

Dormston School



An Information Guide for Parents/Carers
2023 - 2024



Useful Contacts

Switchboard/Reception

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Attendance Officer

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Julie-Anne Innes

Head of Year 7

Scott Cooksey

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Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion

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Please consult our school website for updated school information, forthcoming events, newsletters, curriculum guidance, policies and documentation.

www.dormston.dudley.sch.uk

Headteacher's Message

'Dormston School aims to inspire confident, motivated pupils who have a passion for learning and are fully equipped to contribute to society'.

At Dormston we want to prepare all of our pupils so they are 'determined, persistent, disciplined, collaborative and inquiring citizens who are increasingly independent, with a love of learning'.

Our core values are 'Effort, Knowledge, Respect, Responsibility & Resilience'.

Effort – We believe that when a pupil tries their very best there is no end to what they can achieve. Pupils may not always find every subject easy but with determination and drive they will succeed. Good effort also means **attending school every day** and being on time and equipped for all lessons.

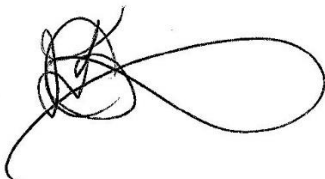
Knowledge – Children come to school to learn. It may sound obvious but every day our staff will be expecting your sons and daughters to give 100% to their school work. We think carefully about our curriculum to ensure children are provided with a broad and balanced experience. We will set all pupils challenging targets which they have to work hard to achieve.

Respect – Good behaviour is the key to a happy and successful school and we will expect all pupils to have good manners and show respect to all staff and other pupils. We will not allow any pupils to 'steal' the learning of others in the class through poor behaviour and we make no apologies for our behaviour system which demands high standards from pupils.

Responsibility – We expect all pupils to be responsible members of the school community. That means taking responsibility for their learning and behaviour but also playing their part in making the school a great place to be. We offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities that enhance the learning experience. Pupils are encouraged to be part of our school council or, in Year 11, part of the student leadership team.

Resilience – We hope that your child is very happy at Dormston School and enjoys every day but sometimes school life, like life outside school, can become a little challenging. When the going gets tough we want our pupils to be strong enough mentally and physically to see their way through their problems and emerge as stronger and wiser people. Our pastoral team are always there to provide the support and encouragement to make sure no pupil is left behind.

We look forward to welcoming your child to Dormston School.



Headteacher

Key Information

SCHOOL DAY

The school operates on a two-week timetable. When your child starts Dormston they will be given a print out of their timetable.

We are currently proposing some changes to the structure of the school day at Dormston School. The reason for this change is to bring Dormston School in line with the government expected 32.5-hour school week. Should the changes be approved, they will come into force from Monday 4 September 2023. We believe that these changes will be beneficial to the school community and will have a positive effect on your child's education. There is no change to the current 5 hours of lessons. There is no change to break or lunchtimes. The built-in change over times will ensure ample opportunity to move from one area of the school to the other and not detract from valuable learning and teaching time. The introduction of a 10-minute afternoon registration will support our behaviour for learning and Prepared for Success programmes.

We will release the results of the consultation by Wednesday 12 July 2023 via email.

**All students must remain in school at lunchtime. They have a choice of purchasing food from several food outlets or bringing in their own packed lunch.*

For the Autumn and Spring terms our Year 7 students have the use of the Gallery area so they can socialise with their Year group whilst settling into the school.

