

20th July 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

Just before we all begin the well-earned summer break, I wanted to outline some key information to support the start of Autumn term in September.

Start of Autumn term

This year we will have a staggered start to the new school year. Tuesday 1st September is an INSET day so school will not be open to students. Year 7 and Year 11 will return to school on Wednesday 2nd September and Year 8, 9 and 10 will return on Thursday 3rd September. Students should arrive ready to go in to tutor at 0845 in full school uniform. The morning will be spent working through arrangements for the term ahead such as sorting timetables and sharing expectations. In addition, all students will have a year group assembly. Students will go to normal lessons from period 3 onwards. Term dates for Academic Year 2026-27 can be found here [Term Dates – The Dean Academy](#). Please note there is a slight amendment to the previously published dates.

Staffing

We have some staff moving on at the end of this academic year – I would like to thank them all for everything they have done during their time at the school and wish them all the best for the future. Colleagues leaving this term are Miss Kesteven, Head of Year 9 and English teacher; Miss Bawol, Art teacher; Mrs Trigg, Cover Supervisor; Mr Worgan, ADP Technician and Mrs Manley, Teaching Assistant. Whilst we are extremely sad to see these colleagues leave, we are excited that they are going on to take their next steps and wish them all the very best (including retirement for Mr Worgan who has been at TDA for 19 years!). It is also an exciting time for us as we have many new staff joining us in September, including the return of Mrs Jones from maternity leave who will be taking over as Head of Year 10 (current Year 9). We also have Mrs Cooke taking on a new role as Medical Officer, which means that Mrs Hooper will be on reception full time. We also look forward to welcoming the Class of 2031 - another large incoming cohort of Year 7s – to our TDA community.

Standards – Uniform

Please can we ask for your support to ensure that your child arrives in September in full school uniform – full details of which can be found on our website. If you require support in purchasing uniform please do get in touch - please do not wait until September when your child returns to school to reach out. On arrival, if any child does not have full uniform, we will make items available to them until they can be purchased. If students refuse to borrow uniform, we will follow our behaviour procedures.





**THE DEAN
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Hannah Rowlands, Headteacher

It is essential that for a strong start students feel ready and look smart, representing TDA with pride and as such a reminder of our uniform expectations:

1. Students are welcome to wear any PLAIN BLACK footwear, which includes trainers. This footwear should NOT include any coloured logos or marks and soles must also be black.
2. Students may wear ONE NOSE STUD only (no nose rings/"dangly" nose piercings) and these MUST be removed for PE.
3. Students may wear STUD EARRINGS only – please no hoops, "dangly" earrings or bars. Again, these MUST be removed for PE.
4. Students are **NOT** permitted to wear any of the following:
 - a. LEGGINGS (other than with a note from a medical professional for exemption which must be shown to the school) or other tight, jean style trousers – students that arrive in school in leggings or trousers that are not appropriately tailored trousers will be expected to borrow some of our stock of uniform or parents will be asked to bring alternative trousers in to school.
 - b. HOODED JUMPERS (either with a zip or without) – if students choose to wear these to school, they will be confiscated and parents/carers will be asked to collect them from reception.
 - c. Nike pro shorts or "hot pant" style shorts for PE.

It is important that parents/carers support us in upholding our uniform expectations so thank you in advance for this.

Equipment

From September we will be introducing more formal daily equipment checks to our tutor time. The equipment that students are expected to have, as a minimum are:

- Black or blue pen
- Green pen
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Eraser
- Highlighter
- Calculator
- Dry wipe marker pen



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Students **MUST** carry this in an appropriate pencil case and bring it to school in a bag. We have increasingly seen students not bringing bags or pencil cases to school and as such they are not fully prepared for their lessons. Thank you for ensuring that your young person embodies our core value of “being ready”.

Attendance

Habits and expectations around attendance have shifted over the last 2-3 years. We are seeing more students absent from school whereby previously they might have come in. We all have a part to play in promoting the importance of attending school every day. We are looking to mark the start of the new academic year with a significant push on attendance and we would appreciate your support to help ensure that we work together to ensure your child attends well. Those first days back really matter. Evidence from a recent Children’s Commissioner report showed that children who miss days 2, 3 and 4 of the new term for unauthorised reasons had a predicted overall absence of almost 45%, or 31 days across the term.

Mobile phones

Following the overwhelming success that we have had with our Year 7 & 8 mobile phone procedures this academic year, and in light of the new DfE statutory guidance prohibiting the use of smartphones for students throughout the school day, we are amending our mobile phone policy so that from September ALL students in EVERY year group will be expected to hand their phones over at the start of the day to store in a lockable case that will be stored within their tutor room.

To facilitate this, we are reducing period 5 from 65 mins to 60 mins and introducing a 5-minute tutor period at the end of the day for the students to collect their mobile phones. Please note, the school day will still end at 3.15 p.m.

Following on from much of the parent voice we have conducted this year and last year, parents and carers overwhelmingly say they wish their child to bring a phone (if they have one) to school as a safety measure for the journey between school and home – I absolutely understand and appreciate this and so students are welcome to continue bringing their phones to school. However, in light of the research that has come out recently about the significant impact that smartphones and specifically some of the apps on them, have on the mental health and wellbeing of young people, we believe that taking such measures are in the very best interest of our students.

If your child chooses to not hand in their phone at the start of the school day, you will be contacted, initially to establish whether the young person has brought a phone to school or not. If a young person is found to be refusing to hand in their phone or is found with a phone on their person, our behaviour procedures will be followed. If students have a phone on their person, it will be confiscated and they can collect at the end of the school day. If it is



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confiscated a second time, we will ask parents/carers to collect the device from reception. More information about mobile phones and schools can be found [Mobile phones in schools - GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk). We will be updating our mobile phone and behaviour policies to reflect the changes and these will be submitted to our Local Governing Board for ratification early in the new academic year.

We do appreciate that some students need their phones on their person throughout the day for medical reasons and will of course make exemptions for these students – if you believe this relates to your child please contact info@thedeacademy.org to inform us of this prior to the inset day on 1st September and a meeting will be arranged with your child's Head of Year or a member of SLT.

Parent/Carer Engagement

I am keen to meet as many members of the community as possible in the Autumn Term. If you have views to share with me, I warmly invite you to do so. Our first meeting will be on **Thursday 17th September 9.30am – 11am**. I am aware that for working parents this may be tricky so we will be planning a second event later on in Term 1 after school.

I am also very keen to establish a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and will be looking for volunteers to work alongside me to enhance our relationship with the local community and fundraise for new facilities and equipment needed in the school.

Local Governing Board

We are looking to expand our current LGB with both Co-Opted Governor and Parent Governor positions available. We will be sharing more information regarding this early in September, but if you – or anyone else that you know of – are interested in joining our LGB, please do send me an email hrowlands@thedeacademy.org.

Finally, I would like to thank the students, staff, parents and wider community for all of their help and support, both personally and professionally, this academic year. I am very much looking forward to what we can all achieve in the next academic year and wish you all a very restful, and well earned, summer break.

Yours sincerely

Hannah Rowlands
Headteacher

HR/TW – End of year letter-200726



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