



Message from the Principal



Mr James Haseldine
Executive Principal

A short week, but a great week at DBK!

Year 8 students enjoyed the experience of a lifetime on our Ghyll Head residential. We strive to provide opportunities that are beyond the expected at DBK, so that students have access to a rich set of experiences to help young people develop their character. I have already received emails and calls from parents thanking our staff for giving their time to arrange and take children on this great outdoor adventure. Please see our report in the newsletter. In addition I was delighted with our Year 11 students who have worked very hard in their mock exams. Many of whom came in to complete coursework and exams when other students were off school on Thursday and Friday. The challenge for them is to now focus on the remaining components of their courses and work hard to begin filling any gaps in knowledge and refining their understanding of courses to succeed when the real GCSE start in 21 school weeks.

We need to get REAL about attendance to school. Post pandemic, the attendance pattern of a proportion of children has changed. 15% of our student population are currently not attending well enough to be able to secure the outcomes required to get them to the college course of their choice. Of course, there are students who have long-standing medical conditions that we are aware of, who we are providing support for. However there are a proportion of children and families where attendance to school must improve to ensure children have better life chances. We want to ensure children are provided with a first class education to enable them to live a fulfilling life and make a difference in their community.

Routines: Daily attendance routines created by families to get students to school daily reduces stress for students and families. This routine also prepares children for the workplace by creating good habits for later life.

Engagement: Being in school helps build trusting relationships with adults and peers, to help build a positive circle of support around a child. By engaging in school and our social circle and planned experiences and routines, a child is more likely to be enabled to succeed.

Access to resources: School also provides children and families to gain access to their entitlement of a free education, free school meals if eligible, support services, someone to speak to, fun, enrichment activities such as sport, music, arts, drama.

Learning: Learning is the most meaningful experience for us all. Showing up to school regularly helps students understand the world, helps them read, helps them process how to communicate and navigate the challenges they will face. But most importantly is the most amazing opportunity to find and nurture their purpose in the world, master skills and amass knowledge and discover how to recognise, create and use autonomy to apply what they have learned to make their mark on the world.

If your child is struggling to maintain regular attendance, please get in touch. We want to ensure we work together to help your child realise their great, great potential. You can contact the attendance team directly via email - attendance@dixonsbk.com

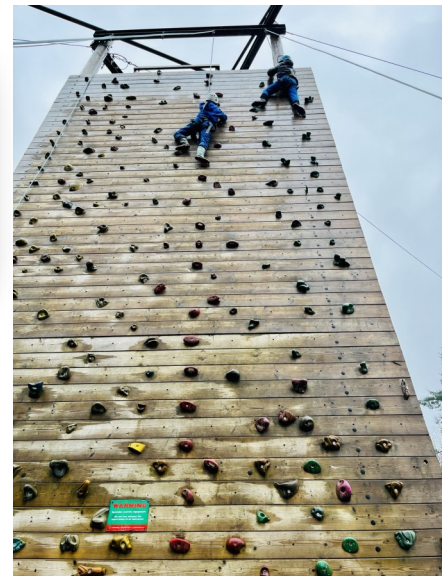
Ghyll Head

Over 100 Year 8 students enjoyed a short residential at Ghyll Head Outdoor Education and Activity Centre in the Lake District this week. 55 students attended Monday to Wednesday and 47 students have been there Wednesday to Friday.

This annual residential always proves to be popular; students get the opportunity to participate in a number of exciting activities including canoeing, climbing, zip wire to mention just a few. As you can see from the photos below, our students were literally 'climbing their mountain' and hopefully have gained the confidence to believe what they can achieve when they try.

From the updates received from staff, students and staff had brilliant time – Group 1 were particularly blessed by good weather but both groups embraced all the activities in some amazing scenery.

We know that for some children it will have been their first time away from their families so we hope students (and families) enjoyed the break!



Year 11 Mock Exams

Well done to our Year 11 students who have just completed a 2-week mock exams programme. They have worked incredibly hard, and this is all part of the preparations for the GCSE examinations in the summer. We want to help our students achieve the best outcomes they possibly can in the summer, as this increases their life choices for their next steps and beyond.

As the majority of our students had a short week in the Academy whilst teaching staff have reviewed the curriculum and identified any gaps in student learning, over a 100 of our creative arts students sat a full day mock exam in their subject. Lots of hard work took place and we are excited to see the results of their efforts.



Premier League Protect the Planet Event

On Tuesday, one of our Year 11 students, AJ, worked with a team of like-minded individuals to organise and help run a Premier League event. The event was based around protecting the planet, and clubs from up and down the country were invited to display the projects they have been working on. AJ and the team have been working on this event for over a year and Tuesday was the day they got to bring their hard work to life. AJ even received a reply from Sir David Attenborough in the lead up to the event! The event was a great success – a fabulous showcase for the young people's projects and displayed the importance of protecting the planet better than anyone could have imagined. Well done AJ on such an incredible achievement.



Sparx Reader

Well done to the top three Sparx Readers this week, Lexie H, Emily C and Emily P - all in Year 8. Thank you to parents/carers for supporting our push with reading.



Book Fair

Between Monday 27th November and Tuesday 5th December, there will be a Book Fair in the school library offering an assortment of books for students to peruse and purchase. Payment can be made by cash, card payment or QR code - available at the Hub. Please encourage your child to visit the library to see this exciting selection of books.



Food Bank Appeal

We recently asked students through assemblies for help in collecting food that could be donated to the Bideford Food bank. year, over 900 items were kindly donated; we are hoping to top that this year. If each person at DBK brought just one item of food, we would be giving over 1,000 items of food to the local food bank!

Students can hand items to their advisors or parents/carers can drop off donations at reception 8.00-3.30pm before Friday 15th December.

Items that can be donated are:

- Tinned fruit, chocolates, tinned rice pudding, tinned puddings, custard, tea bags, crisps, tinned soup, tinned food, tinned meat, tinned fish, pasta, pasta sauce, deodorant, shampoo, shower gel, toothpaste
- Any dry food but nothing that needs to go into the fridge or freezer.

Thank you for helping us to support this worthy charity.

Christmas Lunch/Christmas Jumper Day

On Wednesday 20th December, a traditional Christmas dinner will be on the menu for students and staff to purchase (if students are on free school meals, they can choose to have the Christmas dinner at no extra cost). Students will soon be asked in advisory time if they would like a Christmas lunch (a very limited alternative will be on offer on this day).

We are also hoping to raise money for charity on that day by allowing students to wear a Christmas jumper or an item of red or green alongside their uniform (i.e. a jumper underneath their blazer or red/green socks or hairband) for a cost of £1 (payable via ParentPay only) which will be donated to a local charity, decided on by students.

We hope as many students and staff join in the festive fun!

Dates for your Diary: November/December 2023

Thursday 30th November	Year 9 Parents' Evening/Options Evening
Wednesday 6th December	8.10-9.30am: Parents/Carers Coffee Morning: Safeguarding / How we keep our children safe online
Thursday 7th December	Christmas Concert
Friday 8th December	Flu immunisations (years 7-11)
Tuesday 12th December	8.15-9.15am: Coffee Morning - Meet the Year 11 Team
Wednesday 13th December	8.15-9.15am: Coffee Morning - Meet the Year 7 Team
Wednesday 20th December	Christmas Lunch on offer to students
Wednesday 20th December	Christmas jumper day
Friday 22nd December	Term finishes for Christmas break