

A Guide to helping your child at Darland High School.

Contents

Page 2	Introduction
Page 3	Home – School Agreement.
Page 4	School Uniform and Appearance Policy
Page 6	Rewards and Sanctions
Page 7	Attendance
Page 8	Who to contact
Page 9	Help with social and emotional issues.
Page 10	The curriculum; what your child will be studying.
Page 11	Literacy and Numeracy.
Page 12	How to help your child develop his/her literacy skills.
Page 12	Homework
Page 14	Tracking and assessing progress.
Page 15	How to ensure that you have a happy, stress-free child.
Page 18	Key dates in the school year.

Introduction

Dear Parent,

Welcome to the first edition of Darland High School's Guide for Parents (KS3 edition). This booklet has come about as a result of parents telling us that they would like to know more about the way their children are taught and how they can help advance the learning of their child at home. The booklet is primarily aimed at parents of pupils in Year 7, since we know that secondary schools are organised in very different ways to primary schools. As a parent of two sons in the early years of secondary school, I know just what a struggle it is to get a clear picture of what happens in school from asking them about their day and their lessons! All parents will of course, have recollections of their own time in secondary school, but the education system is constantly evolving and all schools have their unique character.

Much of the information that follows is available elsewhere, either on the school website, in your child's Planner or in our prospectus, but it is to be hoped that this package will be more convenient for parents to refer to. As with all these initiatives, it is important that you contact us with any feedback and ideas you have for items and information for inclusion, in order that we can improve further editions.

Yours sincerely



P Agnew



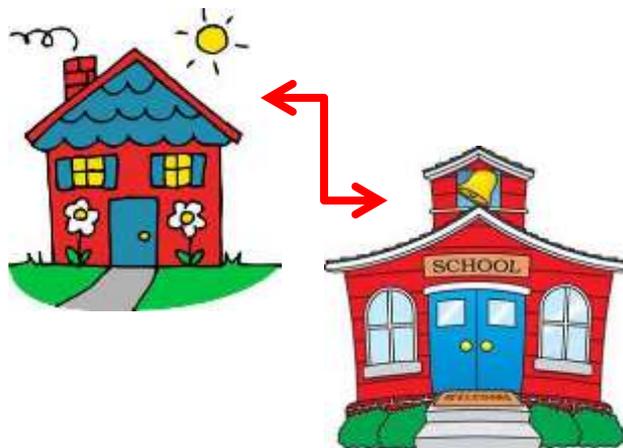
Home School Contract

This is to be found in your child's Planner. Please sign it, along with your child, since it sets out clearly how we hope the parent / school partnership, can work together for the benefit of your son / daughter.

THE SCHOOL:

We will attempt to:

- conduct the best possible care for all pupils,
- treat each individual fairly and equitably,
- maintain close contact with the home,
- provide regular reports on the pupils' work and progress.



THE PARENTS:

We will attempt to:

- maintain a close relationship with the school for the benefit of our son/daughter,
- sign our son/daughters planner on a weekly basis,
- ensure that our son/daughter attends school regularly and punctuality,
- inform the school of any absence,
- support the values of the school, its behaviour and discipline policy,
- encourage a constructive attitude towards the school.

PUPIL:

I will attempt to:

- arrive on time, properly equipped and ready to work,
- follow directions straight away and obey all safety rules,
- listen to the person who is meant to be talking,
- be polite and show respect to fellow pupils and staff,
- always work to the best of my ability and allow others to do the same,
- respect the school uniform and the school buildings,
- co-operate with pupils and staff.



School Uniform and Appearance Policy

At Darland we believe that a smart uniform is very important; it demonstrates the pride that pupils take in our school and themselves.

No extremes of appearance are acceptable - this includes hairstyles as well as dress and the school asks for the support of parents in ensuring their children dress and present themselves correctly. Any pupil not in full uniform or whose appearance does not meet our standards may be sent home. In case of unforeseen problems with uniform, parents should contact the appropriate Progress Coordinator.

In accepting a place at Darland High School, parents agree to these rules.

