



14<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Dear Parent or Carer,

## Year 8 Curriculum Information

We were pleased to welcome our Year 8 students last week to what is the start of an exciting new year in their education. As they step up to Year 8, this first term is important in terms of establishing good habits, engaging in extracurricular clubs and making new friends. We will be emphasising to them the importance of making a positive start to the year and making the most of all the opportunities available to them as I am sure you will be at home.

Students have now completed a full week of their timetable and will have had lessons in all of their new subjects. They will have met all of their classroom teachers who will have explained to students about the courses they will be following and this letter aims to provide that same clarity for parents and carers.

## Curriculum in Year 8

Our Key Stage 3 curriculum is taught over 3 years and aims to be broader, richer and deeper than the national curriculum. The content in each subject is coherently planned and carefully sequenced to allow students to acquire deep knowledge, develop skills and build solid foundations for future learning.

Further details of the content that Year 8 will be studying for each of their subjects during each half term can be found on the 'Curriculum' section of the school website (<https://durhamjohnston.org.uk/learning/year-8-curriculum>). The time allocation in hours for all subjects taught in Year 8 is given below.

Subject	Hours per week	Subject	Hours per week
English	3	Computing	1
Mathematics	3	Art	1
Science	3	Design Technology	1
Languages	4	Food and Textiles	1
History	2	Music	1
Geography	2	PE	2
Ethics and Philosophy	1		



**Headteacher:**

A J O'Sullivan BA, MA

**Director of Resources:**

H Charlton BA, MBA

**Deputy Heads:**

J Bell BSc, MA  
R McFadden MEng  
M J Wright BA

**Assistant Heads:**

A Lennon BA  
S A F McArdle BSc  
N Weaver BA



## **English in Year 8**

This year for English, students are taught in two largely parallel bands. In both bands the classes are numbered 1-3 with a/b/c classes being parallel.

All students follow the same curriculum plan and cover the same topics. Our specialist teachers differentiate lessons to include appropriate levels of support and challenge based on the needs of the students in their class. Setting is reviewed at key points over the course of the year to ensure students are in the most appropriate class, taking into account assessment data, attitude to learning and teacher judgement.

In the week beginning Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September, all Year 8 students will take NGRT (National Group Reading Tests) and NGST (National Group Spelling Tests) assessments. These assessments do not require any preparation at home and will take place on computers in one IT lesson.

## **Mathematics in Year 8**

For Mathematics, students are taught in two largely parallel bands. This is different from the 3 parallel bands in Year 7. In P band the classes are numbered 1 to 5 and in Q band they are numbered 1 to 4.

All students follow the same curriculum plan and cover the same topics. Our specialist teachers differentiate lessons to include appropriate levels of support and challenge based on the needs of the students in their class. Setting is reviewed at key points over the course of the year to ensure students are in the most appropriate class, taking into account assessment data, attitude to learning and teacher judgement.

## **Languages in Year 8**

The study of languages is important at all levels of society and as such features significantly in our Year 8 curriculum. The ability to communicate in multiple languages can give students an advantage in their future career and support success in an increasingly global business community. Equally, the study of languages can help foster positive attitudes to people from different backgrounds, promote tolerance and empathy and develop an understanding of different cultures and traditions.

At the end of Year 7, students chose two languages to study from French, German, Latin, Mandarin and Spanish. Students also have the opportunity to study additional languages this year in lunchtime masterclasses.

## **Pastoral**

Mr Blake is Year Leader for Year 8 with Mr Humberstone as Assistant Year Leader. They will oversee pastoral matters for Year 8 and support students over the next 4 years. Mr Simpson is Key Stage Lead for Key Stage 3. Form tutors are always the first point of contact for any pastoral matters and we encourage regular signing and reading of student planners as an effective method of communication between home and school. Please keep the Form Tutor informed of any issues outside of school that may impact upon a student's life in school. In their first assemblies in Year 8, Mr Blake will talk to the cohort about what it means to be a Durham Johnston pupil and then in the coming weeks pastoral staff will focus upon academic excellence, equality and public service. The pastoral programme in form period will echo the themes each week.

## **Attendance**

As we emerge from the pandemic, we would like to reiterate to all parents and carers the importance of students attending school. Every missed school day is a lost opportunity for students to learn and can mean missing out on key building blocks of knowledge. This can have a detrimental impact on their future learning. High attendance is directly linked to improved exam performance, which in turn opens doors to future learning opportunities and better employment prospects. Attending school also helps students to develop friendships, social skills and cultural awareness. High attendance at school is not just valuable, it is fundamental to future success.

## **Reporting**

Form tutors and subject teachers will be monitoring students carefully over the course of this first term and, where needed, will put the appropriate support, pastoral care or intervention in place. Year 8 students will receive their first progress report in the w/b 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023. This will provide parents and carers with an update as to how students are progressing in each of their subjects.

## **Year 8 Parents Information Evening**

We are hosting our Year 8 Parents Information Evening for the parents and carers of Year 8 students on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September. The information evening offers an opportunity to gain an overview of the school's approach for the year group, with a focus upon the year ahead, the curriculum we offer and the pastoral support we provide. The session will be led by senior school staff and there will also be opportunities to meet with senior teachers and ask individual questions at the end of the session.

If you have any questions relating to the content of this letter, please contact the relevant member of staff from the list below.

**Mathematics** – Mrs Urwin (Subject Leader for Mathematic).

**English** – Mrs Clark (Subject Leader for English).

**General Curriculum** – Mrs McFadden (Deputy Headteacher).

**Pastoral Concerns** – Mr Blake (Head of Year 8)

Yours Faithfully,

Mrs McFadden  
Deputy Headteacher