

DARWEN VALE HIGH SCHOOL

An Aldridge Community Academy 

July 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to you to detail our end of term arrangements and the arrangements for the start of the new academic year 2023/24. We will shortly be publishing our final parent newsletter of the year; "1894". This will describe the many activities, opportunities, and successes of our school community this year.

In the short term I would like to thank parents for your support this academic year. This week has been a busy one even by Vale standards. Our students have undertaken their GL assessments (a nationally standardised test in English, Maths and Science), enjoyed their "Rewards Day" during which Vale visited the Trafford Centre, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Blackpool Zoo and enjoyed a range of exciting school-based activities including an inflatable assault course!

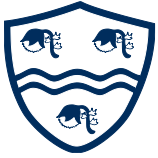
Our trip to Normandy left on Monday 10th July and judging by the photographs we have been sent they are having a great time! In school students in KS3 have been learning about important PHSE (Personal and Social and Health Education) issues in sessions with the Brook.

Thursday 13th July was our turn to host a visit from our patron Sir Rod Aldridge. Sir Rod prides himself on being a self-made man from humble beginnings and this is where our Aldridge attributes derive from. Sir Rod firmly believes that with creativity, passion, problem solving, determination, teamwork and risk taking anyone can be successful. Sir Rods visit coincided with an event you may have read about in the Lancashire Telegraph. DVHS has pioneered an initiative called the Access Project in the Northwest. This project is focused on making outstanding universities accessible for children in more deprived areas. Only 15% of students from areas of high deprivation go on to university. Over 40 students at Vale will receive 1-1 coaching in specific subjects but also mentoring in study skills and other key life skills. The partnership is with the prestigious Queens College (Oxford University) and will include the opportunity to undertake residential visits.

The week beginning 17th July will comprise of our annual Sports Days. The focus of these will be on active participation over elitism! Students will have opportunities to compete in dodgeball, rounders, basketball and netball, athletics, and relay. The activities will be spread across Monday to Thursday with year 7 starting the ball rolling on Monday and concluding with year 10 on Thursday. We will close to students on Friday 21st July at 12.30pm. Any students who will require a packed lunch as part of their free school meal allowance should order a "grab bag" via their form tutor by Tuesday 18th July.

Moving forwards, as an Academy we have decided to change the ties that students will be wearing to feature a coloured stripe of the House that they belong to. This will only be for the new cohort of Year 7 students and the current Year 9 going into Year 10 cohort who would have been changing to a new tie going into KS4 anyway, all other year groups will not change until they progress into KS4. House ties will only be available to purchase from school via Parent Pay. Please ensure that for September your child is fully equipped for learning, and in the correct uniform and appearance. Our policy on equipment and uniform can be found on our website.

As you will be aware we entered a period of consultation about the school day on 12th June. The consultation period is required to last 30 days. The consultation period concluded on Friday 14th July. We have received less than ten separate pieces of feedback on the proposal from all our stakeholders. We recognise that the earlier start time might initially cause some issues for some staff or students in getting to school on time.



DARWEN VALE HIGH SCHOOL

An Aldridge Community Academy 

However, we are confident that given the duration of consultation and the period before the changes commence, parents, staff and students will be able to take reasonable steps to ensure that they arrive to school in good time for our new 8.30am start time. To reiterate, we proposed the change to meet the DFE requirement for schools to provide a full 32.5-hour week and to create additional curriculum time for our Vale Values course.

As a result, the new school day will be as follows:

DVHS new school day			
Time	KS3	Time	KS4
8:30-9:15	Tutor	8:30- 9:15	Tutor
9:15-10:15	P1	9:15-10:15	P1
10:15-10:30	Break	10:15-11:15	P2
10:30-11:30	P2	11:15-11:30	Break
11:30-12:30	P3	11:30-12:30	P3
12:30-13:00	Dinner	12:30-13:30	P4
13:00-14:00	P4	13:30-14:00	Dinner
14:00-15:00	P5	14:00-15:00	P5
		15:00-15:45	P6 Mon, Tues, Thurs

Parents and students should also note that in addition to the slight change of start time we have amended our break and lunch times to consider the significant increase in student numbers due to the ever-growing popularity of Vale amongst local parents. We will welcome another 240+ students in September and have had to field over 50 appeals for places at Vale from Year 6 parents who did not secure a space for their child. As a result, we are moving to a split break and lunch to support a range of considerations including, staffing, safeguarding, queuing and general comfort of our students. Key Stage 3 comprises years 7, 8 and 9 and Key Stage 4 includes years 10 and 11.

We look forward to welcoming back students on Wednesday 6th September at the following times and line up location:

Year Group	Arrival Location	Arrival Time
7	Peace Garden	8:25
8	Amphitheatre – Darwen Side	8:25
9	STEM Garden – Roadside	8:25
10	Amphitheatre – Blackburn Side	8:25
11	STEM Garden – School Side	8:25

Yours sincerely,



Mr M Little
Principal