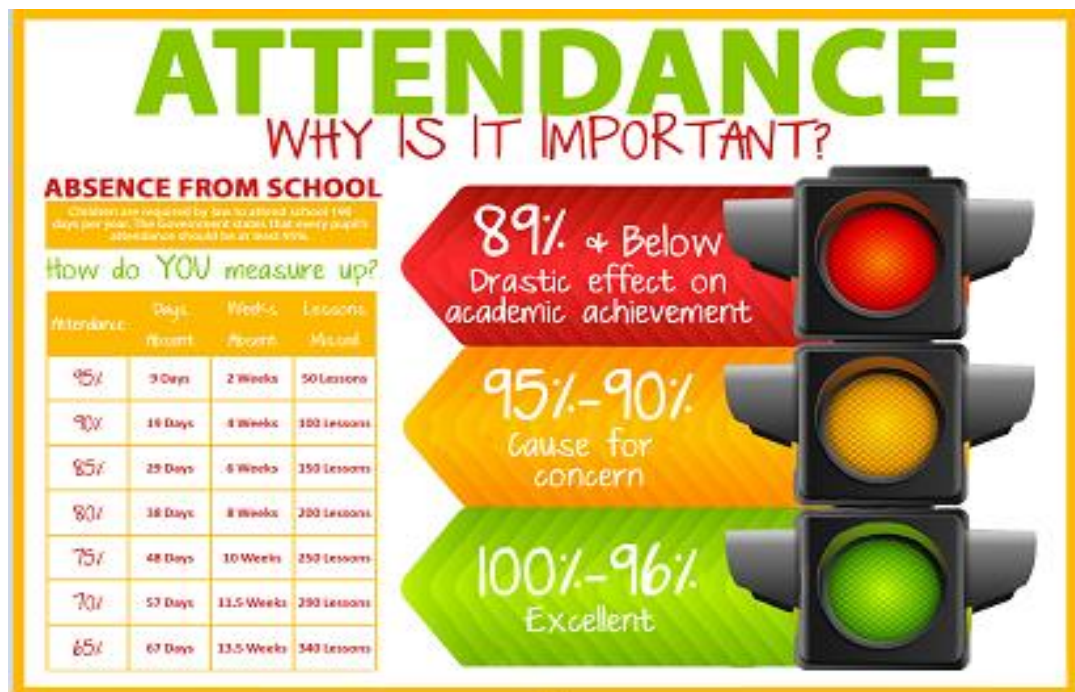


ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

At Dormston we encourage excellent attendance and punctuality. Your child's Form Tutor will carefully monitor their attendance and punctuality. We realise that sometimes absence from school is unavoidable, however, we encourage parents and carers to ensure students are in school as much as possible. If your child is away for any reason please contact the school, preferably before 8.30am, on the first day of absence.

Please be mindful that your child's attendance and punctuality will have a great impact upon their learning and the DfE requires all schools to address persistent absence as a potential safeguarding concern.

Holidays within term time will not be authorised unless under exceptional circumstances.



EQUIPMENT

We encourage our pupils to become independent learners and as such it is vital they are always fully prepared for their learning. **All pupils are required to bring a sturdy bag to school containing the following necessary equipment and stationery:**

- ✓ pens
- ✓ pencils
- ✓ ruler
- ✓ rubber
- ✓ pencil sharpener
- ✓ scientific calculator, we recommend for our 5-year curriculum (Casio fx-83GT X)
- ✓ reading book



Calculators

All pupils are required to have a scientific calculator with them to aid with their learning and progress. As such, the calculators we recommend for our 5-year curriculum (Casio fx-83GT X) these will be available to purchase in school normally at a discounted price. Further information will follow at the start of our September term. The maths department welcomes the use of other models of scientific calculator, however, please note that both staff and students are more proficient in using the Casio model.

Equipment checks will take place each morning in registration and parents/carers will be notified if students are not fully prepared for learning.

Valuable Items

Please note that valuable items are not allowed in school, which includes mobile phones, air pods and smart watches. If you wish your child to have a mobile phone to use on the journey to and from school, it must be left at Pupil Reception prior to morning registration and collected again at the end of the day. If mobile phones are seen being used during the school day, pupils will be asked to turn off the device and hand it into Pupil Reception or place it in their bag. Any refusal will result in the device being confiscated until the end of the day.

Please note: School will take no responsibility for lost or broken items such as these.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Some of you may be eligible for free school meals. When your child joins us in September free school meals currently applied for through Dudley MBC will automatically continue. If you live outside of the Dudley Borough you will need to re-apply via Dudley MBC's Free School Meals Team. If you wish to apply please go to <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/free-school-meals/>.

If you need any further information please contact the Free School Meals Team on 01384 814988 or by emailing freeschoolmeals.benefits@dudley.gov.uk.

