

Parent A-Z

2024-25



**DARWEN
VALE**

An Aldridge Community Academy 

Introduction from the Principal

Dear Parent/Carer,

I'm delighted to welcome you to this parent information booklet, or "Parent A-Z" as we call it. At Darwen Vale our aim is for teachers and parents to work closely together, supporting each other and reinforcing the key expectations for our students as they move up through the school. Working in **partnership** with parents is key to our success, and this document is the best digest we can make of all the systems, procedures, routines, and responsibilities that will make this partnership work. It is therefore essential reading for all staff and parents, and please do keep it as a reference guide to refer to over the year.

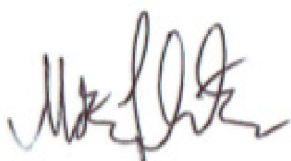
As you will know, Darwen Vale is a growing 11 – 16 Academy situated in Blackburn with Darwen. And from September 2025 will proudly be part of the Darwen Aldridge 6th form, otherwise known as D6. D6 is an ambitious, collaborative and close-knit 6th form, which now combines the very best of Post 16 learning across 3 sites in Darwen: Darwen Vale High School, DACA the Studio School (DAES). Our aim is to be a true community 6th form that serves and empowers young people across our local area. By delivering competitive advantage for each of our learners, we strive to equip students with the knowledge, skills, independence and entrepreneurial spirit to support their ambitious next steps, and to live happy and fulfilling lives.

We opened in our new state-of-the-art building in 2012 and our facilities are second to none. We currently have close to 1200 students in total in Years 7 - 11.

Our vision at Darwen Vale is to ensure that all students achieve, both academically and socially, beyond personal expectations and prior attainment, that they experience an outstanding and enjoyable education and can sustain the life of their choice whilst making a positive contribution to their communities. We will achieve this ambitious vision through addressing three key areas; firstly, by continually striving to improve outcomes for all young people; secondly maintaining a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning; and finally, by continuing to develop high standards of behaviour, life skills and an entrepreneurial spirit in all our students that will equip them for their future after leaving Darwen Vale.

Please remember that, in response to requests, we are now using social media to convey our news and messages as well as the parent app MCAS and Student Portal. You can follow us on twitter at www.twitter.com/darwenvale and on Facebook www.facebook.com/darwenvale

Yours sincerely



Mr M J Little

Principal

This Parent A-Z is reviewed annually before the start of the new school year. Every effort is made to ensure that it is accurate and up to date; during the course of the year, however, it is inevitable that certain things will change in response to events and feedback. The academy will always make every effort to communicate significant changes, but inevitably, there are things which are missed. The most up-to-date policies and information will be available on the school website www.darwenvale.com

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A

Absence

- Excellent attendance is a must if a child is to be successful in their education. However, if your child is ever too ill to come to school, we request that you advise school by 8:00am on the first day of absence on the following MS Form via our school website:
- <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=SNTGlrSI0kWeCLuPfbDZfIuoG2BajEdjihLZ3Fa2LZURDISNDVWUzdVWk9ESlhZNVdGNzIXWlJGSi4u>
- In the event that a child's absence is below 90% we are required to seek medical evidence justifying any sickness absence at all (even just one day) so we would ask in advance that parents support us with this.
- If your child has a medical appointment, please give 24 hours' notice of this and medical proof in order to authorise the absence. Medical proof can be either an appointment letter/card, a prescription or text message from the medical professional. We cannot allow a student to leave the school without written proof for a medical appointment and therefore a phone call on the day will not be sufficient.
- Under no circumstances will requests for holiday in term time be granted so please do not make them.
- If you have any queries about attendance please contact the Attendance Officer Dawn Houghton, on 01254 223000 ext 225 or via email at dhoughton@darwenvale.com.

Assessment (see also progress and targets)

There is a regular cycle of assessment at Darwen Vale, which aims to reinforce learning, provide an opportunity to identify areas of weakness and prepare students for public exams. In KS3, there is a cycle of assessment bespoke to different subject areas, following our process of Data Driven Instruction (DDI) which ensures that in lessons gaps in students learning are identified immediately and closed in a timely manner. All students will sit summative assessments each term, in each subject, and these are more regular at KS4 and include mocks in each of Year 10 and 11. KS3 students will also sit formal GL assessments in English, Maths, Science (Year 8 & 9 only for Science) and reading tests twice a year. Year 7 will sit baseline assessments in September, alongside their CATs.

Attendance

Students are expected to maintain their attendance above 95%. Attendance to school is directly linked to student attainment, therefore regular attendance to school significantly increases your child's opportunity of reaching their full potential. The academy will pursue those families not committed to sending their child to school regularly (<90%). This can include parental attendance contracts, referrals to external services and court prosecution (*including fines*). We do not do this to be punitive, but to protect the long-term interests of the student. Support can be provided to families to address issues around attendance. It is important that this is a collaborative approach and there is a shared understanding of the value of attending school every day.

B

Biometrics

- Darwen Vale uses a biometric system for staff and students to pay for food and drinks at our canteen. Biometrics are used by nearly half of all schools in the UK and provide the quickest and safest means for running these systems.
- School based biometrics tend to take measurements from a scanner or reader that adequately capture the uniqueness of the source but do not capture a complete image. With such an approach the original cannot be reconstructed from the data. It is not possible to recreate a student's actual fingerprint image from what is in effect a string of numbers.
- The fingerprint value is stored in a database on one computer at the school in a proprietary format (an actual copy of the fingerprint image itself is NOT stored). Only the fingerprint reader and storage computer can recognize this format. Fingerprints and their derived values are not transferred to any other systems.
- Biometric data is not stored in the same databases as all the personal information recorded by the school and anyone using those other databases will not have any access to the biometric data. When your child leaves Darwen Vale the data will be automatically deleted.

Break time

Students have a mid-morning break of 15 minutes every day. Food and drink can be purchased from the Canteen. Hot and cold snacks are available. Students cannot pay by cash but should instead "top-up" their biometric account in advance via Parent Pay (see Parent Pay for more information). Students are permitted to eat purchased food and packed lunches in the Canteen only. No food can be eaten in the libraries, corridors or outside.

KS3 Break – 10:15 – 10:30am

KS4 Break – 11:15 – 11:30am

Breakfast Club

Breakfast runs each morning for all students from 8.05am to 8.30am in the Canteen. This club is run on a request only system and is not available for the whole student population. Should you wish your child to attend breakfast club you should apply in writing to Mr. Bradley (Designated Safeguarding Lead and Assistant Principal). This is a limited space offer and the academy's decision on admittance is final. Food is available in the club.

Bullying

Students, staff and visitors to the Academy will be treated with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times. Physical or other forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, are not tolerated in or outside the academy and are dealt with in the academy's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

To prevent instances of bullying the academy will:

- seek to identify bullies
- address the needs of individual children, both bullies and victims
- provide a consistent response to bullies and their victims
- implement a system to deal with different degrees of bullying
- secure clear agreement among all the adults involved on the steps forward

- provide time during the academy's in-service training programme to discuss issues associated with children's physical, social and educational well-being
- disseminate the academy's anti-bullying policies and procedures throughout the Academy

If parents suspect that their child is being bullied, the Academy would like to know as soon as possible; there are certain signs that a parent will spot before they become obvious in school. The first point of contact is the form tutor or the relevant Head of Year. It is much better to raise an issue early, than to let it fester.

C

Communication

To ensure strong partnerships between school and home we want to make sure that communication is as streamlined as possible.

Telephone

We understand that often parents want to speak to somebody in person. For different enquiries we endeavour to deal with parental enquiries within differentiated time periods. See the following list for who to contact in different circumstances and the time frame we will endeavour to respond in.

For attendance concerns where you need to know if your child has arrived at school or not, please ring 01254 223026. If the phone line is busy - email attendance@darwenvale.com We will respond within 1 hour.

