



19 July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I wrote to you in July 2021 with a sense of hope that things would improve in the year ahead and that we would start to recover from the most difficult issues caused by the pandemic. In truth, it has been an equally complicated year with new challenges for all members of our school community. As ever though, that has been balanced by great success and significant achievement. We were nationally praised for our ethical approach to GCSE and A Level examination results, with our students achieving real success in August 2021. We hope to replicate that again this year, with a return to traditional results days and students sitting external examinations for the first time in two years. Students have been supportive of others and staff have adapted to each new challenge. Those challenges have included on site testing, the use of face coverings for fixed periods, a new Public Health referral system for outbreaks and vaccinations, the most intensive wave of the pandemic to date and the return of a fully functioning school with no protective bubbles. It has been a challenging year and, hopefully, 2022-23 will offer an additional step towards a more normal school year.

We are very proud of our students' achievements in 2021-22 and that so many have accessed new opportunities. We have welcomed parents and carers back into the school via Parent Information Evenings (hosting 13 separate events across the year) and have reintroduced a full programme of music, sport, and extra-curricular activities. Our students have achieved success in a wide range of different fields, and we are very proud of them. We have rewarded them for their commitment to social justice and public service and for taking important steps in their personal development, regardless of their starting points. We have thought carefully about relationship and sex education and have celebrated the increased diversity of our school community. In simple terms, we have tried our hardest with every new challenge and have learned and adapted quickly when entering unknown territory. At the time of writing, it is also good to be able to report that there are no current Department for Education updates that we have been asked to share with parents and carers and, hopefully, there will be time for a new Education Secretary to gain experience and understand the needs and strengths of all schools.

There have been several staffing changes for September 2022 that we would also like to share with you:

Staffing for September 2022

We have a very experienced teaching staff at Durham Johnston and our teachers tend to dedicate their careers to the school. They are currently planning very carefully to ensure that students and their families have a clear sense of the subject content, assessment and extension work that they will prioritise in September.

We are also saying goodbye to a number of very experienced staff members in Mr McArdle (Assistant Headteacher, Geography & Former Head of 6th Form)), Miss Owen (Year Leader & Geography), Dr Bolton (Biology, 2nd in Science Department) and Mr Wells (Subject Leader for RE). Collectively, they have been loyal members of staff and have contributed to the success of large numbers of students.

Mr McArdle joined the school in 2001, Miss Owen in 1997 (starting as Year Leader in 2003), Dr Bolton in 2007 and Mr Wells in 2012. We are also saying goodbye to Mr Proudfoot (Maths) who joined the school in 2021.

There have been a number of changes in terms of staffing for September 2022, with serving staff taking on additional roles and new appointments, and teachers joining us for the new academic year. Those appointments are:

In school changes

- **Mrs Anderson** – appointed as Acting Year Leader Year 10.
- **Mrs Banner** – appointed as Year Leader for Year 9.
- **Mr Bowman** – appointed as Pastoral Leader for Key Stage 4.
- **Mr Blake** – appointed as Year Leader for Year 8.
- **Mrs Hardwick** – appointed as RSE/PHSE Lead.
- **Mr Horn** – appointed as permanent Subject Leader for Science.
- **Mr Horrocks** – joining the school's Leadership Group as Intervention Lead.
- **Miss Schwaiger** – appointed as acting Subject Leader for Languages from 2nd in Department.
- **Mr Simpson** - appointed as Pastoral Leader for Key Stage 3.
- **Miss Stannard** – appointed as Year Leader for Year 7.

We also have new staff joining us as student numbers in the school have increased and we are keen to ensure that we have a full and specialist staff to deliver a high-quality of education and support.

