

Our ref: SST/HBr
Date: 9th July 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Key Changes for September 2018

Firstly I would like to thank all of the parents that attended our open week last week. I sincerely hope that having the opportunity to listen first hand to me talking about the direction of travel that the school has taken since April 2017, when I commenced my duties as Principal, and detailing the forthcoming changes for September was both useful and informative. I would also like to thank all of the parents who attended last week's Award Evening ceremony and I equally hope this event was suitably positive and enjoyable.

As the current academic year draws to a close I would like to make parents/guardians aware of the following changes for September, as follows:

Senior Team:

The senior team will be responsible for the following key areas come September:

Mrs D Robinson:	Head of Primary Phase
Mrs S Pragnell:	Deputy Head of Primary Phase
Mrs S Connor:	Business Manager
Mr T Wise:	Head of Key Stage 3 (Years 7/8/9)
Mrs A Adams:	Head of Key Stage 4 (Years 10/11)
Mrs N Whiles:	Director of Sixth Form (Year 12/13)
Mr P Dewes:	Head of Student Care
Mr S Beal:	Head of student aspirations and the House system
Miss N Letts:	Data, reports and Year 11 support
Mr D Wise:	Research and Development, staff professional development and Teaching and Learning
Mrs H Jones:	Quality Assurance and Teaching and Learning

Punctuality:

Please be advised that as of the new academic year any student that arrives to school after 08.40 in the morning will be deemed late and will have to serve a 20 minute detention after school, that same day.

School Day:

Following consultation with staff and students please be advised that break will be shortened by ten minutes, spanning 11.00 – 11.20 and lunch will be lengthened, spanning 13.20 – 14.00.

Tutor Time:

Tutor time will follow one of the following five core activities during the morning 15 minute session:

- The Duston Big Reads
- Numeracy Challenge
- Year Group Assembly
- Global Studies
- Knowledge Organiser Review

Tutor time in the afternoon will focus on a review of the school day, an attendance review, administrative duties and airing a weekly broadcast to students.

Knowledge Organisers:

Students in Key Stage 3 and 4, and some in Key Stage 5, will be issued with a knowledge organiser for every subject that they study. The Knowledge Organiser is, in essence, a bible guide to the core topic that they are studying for any one given Duston term. The Knowledge Organiser will contain the following information:

- The theme/topic for the term
- The Big Questions for every lesson for the term
- An example assessment that students may face, coupled with a copy of the assessment criteria and a model answer
- The homework tasks for that term
- A double page spread of all the core content that students need to learn
- A suggested wider reading list

Please note that the Knowledge Organisers will be emailed to parents and be available via our school website. Students will be issued with hard copies by their subject teachers in September.

Marking:

We will be changing our approach to marking as of the new academic year. Staff will review student work on a two weekly basis and then produce a summary sheet, detailing key positives across the class, common misconceptions and the next steps to further the learning. These review pro-formas will be stuck into student books and then teachers will discuss the feedback in lessons.

Assessment:

We are going to scrap the current PLC approach that exists at Key Stage 3. The PLCs are too heavily biased towards skills and, with the new curricular changes, students need to be able to retain a lot of knowledge. As a result, students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will have one 30 minute assessment every term (for Terms 1-5) and a 60 minute assessment in Term 6. All assessments will be marked to a % and we will report your son/daughter's outcomes to you via our reporting process as a %.

Students in Year 10 will engage with five thirty minute assessments in Terms 1-5 and a 90 minute exam in Term 6. As students' progress into Year 11 they will face 30 minute assessments in Terms 1 and 2 and then a full set of mock examinations in Term 3. These mocks will take place in the latter stages of January, allowing student's time with staff following the Christmas break to prepare for their mocks in school.

Parental Engagement:

I am acutely aware that The Duston School does not currently have a PTA and I am very keen that we have one. If parents are interested in joining a school-wide PTA can you please email office@thedustonschool.org, detailing your name, contact details, the name of your son/daughter and their year group.

Lockers/Equipping the School:

Please be advised that all classrooms will be fully equipped with all of the stationery that students need as of September. Therefore, students will not need to bring pencil cases, pens etc into school. Students are, however, welcome to bring their own stationery if they wish but it is not an expectation.

All students will be issued with a locker in the new academic year and main school students (Years 7-11) will be expected to place their school bags and jackets into their lockers. Please note that all students (Year 7-11) will be issued, by the school, with a black document bag to carry their Knowledge Organisers and any medication etc in.

Educational Trips:

All parents will be emailed a copy of our trip brochure at the start of the new academic year. This brochure will detail all of the trips that have been organised for the 2018-19 academic year, organised by year group and then generalised cross-year group trips. Please also note that residential trips that are not part of a subject's core content, will take place in the penultimate week of the new academic year as part of a school-wide residential week.

I do hope that the information contained within this letter gives you a clear outline of the key changes that will be coming into place as of September. I would like to thank all parents/guardians for their support this academic year and I wish you and your families a very safe and restful summer.

Yours sincerely



Mr S Strickland
Principal

Mr S Strickland – BA (Hons), MA, NPQH
Principal

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