For urgent safeguarding (this means when there is an immediate risk to a child) concerns please contact 01254 223020. If the phone line is busy - email safeguarding@darwenvale.com We aim to respond within 30 minutes.

If you need to speak to or get a message to your child before lunch or the end of the school day and the phone lines are busy, please contact your child's Head of Year on the email below.

If you do choose to leave a voicemail, we will endeavour to respond to all voicemails within 1 hour.

Zoe Wood Y7	zoe.wood@darwenvale.com
Adam Smith Y8	Adam.smith@darwenvale.com
Darren Adcroft Y9	dadcroft@darwenvale.com
Kerry Boardman Y10	kerry.boardman@darwenvale.com
Claire McKenna Y11	claire.mckenna@darwenvale.com

Email

If your concern is non-urgent - something that we can deal with within 48 working hours - then an email is more helpful for us to deal with and will ensure that our phonedlines are not blocked preventing urgent calls being answered.

If you are unsure who to contact, then you can email ckenyon@darwenvale.com. You will receive a response confirming we have received the email and our office team will ensure that your message reaches the right member of staff. Your concern will be addressed within 48 working hours.

Face to face

For face-to-face meetings you will need to **make an appointment** to meet with the right member of staff. Follow the guidance on telephones and email above to make the appointment. Our reception staff will be unable to make any on-the-day meetings.

Getting the right person

Attendance

If, as a parent, you wish to discuss your child's attendance at school you should contact the Attendance Officer, Dawn Houghton. Her contact details are attendance@darwenvale.com or 01254 223026. She can help with register queries, advice on whether your child is well enough to attend school and any other concerns you may have regarding your child's attendance.

Should you feel that your concerns are not being addressed and need to speak to a member of the school's Senior Leadership team then please contact Andrew Bradley the SLT lead for attendance on abradley@darwenvale.com or 02154 223000 ext. 205

Pastoral concerns about your child

Any concerns about behaviour or issues your child might be experiencing will be best dealt with by our Year teams, and your child's form tutor in the first instance.

Year 7

Tutor Group	Form Tutor	Email
7C1	Mr Baines	Phil.baines@darwenvale.com
7C2	Mr Welsh	Elliot.welsh@darwenvale.com
7H1	Miss Smith	Molly.smith@darwenvale.com
7H2	Miss Walsh	Molly.walsh@darwenvale.com
7S1	Mr Bebro (Mon, Wed, Th, Fri) Miss Marks (Tuesdays)	Curtis.bebro@darwenvale.com Ami.Marks@darwenvale.com
7S2	Miss Mahmood	Nmahmood@darwenvale.com
7T1	Mr Knowles	Sknowles@darwenvale.com
7T2	Miss Ramsey	Kramsey@darwenvale.com

HOY 7, Zoe Wood, zoe.wood@darwenvale.com

Should you feel that your concern has not been dealt with effectively or to your satisfaction then you should escalate your communication to the SLT lead for that Year group. For Year 7 this is Victoria Sharkey, victoria.sharkey@darwenvale.com

Year 8

Tutor Group	Form Tutor	Email
8C1	Miss Miller	Paige.miller@darwenvale.com
8C2	Mr Hardicker	Callum.hardicker@darwenvale.com
8H1	Miss Mitchell	jmitchell@darwenvale.com
8H2	Mr Holding (Mon, Tu, Th) Miss Marks (Wed & Fri)	Thomas.holding@darwenvale.com Ami.Marks@darwenvale.com
8S1	Miss Catterall	Candida.catterall@darwenvale.com
8S2	Mr McKay	Alex.mckay@darwenvale.com
8T1	Miss Kerr	Ebony.kerr@darwenvale.com
8T2	Miss Marsden	rebecca.marsden@darwenvale.com

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HOY 8, Adam Smith, Adam.smith@darwenvale.com

Should you feel that your concern has not been dealt with effectively or to your satisfaction then you should escalate your communication to the SLT lead for that Year group. For Year 8 this is Mr A Bradley abradley@darwenvale.com

Year 9

Tutor Group	Form Tutor	Email
9C1	Miss Sri Udom	supatra.sri-udom1@darwenvale.com
9C2	Mr Smalley	Dsmalley@darwenvale.com
9H1	Mr Woodall	Harrisen.woodall@darwenvale.com
9H2	Miss Gregson	jgregson@darwenvale.com
9S1	Miss Morris	emily.morris@darwenvale.com
9S2	Miss Middleton	abby.middleton@darwenvale.com
9T1	Mr Dobson	adam.dobson@darwenvale.com
9T2	Miss Fletcher	caroline.fletcher@darwenvale.com

HOY 9, Darren Adcroft dadcroft@darwenvale.com

Should you feel that your concern has not been dealt with effectively or to your satisfaction then you should escalate your communication to the SLT lead for that Year group. For Year 9 this is Freddie Redfern freddie.redfern@darwenvale.com

Year 10

Tutor Group	Form Tutor	Email
10C1	Miss Patel	Rumanah.Patel@darwenvale.com
10C2	Miss Fernby Sallows	zoe.fernsby-sallow@darwenvale.com
10H1	Miss Javid	sanah.javed@darwenvale.com
10H2	Mr Adam	Aadil.adam@darwenvale.com
10S1	Mr Davis	Aaron.Davis@darwenvale.com
10S2	Miss Reynolds	Charlotte.reynolds@darwenvale.com
10T1	Ms Sterland	Vsterland@darwenvale.com
10T2	Miss C Price	Cara.price@darwenvale.com

HOY 10, Kerry Boardman, kerry.boardman@darwenvale.com

Should you feel that your concern has not been dealt with effectively or to your satisfaction then you should escalate your communication to the SLT lead for that Year group. For Year 10 this is Diane Hayes, Dhayes@darwenvale.com

Year 11

Tutor Group	Form Tutor	Email
11C1	Miss Loudonsack	Rebecca.loudonsack@darwenvale.com
11C2	Miss Williams	Katie.williams@darwenvale.com
11H1	Miss Hilton	Grace.hilton@darwenvale.com

I1H2	Mrs Fielding (Tue-Fri) Miss Raseta (Mon)	Kfielding@darwenvale.com/ Georgina.Raseta@darwenvale.com
I1S1	Mr Hartley	Whartley@darwenvale.com
I1S2	Mrs Little	Sarah.Little@darwenvale.com
I1T1	Miss Venn	Hollie.Venn@darwenvale.com
I1T2	Miss Brewster	Charlotte.brewster@darwenvale.com

HOY Year 11, Claire McKenna claire.mckenna@darwenvale.com

Should you feel that your concern has not been dealt with effectively or to your satisfaction then you should escalate your communication to the SLT lead for that Year group. For Year 11 Miss L Price, Lauren.Price@darwenvale.com.