If your child is entitled to free school meals we feel that it was important to clarify their entitlement so that you are aware of our provisions for free school meals for your child. Any child in receipt of free school meals is entitled to:

- Attend our pre-school breakfast club from 8.15am in the River Café with breakfast options of pastries, toast, hash browns, cereal or porridge (currently up to the value of £1 per day) provided. Water/squash is provided free of charge.
- Receive a free school meal which includes a 'meal deal' consisting of a hot meal and dessert **or** a sandwich and dessert (currently up to a current value of £2.40 per day). The allowance does not include a drink as water/squash is provided in our school canteen.
- Support is provided for DPA Music lessons.
- Contributions towards curriculum-based trips and resources.

To support the government guidelines on healthy eating, pupils are not permitted to use the free school meal allowance to solely purchase a dessert – we will only serve a desert as part of the meal deal. Additionally, the allowance cannot be used to purchase drinks.

You can obviously provide funds for your child to purchase any additional items such as snacks and drinks.

Please be aware that the free school meal allowances are allocated on a daily basis and therefore if food is not purchased on one day, the value cannot be transferred or accumulated for a day later in the week.

We hope that this letter helps to make the free school meals entitlement clear and allows us to support your child by providing a nutritious and balanced meal without allowing pupils to simply spend their allowance on smaller snacks.

HARDSHIP FUND

If you are a family who are not eligible for Free School Meals but are experiencing financial difficulties please contact school to see if and how school may be able to support or offer advice.

GO4SCHOOLS

This is our school online system and it enables you as parents/carers to have access to 'live' information on your child's:

- timetable;
- homework;
- behaviour;
- attendance;
- progress towards these.



You will be provided with more information on this when your child starts with us.

BIOMETRIC SYSTEM/PARENTPAY

The school operates a biometric system allowing students to pay for school lunches with no money exchanging hands. When students join Dormston School they will receive an individual biometric code. Students will be given an account and money can be added via our e-payment system - ParentPay. At lunchtime students select the food they want, place their finger on the biometric reader, and the process is complete. If we do not receive parental consent to take your child's fingerprint we will provide an alternative lunch card which can be used in the same way.



ParentPay allows parents and carers to add money to their child's account securely on-line. During Induction your child will be provided with a ParentPay activation letter, which will provide you with a unique username and password to help set up your ParentPay account. We ask that you set up your account at your earliest convenience.

If you have any problems please do not hesitate to call school or email churst@dormston.dudley.sch.uk.

ParentPay can also be used to pay for other school related fees such as school trips, revision guides and school related equipment.

School Systems and Procedures

FORM GROUPS

There are eight form groups in each year, with an average of 29 children. Each form group contains a mixture of pupils from different feeder schools, with different abilities and talents. Form groups are led by a tutor whom the children will see each morning and afternoon.



Your child's form tutor is their first port of call should they require support or guidance in any area of school life. Throughout the year specific pupils will be identified for individual mentoring with regards to homework, organisation, academic progress and well-being. Bespoke interventions will also be offered on an individual needs basis.

BEHAVIOUR: Rewards

Rewarding pupils for good behaviour, positive attitude, and achievement is a very powerful tool. At Dormston we firmly believe that the use of rewards can serve to increase motivation and promote positive behaviour thus reducing the use of sanctions and, in many instances, rendering them unnecessary.



The house point system continually rewards student achievement in terms of attendance, effort and involvement in extra-curricular activities. House points are tallied both individually, and collectively as a Year group, with success being celebrated at Reward afternoons/evenings. All pupils have the opportunity to achieve their bronze, silver, gold and platinum reward ties based on house points received. 300 house points = bronze tie, 600 house points = silver tie, 900 house points = gold tie and 1200 = platinum tie.

Other rewards include; Headteacher Commendations, Core Value Stripes, Learner of the Month, Pizza/Ice Cream Effort Rewards and an invitation to The Dormston School Awards Evening that celebrates academic achievement in an 'Oscar' style ceremony.

Behaviour - Prepared for Success

At Dormston we firmly believe that all pupils are entitled to disruption free learning. As such we operate a 'Prepared for Success' behaviour and learning system. If required sanctions are given through a central school system and carefully monitored by the Behaviour and Welfare Team (BWT), Heads of House and Senior Leadership Team.

