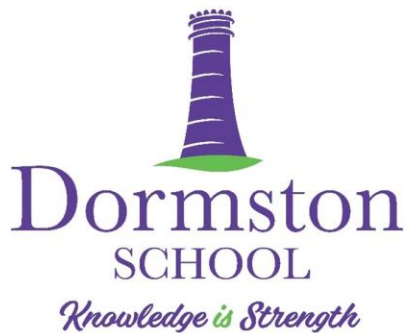


Our Ref: JWS/KON

July 2026

ALL YEAR 9 PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Year 9 Parents/Carers



As we reach the end of another academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and to congratulate our Year 9 students on reaching a significant milestone in their education.

This marks the end of Key Stage 3. Your child now graduates into Key Stage 4, ready to begin the next stage of their educational journey. They are no longer simply Key Stage 3 students; they return in September as fully-fledged GCSE students, with new opportunities, greater responsibility and exciting challenges ahead.

It has been a privilege to serve as Head of Year 9, and I am delighted to let you know that I will continue as their Head of Year 10. Having watched this year group grow in confidence, maturity and character over the past year, I am excited to continue supporting them as they embark upon their GCSE courses.

Key Stage 4 is a rewarding but demanding period. The pace of learning increases, expectations are higher, and every lesson matters. Success is not achieved through last-minute effort but through consistent attendance, excellent habits and resilience.

One of the most important factors influencing academic success is attendance. Research consistently shows that even small amounts of absence have a significant impact on achievement.

To put this into perspective:

- 100% attendance = every learning opportunity;
- 95% attendance means approximately 10 school days missed across the year;
- 90% attendance means around 20 days missed – the equivalent of four weeks of learning;
- By the end of Key Stage 4, persistent absence can amount to months of lost teaching that is incredibly difficult to recover.

Every lesson builds upon the last. Missing school is not simply missing content; it means missing explanations, discussions, practical experiences and opportunities to practise new knowledge alongside teachers and classmates. We therefore ask for your continued partnership in ensuring your child attends school every day unless genuinely unwell.

You may also be aware that there has been significant national movement regarding mobile phones in schools. In line with current expectations and statutory legislation, mobile phones are not allowed in school.

Our priority is to provide a calm, focused learning environment where students can concentrate fully on their education without the distractions that phones inevitably bring.

We appreciate your support in reinforcing this expectation before students return in September.

As students begin their GCSE option subjects, they are stepping into an environment that mirrors the professionalism expected in the wider world. We therefore ask that students return looking smart, prepared and ready to learn from the very first day.

Please take the time over the summer to check our school's uniform policy carefully and ensure that your child returns in full compliance. In particular:

- no facial or additional piercings;
- no trainers, unless there is a medically approved exemption;
- no extreme hairstyles or unnatural hair colours;
- skirts must be of an appropriate length (just above the knee), material must be trutex grey, not stretchy or tight fitting.



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Just as importantly, students must arrive fully equipped for learning every day. This means bringing a school bag containing the essential equipment required for lessons, including pens, pencils, a ruler and any other items listed in our equipment expectations.

Unfortunately, this year we have seen some students arrive at school without even a bag or a pen. This is simply not acceptable at Key Stage 4. Being properly equipped is a basic expectation and demonstrates that students are ready to learn and take responsibility for their education.

Our year group motto remains "Leaving Lasting Legacies." Over the past year, our students have embraced this message in so many ways, and I am particularly proud that they now have a year group song which incorporates these words. If your child hasn't already shared it with you, please encourage them to do so over the summer. It captures something special about who they are and what they are striving to become. As I write this letter, I am still buzzing from England's recent early-hour victory in Mexico (hopefully we are still in the tournament when you receive it). Watching the team overcome one challenge after another made me reflect on what lies ahead for our students.

England's famous victory at the Azteca Stadium, wasn't all about the challenge of the opposition, it was also the altitude. The thinner air made every run harder, every recovery slower and every moment more demanding. The altitude itself became an obstacle that every player had to adapt to if they wanted to succeed.

Key Stage 4 is much the same. The workload increases. Expectations rise. There will be moments when students feel that the climb has become steeper than before. The demands of GCSE study can seem overwhelming at first, but, like elite athletes, success comes through preparation, discipline and perseverance. Students who establish strong routines, attend every lesson and embrace the challenge will soon find themselves thriving at that higher altitude.

None of our students will make that climb alone. Their teachers, tutors and you will be alongside them every step of the way, supporting, encouraging and challenging them to achieve their very best.

Finally, as one chapter begins for our students, another closes for a valued member of our team. At the end of this year, Year 9 will be saying goodbye to our Deputy Head of Year, Miss Legge. Miss Legge has been a wonderful source of care, encouragement and support for our students throughout the year, and her kindness and dedication have made a lasting difference to so many young people. While we are very sorry to see her leave, we are incredibly grateful for everything she has done for the year group and wish her every success and happiness in the future.

As always, thank you for your continued support throughout this year. Over the summer, I encourage every student to rest, spend time with family and friends, read regularly, stay active and return refreshed, motivated and ready to embrace everything Year 10 has to offer.

I wish you and your family a safe, enjoyable and restful summer break, and I look forward to welcoming everyone back in September.

Have a great summer.

Yours sincerely

Mr Wilkes

Mr Wilkes

Head of Year 9

Head of Year 10 (from September)