

Dear DMS families,

I cannot believe we are already halfway through our first term back in the academic year. The school has been so busy with welcoming in new students and welcoming back those who were already with us.

Next week will see Year 5 HomeBase Tutors welcome parents and carers into school for the 'Settling In' Evening. As a parent of a child that started middle school this year, I know that it can be an anxious time trying to understand how it all works. This evening is a great opportunity for you to meet with your child's Homebase Tutor and ask any questions you may have and hear about how your child is getting on.

There have been so many changes that we have shared with you already this year, but I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for all your support with our new Mobile Phone Free School Policy. Our students have been amazingly positive about this new policy. Phones are readily handed into homebase boxes every morning and collected again at the end of the day. I have had a lot of responses from students telling me they are no longer worrying about their phones and what is going on outside school anymore, and from you, as parents and carers, also lovely positive feedback. We know mobile phones are part of our lives and are here to stay, but these are small steps we take to allow students to focus on learning and feel safe in school.

Finally, you will see from the calendar on the school website, that school trips are beginning to start again next week, with Year 5 visiting Stonehenge and Year 6 going to Winchester to visit the Science Museum. These are great opportunities for our students to get first-hand experience of things they are learning about in their lessons. If you have any questions about what you need to do to support your child to be able to attend, then please contact the school office or your child's Head of Year.

Miss Layfield

2

Important dates for your diary

30th September	Year 5 and Year 7 individual photos
30th September	Year 5 Settling Evening for parents – 4:30 to 6:00pm – PTFA to offer tea/coffee & uniform
2nd October	Open Morning for new parents – 9.15 to 10.15am
10th October	Hello Yellow Day – World Mental Health Day – swap a piece of uniform for something yellow!
10th October	PTFA Bingo Night – doors open at 6pm – 6.30pm eyes down
14th October	Open evening for new parents – 4:30 to 6pm
16th October	Year 6 trip to Winchester – Science Museum
22nd to 31st October	Half Term
31st October	Closing date for Year 9 school applications
18th November	Open Morning for new parents – 9 to 10am
28th November	PTFA Quiz Night

3

Introducing this week...

Miss Willey, our lovely new Art & DT technician joined us this September at DMS. She studied Jewellery and Silversmithing at The University for the Creative Arts and has a real passion for making and creativity.

Alongside her role at DMS, she is an amazing working artist, and she has her own studio where she creates beautiful pieces of art.

Miss Willey is also a former pupil of DMS, and she is looking forward to supporting the Art/DT department and helping students bring their creative ideas to life.



4

Parent Question of the Week

My child has just started at DMS, and I would like to volunteer to help, how can I do this?

We are always welcoming parent helpers/volunteers at DMS and love that our families want to participate by supporting our community. Whether you have a spare hour once a week or spare time now and again, there are always ways to help. Mrs James and Mrs Jeffery are always looking for people to listen to students read or help in the library. Our tech team also appreciate help in Food Tech and in DT. If your child is going on a school trip, then Heads of Year always welcome parent helpers. Finally, our amazing PTFA is a fun way to meet other parents and help with events. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact our school office and they can make sure that your details are shared with the right people.

Pupil Question of the Week

5

Why do we use a visual timetable?

If you are new to DMS you will see that there is a visual timetable in all the homebases. Visual timetables are a great way for you to easily see, every morning, what lessons you have for the day. They are a great way to help you organise yourselves. If you are dyslexic or find reading and understanding lots of changes and information a bit tricky, these are a great way for you to see what is going on in your day.

6

Mental Health Support Team in Schools - Workshops for Parents

As a school, we are very lucky to work closely with the Mental Health Support Team in Schools (MHST). This term they have already been in to school and delivered an assembly to our Year Five children around the theme of Change and have more planned throughout the year.

This academic year they will also be leading workshops for parents in school, starting with **'Supporting Your Child's Anxiety'** on **Monday 20th October** (4.30pm - 6pm). This workshop covers the theory around anxiety in young people, potential triggers and maintenance factors, as well as key strategies to support your child with managing worries. It also explores parental wellbeing and the importance of this when supporting your child.

Later in the year they will be running **'Supporting your Child with Sleep Difficulties'** on **Monday 12th January** (4.30pm - 6pm). This session is available for parent/carers who are looking to understand and support their child with their sleep difficulties. The session covers theory around sleep, common difficulties, and key strategies to implement.

There will also be the opportunity to attend an additional 'Supporting Your Child's Anxiety' Workshop in June.

If you would like to attend the October workshop, then please email Mrs Ray: fray@dms.wessex.ac to secure your place **by Friday 17th October** the latest.