New staff joining Durham Johnston

- **Mr Bray** – joining the school as Subject Leader for R.E.
- **Miss Colvin** - joining the school in English.
- **Miss Garvey** – joining the school in Learning Support.
- **Mr Glover** – joining the school in Design & Technology.
- **Miss Greenfield** – (re)joining in Design & Technology.
- **Mrs Horner** - joining the school in Learning Support.
- **Mr Middleton** - joining the school in Science (Subject Leader for Chemistry).
- **Miss Morgan** - joining the school in English.
- **Miss Oldroyd** - joining the school in Maths.
- **Mr Oliver** - joining the school in Science (Physics).
- **Mr Musgrave** – joining the school in English.
- **Mr Rhodes** – (re)joining the school in Languages.
- **Mrs Robinson**- joining the school in Learning Support.
- **Miss Robson** – joining the school as Assistant Headteacher for Personal Development.
- **Dr Scull** - joining the school in History.
- **Miss Stafford** - joining the school in Learning Support.
- **Mrs Watchman** - joining the school in Learning Support.
- **Miss Whittock** – joining the school in Maths.
- **Ms Wrathmall** – joining the school in Science (Biology).

We have some additional plans in place for the summer break and some important maintenance of the school building. The school will be open throughout the summer but please be aware that teaching staff will not be present and that we will not be able to deal with queries quickly if they are subject specific or are for specific staff members.

Summer Dates & information

A Level & GCSE Results Days - There are two results days in August. A level results day is Thursday 18th August 2022 and GCSE results are shared on Thursday 25th August. A detailed letter outlining the results process has been sent to all Year 11 and Year 13 students.

Summer Dates & information continued

- We will continue to provide a significant level of support for our current Year 11 and 13 students as they prepare for their next steps to 6th form study, university, work, or an apprenticeship. Mrs Lennon has written to all Y13 students to explain how we will support them as part of the **A Level results' day on Thursday 18th August 2022** and we have also shared an update outlining some of the issues related to university places in 2022 with Year 13 students.
- We are also very keen to offer continuing support to all of our Year 11 students. Students will receive their **GCSE results on Thursday 25th August** and we will provide help and support to ensure that all of our students are clear about their next steps. **Please check the school website in the weeks beginning 15th and 22nd August for any updates, as we will provide additional information about our results days and any changes that are necessary to the plans that have already been shared.**
- Information relating to arrangements for the two results days can be found here: [Quick Reference Guides to Results Days | Durham Johnston School](#)
- **Year 6 into 7 Summer School** - Our Year 6 summer school is scheduled for the weeks beginning **29th August 2022**. Information regarding the Summer School will be posted on the website.
- **National Tutoring Extra Support** – We have also invited a number of students into school for additional tuition and tutoring in the week beginning **29th August 2022**.
- **Mental health Summer Holiday Wellbeing Campaign** – During the summer holidays Kooth want to make sure that children and young people know that they are still available for them. They understand that many young people may be quite reliant on the support they receive while they are at school. Students can still access free, safe, and anonymous mental health support on Kooth.com during the summer holidays. They can do so by visiting: **go.kooth.com/sRw9**. There are a number of other suggestions on how to access support via our school website.
- **Start of Term Dates** - Please also note that the school term **starts for all Year 7 to 11 students on Wednesday 7th September. The 6th Form Team have shared a different arrangement for Years 12 and 13.**
- We had hoped to have Year 7 and new Year 12 students back first, but that would involve the school not fulfilling its 190 school days in an academic year commitment. **Please accept my apologies for any confusion that this may have caused.**

The Year Ahead for each individual year group, September 2022 to July 2023

It is very important that parents, carers and students have a sense of the year ahead. The following offers an overview of some of the key dates in 2022-23 for each year group. We will continue to share and celebrate the achievements of each group and are very excited to have a number of experienced colleagues stepping up to Year Leader roles in the year ahead. Mrs Lennon and Mr Wilbraham write to Years 12 and 13 on a weekly basis and will continue to do so from September onwards.

Year 7 - Key Dates and the Shape of the Academic Year

In September Year 7 will learn to mix with others in a much larger school and will quickly familiarise themselves with our routines and the building. Their induction will take place on the first day of the new school term and we will offer continued support as they become familiar with their new school. We will work closely with students to identify any extra support that is needed in terms of KS2 knowledge and will accelerate their understanding of key concepts and the skills necessary in their first year of secondary school. Year 7 have had the opportunity to spend time with their form tutors, Miss Stannard and Mr Simpson as Pastoral Leader for Key Stage Three (Years 7, 8 and 9). We are confident that they will enjoy their first year.

