — and a well-earned week off in February — there is so much to look forward to. During these 12 weeks, we will be running three rounds of our 100% Attendance Club, giving students three chances to win £10 Amazon vouchers. We will also pass the halfway point of the school year, making this the ideal time to push attendance even higher so students can enjoy all the activities, trips, time with friends, and, of course, their important learning. We are really looking forward to welcoming everyone back in January, ready for a positive and successful term 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



Congratulations St Dunstan's Students!

Together you have achieved

200,000

On Track Points this year!





Glastonbury Traditions



St Dunstan's was delighted to come together with local primary school pupils, community members and dignitaries for the cutting of the Holy Thorn.

This much-loved tradition brought generations together in a truly special moment, and we hope King Charles enjoys this meaningful Christmas table piece.





Christmas Jumper Day



Our school was bursting with festive spirit on Tuesday as students and staff arrived in a wonderful display of bold, bright, and brilliantly festive Christmas and favourite jumpers!

From shimmering glitter and dazzling sparkles, to reindeer, Christmas puddings and cheerful Santas, every jumper added to the joyful atmosphere across our classrooms.

More importantly, the day gave our whole community the chance to show generosity by supporting Save the Children, helping to make a difference to young lives in over 100 countries worldwide.





Christmas Lunches



The smell of Christmas dinner filled the air on Wednesday!

With a slight adaptation to the day, all students had the opportunity to enjoy their meal with their year group, and the canteen was alive with happy chatter, Christmas lights and approving noises.

Huge thanks to our fantastic canteen staff for all their hard work — it was a real triumph!





Christmas Crafts



On Monday we had Christmas Crafts running over the lunch period, where students were invited to create a range of items. From Christmas decorations, to cards and models, it was a hive of festive activity. In addition, students in KS3 art club have been decorating candles to give as gifts to loved ones this festive season! (Don't worry, Miss Hart did all the wax pouring)



Christmas Carols



The sun was shining on St John's Church last week when our students sang carols in the High Street. The aim was to bring Christmas joy to the community and raise money for charity.

Students sang many Christmas songs from Silent Night, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer and The 12 days of Christmas, with several students singing solos. Students performed beautifully and raised over £65 for a local charity, Promise Works, which is supported by the Mayor Cllr Dr Michael White who joined us. Promise Works operates in Somerset to provide 1:1 mentoring for young people for 2 years.

Before returning to school, we visited Burns the Bread for a Christmas bakery treat which was very much deserved.





Year 11 Celebration Event



St Dunstan's was delighted to welcome back our Year 11 leavers last week. This is a year group we are all incredibly fond of, and it was wonderful to celebrate their hard work and determination once more.

Over the summer, they achieved record-breaking results, and we were proud to recognise their achievements with a special certificate ceremony.

It was lovely to catch up over coffee and biscuits and hear all about the exciting next steps in their journeys.

We wish every one of them the very best for the future — they will be sorely missed!





St Dunstan's Library presents...

THE BOOK NOOK

What a term it has been! What a year! It has been a joy to see how many students love reading, how many talk about books with their friends, how many devour books each evening, or escape their troubles in the pages of a little piece of magic.

As we end the year, we wanted to highlight some of the most popular books of 2025...

The Heartstopper Series



The Sad Ghost Club



The Shatter Me Series



Five Nights at Freddy's



The Hunger Games



The Cruel Prince



A Good Girl's Guide to Murder



Truth

Resilience

Ambition

Community

Kindness



Safeguarding Spotlight



Dear Parents/Carers,

We have been made aware that several titles in the '**According to Humphrey**' series contain a weblink at the back of the book that no longer directs people to information about the books. Instead, the link has been compromised and now leads to inappropriate and unsafe material that should not be accessed by children at any age.

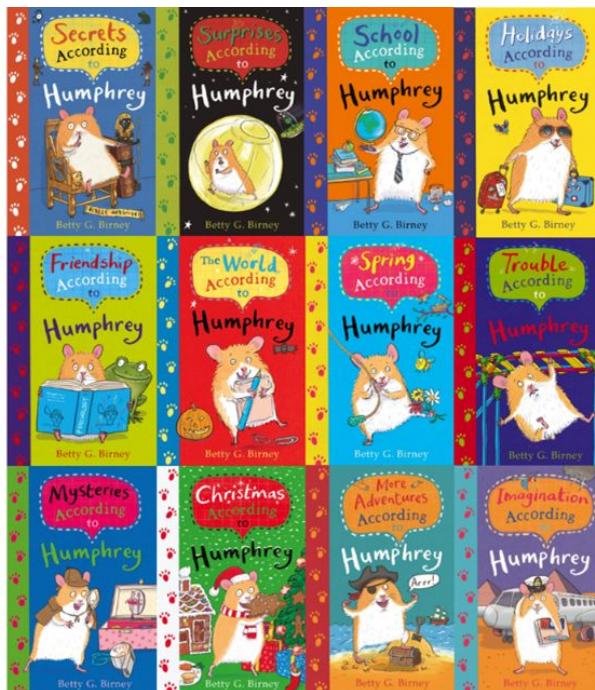
Below are images of some of the front covers in the series to help you identify the books should you have any at home. The link can be found on the back cover or may be also included on a page inside.