The aims of Prepared for Success are:

1. To **eliminate disruptive behaviour**, so that there is a culture of achievement, ambition and learning everywhere in the school, and no learning time is wasted.
2. To provide **clarity for staff and students** about acceptable behaviour and the consequences of misbehaviour.
3. To encourage students to **take responsibility** for their own actions.
4. To enable teachers to **deliver engaging and creative lessons, experiment and take risks**, without concern for behavioural consequences.

Whilst sanctioning poor behaviour the school will also work with pupils to reflect on their actions and put interventions in place to prevent reoffending. Reasonable adjustments are made to take into consideration pupils with specific needs.

PREPARED FOR SUCCESS

SUCCESS FOR YOURSELF

- ✓ Treat all staff and students with respect.
- ✓ Wear your uniform correctly and with pride.
- ✓ Put 100% effort into all that you do.

SUCCESS AROUND SCHOOL & IN THE COMMUNITY

- ✓ Walk calmly and sensibly.
- ✓ No pushing or contact.
- ✓ Use the correct stairwells around school.
- ✓ Do not drop litter.
- ✓ Respect the environment.

SUCCESS IN LESSONS

- ✓ Be on time. Teachers will meet and greet you.
- ✓ Be ready to learn, with correct equipment.
- ✓ Follow instructions.
- ✓ Listen when others are speaking.
- ✓ Keep off task conversation for social times.
- ✓ Work in silence when asked.
- ✓ At the end of a lesson wait until you are dismissed.

Dormston SCHOOL
Knowledge is Strength

VALUES
Effort, Knowledge, Respect, Responsibility, Resilience

Our 'Prepared for Success' behaviour system has three strands:

1. **Success in the lessons (Behaviour and Welfare Team Events)**

After a 'last chance' warning a pupil will be 'parked' in another classroom or sent to the Behaviour and Welfare Team if their behaviour does not improve, depending upon the incident. If a pupil is sent to the Behaviour and Welfare Team they will spend time in our refocus room and will receive a same night 30 minute detention. Parents/carers will be made aware via a SMS groupcall. A moving forward talk will then take place at the end of the school day to ensure a no grudges approach next lesson. If behavioural issues persist, further sanctions will take place and parents /carers will be notified.

2. **Success around school and in the community (Behaviour Events)**

For behaviour that breaks our rules, BEH events will be issued. Any pupil receiving two behaviour events in a day will receive a 30 minute same night detention. Four behaviour events across a week will result in a 60 minute Senior Leadership Team detention on Friday after school. Parents/carers will be made aware via a SMS groupcall.

3. **Success for yourself**

We expect the best from our pupils and poor behaviour is not tolerated. Should you have any concerns, please contact your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year immediately. Often early intervention can nip a concern in the bud. A copy of our Positive Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy can be found on the school website.

By sending your child to Dormston School you are committing to abide by the rules and approach to education and welfare laid out in our Home School Agreement. This can be found on our website. If you have any concerns regarding the school's, your child's or your own commitment to this agreement please contact the school so that a meeting can take place to discuss the situation further.

BEHAVIOUR AND WELFARE TEAM

Our Behaviour and Welfare Team (BWT) investigate incidents of concern that have caused pupils or parents/carers anxiety. They also work very hard to promote positive behaviour around school with groups of individuals or the wider community.

This team are non-teaching staff, specifically trained in areas of behaviour and well-being to help support your child if ever necessary. They also act as learning mentors for all children.



HOMEWORK

Your child will receive homework each day which will be set on Go4Schools. We encourage parents/carers to look daily/weekly at the work being set to ensure deadlines are being adhered to. Go4Schools also offers parents/carers an insight into the homework that has been set.

The amount of homework and time spent upon each piece of homework will vary between year groups.

Year Group	Time to complete each piece
7	20-30 minutes

Support with Homework:

Not all homework is done at home; in fact, for some pupils who find it hard to work at home, or for some tasks which may require resources (books, software, equipment) more readily available at school, it is necessary or desirable to carry out tasks at school.