Key Dates for this year group:

- **Start of the school year** – Wednesday 7th September 2022.
- **Year 7 National Baseline Testing** – Week beginning 12th September 2022.
- **Year 7 Tutee Progress Evening with Form Tutors** – Week beginning 2022.
- **Year 7 Settling in Report** – Week beginning 17th October 2022.
- **Year 7 National Baseline Testing** – Week beginning 22nd May 2023.
- **Year 7 Parents' Evening (School Cloud Online)** – Monday 17th June 2023.
- **Year 7 Report issued** – Week beginning 10th July 2023.

Year 8 - Key Dates and the Shape of the Academic Year

Year 8 will be offered extra support by their teachers, and we will make sure that the curriculum is tailored to their needs. We will also offer pastoral support so that students can feel fully part of the school and build on their first year in school. They will be taken forward by Mr Blake, a very experienced teacher at the school, and Mr Simpson as Pastoral Leader for Key Stage Three (Years 7, 8 and 9).

Key Dates for this year group:

- **Start of the school year** – Wednesday 7th September 2022.
- **Year 8 Parent Information Evening** – Week beginning 19th September 2022.
- **Year 8 Report** – Week beginning 9th January 2023.
- **Year 8 Parents' Evening (School Cloud Online)** – Monday 13th March 2023.
- **Year 8 Report issued** – Week beginning 10th July 2023.

Please note: Parent Information evenings are led by senior staff and are not parents' evenings. They take the form of presentations in the main hall.

Year 9 - Key Dates and the Shape of the Academic Year

We will also offer support to our Year 9 students and will provide additional time and guidance before they choose their GCSE options. Students will have support regarding pathways and careers and will have taster sessions in the GCSE subjects that they have not had the chance to study at KS3. They will be led by Mrs Banner, an experienced teacher at the school, and Mr Simpson Pastoral Leader for Key Stage Three. (Years 7, 8 and 9).

Key Dates for this year group:

- **Start of the school year** – Wednesday 7th September 2022.
- **Year 9 Parent Information Evening** – Week beginning 26th September 2022.
- **Year 9 Report** – Week beginning 9th January 2023.
- **Year 9 Options Evening** – Monday 16th January 2023.
- **Year 9 Parents' Evening (School Cloud Online)** – Monday 30th January 2023.
- **Year 9 Report issued** – Week beginning 10th July 2023.

Please note: Parent Information evenings are led by senior staff and are not parents' evenings. They take the form of presentations in the main hall.

Year 10 - Key Dates and the Shape of the Academic Year

We will make sure that Year 10 have a positive start to their GCSE subjects and will provide opportunities for any skills or key knowledge from Year 9 to be integrated effectively into their 2-year GCSE courses. Students have already started to study for their Science and RE qualifications and students have received detailed information about next steps from Mrs McFadden, Deputy Headteacher. They will be led by Mrs Anderson, an experienced teacher at the school, and Mr Bowman, Pastoral Leader for Key Stage Four (Years 10 and 11).

Key Dates for this year group:

- **Start of the school year** – Wednesday 7th September 2022.
- **Year 10 Parent Information Evening** – Week beginning 31st October 2022.
- **Year 10 Settling in Report** – Week beginning 17th October 2022.
- **Year 10 Parents' Evening (School Cloud Online)** – Monday 15th May 2023.
- **Year 10 Mock Examinations** – Date to be confirmed, June 2023
- **Year 10 Report issued** – Week beginning 10th July 2023.

Please note: Parent Information evenings are led by senior staff and are not parents' evenings. They take the form of presentations in the main hall. We will also offer regular updates on setting and tiers of entry in English, Maths and Science throughout the year.

Year 11 - Key Dates and the Shape of the Academic Year

We will work very closely with Year 11 students to identify any extra support that is needed and will plan the curriculum very carefully so that time in school is maximised. We will regularly assess their knowledge, understanding and exam skills to make sure that we cover the GCSE specification as efficiently as possible. All examinations will be completed formally in school to replicate their finals in the summer term, and they will continue to be led by Mr Digby, with support from the Subject Leaders of English, Maths and Science alongside Mr Bowman, Pastoral Leader for Key Stage Four (Years 10 and 11).

