



23 July 2025

Dear Families

### **End of Year Update Letter 2024-2025**

Once again, we close another Academic Year. I am looking forward to seeing pupils being celebrated and receiving awards as part of our end of year Celebration Assemblies later this week. We also see the Alton Towers Rewards trip depart today, recognising our 100% Club pupils for their achievement. The best part of the job is seeing our pupils be successful and be recognised for their hard work and effort. This was especially true yesterday evening, when Year 7 pupils graduated from The Bridge and into Year 8. It was a joy to see families celebrating success with their children.

We say goodbye to pupils for the summer later this week. A reminder that the Academy will close at 1.15pm with bus services being rearranged. A link to my letter on this is here: [End-of-Term-and-Start-of-Term-Arrangements.pdf](#)

### **2024-2025 Successes and Reflections**

I am proud of the work we have done this year to keep getting better. I am finalising our next long-term plan leading to 2028 and will share many aspects of this with you in due course. Whilst reflecting on this year we can recognise:

- There are significant improvements in school attendance with further plans to improve attendance in place for next year. We know that pupils who attend, achieve. Every pupil with 95% attendance or higher in Year 11 makes better than national progress at GCSE.
- We have further strengthened the curriculum, making our most important knowledge explicit. Our latest plans, including Assessment and Curriculum Overviews are available on our website for all families. You can explore what your child learns in the Academy and what they will be assessed on here: [Curriculum - The Dukeries Academy](#)
- Our Outcomes strategy has again improved, and pupils are achieving more each year. Strategies used in Year 11 are now applied across all year groups. We are hopeful that our summer results will demonstrate another movement forward in pupil progress.
- We have improved our offer for reading, with teachers being trained in classroom strategies to promote reading in lessons and encourage reading aloud.
- Strategies to improve toilets and use of these facilities have greatly improved pupil experience, with further improvements planned for next year. Pupil voice has recognised these improvements as we check the quality of our work.
- The student leadership team continues to grow in stature and has had a real influence on shaping our work, including changes to the Academy Day.
- Pupils have continued to benefit from further improved experiences in extra-curricular, sport, enrichment and drama, especially highlighted in the recent Oliver performance. We are very proud of this.

- We have further embedded core routines and expectations so that standards of behaviour and culture have continued to rise.

Like any school, we have areas to work on, and we do our best to be responsive to families and keep improving what we do. There are several priorities for September and beyond, many of which have been prioritised because of your feedback in the recent Edurio survey. Some of these include:

- Improving the quality and regularity of communication with you as families.
- Adding capacity to the SEND department through new TAs, Intervention Assistants in English and Maths and continually improving our systems in SEND.
- Further developing the Academy strategy for reading.
- Continuing to work with families on improving standards of school attendance.
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning through high-quality teacher development.

A key part of my planning has been to ensure we respond to national recruitment challenges. Fortunately, through a successful recruitment period we have managed to secure talented new teachers and support colleagues for September, which will mean we are fully staffed by expert teachers. We have had lots of applications for advertised roles and candidates have recognised a highly supportive school that is on an exciting and clear journey of improvement.

### Staffing Changes for September 2025

This year we say goodbye to staff who are leaving for pastures new, or who are retiring at the end of this year. We also welcome new staff who are starting with us in September. I have shared information on staffing changes below. It is worth noting that interviews are on-going through the summer break, so some roles will be recruited to shortly, ready for our return in September. Where this is the case, the role is listed. There are also some colleagues who are changing roles as we begin the new term.