For clarity and reassurance, we are not aware of any children who have accessed this link at our school and have removed copies of the book with the weblink from school circulation.

Actions and Next Steps:

- If you have any of these books at home, we advise you to remove them immediately or remove the page with the weblink.
- Be extra-vigilant with all children's books that contain links and ensure that they are checked by an adult.

We are grateful for your continued support in working together to keep our children safe.





Holiday Activities



Activity Calendar

Community Inclusion and Activity Team

Christmas Holidays
Sat 20 Dec - Fri 2 Jan 2026



For ALL children and young people in Somerset with a disability or additional needs
*You DO NOT have to be referred to any service to access these activities, unless otherwise stated.

Useful Information

Who are the people offering the activities? Organisations who have experience of working with children and young people with a disability or additional need and their families. Activities can be adapted to suit the children and young people who would like to attend. Please call them to chat about your child / young person's needs.

Activities offered by the Community Inclusion and Activity Team - Dependant on the child / young person needs, we can provide a day out without parent / carer as we offer group supervision. If it is the first time your child / young person has accessed a trip with our team, a parent/ carer will need to attend. We require payment a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the day. Please note, spaces for children and young people with a disability or additional need will be prioritised first, with spaces offered to siblings once bookings have closed if we have room.
Online payment at www.somerset.gov.uk/cwd

Don't forget our Activity Day Passes - Available to ALL families in Somerset with a child or young person with a disability or additional need - Puxton Park, Noah's Ark, The Bristol Zoo Project, Abbotsbury, Ferne Animal Sanctuary, Hestercombe gardens, Court farm. Email ciateam@somerset.gov.uk to find out more or visit www.somerset.gov.uk/activity-passes to view the flyer.

Max Card - A FREE card for all children and young people with a disability or additional need in Somerset aged 0-25 years. This card can be used at many places all over the UK offering discounts and special rates when you show the card. Visit www.somerset.gov.uk/max-card for more information on how to access this card. Cards can ONLY be issued by Somerset Council to people living in Somerset.

If you would like help with the calendar and how to access activities, please email ciateam@somerset.gov.uk and someone will be in touch to support you.

Key for activities:

- Family Activity - for all members of the family to attend and enjoy
- Child/Young person can attend on their own under group supervision or with parent/carer if additional 1:1 support is required - please call the organisation to have a chat
- Child/young person must attend with a parent or carer
- Staff provided by the organisation to support the child/young person 1:1 if required - please call the organisation to see what they can provide as this may not include personal care
- Some parts of the activity are wheelchair accessible please call the organisation to find out more
- Accessible changing facilities are available please call the venue to find out more
- Activities aimed at young people/teenagers/young adults



Holiday Activities

**SATURDAY 20th DEC**

Childrens World
The Pitton Stage, St Mary's Lane, Pitton, BA4 5HX.
Children's World Xmas Family Rave and Interactive DJ
Experience in partnership with Big Fam Disco. Fun for all ages and abilities. Learn to DJ yourself with Bass and Rave classics and with a dedicated break out space so you can have some quiet time trying out DJ equipment and creating your own Graffiti Big Fam Logo. 2-4pm. For all ages. £5 per person.

To book, please contact Angela Bolton 01458 883693 or email info@childrensworldcharity.org

**SUNDAY 21st DEC****Wilderwoods**

Wilderwoods Forest School, Drayton Woods, Langport TA19 0JZ.

Midwinter Candlelit Celebration. Decorations, candles and songs in the woods with refreshments around the campfire afterwards. 3-6pm. For all ages. £8 (1 child/1 adult), £15 per family (max 2 adult, 3 children). Additional children/adults £5 per person.

To book, please call Hannah Aitken on 07970 883264 hannah@wilderwoods.org

**MONDAY 22nd DEC****Rainbow Roots**

Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB.

Mindful Christmas Crafts. Join us at Rainbow Roots for a magical mix of creativity and calm! Each morning, children will make festive crafts and learn simple mindfulness techniques to help them feel relaxed, focused, and joyful through the Christmas season. 10am-12:30pm. For 5-11 yrs. £7.50 per person.