Key Dates for this year group:

- **Start of the school year** – Wednesday 7th September 2022.
- **Year 11 Parent Information Evening** – Week beginning 3rd October 2022.
- **Year 11 Mock Examinations** - Week beginning 10th October 2022.
- **Year 11 Report** – Week beginning 14th November 2022.
- **Year 11 Parents' Evening (School Cloud Online)** – Monday 14th November 2022.
- **Year 11 Mock Examinations** - Week beginning 13th March 2023.
- **Year 11 Parent Information Evening** – Monday 6th March 2023.
- **Year 11 Report issued** – Week beginning April 2023.

Please note: Parent Information evenings are led by senior staff and are not parents' evenings. They take the form of presentations in the main hall.

Year 12 – Key Dates and the Shape of the Academic Year

Year 12 will complete baseline assessments, including content from transition work. They will also have the opportunity to sit internal examinations after their first term is completed. All examinations will be completed formally in school to replicate their finals in the summer term.

Key Dates for the year group:

- **Year 12 Start of the school year** – Wednesday 7th September 2022 (New to Durham Johnston) and Thursday 8th September 2022 (Former Year 11 at Durham Johnston).
- **Year 12 School Photographs** – individual and year group – 13th & 14th September 2022.

- **Year 12 Parent Information Evening** – Week beginning 19th September 2022.
- **Year 12 Settling in Report (transition to A level study habits)** – Week beginning 17th October 2022.
- **Year 12 Mock Examinations** – Week beginning 9th January 2023.
- **Year 12 Report issued** – Week beginning 6th February 2023.
- **Year 12 Parents' Evening (School Cloud Online)** – week beginning 13th February 2023.
- **Year 12 AS External Entry Decisions** – Tuesday 14th February 2023.
- **Year 12 Mock Examinations** – Week beginning 12th June 2023.
- **Year 12 Final Report issued** – Week beginning 3rd July 2023.
- **Year 12 UCAS (Next Steps) Parental Information Evening** – Week beginning 3rd July 2023.
- **Year 12 Work shadowing / EPQ / NEA opportunities** – Week beginning 17th July 2023.
- **Year 12 External AS Examination Results** – Thursday 17th August 2023.

Please note: Parent Information evenings are led by senior staff and are not parents' evenings. They take the form of presentations in the main hall.

Year 13 – Key Dates and the Shape of the Academic Year

Year 13 students have already signed up for their Year 13 courses and have already made progress with Year 13 work in many subjects. We have offered guidance and support regarding how best to use the summer break to prepare for a strong start in their final year of linear A level study, and in preparation for next step decisions. All examinations will be completed formally in school to replicate their finals in the summer term.

Key Dates for the year group:

- **Year 13 Start of the school year** – Thursday 8th September 2022.
- **Year 13 School Photographs** – individual and year group – 13th & 14th September 2022.
- **Year 13 Mock Examinations** – Week beginning 7th November 2022.
- **Year 13 Report issued** – Week beginning 28th November 2022.
- **Year 13 Parents' Evening (School Cloud Online)** – Monday 5th December 2022.
- **Year 13 UCAS Application Deadline (internal)** – Friday 9th December 2022.
- **Year 13 Final Mock Examinations** – Week beginning 27th February 2023.
- **Year 13 Final Report issued** – Week beginning 28th March 2023.
- **Year 13 External AS Examination Results** – Thursday 17th August 2023.

Please note: Parent Information evenings are led by senior staff and are not parents' evenings. They take the form of presentations in the main hall.

We are very mindful that it has been a difficult year for our students. We are keen to celebrate success, to offer more support to each year group and to make lessons as engaging and well taught as possible. We will also focus very strongly on our ethos and will ensure that all members of our school community are treated respectfully, with kindness and fairly. The following information regarding safeguarding, communication, the use of mobile phones and uniform should offer a clear understanding of both school and parental responsibilities when it comes to each of these important areas of school life. We are a community with high expectations, and it is important that we all work together positively.