Should you have a serious concern about student behaviour, detentions or uniform issues you should contact Mrs Marsland our Assistant Principal for Behaviour and Culture sophie.marsland@darwenvale.com

Timetable/options

Any concerns around the options process or timetable issues should be directed to Ruth Cull our Vice Principal (Curriculum), Ruth.Cull@darwenvale.com or 01254 223000

Subject concerns

Any concerns you might have about your child's progress in individual subject areas should be directed to the Head of that subject, or in larger curriculum areas in the first instance the assistant Head of that Faculty

Maths	Mr Bennett	daniel.bennett@darwenvale.com
English	Miss Ashcroft	RAshcroft@darwenvale.com
Science	Mr Tattersall	jake.tattersall@darwenvale.com
Art	Miss Ramsey	KRamsey@darwenvale.com
Computing	Miss Mitchell	JMitchell@darwenvale.com
Humanities	Mr Hodgkinson	jake.hodgkinson@darwenvale.com
MFL	Miss Catterall	Candida.Catterall@darwenvale.com
PE	Mr Baines	Phil.Baines@darwenvale.com
Drama	Mr Bebro	Curtis.Bebro@darwenvale.com
Technology	Mrs Walsh	Molly.Walsh@darwenvale.com
Music	Mr Dobson	adam.dobson@darwenvale.com

SEND

Should you have any questions or queries regarding a special educational need that your child has or if you suspect that your child has a special educational need then you should direct your query in the first instance to Mr Broderick SBroderick@darwenvale.com who is the SENDCO. If after contacting Mr Broderick, you feel that your query has not been resolved then you should contact Mrs Sharkey, the Director of Inclusion Victoria.Sharkey@darwenvale.com

Tutor time

Tutor is used for a range of pastoral and academic activities. Should you wish to discuss any issue around tutor time then please contact Mr Redfern Assistant Principal at Freddie.Redfern@darwenvale.com

Extra-curricular

Darwen Vale offers a comprehensive list of extra-curricular activities that take place at lunchtime and after school. You can see our current club timetable on our school website or by emailing Mr Redfern (Assistant Principal for Personal Development) at Freddie.Redfern@darwenvale.com

Careers

Any queries regarding Careers and transition to post-16 education or employment can be directed to Mr Miele (Careers Lead) at nmiele@darwenvale.com.

Trips and visits

Each trip has a nominated staff leader and any queries regarding the trip should be directed to that member of staff. Should you have any further concerns or issues regarding specific trips please contact Mr. Bradley (Assistant Principal) for further information abradley@darwenvale.com

Contact Details (ours)

Address: Darwen Vale High School, Blackburn Road, Darwen, BB3 0AL

Telephone: 01254 223000

Email: ckenyon@darwenvale.com

Website: www.darwenvale.com

Twitter: @DarwenVale

Facebook: www.facebook.com/darwenvale

Mr M Little, Principal: School Mobile: 07930 451881 **available during school hours only.**

Contact Details (yours)

It is vital that we have accurate phone, email, and postal address details for all of you. It is also vital you keep school up to date with who has parental responsibility for the child. We send all important updates **via email** and through MCAS (My Child at School) to parents/carers, so it is vital that you keep your email address updated on our records. Please update us whenever anything changes by either registering changes on MCAS or by emailing Kirsty.Taylor@darwenvale.com

Counselling & Student Therapy

As part of our pastoral support at Darwen Vale, we offer a range of counselling, therapeutic and psychological support to students and parents.

Students are offered these services based on referrals by parents, academy staff or care workers, or by self-referral from students themselves. If you think your child would benefit from the services available, please contact Mr Broderick, SBroderick@darwenvale.com or 01254 223000 ext 261.

External partners

The academy also works closely with a range of external providers to provide more tailored support for those who require it. A selection of our external partners are listed below, however, this is by no means exhaustive and we are continually growing and building our community links for therapy and counselling.

- Child Bereavement UK
- ELCAS
- Educational Psychology
- SEND Support Service

- SENDIAS Advisory Service
- Mental Health Support Team
- Brook
- School Nurse
- Paediatricians
- Occupational Health and Therapy
- Social care and family support workers

Curriculum

KS3

Subject	Number of weekly lessons	Subject	Number of weekly lessons
English	4 (5 in Year 9)	Art	1
Mathematics	4	Design Technology	1
Science	4	Physical Education	2
Religious Education	1	Performing Arts	1
Geography	2	Computing	1
History	2	Character Curriculum	x3 45-minute sessions
French	2 (1 in Year 9)		

GCSE

Compulsory Subjects	Number of weekly lessons	Subject Options - 3 lessons of each a week
GCSE English (Literature & Language)	5	Option A
		Option B
GCSE Mathematics	5	Option C
GCSE Science (Separate or Combined Sciences)	5	
Physical Education	1	
Character Curriculum including one session of RE.	x3 45-minute sessions	

More detail about the curriculum at all Key Stages and detailed information about what your child will learn and when can be found on the Curriculum tab on the school website or by contacting Ruth Cull, Vice Principal.

D

Detentions

- There are a variety of detentions implemented daily to sanction the appropriate level of behaviour displayed by a student:
 - 20 Minute detention (Set by departments) for not completing homework or missing equipment
 - 30-minute detention (3:00-3:30pm or 3:45-4:15pm if in Period 6 Daily)
 - 60-minute detention (3:00-4:00pm Wednesday and Friday only)
- For all detentions we operate a policy of “same day detentions”. This is accepted as best practice as it ensures the sanction is clearly linked to the misdemeanour and issues are tackled without delay and do not roll over into the following day.
- If a student is given a detention for that day their parent will be informed via notification on our parent app MCAS, and text message typically between 2.00pm and 2.30pm.
- If a student receives a detention after 2.15pm it is too late to notify you so it will roll-over to the following day in order to give you reasonable notice (unless you give your consent for it to take place the same day).
- Staff will notify parents of the specific details of a detention where they deem appropriate. This will occur via email, phone call or the comment on MCAS. For example, a staff member may not deem it necessary to alert you to a detention related to a student’s uniform being incorrect. Students are responsible for informing their parents of the reasons for all detentions. Staff communication to home is unlikely to happen until the afternoon (as teachers are teaching during the day). We would ask that parents be patient to find out the reason behind the detention and **do not call reception for the detention details unless there is an emergency**. Parents are encouraged to email their child’s Form Tutor or Head of Year to request any further details related to behaviour incidents.
- On rare occasions, some students receive two detentions on the same day. Where this happens, our Behaviour Policy states that the student will sit only the one detention, however students’ points totals are closely monitored by their Head of Year and if a student receives more than -9 in one day, a parent meeting is likely to be arranged. The Behaviour Policy, and more explicit details, are available on our website.
- If a student truants any detention, they will be placed in the higher-level detention the following school day. Should they truant a 60- minute detention, they will be placed in Seclusion the following day.
- Lateness in the morning (arriving after 8:33am) results in a 30-minute detention.
- If your child is seen dropping litter around school, they may be given litter-picking duty (community service) in lieu of a detention.

At the risk of stating the obvious, the best option here is for students to not get detentions! We have high expectations of behaviour at Darwen Vale and this disciplined, orderly environment benefits everyone. Schools in which poor or disruptive behaviour is tolerated quickly become dysfunctional and it is the students who suffer. By choosing Darwen Vale and signing our home / school agreement, parents have given their explicit support for these high expectations and, when detentions are issued, we ask you to trust and support the teacher who has issued it and to address the problem yourself with your child at home. We are extremely grateful for the support parents give us in this area and can see that it is making a massive difference each day.

E

End of the day

- Students must go straight home and not “hang about” outside the academy or near local shops / bus stops. This is both for their own safety and out of courtesy to our neighbours.
- If students are found to be causing anti-social behaviour in local parks and shops in uniform, either before or after school they will be sanctioned in line with our Behaviour Policy.
- Any parents who wish to collect their child should wait outside the relevant entrance and should not ask to wait in the academy itself.
- If parents wish to collect their child by car they must enter via the Main Car Park and follow the one-way system. They should not park in front of the school as it will cause a significant road safety risk or instead arrange to meet them at a pre-determined place on one of the local streets.

Enrichment

- Darwen Vale students benefit from a comprehensive programme of enrichment activities designed to stretch their thinking, broaden their horizons, and teach them more about the world.
- Extracurricular clubs take place during lunchtimes and afterschool.
- Enrichment is optional for all students, but on some occasions, there will be targeted, catch-up sessions which your child will need to attend. If this is the case, a letter will be sent home to inform you of this.
- In order to get the most from all enrichment sessions, behaviour, punctuality and effort must be exemplary at all times. Any lapses in behaviour will be dealt with in the same way as during normal lesson time.