Girls

Bottle green blazer with school crest
White school shirt with long or short sleeves
School tie with crest
Black school trousers or knee length black box pleat or A line skirt
Plain black or white short socks or black tights (opaque)
Plain black shoes sensible heel and no large logos



Boys

Bottle green blazer with school crest
White school shirt with long or short sleeves
School tie with crest
Black school trousers
Plain black short socks
Plain black shoes sensible heel and no logos

**Although the blazer, shirt and tie are the formal uniform, parents may like to purchase pullovers to be worn under the blazer as an option.*

School uniform purchased on-line from RAM Leisure www.ourschoolwear.co.uk and Sportswear International www.swi.co.uk and not direct from the school.

PE Kit

Boys

Outdoor Kit

Green rugby shirt
Black shorts
Green knee length socks
Studded football boots
Gum shield – optional
Shin Pads



Indoor Kit

Plain white T shirt – Darland logos
Black shorts

Girls

Plain white T shirt – Darland logos
Black shorts
White socks
Trainers

Trousers must not be too tight and the style of the trouser must allow a shirt to be tucked in properly. Ski pants, combat trousers, black jeans, leggings or low-rise (hipster) trousers are not allowed, nor are any adornments to the trousers like big buttons, large belts, buckles etc.

Skirts must not be too tight or have splits. Skirts must be knee length (at least 6" below the bottom of the school blazer) black box pleat or A line.

Shirts must be traditional school shirt design so that they can be tucked into skirts and trousers properly. They must not be fitted, short or fashion shirts without a proper collar.

Shoes must be completely black and low heeled, any visible logos must be small. Trainers, boots and sandals may not be worn.

Socks/tights must not be coloured or patterned.

Outdoor coats should fit over the blazer so that they can be worn to and from school in bad weather. Clothes that are **not part** of the official school uniform e.g. baseball caps, neck-warmers, denim jackets, hooded tops, trainers or anything that we consider to be "street culture", are not allowed either on the way to school or in school.

Hooded Tops - Hooded tops are not to be worn either in school, or on the way to and from school. They will be confiscated if worn.

Jewellery - pupils may only wear an inexpensive watch and one pair of **plain studs** in the lower lobes. Hooped earrings including sleepers are not allowed. No body jewellery is allowed (nose, tongue, lip, eyebrow, belly button etc). The school will not be responsible for any injury caused by body piercing. All jewellery brought into school is at pupils' own risk.

Hair should be a natural colour. Hair styles must not be extreme; the minimum length is grade 2. The school will decide what is extreme and if you are in any doubt about your child's hair style, please check with a senior member of staff. Head bands and hair bobbles should be of a dark colour and not excessive. Hair flowers are not permitted. Tramlines, shaved designs in hair or shaved eyebrows and hair extensions are not permitted.

Make-up is only allowed if it is very subtle and is applied minimally. The school reserves the right to make that judgement and we will ask pupils to remove excess.

Nail varnish is not allowed.

Uniform Monitoring

All pupils will be issued with a uniform card which they must have with them in their blazer at all times. The uniform card has the purpose of monitoring uniform in order to ensure that **ALL** pupils look smart at **ALL** times. The monitoring system will operate as follows:

1. All pupils will be issued with a small Uniform Monitoring Card (UMC) which they must carry at all times and show to teachers when asked.

2. If your child has a reasonable excuse why they are missing an article of uniform (such as a blazer being on order from the suppliers), parents must write a letter to the form teacher, who will then issue the pupil with a sticker which will be stuck on the UMC to excuse the pupil.
3. If a member of staff sees a pupil breaking our uniform rules (e.g. wearing a tie at half mast, wearing a skirt that is too short, failing to wear a blazer), they will ask the pupil for their card and initial it.
4. After five incidents (and five staff initials), the pupil will be placed in lunchtime detention for 15 minutes on the following day.
5. If a pupil loses their card, they will be placed in detention.
6. If a pupil fails to attend a detention for uniform, they will be placed in isolation for half a day.

Wearing a smart and tidy uniform is an important part of instilling pride in our pupils for our school and a respect for themselves and the importance of learning.

Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards

At Darland we take the business of rewarding achievement seriously. In addition to our regular 'Achievement presentations' in year and whole school assemblies, we have two other systems to reward you for doing well.