To book, please email Lou Stockley on hello@rainbowroots.uk

**TUESDAY 23rd DEC****Rainbow Roots**

Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB.

Mindful Christmas Crafts. Join us at Rainbow Roots for a magical mix of creativity and calm! Each morning, children will make festive crafts and learn simple mindfulness techniques to help them feel relaxed, focused, and joyful through the Christmas season. 10am-12:30pm. For 5-11 yrs. £7.50 per person.

To book, please email Lou Stockley on hello@rainbowroots.uk

**(20th)****Purple Elephant**

The Assembly Rooms, Christchurch, Street West, Frome, BA11 1EB.
Family Holiday Fun! Christmas party! With festive crafts, Santa, and a hot meal, followed by a silent disco. 10am - 2pm. For all ages. £2 suggested donation. Free to those on free school meals.

To book, please email rebeccaharrison@purpleelephant.org.uk



ACTIVITY PACKS

Step4ward-in2growth

Christmas holiday activity packs tailored to young person's interests with a festive theme. Christmas Eve boxes also available, with small, individualised gifts to be opened the night before Christmas! Hand delivered if local to Shepton Mallet or sent by Royal Mail. For ages 3-18th birthday. £3 per pack/box.

To order, please contact Becky on 07737 331174, email Step4ward-in2growth@mail.com or facebook: [Step4ward-in2growth](https://www.facebook.com/Step4ward-in2growth)

**Rainbow Roots**

Dove Barn, Manor Farm, Silver St, Barton St David, TA11 6DB.

Gifts from the Heart. In our cosy afternoon sessions at Rainbow Roots, children will craft thoughtful handmade gifts to share at Christmas. We'll explore gratitude, kindness, and the joy of giving - celebrating how special it feels to make something with love for someone else. 1:30-3:30pm. For 5-11 yrs. £7.50 per person.

To book, please email Lou Stockley on hello@rainbowroots.uk

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To book, please email Lou Stockley on hello@rainbowroots.uk

**TUESDAY 30th DEC****Community Inclusion Activity Team**

Sanders Garden centre, Brent Knoll, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset, TA9 4HJ.

Join us on a family day at the festive Big Top! Prepare to be mesmerised by twirling fairies, cheeky elf Nia, breathtaking aerialists and daring acrobats. Marvel at dazzling lasers, the heart stopping wheel of death and the adrenaline pumping motorbikes in the globe. Even Santa makes a magical appearance!

Venue has a limited number of ear defenders which can be borrowed for the duration of the show, so please bring your own if needed. Show includes flashing lights. Staff will be on site for support. 5-7pm. Please arrive by 4:30pm to time to be seated. For all ages. £5pp.

To book, call 07977 412199 from 10am on Tuesday 2nd December.

**WEDNESDAY 31st DEC****Mad Community CIC**

The Mad Hub, Unit 14 Orchard Shopping Centre, TA1 3TP.

New Year's Eve inclusive disco with lower-volume music to create a lively but sensory-friendly environment. There will be gentle disco lighting & party decorations to build excitement in a welcoming, festive space. TV-projected countdown from will give children the full New Year's experience in a way that suits their needs. 12:45-1:45pm. For 4-11yrs. 2:30-3:30pm. For 11-16 yrs. £2.95 per person.

To book, please call Kelly Gauntlett on 07467235667 or email themadhub@outlook.com

**Minehead Eye**

Minehead Eye centre, 1A Mart road, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 5JB.

Enjoy games, music, sensory room, arts and crafts, water and sand tray activity! Café style space available for parent carers. 2 youth workers on hand for support and advice. 2-4pm. For 9-18 yrs. £1 per person.

To book, please email reception@minehead-eye.co.uk

**FRIDAY 2nd JAN****In the Mix**

The Hub Centre, Hartswell, South Street, Wiveliscombe TA4 2NE.

Create and Bake! Join us to make your own chocolate bark, mug decorating and creating your own hot chocolate to take home. 10am-12:30pm. For 11-18yrs. £2 per person.

To book, please contact emma@carberry@inthemixproject.org.uk 07494 839722.

**Escape Support Group**

Icescape Clark's Village, Street, BA16 9BB.

Glide into the festive season at Clark's Village magical ice skating rink! Penguin and seal skating aids will be available for help with balance. 1-1:45pm. For all ages. Children 12 and under £5. Adult & children 12+ £6. Carer - Free. Wheelchair user £5.

To book, [fundraising@escapesupportgrgroup.com](http://escapesupportgrgroup.com) Bookings through the website escapesupportgroup.com.



For more inclusive activities, groups and organisations in your area,

please visit the Local Offer: www.somerset.gov.uk/send-events

where you can search by keyword or location.

Truth**Resilience****Ambition****Community****Kindness**