Equipment

Students should have the following equipment with them every day at school:

- Student planner (provided to students on the first day of the academic year)
- A bag
- 1 x clear pencil case with the following **compulsory** contents:
 - 2x black writing pens
 - 1 pencil
 - 1 rubber
 - Ruler (15cm or 30cm)
- Optional but recommended contents:
 - 1 green writing pen
 - 2 highlighter pens
 - 1 glue stick
 - 1 Maths set (including compass and protractor)
 - 1 Casio scientific calculator

Exam entries

- Entries for external exams will be made for Year 11 students in January, via our exams officer. GCSEs are done in Year 11, and linear. Home language exams will be sat in Year 11 for GCSE. Non-taught subjects (for example home languages) can be sat at Darwen Vale. Please contact our

exams officer Kirsty Taylor (Kirsty.taylor@darwenvale.com) if you are interested in entering your child for a home language exam.

- Certain courses contain an element of non-exam assessment (coursework). Milestones and submission deadlines are published well in advance and must be adhered to. If the submission deadline is missed, candidates will either have to pay for their exam entry or will not be entered at all.

F

Food

- *Break time Catering:* Students can buy snacks in the Canteen during break time when you add credit to your child's account. Don't forget to set up alerts on Parent Pay so you can top up when the balance is low. If they do not have credit on their account, they will not be able to purchase snacks. To help students with budgeting and provide certainty for parents that no unauthorised expenditure can be made, we do not offer credit facilities, so no student is able to purchase items with insufficient funds. There is also a daily spend limit so students cannot spend of all their allowance at once.

Remember that parents and carers can view daily expenditure on the Parent Pay app, you can also request a printout of what your child has eaten each day from school reception.

- *Lunch:* We offer students a range of hot and cold options during lunch service which can be paid for in the same way as break time food by topping up on Parent Pay in advance. You can pay on Parent Pay anytime or apply for free school meals – see Free School Meals.
- *Packed lunch:* If you prefer, your child can bring a packed lunch to school with them. However, please be aware that we do not allow nuts in packed lunches due to student allergies.
- *Sweets/fizzy drinks/crisps:* Fizzy drinks, chewing gum, family sized packets of crisps (e.g. Tubes of Pringles) and sweets containing nuts are banned from Darwen Vale.
- *Dietary Requirements:* The academy is committed to accommodating different dietary requirements. For example, we offer vegetarian, vegan and gluten free options. If your child has an allergy or special dietary requirement, please email Caterlink directly with this information (4419-dvhs@caterlinkltd.co.uk) and they will do his very best to accommodate.

Form Tutors

The form tutor should be your first port of call for any queries regarding your child's academic progress or other school issues. You can contact them via email using the contact details under C for Communication.

Free School Meals

- A number of parents at Darwen Vale will qualify for what is known as "Free School Meals". Like all academies, it is very important for us that we have the maximum number of eligible parents registered for FSM because it will increase the funding we receive from the central government and local authority. We therefore encourage parents to apply if they feel there is a possibility they might qualify.
- As Darwen Vale operates a biometric system, your child will never be singled out as a receiver of free school meals. It is not possible to tell which child is paying for lunch when they use the

biometric tills, and which is registered as getting lunch for free. This is another advantage of the biometric system.

- As well as being able to provide a healthy, hot meal every day for your child, free school meals funding also allows the school to buy additional classroom resources and support towards the cost of uniform, so we encourage all parents who believe that they are eligible to make a claim to do so.
- Your child qualifies for Free School Meals if you or their other parent/carer are receiving:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Child Tax Credit-provided you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income that does not exceed £16,190 (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs)
 - Universal Credit and have an income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £7,400
- How to apply for FSM?
 - Online application: <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-meals>

H

Home / Academy Agreement

This is a very important document which all students and parents have signed prior to joining to Darwen Vale. It sets out what can be expected from all parties and will be kept on a student's file and referred to as necessary. It can be found and returned at the back of this booklet or via the online form when you first joined us.

Homework

At Vale homework is an essential part of learning at Darwen Vale. It is vital that it is done to the best of every student's ability to increase their independence and organisational skills.

It is set in the following **approximate** daily quantities:

Key Stage	Core Subjects (Maths, English, Science)
Years 7 & 8	45 – 90 minutes per day
Year 9	1-2 hours per day
Year 10 and 11	1.5 to 2.5 hours per day

Homework will be marked and returned promptly, at which point students are expected to review their work and make corrections in green pen, unless this is completed in an online format. This is a very important learning tool, as it is here that students are getting personalised help aimed at what they need to learn. This routine applies to all Darwen Vale students.

Students who do not submit their homework, or do not complete homework to a high enough standard, will receive detentions as per the Darwen Vale behaviour policy. Homework clubs are available during the week to support students who struggle with completing their homework. All homework will be recorded on Bromcom and available to see on MCAS and Student Portal.

An updated copy of our homework policy is available on the school website.

House System

Our house system is designed to promote a sense of belonging and mutual support for all students. Every student and member of staff belongs to one of our four houses, each of which is named after a different role model, from a wide variety of backgrounds. To increase a sense of belonging we have recently introduced new house ties.

Curie (green) – Marie Curie, Scientist and the first woman to win a Nobel Prize.

Holmes (blue) – Dame Kelly Holmes, British athlete.

Shakespeare (yellow) – William Shakespeare, playwright, and poet.

Turing (red) – Alan Turing, Mathematician, and computer scientist.

Every year, the houses compete for the Darwen Vale House Cup, which is awarded to one winner at the end of the Summer Term.

Students can earn house points in every area of school life. The positive house points they receive in lessons, in the community and for their approach to independent study will all count towards their house total. Consistently demonstrating the Academy's core values is the most straightforward way an individual student can support their house.

In addition, there is a busy calendar of house competitions, with a different Aldridge Attribute focus each half term. All students are encouraged to enter house competitions.

I

Internal Seclusion

- As part of an effective behaviour management system, Darwen Vale, like all successful academies, runs an Internal Seclusion room. The purpose of this room is to isolate students from their peers when they have committed a serious breach of the behaviour policy, sending a clear message to them and to their classmates that the academy will not tolerate such behaviour and that the choices they have made have consequences.
- Students in Seclusion will be expected to complete work throughout the day, so as not to fall behind in their learning.
- Students booked into seclusion will be from 8:45 – 3:45pm and parents/carers will be contacted to advise of their child being booked into seclusion.
- Any student sent to Seclusion from a lesson will also automatically receive a 60-minute SLT detention on the next available day (Wednesday or Friday).

- In the highly unlikely event that a student behaves badly within Seclusion their stay will be extended or they may even be subject to seclusion offsite or a Suspension (which Seclusion is of course designed to avoid where possible).

L

Learning Support

- At Darwen Vale we believe all children will achieve academically beyond personal expectations and prior attainment'. For this to happen, some children will require further support. For some the support needed will be clear from day one. For others, individual needs may surface as the weeks progress. We are committed to ensuring all children's needs are met and will constantly assess this throughout the year. If you feel at any point during the year that your child needs some additional support please feel free to contact the academy and speak to Mr Broderick (SENDCo), or email sbroderick@darwenvale.com
- To establish initial levels of need the academy will refer to the data provided by feeder schools, the KS2 SATs results, and our own internal baseline assessments and observations. These will help us determine groups of students that may need extra Literacy or Numeracy support, or exam access arrangements, such as 25% extra time. Programmes of intervention and a tailored curriculum may then be established for some students.
- At Darwen Vale we are committed to inclusion for all. This includes students for whom English is not their first language. We believe that students from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds have a right to an outstanding education and should be able to take part in the full range of social, educational, sporting, creative and academic activities on offer at Darwen Vale. Where support is needed for this, we assess the child and put together a programme of language development tailored to them. We will consider their individual curriculum, which lessons they can currently access fully, which lessons they need support in, and which lessons they may need staggered integration into.
- We also support students who may need assistance because they are experiencing difficulties with their behaviour or require additional emotional help by our learning mentoring service. This entails learning mentors developing and delivering a bespoke programme, which includes working with parents, the students, and staff to tackle any issues.
- To understand the support we offer at Darwen Vale, please view the SEND Offer on our [SEND page](#). The BWD local offer can be found on their [website](#) too.