Achievement Points



These are points awarded by teachers to pupils for doing something really well in school. For example, you can get points for working hard, helping others, representing the school, producing outstanding homework and working in a group. The points are logged on the school computer system and you get updates every two weeks. When you reach 30 achievement points you will get your bronze star, which is a badge you may wear all year. If you achieve 50 achievement points you will be awarded a silver badge and for 100 achievement points, you will be awarded a gold star.

Behaviour Points



When pupils misbehave or fall short of our high expectations it is important that these incidents are dealt with in a consistent and fair manner and that they are logged on a central database.

In most cases, an incident of misbehaviour, such as failing to pay attention in a lesson, will be dealt with by your class teacher, but all incidents will lead to points being added to your behaviour record, which your form tutor will discuss with you in form time. The points range from 1 to 4, depending on the nature of the incident. Our expectations are clearly set out on page 16 of this planner and you should be aware that you can get behaviour points for untidy or incomplete uniform as well as poor behaviour and forgetting your homework.

Behaviour Points Tariff

- 30 points = pupil is placed in the Seclusion for half a day
- 50 points = pupil is placed in the Seclusion for a whole day. By this stage, parents will have been contacted and invited in.

If an incident needs to be referred to a Faculty Coordinator or a Progress Coordinator (Year Head), or even the Senior Leadership Team, it will of course mean that more points are logged on our database. When you receive your Progress Review to take home, your parents will also receive a printout of all the behaviour incidents you were involved in since the last Progress Review. Your parents can of course, request a printout at any time, through contacting the school.

Behaviour Plan

We have a number of simple rules that all pupils must follow in lessons. They are listed on the Behaviour Policy page which follows this guidance. The policy also tells you about our stepped response to instances when these rules are broken in class.

If the behavioural incident takes place out of lessons or if it needs to be referred to your Progress Coordinator, then a lunchtime detention with Mr Jarvis will result. You will be given a letter to take home to your parents on the day before the detention which you will need to get them to sign. Mr Jarvis runs a detention on every week-day in Room 16 which starts at 12.35 and finishes at 1.00pm to allow you time to get your lunch. For more serious incidents, there is the Headteacher's detention, held on Fridays, from 3.20 - 4.05pm.

Please note that the provision of these detentions does not replace the sanctions of internal and external exclusions, which are important for the continued well being and focus on learning for all at Darland.

Seclusion

Our goal in using this sanction is to address poor behaviour promptly and avoid if at all possible, the sanction of external exclusion. In the Seclusion room, pupils will be guided in reflective activities to help them understand the importance of good behaviour. They will also be provided with work from their subject teachers to ensure that they do not fall behind in their work. If your child is referred to this facility they will be given a letter to take home to parents/carers retrospectively informing of the details of the event and the reason for the referral.

Lunchtime reminders

All pupils need a pass to allow them out of school at lunchtime. These passes are issued at the school office on receipt of a letter from your parents asking for you to be able to come home for lunch. If you have a pass, you must show it to the lunchtime supervisors at the main gate (the side gate is locked at lunchtime) and make your way home directly.

The main sports field is available only to Years 10 and 11 at lunchtime and only during good weather in the summer terms.

Attendance

What to do if your child is sick

If your child is too unwell to attend school, please telephone the school as soon as you can. Our Attendance Officer, Mrs Hughes, starts work at 8.30 each morning and can be reached on 01244 570588. Alternatively, please leave a message. If your child becomes unwell during the school day, he/she must report to the school office and get a yellow slip signed by their Progress Coordinator or a senior member of staff. A call is then made by the office to arrange for a parent to come and collect their child. On no account are children to make their own way home, or be collected by parents, before the office has made telephone contact with parents.

Encouraging attendance

We take attendance very seriously at Darland and do all we can to encourage it. There are fortnightly attendance competitions between form groups and prizes for pupils who succeed in having 100% attendance throughout the year. Twice a year, at Christmas and again at the end of the summer term, pupils with 100% attendance have the opportunity to win either a flat screen TV, or an iPod.