Safeguarding & Speaking Up

Mr Weaver, Assistant Headteacher, is our Designated Safeguarding Lead. All members of the school are safeguarding trained, with the school's Leadership Team and Year Leaders having enhanced training experience. We take our commitments very seriously and have a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of prejudicial behaviour or harassment. If any student is worried about an issue, they should speak with their Year Leader or a member of the school leadership team. The list of safeguarding staff can also be found in each student's organiser and on the school website. We encourage students to speak up and, if they observe someone else in difficult circumstances, to never be a bystander. **If you have any safeguarding concerns always contact the school. We will treat all concerns seriously, will respect confidentiality where possible and will always investigate thoroughly.**

Students will make mistakes and we will prioritise educating those that do and offering opportunities to apologise and put things right, but we will not accept anyone being made to feel deliberately uncomfortable by others. We have a zero-tolerance attitude towards bullying and a commitment to educate all students so that they can avoid dangerous situations. We also take our time to understand each unique situation and would encourage parents and carers not to take everything that they are told at home at face value. **Please engage with the school positively and do not rush to judgement.**

School Communication

We will continue to offer regular weekly updates and additional guidance if appropriate. The weekly Friday bulletin will return as of September, outlining extra-curricular opportunities and celebrating student success across the school. Please write to the school with any new email addresses and telephone numbers so that you can keep up to date with what is happening in school.

If you need to contact the school, please be aware that teachers are unavailable between 8.20 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. each day and cannot easily respond to telephone calls or emails. We are always happy to communicate with parents and carers if there is an issue or significant development, but it is important to note that school staff will be working with students before and after those times too. They teach, meet with and safeguard students, attend meetings and plan. We always try to respond to any query within 3 working days, as is common in most professional organisations. Parents or carers should never arrive at school expecting to see a staff member without a prearranged appointment. Parents and carers doing so will be asked to leave and to arrange an appointment, if appropriate, at a later date and time. Parents or carers should never demand immediate action or behave in an aggressive or threatening manner. We will limit interaction with any parent or carers conducting themselves in this way.

If you have any concerns regarding a safeguarding issue, please make sure that reception staff are aware, and we will always act very quickly.

Mobile Phones, Use of Social Media & Positive Behaviour

Our rules regarding mobile phone are very simple. **They are not allowed to be used, seen, or heard anywhere on the school site or at any point during the school day. Students do not have a right to use their mobile phones on the school site.** Any student failing to follow this very clear rule will have their phone confiscated and a letter will be sent home explaining our concern. School provides an opportunity for respite from constant communication and allows student to talk and interact in person. To avoid confusion there are some other very simple rules regarding mobile phones, communication and social media use:

- No student has permission to film or record any other member of the school community. Any student doing so will rightly be sanctioned.
- Filming or recording other members of the school community without their consent is illegal.
- It is completely unacceptable to share pictures, request pictures or bully others online. The school has a zero-tolerance attitude to this form of behaviour.
- It is unacceptable to make unkind, illegal, or prejudicial comments about other people based upon their characteristics, background, or circumstances. Actions in or outside of school have consequences.
- As a parent, discuss how your child uses their phone and make sure that they do not behave in any of the unacceptable ways identified above. We emphasise that students should not be bystanders, nor should parents. There is national research into the dangers of letting children keep phones in their room overnight and it is always sensible to discuss what your child is looking at online. These are key parental responsibilities that will help you to safeguard your child.
- We will always offer support and guidance and regularly share E-Safety alerts via the school website. Please be aware that there are clear legal age limits on many forms of social media.
- Discuss the unrealistic nature of relationships and human bodies that are frequently shared online and use internet controls at home to protect your child from unregulated online content.
- Please also encourage your child to think carefully before making negative or thoughtless comments about other students via social media. Parents have responsibility for regulating social media use and for ensuring that there are consequences for offensive and unkind behaviour. As parents or carers, I would also encourage you to avoid negative, inaccurate, or provocative comments on social media about other members of the school community. We will continue to offer guidance to students about how to de-escalate situations and to avoid confrontation with others. It is important that parents support us in this and set a good example.
- Many of the negative situations that we address in school are caused by students making poor decisions in relation to social media use outside of school. Please act upon the advice given above and be aware that the behaviour of your child outside of school is a parental responsibility. We will offer support and guidance, but it is a parental choice as whether or not children use mobile phones and access social media.
- Please can I also encourage you to talk at home about the importance of behaving in a considerate and socially responsible manner on the way to and from school? Parents and carers are responsible for the behaviour of their children as they travel to and from school and it is important that you discuss how to treat other members of our local community respectfully.