Pupils can complete work in the PLC before and after school and additional support is available at Homework Club as per timetable.

Homework is a very important part of pupil progress at school:

- Homework will be used to **reinforce prior knowledge**. It will sometimes take the format of Last week/lesson, Last month, Last term/year tasks which will reinforce prior learning. This will ensure that revision is an ongoing process and will consolidate learning.
- Homework can also be used to prepare for the next activity in a form of **flipped learning** where pupils prepare in advance for new topics. This may be through directed but independent research, comprehension or video resources.
- **Reading** may be set as homework. Parents/carers should acknowledge that reading homework has been completed.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES/OFF SITE VISITS

Pupils are given many opportunities to enhance their education through trips and visits. Opportunities that will be provided during your child's time at Dormston include; visits to local theatres, museums, places of worship, universities and places of historic interest, as well as overseas enrichment such as Ski trips, Geography trips, Paris and New York trips.

Please note: Pupils not returning the Pupil Information/ Key contacts form will not be permitted to attend any off-site visits.

MORNING & AFTERSCHOOL PROVISION

Pupils who arrive at school early each morning are welcome to make use of the PLC from 8.15am onwards. During this time pupils can complete homework activities and have assistance in finding information and borrowing books.

Breakfast club is also available from 8.15am onwards. It is based in our River Cafe and is supervised by the Pastoral staff. All students are welcome.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

After school provision is provided during term time. Activities range from the school orchestra, singing group and involvement in the school production, to chess club, a variety of sports clubs, dance, drama, archery, fencing, MasterChef and the debating society. Please see our school website for the current programme of activities.

Pupils can collect house points for participation in an extra-curricular activity to go towards their bronze tie.



Monitoring and Tracking Progress

Within the first few weeks at school, pupils will be put into groups according to ability in some subjects. Please do not be alarmed by which set your child is in. The same subject matter is taught albeit at a different pace to ensure knowledge is secure facilitating the best progress for each child.

Other subjects will teach in mixed ability sets.

Throughout the year, all pupils are monitored to check progress is being made in each subject area. The results of this are sent home to be shared with parents.

Effort is graded on a 1-4 scale. For pupils not meeting the required standard, an opportunity will be made available for parents to discuss matters further with subject teachers at Parents Consultation Evenings throughout the year.



INDIVIDUAL NEEDS – Inclusion Hub

Learning Support Assistants work closely with many pupils throughout the school to encourage learning and help to develop key skills. Some pupils will have individual Learning Profiles that contain personalised strategies that teachers adopt to ensure the best progress. These are reviewed throughout the year by our SENCO.

Student Leadership Team

Pupils in the upper school are offered the opportunity to take on more responsibility by representing the school and supporting their peers.

There are a whole range of student positions of responsibility including:

- Head Boy/Girl, Deputy Head Boy/Girl for each house
- House Student Leadership:
 - Peer Mentors;
 - Charity Organisers;
 - Inter-House Events Organisers;
 - Community Leaders;
 - Homework Mentors;
 - Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.

At Dormston we have School Councils which are represented by pupils in all years. The School Council regularly looks at issues within the school such as school uniform, litter, the school environment, to name but a few and will meet with the Headteacher termly to discuss these issues to enable the pupils within the school to have a voice.

Each form group will also have a Mental Health Ambassador to ensure all young people are getting information and support to enable them to stay mentally well and resilient.

We sincerely hope many of our pupils will take advantage of the opportunities available to them and take on a position of responsibility in the future.

Concerns and Support

Please do not sit at home worrying. Often a short phone call is all that is needed to alleviate any initial concerns or teething problems. The aim of this booklet has been to inform you of some of the systems used at Dormston.

Please feel free to contact the school at any point in the future to discuss concerns or anxieties. We endeavour to return phone calls as quickly as possible and would be happy to meet parents with prior notification. We do not advise that parents just turn up at school expecting to see a member of staff as they have teaching commitments. Thank you for your support with this.

INFORMATION

See <https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum> for more information on the national curriculum.

Details of training days, consultation evenings, free school meal eligibility, safeguarding advice and all of the school's policies are readily available on the school website.