Fixed Term Notices and Holiday leave

Along with schools across Wales, the school reserves the right to recommend that the Local Authority serves fixed term penalty notices on parents who Parents are requested not to arrange family holidays during term time. The School will not authorise any holiday leave for pupils in Years 10 and 11 or in the summer term of Year 9. For pupils in other year groups, holiday leave may be granted so long as the pupil has an attendance of over 90% and that the correct 'holiday form' has been completed by the parent. Please remember that there is no statutory right to take a holiday during term time and that the authorisation of such absences is at the Headteacher's discretion.

Who to contact at Darland

As the school has grown in size, we see it as even more important to make it as easy as possible to contact the school to find somebody to deal with concerns and queries. There are three main ways of contacting the school:

1. **By telephone:** 01824 570588. The switchboard is staffed from 8.30 until 3.30pm every day and we have recently taken on extra office staff to avoid delays in answering 'phone calls. Outside these times, please leave a message and we will get back to you. If you know the extension number of the person you wish to speak to, please use it, since this can help us deal with your enquiry more promptly. For example, the majority of pupil pastoral issues are dealt with by our Behaviour for Learning team (Mrs McClean, Mrs Thomas and Mr Jarvis), so their extension numbers are listed below.
2. **By email.** Increasingly, email is used as a means of communicating with parents. The main school email is Headteacher@darland.wrexham.sch.uk This is checked by the school office several times a day and messages forwarded to the member of staff best placed to help with the query.
3. **In person.** In normal circumstances, parents are asked to 'phone the school first to arrange an appointment with the member of staff they wish to see. However, we understand that some issues are so urgent that parents need to see a senior member of staff as soon as possible and will always do our best to accommodate this.

Useful contacts

Headteacher	Mr P Agnew
Deputy Head	Mr S Corner
Assistant Head Curriculum	Mr S Roberts
Assistant Head Pupil Progress and Wellbeing	Mrs L Easton
Additional Needs Coordinator	Ms D Hughes
Assistant Additional Needs Coordinator	Mrs S Abel
Faculty Coordinator English / Literacy Coordinator	Mrs C Wasiuk
Assistant Faculty Coordinator English	Mrs J Davies
Faculty Coordinator Maths / Numeracy Coordinator	Dr M Edwards
Assistant Faculty Coordinator Maths	Mrs J Hawke
Faculty Coordinator Science	Mrs N Jones
Assistant Faculty Coordinator Science	Miss K Green
Faculty Coordinator Modern Languages	Miss F Jones
Assistant Faculty Coordinator Languages	Mrs Livingstone
Faculty Coordinator Technology & the Creative Arts	Mr T Clarke-Coyne
Faculty Coordinator Humanities	Mrs V Gray
Assistant Faculty Coordinator Humanities	Mrs L Garratt
Head of PE	Mr A Lloyd
PSE, Coordinator	Mrs G Jess
Faculty Coordinator Performing Arts	Mrs T Lee
Assistant Faculty Coordinator	Mr E Winterbottom
Progress Coordinators Year 7	Mrs S Owen
Progress Coordinator Year 8	Miss S Griffiths
Progress Coordinator Year 9	Mr S Coyne
Progress Coordinator Year 10	Mrs C Booth
Progress Coordinator Year 11	Mr G Hamm
Behaviour for Learning Assistants	Mr M Jarvis (ext. 250) Mrs A Thomas (ext. 215) Mrs J Hayes Mrs M McClean (ext. 237)
Parent Liaison Officer	
Headteacher's secretary	Mrs C Pickup (ext.211)
Examinations Officer	Mrs T Bharrat (ext. 223)
Librarian, Publicity Officer (website & newsletter)	Mrs D Adcock (ext. 243) d.adcock@darland.wrexham.sch.uk

Help with social and emotional issues

The majority of our pupils make the transition from primary to secondary school with ease, but there is no doubting that it is a challenging time for many youngsters, with much to contend with in terms of responding to different academic demands and the social pressures which arise from moving from an environment where the pupil knows everybody, to one where there are over 170 pupils in a single year group. As your child progresses through the school, there may well be times when they feel vulnerable and unhappy, especially as they pass through adolescence. We believe therefore, that the support we provide to assist pupils in their social and emotional development, should be every bit as important as the help we provide academically, since an unhappy child is one that will rarely achieve his or her potential.

