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Dear DMS Families,

Over the past year, social media has moved to the centre of a national conversation about young people’s wellbeing, safety, and learning. From government debates to parent forums, there is growing concern about the role platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat play in the daily lives of children and teenagers.

There is mounting evidence linking heavy social media use with increased levels of anxiety, low mood, and poor self-esteem among young people. The constant exposure to curated, idealised lives can lead to unhelpful comparisons, while the pressure to remain “always online” often disrupts sleep and reduces downtime.

Issues such as cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and online exploitation have become prominent in national debates. While platforms have introduced safeguards, many experts argue that these are not always effective or consistently enforced.

Constant notifications and the pull of social media can undermine concentration, resilience, and deep thinking. The ability to focus for extended periods—a key skill for academic success—is increasingly challenged by digital distractions.

The national consultation around the use of social media by children under the age of 16 closed during the most recent half term. While no single solution has yet been agreed upon, the consensus is clear: action is needed to help young people develop healthier relationships with technology and we will await the legislation which follows.

At Dorchester Middle School, we are committed to staying informed, thoughtful, and responsive. Our mobile phone ban has been one of the most impactful decisions we have taken since it was brought in at the start of the academic year. Whilst we may constantly be persuaded that AI will dominate everything we do, I personally do not think it will ever replicate emotional intelligence, creative vision, physical dexterity and ethical judgement which is why it is so critical that at Dorchester Middle School we will always continue to focus on the ‘whole child’ and strengthening the values and education that I know so many of you hold dear.

Mr Webb

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Important dates for your diary

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6th June | Community Open Morning – Saturday 10am to 12pm - (future Y5 pupils and parents) |
| 8th June | MHST Workshop for parents, Supporting children with anxiety - 4:30 to 6:30pm - DMS |
| 9th June | Sponsored Run – Community Challenge (during school hours) details sent home via letter |
| 10th to 12th June | Year 6 Residential trip – Weymouth |
| 12th June | Non-Uniform Day – in exchange for prizes for the Summer Fete's tombola/raffle |
| 17th June | Sports Day – more information to follow, after half term |
| 20th June | Summer Fete |

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Introducing this week...

Miss Whetton recently joined DMS as a Teaching Assistant, bringing with her a warm smile and genuine enthusiasm to the role. With previous experience in childcare and a background in the NHS, she returned from maternity leave ready for a fresh challenge and eagerly embraced the opportunity to join our school community. Miss Whetton used to be a pupil of DMS too!!

Outside of work, Miss Whetton loves baking, spending time outdoors, and enjoying quality moments with her two daughters and friends. Welcome back to DMS, Miss Whetton!!



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Parent Question of the Week

Are there opportunities for me to join the various events taking place at DMS this half term?

The short answer is yes!

From our Celebration Assemblies to Sports Day (when families are welcome to picnic with their children), the wonderful PTFA summer fete, our rather huge production of Mathilda and our transition programme – we will keep you updated as to when you are able to join us to enjoy these experiences with your children.

Pupil Question of the Week

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Will we be able to apply to be a Prefect shortly?

Yes, Miss Clements is leading this process, and successful applicants will subsequently be able to apply to be a Head of House

Interviews for the Head of House position will be on 22nd June with myself and Miss Clements. This is a wonderful opportunity to represent the school at all our public events and parents always speak highly of how pupils conduct themselves. I am looking forward to seeing the current Year 7 apply for these very important positions.

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PTFA News

So many more events coming before the end of the academic year!! Thanks to our unstoppable and amazing PTFA!!

You would have received information about the upcoming **Community Challenge** to be held on **Tuesday 9th June**; children can run, walk or jog 200 metre lengths of the field to win house points and raise money to support the school. There is still time to sign up for it!!

On **Friday 12th June** we have a **Non-Uniform Day** in exchange for prizes for the tombola and raffle during the Summer Fete. Please Send your contributions with your child or drop the at the school's Reception. Thank you in advance, your support makes a huge difference!!

Next, is the **Summer Fete** on **Saturday 20th June**. You don't want to miss out on this, it is always an amazing event which brings our school community together and you can enjoy BBQ, bar, games, raffle, tombola and lots more!!

DORCHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Non School Uniform Day

FRIDAY 12 JUNE

Please bring in a tombola prize suitable for the Summer Fete

SWEETS | TOILETRIES | GAMES
CHOCOLATE | UNWANTED GIFTS! | DRINKS

NO ALCOHOL

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In loving memory...

With a heavy heart, we need to inform you of the devastating news that our beloved pupil Jensen Pittman from Year 7, sadly passed away on Monday. Jensen was such a loved member of our school community; he loved school, his friends and never let his health condition get in his way to be an active part of DMS and the wider community. Jensen lived with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a condition that causes progressive muscle weakness, but despite the challenges he faced, Jensen was always the happiest, kindest boy and it was a joy to see him around the school. His enthusiasm and bright spirit touched so many lives, and he will be deeply missed by his classmates and staff at DMS. Today, we keep Jensen's family in our hearts and prayers, especially his sister Mina, who is also a pupil at DMS, as they go through such an incredibly difficult time.