Line Up

Students are required to line up at the beginning of each school day, and at the end of break and lunch time if they are outside. This is to ensure a calm and orderly entrance into the building and maintain high expectations of uniform which will be checked on entry into the building.

Students must be in their line up location no later than 8:30am at the start of each school day.

Line up locations at the start of the school day:

Year 7 – STEM Garden- Road side

Year 8 – Amphitheatre -Darwen side

Year 9 – Amphitheatre -Blackburn side

Year 10 – STEM Garden- School side

Year 11 – Peace Garden

At break and lunchtime students must re-enter the building according to which lesson they have next. If their lesson is on the ground floor they will enter via the Peace Garden, if their lesson is on the 1st floor they will enter via the fitness suite aligning doors, and if their lesson is on the 2nd floor they will enter via the science laboratory aligning doors.

M

Medical Needs & Medical Care Plans

- Your child's medical welfare is of paramount importance to all staff at Darwen Vale. If your child has a medical condition this must be declared to the school through the admissions forms. If your child develops a new medical condition while at school, you should contact reception and the relevant Head of Year. A review form will then be sent to you annually to ensure the information we hold is reviewed; however, it remains parental responsibility to notify us of changes to needs and medication.
- If your child has a serious medical condition this may require a referral to the school nurse or development of an individual healthcare plan. Individual healthcare plans are reviewed on an annual basis and will be shared with all staff working with your child at the academy.
- If your child has allergies or food intolerances, you should notify the school in the same way as above. Our school canteen caters to all allergies and intolerances; however, your child will be responsible for making an appropriate choice based on the listed allergens.
- All medication taken on site must be signed in at reception with a signed consent letter from the parent.
- Students who require an asthma inhaler or EpiPen **must** always carry these with them. A spare should be given to the First Aiders at reception. The academy carries its own spare supplies of inhalers and EpiPens for use in an emergency.
- Depending on their need, your child's picture and details may be added to the 'high needs medical' list. This list is a safeguarding measure to ensure full staff awareness of serious medical needs onsite. It may be displayed in staff areas of the academy and will routinely be sent out to all teachers.
- Please note that toilet passes will only be issued to students who can provide explicit medical evidence (e.g. a doctor or consultant letter) supporting the request.
- If you have any queries or concerns regarding the medical provision at Darwen Vale, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Sharkey Director of Inclusion at victoria.sharkey@darwenvale.com

Medical appointments (external)

- It is always best to make medical appointments outside academy hours. If this is not possible, students must bring in the appointment card/letter from their GP, hospital, or other medical professional in advance of the date to show to the Attendance Officer. The parent/carer can also email this information to the attendance officer at dhoughton@darwenvale.com.
- If the Attendance Officer agrees with the necessity to miss school, then they will countersign the letter and the student will present that at reception where they will need to sign out. It must be noted this will count towards an authorised absence.

- Please note that the reception team cannot collect students from lessons for appointments. Please ensure your child is aware of their appointment time prior to the start of the school day and arrange to meet them at reception at a specified time.
- The Attendance Officer Ms Dawn Houghton can be contacted on 01254 223000 ext. 225 or via email at dhoughton@darwenvale.com

Meetings with Teachers/Head of Year

All appointments with teachers must be made **in advance** and requests for ad hoc meetings will not be granted. This has always been our policy and is standard practice in secondary schools.

Please refer to C for communication to contact the member of staff directly to arrange a meeting.

Mentoring

Our Learning Mentor team provide Social, Emotional and Pastoral (attendance and behaviour) support for targeted students within the Academy. Priority is given to Looked After Children (LAC), students with EHC plan objectives, students on the SEN register for Social, Emotional or Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

Mentoring sessions are scheduled 1:1 sessions occurring once per week for each student on the mentoring register. Each session takes place in the 1st half of a lesson and lasts 25 minutes. Sessions are scheduled in advance.

All mentoring sessions follow a structured 3-part plan much like the Darwen Vale 4-part lesson. The 3 parts of each session consist of:

- *Reviewing the Past* – Mentor and student identify instances of success or previous difficulties since last session.
- *Working Together* – Mentor plans an engaging activity which helps the student make progress towards their personal goals or objectives.
- *Looking Forward* – Mentor and student identify potential obstacles and discuss strategies to overcome

In addition to mentoring sessions, Learning Mentors may recommend further interventions including homework support club, restorative conversations with students or staff, in-lesson support, social and emotional support, attendance support, anger management or social skills programme.

MCAS (My Child At School)

- The My Child At School (MCAS) parent app is an application enabling the user to view their child or children's school data on their smart phone.
- In summary the app provides:
 - Access to real timetable, calendar and attendance.
 - An insight into to parents on their child's schoolwork (homework, topics etc...)
 - Communication facilities to improve contact between parents and schools
 - Instant access to published reports and letters
 - Behaviour points totals and details of all detentions and negative house points
 - School announcements etc...

- If your child is in year 8-11, you can log in to the account using your email address and the password you set when you first set up the account.
- If your child has started in year 7 in September 2023, then you will receive communication from school about how to get set up on the MCAS platform.

Mobile Phones

- Mobile phones are **not to be seen or heard at Darwen Vale**. The Governors have set this policy in light of the serious behavioural and safeguarding risks to the students that bringing phones to school will create.
- If a student brings a phone into school and is caught using it or it makes a noise, it will be confiscated, a 30-minute same day detention will be issued, and the mobile phone returned after the detention. If this is persistent parents/carers will be asked to come in and collect the mobile phone.
- Students may not 'hand-in' mobile phones at reception and collect them at the end of the day unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- The only exception would be if there is a genuine safeguarding reason for a student to have a phone. A parent who can identify such a reason may email the Assistant Principal for Behaviour via sophie.marsland@darwenvale.com but it is unlikely the request will be granted unless it is an extremely serious case.
- We would ask that students plan ahead and make any arrangements for after school with you in advance. Please refrain from calling reception to ask us to pass a message to your child during the day unless it is an absolute emergency as a significant amount of staff time is absorbed in delivering these messages.



Online safety

It is vital that parents and staff work together to safeguard our students, to educate them on the dangers that come with being online and be aware of the repercussions that come with being involved in cyber bullying either directly or on the periphery. Comprehensive information regarding E-Safety can be found on the school website.

Definition

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of communication technology such as mobile phone text messages, social media apps, e-mails or websites. This can take many forms, for example:

- Sending threatening or abusive text/instant messages or e-mails, personally or anonymously
- Making insulting comments about someone on a website, social networking site (e.g. Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat) or online (blog or YouTube)
- Making or sharing derogatory, inflammatory, or embarrassing videos of someone via mobile phone or email (such as 'Happy Slapping' videos or physical/verbal assaults).

Cyber bullying is a critical issue which can be harmful for the young person involved. It is important that parents and carers understand the way young people communicate with others, the potential risks and implications to online behaviour.

