



Our Ref: RDE/KON

September 2025

YEAR 10 PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Year 10 Parents/Carers

I would like to welcome your child back to Dormston and specially to Key Stage 4! I hope that you and your family have enjoyed a wonderful Summer holiday and that your child feels refreshed and ready to begin their GCSE studies. This is the time now that students can put the past behind them and work towards the end goal of attaining the best grades possible. I describe GCSE's as 'keys' to the next stages in life - how many 'keys' they gain and what 'doors' (post 16 pathways) they have available to them all depends on their actions from this day forward. For them to gain the best grades and open as many 'doors' as they can, the most important thing to assist them is their attendance. Attendance has proven to be the most significant factor in progress, with statistics proving:

- **97- 100%** attendance = **+1** grade in every subject.
- **95 - 97%**= **+ 0.23** grades in every subject - equivalent to 1 higher grade in 2 subjects.
- **92 - 95%**= **-0.30** in every subject- equivalent to 1 lower grade in 2 or 3 of the subjects.
- **90 - 92%**= **-0.57** in every subject- equivalent to 1 LOWER grade in 4 of the subjects.
- **85 -90%**= **-0.60** in every subject- equivalent to 1 LOWER grade in 5 of the subjects.
- **80 - 85%**= **-1.42** in every subject- equivalent to 1 LOWER grade in every subject and 2 LOWER grades in at least 3 subjects.
- **BELOW 80%**= **-1.89** in every subject- equivalent to 2 LOWER grades in EVERY SUBJECT.

Government data shows:

- At KS4, pupils who attended school nearly every day in Year 11 (with an attendance rate of 95-100%) were 1.9 times more likely to achieve the Grade 5 in English and Maths GCSE compared to pupils who only attended 90-95% of the time (relating to up to 2 weeks more time in school over the course of a year) and 3 times more likely than persistently absent pupils who only attend 85-90% of the time (relating to 4 - 6 weeks more time in school). This means missing just 10 days of year 11 reduced the likelihood of achieving grade 5 in English and Maths by around 50%. Pupils who attended school 90-95% of them time were also 1.6 times more likely to achieve Grade 5 in Maths and English GCSE compared to pupils who only attended 85-90% of them time, relating to an additional 2-4 weeks in school. This demonstrates there are improvements in the chance of success from increased attendance by one absence band.
- *'The link between attendance and attainment in an assessment year Research Report' March 2025- Department for Education.*
- Year 11 pupils with near-perfect attendance are almost twice as likely to achieve grade 5 in English and Maths GCSE, compared to similar pupils attending 90-95% of the time. In other words, missing just 10 extra days a year reduces the likelihood of achieving these grades by around 50%. Persistently absent pupils in secondary school could earn £10,000 less at age 28 compared to pupils with near-perfect attendance.

Due to this, it is vital that we work together to ensure maximum attendance to provide the best progress and attainment for Key Stage 4 for your child. Please remember that if a child does not achieve grade 4 in English and Maths, they will be required to continue studying these subjects post 16, regardless of the type of course they do, or if they are able to secure an apprenticeship.

We do have so much to look forward to this year - starting with our reward trip to Alton Towers on 26th September 2025. This must be paid for this week, please contact me if there are any issues. We have Executive Leadership Team and Peer Mentors starting their roles and completing training. Work Experience will be launched this week which will allow students the opportunity to gain an invaluable insight into the realities of their future working life. GCSE options will begin, where students are now studying for their final exams, so every lesson counts! We will still have the whole school rewards on offer and Year 10 specific rewards, such as Christmas presents for 100% attendance and 0 negative points and weekly prizes for the best-behaved form. This is a truly exciting year for your child and we will do all we can to support them on their Key Stage 4 journey.

Curriculum areas will be launching their GCSE specific information during this first week. Here is an overview of some of the subjects and what your child will be studying this term.

Maths

Foundation students will start with

Two-way tables
Frequency trees
Rounding and error intervals

Higher students will start with

Representing and interpreting data
Expanding and factorising
Trigonometry

Useful websites

<https://www.mathsgenie.co.uk/>
<https://www.1stclassmaths.com/>
<https://vle.mathswatch.co.uk/vle/>

French - Edexcel

Topics will be

- 1: Freetime, technology, TV/cinema, going out, Past and Present events
- 2: Family life, daily routine, friendship, relationships, role models, celebrations

ActiveLearn logins will be given before half term for online homework

Links to vocab powerpoints will be shared when needed.

There will be an opportunity to purchase a course revision/support guide during the first half term.

BTEC Sport: Pupils will be exploring how to 'Prepare participants to take part in sport and physical activity'. Within this, pupils will have the opportunity to understand:

- Sporting Provisions available for all.
- Impact of Technology and Equipment in Sport.
- How to plan and lead a warmup activity.