Mrs Ray - Mental Health Champion



I am really looking forward to hosting more SEND coffee meetings for our parents and carers of students with SEND this year. I always enjoy meeting with you and sharing ideas on how we can help our students in school and in the community. I am also aware, that for these coffee meetings to work for everybody, we need dates and times that are suitable for as many of you as possible.

You would have recently received a questionnaire asking for your views and opinions on how to make these work even better. If you have not yet returned it, please do so as soon as possible. Once we have your input, we can look at getting the news dates and times into our school calendar for the year.

Attached to this newsletter you will find attached some information about the Artz+ Sportz+'s October Half Term Programme, which is now out. They want to ensure that you are aware of the opportunities they offer. There are a range of great activities across Dorset for children with additional needs and their siblings.

Harvest Collection for Local Feed Larder

We are once again collecting food donations for Harvest this year, in partnership with Storehouse Church. Each autumn, Storehouse gathers around 10 tons of food to support individuals and families in need across the local area.

To help ensure a balanced collection, we've divided suggested donations by class. This will allow Storehouse to distribute a wide range of essential items more effectively.

We would be very grateful for any contributions you are able to make. Please check the list for your child's class and, if possible, pick up the suggested item. Crates will be available in each classroom for pupils to place their donations in from the 29th September.

On the morning of 9th October, our Student Council will be delivering the collected goods to Storehouse Church and helping with the distribution. Thank you in advance for your generosity and continued support.

Mrs King – Deputy Headteacher



Year 5 Donations please
5A – Cereals
5B – UHT Milk
5C – Tinned Meat
5D – Tinned Fruit
5E – Tinned Veg

Year 6 Donations please
6A – Cooking sauces
6B – Baked Beans
6C – Soups
6D – Biscuits
6E – Rice Puddings

Year 7 Donations Please
7A – Tinned Tomatoes
7B – Custard
7C – Coffee
7D – Tea bags
7E – Microwave Rice

Year 8 Donations Please
8A – Men's Toiletries
8B – Women's Toiletries
8C – Toilet Rolls
8D – Shampoo
8E/F – Tinned Tuna

ARBOR Parents App

We have most of our parents/carers on board the new Arbor Parent App!! Thank you so much for signing up!! We still need a few more parents to start using the app. If you haven't signed up yet, please use the links below to download the app from your relative App Store!

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/arbore-parent-app/id1448707412>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details...>

You will be able to see your child's timetable, achievement & behaviour points and much more! **Please note that we will no longer be using the school gateway to send or receive communication regarding your children.**

Learning Plans – SEND Pupils

If you are new parent/carer to the school and have a child on our SEND register, we would like to let you know that they will get an individual learning plan twice a year. If your child is now in Year 6, 7 or 8 and was with us last year, they already have their individual plan that has been shared with all their new teachers.

We are now working hard on getting to know the new students and understanding where they would most benefit from to have support in place. Their new plans will be written in November and then shared with you. All plans are specific to your child with personalised targets that help them to thrive, so spending time getting to know your children before they are written it's very important.

If in the meantime, if you have any concerns about your child's learning, then please do contact the subject teachers or myself, Miss Layfield.

What is happening in our Community



Hello Yellow Day – World Mental Health Day

Dorchester Middle School will be supporting World Mental Health Day on **Friday 10th October**. We will be acknowledging this important day by participating in 'Hello Yellow Day' by substituting an item of our school uniform for something that is yellow in exchange for a donation of £1. This year we will be raising money for the fabulous charity Young Minds. Details on how to donate to the charity will be sent out nearer the time. Now, where did we put our yellow socks?!

Student Council – Elected pupils

We have a new Student Council with representatives from each Year group, who were elected by their own peers. It was truly fantastic getting to know all the candidates.

The elected pupils are:

Year 5: Ollie and Louis

Year 6: Jack, Amelia and Laura

Year 7: Harry and Amber

Year 8: Alfie and Piran

Well done to all of you!!



12 And finally...

We are aware of the challenges that families and children are facing with the long waiting lists to be assessed for autism. At school, we always take the approach of treating all students individually and adapting to support them to have the best outcomes in school. We also know that if your child is eventually diagnosed, parents can be left wondering how best to support your child.

The link below is a helpful online course for parents of children who have a diagnosis of autism. However, if your child is on the waiting list you may also find this helpful. The course is endorsed by the National Autistic Society. [ADAPT: After Diagnosis of Autism Parent support Training - Recovery College Online](#)

Miss Layfield