Signs of Cyber bullying

- Secretive behaviour as you approach the computer, such as rapidly switching off screens, or attempts to hide online behaviour, such as empty file history
- Appears nervous when receiving a text, instant message, or email
- Difficulty sleeping
- Unexplained weight loss and gain
- Spending much more or much less time texting, gaming or using social media
- Low self-esteem
- Avoiding formerly enjoyable from social events
- Not wanting to go to school and/or avoiding meeting friends and schoolmates
- Suddenly behaving differently at home
- Not doing as well in school

E-safety at Home

- Discuss with your child what sites and apps they like and explore them together
- Discuss with your child what sites and apps are age-appropriate
- Be positive about what you see online but also be open about any concerns that you may have as a parent/carer
- Keep the computer in a public place in the house

Advice to Parents/Carers:

Cyberbullying can be really difficult for a child to deal with therefore it is important that parents/carers keep calm and listen to their child about any concerns they may be experiencing. It is important to regularly check-in with your child. If they are experiencing cyberbullying you should contact external organisations that can provide help and support such as Childline, and contact Darwen Vale via your child's form tutor to report it as soon as possible.

The following guidelines outline how parents/carers can talk to their child about online safety:

- Always use privacy settings
- Always respect others - be careful what you say online
- Be careful what pictures and videos you upload. Once a picture or is shared online it cannot be taken back.
- Only add people you know and trust to friends/follower lists online. When talking to strangers, keep your personal information safe and location hidden.
- Save the evidence. Always keep a copy of offending emails, text messages or a screen grab of online conversations and pass to a parent or a teacher.
- Make sure you tell an adult you trust, for example, a parent, a teacher or the safeguarding lead, or call a helpline such as Child Line on 0800 1111 in confidence.
- Learn the functions of how to block someone
- Most social media services and other sites have a button you can click on to report bullying. Doing this can prevent a bully from targeting you and others in the future.

Parent controls are software and tools which you can install on your phone or tablet, game consoles or laptops and your home broadband. *Parent controls help you to:*

- Plan what time of day your child can go online and how long for
- Stop them from downloading apps they are too young for
- Manage the content different members of the family can see
- Help you to block or filter the content you see when you're searching online

There are always different methods to keep your child safe online. Darwen Vale will ensure that all parents and carers are informed of the procedures in place in the Anti-Bullying Policy to deal with all forms of bullying including cyber-bullying.

It is essential that all parents and carers are involved in resolving the issues that stem from cyber bullying because this can help to strengthen their child's self-confidence and restore a sense of emotional safety. Important and useful information can be found on the following sites to provide support to parents, carers and children:

Cybersmile Foundation: <https://www.cybersmile.org/>

Thinkuknow: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk - 0808 800 5002

Childnet: www.childnet.com

The Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Kidscape: <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Young Minds: <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

P

Parents' Evenings

Parents' evenings are compulsory for parents to attend, as directed by the Department for Education, and they are a vital part of the partnership between school and home. Parents' Evenings will either involve individual meetings with your child's teachers or a presentation from senior staff. Parents will be contacted by email and letter in advance of their child's parents' evening, but the dates for the year are provided below:

Year 7

- Parents Evening Thursday 16th January 2025, 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Year 8

- Parents Evening, Thursday 15th May 2025, 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Year 9

- Parents Evening Thursday 7th November 2024, 4:00pm – 6:00pm
- Options Evening, Thursday 13th February 2025, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Year 10

- Progress Evening Thursday 17th October 2024, 6:00pm – 7:00pm
- Parents Evening, Thursday 24th April 2025, 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Year 11

- Progress Evening Thursday 12th September 2024, 6:00pm – 7:00pm
- Parents Evening Thursday 12th December, 4:00pm – 6:00pm
- Parents Evening Thursday 20th March 2025, 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Open Evenings

- Y6 Open Evening – Thursday 26th September 2024, 5:00pm – 8:00pm
- Y6 New Intake Evening – Thursday 3rd July, 5:30pm – 7:00pm

Parent Forum

The parent forum has grown rapidly last academic year and meet half termly to discuss school-wide issues and suggestions for improvement. The dates for Parent Forum for academic year 24/25 are below. Please contact Mrs Kenyon, CKenyon@darwenvale.com for more information:

- Tuesday 1st October 2024 6:00 – 7:00pm
- Tuesday 19th November 2024 6:00 – 7:00pm
- Tuesday 28th January 2025 6:00 – 7:00pm
- Tuesday 11th March 2025 6:00 – 7:00pm
- Tuesday 13th May 2025 6:00 – 7:00pm
- Tuesday 24th June 2025 6:00 – 7:00pm

Parent Pay

Parent Pay is the app which Aldridge Education uses to handle all payments from parents/carers. To top up your child's food and drink allowance, to pay for a trip or to pay for the school tie is all through Parent Pay.

All new Year 7 parents will receive their Parent Pay log in prior to starting at Darwen Vale. These are normally given at the Induction Evening or sent out.

For any queries relating to Parent Pay or for a new log in please contact our Finance Officer Janet Greenhalgh at janet.greenhalgh@aldridgeeducation.org or 01254 223000 Ext. 214.

Personal, Social & Health Education

PSHE is integral to the curriculum at Darwen Vale and all students, Year 7-11, will study a vast array of topics during morning tutor time which we call our 'Character Curriculum'. This curriculum covers both statutory content and content that we believe is contextually applicable to our students. Further details regarding our 'Character Curriculum' can be found in the subject area on the academy's website.

Progress and targets

- In KS3, students are given a pathway, based on their primary school KS2 scores (or CAT assessments completed on arrival if they didn't do SATS) and using FFT20 as a measure. We also use internal assessments at the beginning of Year 7, plus nationally recognised Cognitive Ability Tests (CATS) and Reading Tests, to check the accuracy of the data we are given.

- At each assessment, students' progress will be assessed compared to their target. Students get individual feedback after each assessment, which shows their progress in each aspect of that subject/unit.
- Parents of KS3 and KS4 students will receive three Parent Reports a year. These reports will outline your child's progress, attainment and attitude to learning.
- Success depends on doing the right course, as well as hard work. A level and GCSE options are therefore very important, and every student will have personalised advice on which subjects to take. Sometimes this advice is not what students want to hear, but we promise always to give the best possible advice and guidance to our students; this includes telling them unwelcome news if necessary. Occasionally, this will mean refusing entry to a course, or not entering a student for an exam if our professional judgement tells us that a student is on the wrong track.

Punctuality

Students must arrive at the academy by the correct time each day. Students are expected to be in their relevant line up location at 8:25am. Any student arriving after that time will be issued with a 30-minute detention for the same day, which they must attend.

Please make sure students do not arrive to school earlier than 08.30am. If early, students will be told to wait outside until the school opens.

From lesson-to-lesson students have 3 minutes of transition time to get from one lesson to the next. If they are late to lesson after the 3 minutes of transition time they will be issued with a 30-minute same day detention, which they must attend.

R

Reception

Parents cannot wait in reception for their child at the end of the school day. This is for the safety of the whole school community, but also because it is not sustainable in a school of 1200 students. Instead, we ask that you wait outside for your child at a spot which you pre-arrange with them.

The school would be very grateful if parents could avoid asking us to deliver messages and items to their children during the school day, except where there is an urgent medical or safeguarding reason. It absorbs a significant amount of staff time, and our numbers are too big to accommodate these requests. It is also not teaching students the important life-skills of organisation and planning. Students must learn to pack their bags carefully the night before and make any after school arrangements with their parents in advance.

We also ask you to be respectful to all staff.

Rewards

At Darwen Vale High School we reward and recognise our students. Positive behaviour will be rewarded through earning House Points. Our houses are, Curie, Holmes, Shakespeare and Turing.

Examples of the kinds of behaviours which will be rewarded and celebrated are:

- **Students attitudes to learning** including students' approach to classwork and classroom communication. Students can earn +1, +3 or +6 for demonstrating these behaviours.
- **Students respect for the Academy and wider community.** Students can earn +3 or +6 for demonstrating these behaviours.