The BTEC Sport specification is available below.

Up to page 24 is appropriate for the first term.

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/btec-tec-awards/sport/2022/specification-and-sample-assessments/btec-tech-award-sport-spec.pdf>

Citizenship Studies AQA 8100- Topic - 'Politics & Participation'- including the nature and make up of parliament, government, MPs, voting arguments, electoral systems, separation of powers, bicameral parliament and roles, local councils, protesting and action.

Resources to help- Seneca- links will be given to pupil YouTube channel
<https://youtube.com/@mrsdowniecitizenship9053?si=pbj-xjmVuq1BbW8d>

GCSE Religious Studies (Year 10 Autumn Term)

Theme D: Religion, Peace & Conflict (including pacifism, violence, protest, justice, reconciliation, forgiveness, Just War, holy war, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and nuclear deterrence, victims of war, responses to war, causes of war: greed, self-defence, retaliation and religion) - students will have been given an A5 revision booklet for this topic that they need to revise from regularly. Students can turn the information from the booklet into flashcards and test themselves regularly, read ahead of lessons, create mind-maps etc...

Art & Design AQA - Theme: Magnified/Close Up

Students will be expected to take good quality photographs of any of the following: objects / natural forms / animals / people etc. Students will need to zoom in on a particular area of whatever they have chosen to photograph. Students need to ensure they have good lighting and their photographs should be clear and in focus (no blurry photos please)! Students should also create a Pinterest account if they don't already have one (they will need a personal email to do this) Students can use Pinterest to look for artists who have created work on the theme of Magnified / Close Up. Here are a couple of artists to get you started - Georgia O'Keeffe and Sarah Graham. Finally, students can begin making drawings and sketches based on their photographs. The project will run until Christmas and students will create work to meet the 4 assessment objectives:- AO1 (artist links) AO2 (experimenting with media) AO3 (Drawing and photography) AO4 (presentation and final outcome)

Year 10 Music GCSE OCR

This half term pupils will begin their instrumental lessons, choose and rehearse a piece of music for their solo performance, explore the Areas of Study that feature on the listening exam and learn how to compose music in a range of styles.

Geography AQA 8035- Topic- 'The Living World'- including the tropical rainforest and hot desert environments.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z2tqwxw> BBC Bitesize is a great starting point

Eduqas GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

- Microorganisms, enzymes and food spoilage.
- Food spoilage.
- Food preservation.
- Knife and presentation skills.
- Diet and health- Healthy eating initiatives.
- Macro nutrients: Protein, fats and carbohydrates.
- Micronutrients: Vitamins, minerals and trace elements.
- Food commodities: Pastries.

Exam Board AQA- Course Title: GCSE Design & Technology

Introduction to Timbers: Theory work focussing on Manmade Boards, Hardwoods and Softwoods, surface finishes, Permanent and Non-permanent fixings, Knock down joints. Practical work: focussing on designing and making a Plywood Jigsaw and Packaging

The work of others: focussing on Famous Companies and Designers.

Introduction to Metals:

Theory work focussing on Ferrous and Non-Ferrous Metals, Alloys, Finishes for Metals, Production processes including casting, welding and Vacuum Forming. Practical work: focussing on designing and making a Bottle Opener and Packaging

[GCSE Design and Technology - AQA - BBC Bitesize](#)

Drama - Edexcel - Topic is Component 1: Devising, and Component 3: An Inspector Calls

C1 prep - Research on popular theatre practitioners like Stanislavski, Brecht, Artaud and Frantic Assembly. Keeping a detailed notebook of what happens in practical sessions. Watching youtube clips of past GCSE and A-level practical performances for inspiration.

C2 prep - Reading An Inspector Calls (students are studying it in English). Watching the full performance on youtube. Creating costume, lighting, sound, set designs based on the characters and events of the play. Getting family members to act bits out and directing how they could do it differently!

Eduqas GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition.

Microorganisms, enzymes and food spoilage.

- food spoilage;
- food preservation;
- knife and presentation skills;
- diet and health- Healthy eating initiatives;
- macro nutrients: Protein, fats and carbohydrates;
- micronutrients: Vitamins, minerals and trace elements;
- food commodities: Pastries.

On a weekly basis, students make a variety of dishes that are linked to the topics that they are studying.

Geography AQA 8035- Topic- 'The Living World'- including the tropical rainforest and hot desert environments.

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English - 'An Inspector Calls' and 'A Christmas Carol'.

On a weekly basis, students make a variety of dishes that are linked to the topics that they are studying.

Thank you for your continued support, I look forward to the beginning of a successful year with your child,

Yours sincerely

R. Downie

Mrs Downie
Head of Year 10