Available support

It may sound obvious, but the support that you, as a parent, provide for your child by taking an interest in what they are doing at school and discussing worries with them, is of paramount importance in ensuring a happy child. As children enter adolescence, they often withhold information on what is happening at school and how they are coping. This should not provide parents with a signal not to ask questions however, since children in this phase of their life, need the encouragement of their parents even more. As a later section in this guide stresses, a key role of a parent is to inject confidence in the learner, by celebrating triumphs, no matter how small and encouraging an atmosphere where a child can 'unload' after a busy and hectic day.

The development of self-esteem is one of the key objectives of our Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme, but as well as this, the school offers the following for pupils facing social and emotional difficulties.

The Form Teacher

These individuals take a pride in getting to know each member of their form both from an academic and a social perspective. Wherever possible, we try and keep pupils with the same form teacher throughout their time at Darland, so this relationship can deepen over the years. Pupils should feel confident at approaching their form teacher for support and advice on a range of issues.

Peer Mentors

There are around 20 'Peer Mentors' appointed each year. These are pupils in Year 10, with a particular aptitude for working with younger pupils who have been trained by the programme coordinator (Mrs Ann Thomas) and are attached to each of the Year 7 forms. Their task is to act as an older brother or sister to the younger pupils, (not exclusively from Year 7) and help them out with friendship issues. Peer Mentors operate a 'drop in' facility at lunchtimes and also spend time on the Junior Yard, organizing games and talking to pupils. If you think your child would benefit from one-to-one time with a Peer Mentor, please contact their form teacher.

Learning Coaches

The school has three Learning Coaches who staff the Learning Coach office every morning. They are available to talk through social problems that pupils may have. If a child arrives in school upset, the duty Learning Coach is probably the person who will be detailed to spend time with him or her and help resolve the issue. Parents are welcome to request Learning Coach intervention, through contacting either the Form Teacher or the Progress Coordinator.

School Counsellor

For more deep-seated anxieties or emotional problems, a professional school counsellor is available. This person works part time at the school and appointments must be made through Mr Jarvis, (extension 250) or the child's Progress Coordinator.

Pupil Assistance Programme (SAP)

SAP is a tried and tested group counseling programme, (consisting of 8 one hour sessions), which the school has been running for a number of years. It aims, through a highly controlled and structured programme, to bring pupils to share concerns in the safety of a group. SAP counselors undergo intensive training and candidates for this programme

selected very carefully after consultation with parents.

Pupil Support Centre

This room, in our pastoral area next to the Progress Coordinator's office, is run by Mr Jarvis. The role of the centre is to provide support to pupils unable to attend particular lessons. Pupils transferring from other schools spend time with Mr Jarvis on transition, as do pupils on part time timetables, or rejoining school after long periods of absence.

Youth Worker

Our Youth Worker, Charlie Lynch, is in school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. She works with pupils at risk of disaffection or who have very poor attendance. Referral is via the pupil's Progress Coordinator.

School Nurse and Info Shop

Our school nurse is Dawn Spencer. She is in school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and is based in her office opposite the school hall. As well as attending to the medical needs of our pupils, Dawn oversees the Info-Shop, a confidential drop in centre that operates one lunchtime a week. Pupils can stop by and get advice on relationships and health issues in a friendly and informal atmosphere.

The Curriculum: what your child will be studying in Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9).

This section of the parents' guide is intended to give parents an overview of the different subjects that are studied by pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, together with an explanation of our setting and banding arrangements.

Our principal aim in Key Stage 3 is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will provide the pupils with the skills necessary to succeed in life and particularly with the next stage in their education, the Key Stage 4 courses which lead to recognized qualifications at age 16. Increasingly the focus across the curriculum is on the development of skills (principally literacy and numeracy), rather than the acquisition of knowledge, although creativity, problem solving, resilience and group work are also key components of every subject area.