Where students go above and beyond in demonstrating and embodying the Aldridge Entrepreneurial Attributes of CREATIVITY, TEAMWORK, PASSION, RISK TAKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, DETERMINATION they will be rewarded with a Golden Ticket in their lesson, which can be used to purchase an item of break food from the Canteen and be awarded +10 where this happened parents/carers will be notified, and the student will be entered into an end of term prize draw.

Form tutors will keep track of individual house points as well as those awarded to the whole tutor group and House. Earning House Points enables students to access rewards at the end of term. Students' House point's totals will be shared with parents and carers at the end of each half term and can be accessed daily through MCAS to enable positive conversations and clear target setting. At the end of each term the House with the highest net points will get to enjoy an early lunch.

At the end of each half term and term there will be a rewards assembly for each year group to acknowledge the successes of our students and present awards for the half term. Rewards at these assemblies include certificates, amazon vouchers, Just Eat vouchers, and our Bronze, Silver and Gold pins.

As well as the above students are rewarded by being given the opportunity to attend rewards trips. Their invitation to attend and opportunity to pay using Parent Pay for the rewards trips will be based on their total house points and attendance, and then on a first come, first served basis.

S

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a critical part of keeping your child safe. The academy has a very comprehensive safeguarding policy, which outlines all the actions we will take to help all our young people (*see website for policy*). To help support your child in the academy, please be aware of the following avenues for your child to inform us of any safeguarding issues:

- PSHE - We have a personal, social and health education curriculum that addresses many aspects of safeguarding, including cyberbullying and internet safety, but more importantly how your child can develop their understanding, skills and knowledge to minimise risk in many different situations.
- Pastoral system - Our pastoral care, led by Mrs Marsland – AP Behaviour and Culture, has an excellent team of Heads of Year, Assistant Heads of Year and Form Tutors readily available to help. The Form Tutor will always work on developing an excellent relationship with students and parents / carers to be the first port of call.
- Supporting “vulnerable” students - we are understanding that there are certain cohorts in the student body are more vulnerable and provide an exceptional inclusion support to help them throughout their time at Darwen Vale, with a generous allocation of therapists, learning support assistants, learning mentors and access to outside agencies where required.
- Involvement with external agencies - we work closely with a number of organisations, which includes, Early Help, social services, prevent, and the police to provide additional support

The academy designated safeguarding lead is Mr Bradley (Assistant Principal). Mr Bradley can be contacted via email at abradley@darwenvale.com

Safeguarding - some key legal requirements

All schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 in the exercise of their functions to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

This duty is known as the Prevent duty. Indicators of extreme behaviour includes some of the following:

- Verbal comments - praising ISIS or Jihad: praising extreme figure heads (e.g. Hitler); discussing other religions in a disparaging way
- Peer actions - refusing to work with others owing to their religion/beliefs
- Personal beliefs - extreme views on foreign policy; claims they should fight for their people abroad
- Communications - the use of social media to publicise extreme views; drawing inflammatory images (e.g. swastikas)

What is the prevent strategy?

Prevent is a government strategy designed to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorist or extremist causes. Prevent is a crucial element to safeguarding therefore it is essential that Darwen Vale, its staff and governors safeguard children from radicalisation and extremism. This means that we have to protect our students and we have a duty to recognise concerns, maintain an open mind and report.

What we look for and who to report

At Darwen Vale we understand that extremism and radicalisation can be a sensitive topic. We expect all staff to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British Values and to educate all our Darwen Vale children on these values.

British values include:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty and mutual respect
- Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

It is Darwen Vale’s responsibility to ensure that all staff are trained to recognise and report concerns and report disclosures with sensitivity. All concerns and information will be reported and documented to our safeguarding lead, Mr Bradley.

Senior Leadership Team

Role	Area of responsibility	Name
Principal	School improvement/Leadership and management	Matthew Little
Vice Principal	Quality of Education	Ruth Cull
Vice Principal	Pastoral	Alex Venables
Assistant Principal	Safeguarding and Attendance	Andrew Bradley
Assistant Principal	Behaviour and Attitudes	Sophie Marsland
Assistant Principal	Data and Assessment	Lauren Price

Assistant Principal	Teaching and Learning	Diane Hayes
Assistant Principal	Personal Development	Freddie Redfern
Director of Inclusion	Inclusion	Victoria Gilham-Sharkey

Social Media & Internet Use

As outlined in the Darwen Vale Behaviour Policy, inappropriate social media use or online activity can result in internal seclusion (I.S.), Suspension (FTE), or Permanent Exclusion (PEX) depending on the severity of the incident.

Misuse of social media instances includes but is not limited to:

- Personal comments about teachers or students
- Misappropriation of photographs of teachers or students
- Impersonating staff or students on social media
- Posting malicious accusations about staff members
- Posting homophobic remarks
- Posting racist remarks
- Posting sexual remarks or images
- Adding students into “group chats” to target them.

Whilst instances such as the above may occur via fake accounts or accounts created by non-Darwen Vale students, this will not matter when it comes to disciplinary action, as knowledge of these accounts without reporting them, or any active agency at all (even just following the account) is strictly against the academy behaviour policy.

Social, Emotional Mental Health Escalation (SEMH)

At Darwen Vale, we have introduced a SEMH escalation process, which starts with a referral made by Head of Year, Teachers, parents or the student. The student will then be triaged, and an appropriate package of support planned.

Packages might include; after-school drop-in, quiet reading/study space, form time drop-in, well-being workshops, quiet canteen space, nurture group referral, talk for teens sessions, CBT workshops, sensory circuits, rebalance room, mentoring, counselling and referral to external services.

All packages will take place over a half term and be reviewed to support a next steps plan. For further information on SEMH referrals please contact Mr Broderick SENDCo at sbroderick@darwenvale.com.

Student Portal

All students have access to the Student Portal website.

This is the platform where a student can view their progress in real-time through the web browser or mobile application.

Student Portal gives students instant access to their information such as their school timetable, home learning tasks, achievement points, attendance, and news about the latest school events.

T

Timings of the Day 2024/25

Time	KS3	Time	KS4
8:25-8:30am Line Up			
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

Term Dates 2024/25

Autumn Term 2024		
Monday	2 September – 3 September	School closed for Staff Training
Wednesday	4 September	School opens for Years 7,11 and 12
Thursday	5 September	Open for all pupils
Friday	18 October	School closed for Staff Training
Half term Monday 21 October – Friday 25 October 2024		
Monday	28 October	School re-opens
Monday	2 December	School closed for Staff Training
Friday	20 December	School closes

Christmas Holiday			Monday 23 December – Friday 3 January 2025
Spring Term 2025			
Monday	6 January		School re-opens
Friday	14 February		School closes
Half term	Monday 17 February - Friday 21 February 2025		
Monday	24 February		School opens
Monday	24 March		School closed for staff training
Friday	4 April		School closes
Easter Holiday			Monday 7 April – Monday 21 April 2025
Summer Term 2025			
Tuesday	22 April		School re-opens
Monday	5 May		Bank Holiday
Friday	23 May		School closes
Half term	Monday 26 May - Friday 30 May 2025		
Monday	2 June		School re-opens
Thursday	17 July		School closes to students for the summer
Friday	18 July		School closed for Staff Training

Travelling to and from school

Having a safe journey to and from school is important for all Darwen Vale staff and students. Students are encouraged to make this journey by foot or by bike. We have bike storage facilities outside Darwen Vale, but students should bring their own bike lock.

School also offers a free minibus pickup and drop off service. This is reviewed on a yearly basis with students lower school receiving priority. There is an application process to achieve a place on the school bus as there are severely limited numbers and allocation of places is completely at the discretion of the Principal or delegated member of staff. All enquires for the service should be sent to contact@darwenvale.com

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Uniform

We are proud of our young people and encourage them to be proud of their school and their community. One key aspect of this is that all our students in KS3 and KS4 will wear a smart uniform. This promotes safety, a sense of community and demonstrates that students are ready to work. Students must be impeccably always presented in the correct school uniform.