If you are able to, please consider making a donation to 'Mission Jensen' in his memory. Mission Jensen is a charity which supports Duchenne UK, and is dedicated to funding research and working towards a future free from Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/missionjensen>

Jensen will continue to live in the hearts of the DMS community.



ROARS

Congratulations and well done to our ROARS winners of the last week of half term! Below are our fantastic pupils who displayed our school values of READY, ORIGINAL, AMBITIOUS, RESPECTFUL and SAFE.



Year 5



Year 8

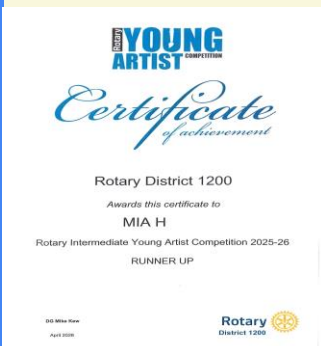
Year 6



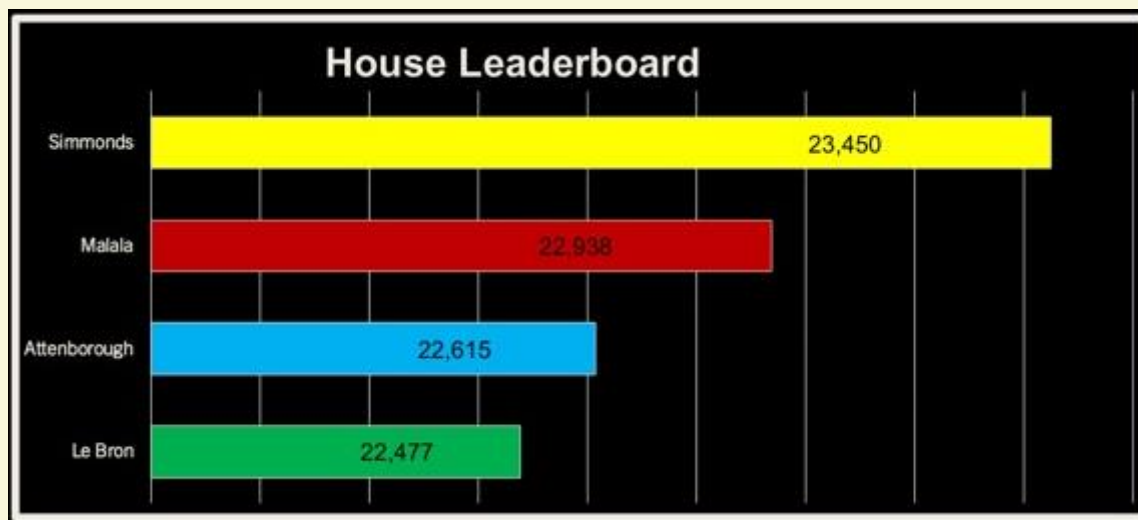
(Year 7s were on a Residential trip)

Celebrating our amazing pupils...

Our lovely Poppy in Year 6 entered a show jumping competition with her horse Teddy during the half term break. She came 4th in the 40cm category and in the 50cm category, she came 6th. We are super proud of Poppy's achievement. Well done Poppy!!!



We are also celebrating the talented Mia H in Year 8, who is a runner up in the Rotary Young Artist Competition for 2025 2026 in the intermediate Young Artist Category. Well done Mia, we are very proud of you!!



What else has been happening in our Community?

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Important information for our DMS families – Free School Meals

More Dorset children may be eligible for free school meals from September 2026. Following changes from central government, the rules are changing so all children whose parent/carer receives any level of universal credit (removing the current £7,400 annual income cap) will be entitled to free school meals. To prepare for the change, you will need to apply, or reapply from 1 June 2026, even if your child is currently receiving free school meals. Follow the link below to find out more and use the checker to see if you qualify. <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/news/more-dorset-children-could-qualify-for-free-school-meals->

Junior Math Challenge

Last month we had 50 year 7 & 8 students take part in the Junior Maths Challenge, a national mathematics and problem-solving competition. To achieve a bronze certificate students needed to place in the top 50% nationally, silver the top 25% and gold the top 8%. Each of the 5 year 8 classes had someone achieve a gold Certificate. To qualify for the next round of the competition students needed to place in the top 3% of the country and have had 4 students qualify for the next round!! How PROUD we are of these fab pupils! Well done!



Y7 Lulworth Trip

Year 7 have had a fabulous time in Lulworth today. They were greeted by high winds and heavy rain in the morning, which showed the erosive power of the ocean; helping us understand more about the coastal processes in our curriculum. After having lunch in the solace of Holy Trinity church together, the sun decided to make an appearance!



This enabled us to do field sketching and pebble measuring without much meteorological distraction, as well as the opportunity to enjoy an ice-cream. The children behaved superbly and members of the public commented on how polite they were as they completed their questionnaires and moved around the Cove.



12 And finally...

Finally, we look forward to welcoming families at our community open morning this Saturday. It is a further fantastic opportunity to see the improvements to the school over the last year and meet some key members of staff. We cannot wait to show you all around!

Mr Webb