Staff Leaving	Staff Joining	Changes of Roles
Mr McDermott – Assistant Principal Mrs Young – Associate Assistant Principal Mrs Clark – Head of Science Mrs Shepherd – Principal's PA Miss Ockert – Teacher of English Miss Mitchell – Teacher of Science Mrs Davies – Administration Assistant	Mrs Wintrip – Assistant Principal Mr Dench-Smith – Head of Science Mr Ball – Subject Specialist Leader in Maths Miss Freeman – Teacher of English Miss Dickinson – Teacher of English Mrs Kerrigan - English Intervention Assistant Ms Ryan – Administration Assistant Mrs Anbalagan – Teaching Assistant Maths Intervention Assistant Teaching Assistant Teaching Assistant	Mrs Rowlinson – Head of Year 11 Mr Nabbs – Raising Standards Leader and Timetabling Miss Tromans – Principal's PA and Administration Manager Subject Specialist Leader and Academy Reading Lead



## Academy Day, One-Week Timetable and Start of Term Arrangements

You will know from my previous communication that we have adapted the Academy Day from September. We have moved all Tutor Time activities to the beginning of the day and extended lunch, to create a simpler, more traditional school day. This was in response to both pupil and parent voice. I hope this is a welcome change. I have copied the new Academy Day below as a reminder of how lessons will be structured.

My aim moving forward is to simplify lots of our work so that teachers can focus on teaching and pupils can focus on learning. Another change, which I hope will also be a welcome one is that we will be operating a one-week, rather than a two-week timetable from September. I hope this will reduce any confusion and remove any questions about which lessons pupils have week on week.

This change will mean that pupils will have the same lessons, at the same time, every week. This should make it simpler both for pupils and for families to plan the week together and talk with each other about learning in school.

### Academy Day 2025-2026

Staff and Student Breakfast (20) 8.20 – 8.40	
Staff on gates from 8.20. Whistle at 8.38	
Tutor Time (40)	8.40 – 9.20
Period 1 (55)	9.20 – 10.15
Period 2 (55)	10.15 – 11.10
Break (20)	11.10 – 11.30
Period 3 (55)	11.30 – 12.25
(Lunch) (45)	12.25 – 1.10
Period 4 (55)	1.10 – 2.05
Period 5 (55)	2.05 – 3.00
Accelerate	3.00 – 3.50

### Start of Term Arrangements

The start of term will begin with two Inset Days, where we will induct new staff, complete staff training and ensure we are fully prepared for the year ahead. Pupils will then return on a phased plan, which is outlined below. I have also included a link to our Term Dates, found on our website here: [Term Dates - The Dukeries Academy](#)

Monday 1 September – Teacher Training Day

Tuesday 2 September - Teacher Training Day

Wednesday 3 September – Year 7 and Year 11 Return

Thursday 4 September – Whole Academy Return

### Start of Term Expectations



We will be running our usual “Culture Reset” in the first fortnight of the new academic year. This is a well embedded practice which helps us ensure the year begins with the highest standards.

We do this to make sure that every child is meeting our expectations for uniform, equipment, attendance and behaviour expectations. We aim for disruption-free classrooms so that all children can learn and achieve their best.

We will be re-teaching our Academy values of Integrity, Ambition and Excellence and reflecting on how these apply to daily life both in and out of lessons. We will re-teach core routines and remind pupils why these are important. I would like to remind all families of some basic expectations before we return.

- Trainers are not allowed.
- Hoodies are not allowed.
- Only skirts and trousers detailed in Academy policy are allowed.
- False nails and false eyelashes are not allowed.
- Mobile phones are not allowed. No parent should be communicating with their child without the support or knowledge of the Academy.
- Ear pods or earphones are not allowed.
- We expect all pupils in full Academy uniform.

Standards Gate operates every day from 8.30am, and we will continue to run this strategy as we help ensure all children are fully equipped and prepared for learning, including through being in the correct uniform.

To ensure clarity about what we expect for uniform, I have included the link to our policies which are found on our website here: [Uniform - The Dukeries Academy](#)

It has been a pleasure to continue working with you this year. I am highly optimistic for the future after another year where we have made significant steps forward together. We have a lot to look forward to, with improvements happening all the time. If you missed my previous communication, with updates from the Department of Education on the progress of our New Building, you can find this here: [New-Build-Update-letter.pdf](#)

We are working hard, alongside our day-to-day priorities, to deliver The Dukeries Academy and the Ollerton community a school building it deserves.

I will be in contact again soon as we begin the new year. I wish all of you a happy, safe and restful summer break.



Mr M Brett  
Principal