Please familiarise yourself with the uniform and equipment policy on our website for a full list of compulsory uniform, recommended and optional items or equipment.

Where can I buy uniform?

- Gray's, Northgate, Blackburn Tel: 514257
- Derek Whittaker & Co, 3 Waterloo Pavilions, Church Street, Blackburn BBI 5AL Tel: 676047
- Snazzy's, 22- 24 Bridge Street, Darwen Tel: 07980353104

Ties

- Y7 – Y11 House Tie
- Replacement ties are available via Parent Pay

Uniform Pointers

- Students must have their shirts always tucked in
- Ties must be clipped on professionally and not pulled off other students
- Leather school shoes are compulsory - no trainers, ballet-pumps or canvas shoes. Trainers cannot be worn at any time except in PE lessons.
- No jewellery (except watches)
- Nail polish, false eyelashes and make-up are not allowed
- Sensible, 'professional' haircuts for boys and girls
- School bags must be black or navy and fit for school purpose
- Coats must be plain black, dark grey or dark blue coat without any visible logos
- No hats are allowed
- Any changes to uniform due to weather will be decided by the Principal only and will be communicated with parents/carers via email
- If a student arrives at school with incorrect uniform, we will contact you and, with your permission, send the student home to resolve the issue. If we are unable to contact you the student will be provided with the item to borrow, as well as a 30 minute same-day detention. Should the student refuse the borrowed item they will be placed in internal exclusion. We cannot have students in incorrect uniform in lessons and around the school for the obvious reason that it will lead to more general slippage in uniform standards.



Home-Academy Agreement

	The Academy	Parent/carer(s)	Students
We Aim High	<p>We provide a positive environment for every student to achieve at the highest level by supporting, rewarding and recognising talent.</p> <p>We provide opportunities for your child to develop their leadership skills in all aspects of the Academy.</p>	<p>You provide a suitable environment for your child to work at home to enable them to achieve at the highest level.</p> <p>You support your child in developing their leadership skills and responsibilities.</p>	<p>You will positively contribute to our learning environment by believing that we can all achieve at the highest level.</p> <p>You are an Ambassador for the Academy and will always demonstrate your leadership skills through outstanding behaviour to, from and in the Academy.</p>
	<p>We will arrange parents' evenings during which progress will be discussed.</p>	<p>You will attend all parents/progress/options evenings and support your child in their academic progress.</p>	<p>You will proactively aim to improve your progress and attainment taking an interest in your targets and setting goals.</p>
	<p>We will strive to teach outstanding lessons to your child every day.</p> <p>We set targets for students and review them regularly.</p> <p>We report regularly to parents/carers on student progress.</p>	<p>You will support these outstanding lessons by checking that Homework is completed.</p> <p>You read all reports carefully, discuss progress with your child and contact the Academy with any concerns.</p> <p>You attend meetings arranged with the Academy.</p>	<p>You will fully participate and engage in your own learning in all lessons every day. You will strive to be outstanding both inside and outside of the classroom.</p> <p>You know all your targets and how to achieve them.</p> <p>You discuss your reports with your parents/ carers.</p>

	<p>We promote and support reading to all students, encouraging your child to read for pleasure as much as possible.</p> <p>We provide students with learning opportunities beyond the curriculum via our enrichment programme and Independent Learning.</p>	<p>You take an active interest in encouraging your child to read for pleasure as much as possible.</p> <p>You will encourage your child to take part in learning opportunities beyond the curriculum.</p>	<p>You will read daily.</p> <p>You will take part in learning opportunities beyond the curriculum.</p>
	The Academy	Parent/carer(s)	Students
We Work Hard	<p>We will consistently apply the behaviour and rewards policy to all students. 100% - no excuses.</p> <p>We contact home if there are concerns about a student's attendance, punctuality, uniform or behaviour.</p> <p>We will listen to your child and provide appropriate support and guidance.</p>	<p>You consistently support the Academy's behaviour and reward systems. 100% - no excuses.</p> <p>You inform your child's Form Tutor if you are aware of any problems that may affect your child's learning or behaviour.</p> <p>You inform the Academy of any changes to your contact details.</p>	<p>You follow all Academy rules. 100% - no excuses.</p> <p>You will tell your Form Tutor or another adult if you have any concerns or worries.</p> <p>You will treat others with respect and inform your Form Tutor if you are aware of any bullying.</p>
	<p>All judgements on acceptability of uniform and behaviour can only be made by Darwen Vale staff.</p> <p>We inform home as soon as possible before 3:00pm if students need to be detained for thirty minutes or more after the end of the Academy day.</p>	<p>Your child attends every day and arrives on time.</p> <p>Your child wears the correct uniform to, at and on the way home from the Academy.</p> <p>Your child has the correct learning equipment every day, including PE kit where necessary.</p> <p>You support our rules for attendance, uniform and behaviour and agree to your child being detained without notice for up</p>	<p>You arrive on time at the Academy, every day.</p> <p>You wear the correct uniform to, at and on your way home from the Academy.</p> <p>You bring the correct learning equipment every day, including PE kit where necessary.</p> <p>You do not bring in anything dangerous or illegal into the Academy.</p> <p>You will attend all detentions.</p>

		to thirty minutes or more at the end of the school day where the Academy deems necessary.	
	The Academy	Parent/carer(s)	Students
We Care	We promote healthy eating and lifestyle within the Academy and therefore do not allow any unhealthy snacks such as family sized crisps and energy drinks to be brought into the Academy. We will confiscate banned food items and they will not be returned.	You ensure that your child does not bring any unhealthy snacks such as family sized crisps and energy drinks to be brought into the Academy..	You do not bring any unhealthy snacks such as family sized crisps and energy drinks to be brought into the Academy.
	We provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.	You respect our safe and supportive learning environment and encourage your child to respect each other's race, culture, gender and sexual orientation.	You work and play fairly, to make our Academy a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.
	We respect each other's race, culture, gender and sexual orientation and maintain zero tolerance to any form of bullying.	You emphasise the importance of your child's respect for all Academy buildings and equipment.	You must respect each other's race, culture, gender and sexual orientation. You respect all Academy buildings and equipment.
	We have a nut-free approach in school. We do not sell nut products.	You check the packaging of the products brought into school by your child. If this state nuts or associated items in the ingredients, or 'traces of', do not allow your child to bring these items into school.	You check the packaging of the products you bring into school. If this state nuts or associated items in the ingredients, or 'traces of', you do not bring these items into school.
	The Academy	Parent/carer(s)	Students

Personal Development	<p>We deliver an inspirational and creative PSHE curriculum to enable progression and success for all our students.</p> <p>We provide opportunities for students to extend and develop their learning through a programme of enrichment activities.</p> <p>We provide the opportunity for our students to learn and develop their ability to play a musical instrument.</p>	<p>You are genuine partners in your child's learning and experiences.</p> <p>You ensure your child takes a full and active part in the Academy's enrichment programme.</p>	<p>You work well as an individual and in groups, to inspire each other to achieve.</p> <p>You actively participate in the Academy's enrichment programme.</p>
Communication	<p>We will use Bromcom platforms to communicate any information.</p>	<p>You will use the My Child at School app to check your child's achievement, behaviour, attendance and other notices.</p> <p>If you have any changes in circumstance or personal details, you will update this via the MCAS app</p>	<p>You will use the Student Portal to check your achievement, behaviour, attendance and other notices.</p>
Additional permissions	<p>By signing the Home-Academy Agreement you are also agreeing to: Use of your child's photos in the Academy newsletter and Prospectus. Use of your child's recorded image for use in Assemblies and training videos within the Academy and the Aldridge network and publications.</p>		

Name _____

Name _____

Name _____

Signed _____

Signed _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Date _____

Date _____