If you are unsure about any of the above points or need help in order to safeguard your child and to understand the dangers of social media and how to keep your child safe online, please contact the school and we happily offer guidance and support.

Uniform and Piercings in September 2022

Our uniform is intended to be affordable, fair and to ensure that all students are members of the same, equal community. Please be aware that we have a selection of high-quality uniform available that has been donated by parents and carers. Please contact the school if you need any additional support with uniform.

For those of you who will be buying new items of uniform this summer, the uniform requirements are set out in our uniform policy at this link: [Uniform | Durham Johnston School](#)

We have emphasised to all students that uniform needs to be worn in a particular way, and we are committed to be fair and consistent in the language that we use in relation to uniform, and in how we apply the rules for all students. It is always important to review school uniform and we intend to discuss what students wear with representative groups from each year group as the year progresses. To avoid unnecessary issues that can impact upon student learning, please ensure that clothing is not made from stretch lycra or knitted fabrics. Uniform should be functional, appropriate, and allow all students to move around the school freely.

In addition to the above uniform advice, **can I request that if your child is intending to get their ears pierced in the summer that they do so at the very beginning of the summer holiday, so that their piercings can heal and be safely removed for September?** Piercings are not allowed in school and students are fully aware of this fact. These are small things, but our rules are very clear, and students should avoid decisions that will impact upon their ability to learn and progress when they return in September.

Form Tutors and senior staff will work with all students on a weekly basis to ensure that uniform issues are not limiting opportunities to be part of our community or to learn.

Positive Developments & School Improvement

We are very excited about the year ahead and are committed to improving the quality of education and opportunities for personal development for all students in the year ahead. The following overview outlines a selection of some of the key things that we have planned and areas for ongoing development:

- Our first Christmas Carol Service at the Cathedral since 2019.
- The return to a full programme of trips and visits including Pompeii, French and German study visits, our longstanding ski trip and cross curricular visits to the Cathedral and other sites of local importance.
- A full wellbeing week, including our Battlefields study visits and trips to Malaga and Howtown.
- The return of our long running Culture Festival.
- A new Relationship & Sexual Education curriculum with an information evening for parents and carers.
- Information evenings for all Year Groups, involving celebrations of student success.
- The return of our Art exhibition evening.
- The creation of a Durham Johnston 'world map' identifying the wide variety of backgrounds and countries that our students and families have joined the school from.
- An extensive alumni programme, where we invite parents, carers, and form students to share information about their jobs and careers and what they wish they had known at school.
- Support for local charities and organisations, as chosen by our House System.
- Increased support for all students with a special educational need.
- The reintroduction of form representatives and a new school council, or committee.

It has been another unusual and challenging year for all members of our school community, and we will work very hard across the summer to make sure that our students have the guidance, structure and support that they need to be successful in 2022-23. Please check the school website regularly and follow us on Twitter for updates and encourage your child to check their school email account and Microsoft Teams regularly. For our part, we will continue to find ways to improve our communication and to engage with parents and carers as education continues to be affected by the changing national picture. Whilst the pandemic has been very challenging, recent national reports referencing child poverty in the Northeast of England and the ongoing cost of living crisis suggest another difficult year. However, each student is equal when they cross our threshold, and we will always work hard to make each day at school rewarding and positive.

I hope that you and your family have a good summer and that we can all approach our return in September with a sense of shared purpose and anticipation.

Thank you for your ongoing support, it is greatly appreciated by all school staff.

Yours faithfully,

**A J O'Sullivan,
Headteacher**



Headteacher: A J O'Sullivan BA, MA
Deputy Heads: J Bell BSc, MA
R McFadden MEng
M J Wright BA

Director of Resources: H Charlton BA, MBA
Assistant Heads: A Lennon BA
S A F McArdle BSc
N Weaver BA