At Darland, we organize the day into five one hour periods and for timetabling reasons, the cycle of lessons stretches over two weeks. The allocation of time to different subject areas is as follows:

At Key Stage 3 (KS3) the school curriculum consists of:

- Core subjects – English (En), Welsh(2nd language) (We), Mathematics (Ma), Science (Sc) and Religious Education (Re)
- Non core subjects –, French (Fr), Design and Technology (Te), Drama (not in Year 9) (Dr), ICT (It), History (Hi), Geography (Ge), Art (Ar), Music (Mu), Physical Education (Pe). In year 7 Religious Education, History and Geography are delivered as part of a Humanities course.
- PSE (Ps) (including sex education) & Careers and the World of Work

	En	Ma	Sc	We	Fr	Hi	Gg	Re	Te	Ar	Mu	It	Dr	Pe	Ps
Year 7	7	7	6	3	3	3	3	2	4	2	2	2	1	4	1
Year 8	6	6	6	4	4	3	3	2	4	2	2	2	1	4	1
Year 9	6	7	6	4	3/4*	3	3	2/3*	4	2	2	2	0	4	1

* The top band in Year 9 has four periods of French a cycle and 2 periods of RE. The middle and lower bands have 3 periods of French and 3 periods of RE.

Ability grouping of classes in KS3

In Year 7, all subjects are taught to mixed ability form groups apart from the following, which are taught in sets: Maths, English (ability sets), D&T (smaller mixed ability sets) and PE, (mixed ability gender sets)

As previously mentioned, all pupils remain with the same pupils under the same form teacher, throughout their time in Darland and consequently registration and PSE lessons are always delivered in form groups. However, by the time the pupils reach Year 8, we feel that we have got a clear idea of their potential. In order to ensure that each pupil is stretched in terms of ability, groups are increasingly structured according to ability. This allows us to limit the size of groups where pupils often struggle and provide appropriate support through our ALN department. It is important to note that each pupil has a demanding set of target levels which they are expected to achieve by the end of Year 9, regardless of what set or band they are taught in.

In Year 8, the following subjects are taught in sets: Maths, English (ability sets), D&T (smaller mixed ability sets) and PE, (mixed ability gender sets). Pupils are placed in teaching groups within three ability bands (Conwy-those pupils aspiring to at least Level 7, Dyfi- those pupils aspiring to at least Level 6, Teifi- those pupils aspiring to at least Level 5) for the following subjects: Science, History, Geography, RE, Welsh, French, Art, Music, IT, Drama.

Year 9 follows the same arrangement as Year 8, but for this year group, Science is taught in sets.

Literacy and Numeracy

The launch of the Numeracy and Literacy Framework (LNF) across Wales in 2013 has led to significant changes in both primary and secondary schools. Not only are all pupils tested every summer in literacy and numeracy, but all teachers are expected to develop these skills through their teaching. At Darland we have adopted the following strategies to ensure that all pupils make progress appropriate to their age and learning need:

- **Intervention classes for Literacy and Numeracy.** Annual screening of all pupils using the national tests together with other tests allows us to identify pupils with lower than expected reading and comprehension ages. We have five members of our Learning Support team who are trained in providing intervention programmes to boost literacy. There are two main programmes: Skills Plus, for those pupils up to 18 months behind their chronological reading age and ALN literacy, for those pupils with weaker reading skills. In both schemes, pupils are extracted from their timetabled lessons for between one and two hours a week to help them raise their reading ages. There is a similar programme for numeracy intervention.
- **Literacy and Numeracy Form Activities.** For two registration period a week, all pupils in Key Stage 3 undertake literacy activities, following tasks set out in booklets provided by our Literacy Coordinator. These may involve writing book reviews, reviewing textual forms and practising grammar and punctuation. On one registration period a week, all Key Stage 3 forms engage in numeracy activities, using work books provided by our Numeracy Coordinator.
- **Use of the library and reading competitions.** Our librarian, Mrs Adcock, runs a series of reading challenges, designed to encourage both the use of the library at lunch and breaktimes and also to promote reading as a leisure activity. We look to all parents to encourage their children to get in the habit of reading for pleasure.
- **Integrating literacy and numeracy activities in subject assessments.** Every pupil in Key Stage 3 should expect to be formally assessed at least once every half term in each of the subjects they study. We have made it a requirement that these in-house assessments involve aspects of literacy and numeracy. In the feedback that the pupils receive at the end of their assessments, there should be a specific comment related to the progress of the pupil against the LNF expectations for the particular year group. As well as tracking the progress of each pupil against the particular literacy or numeracy skill, each teacher will also write a short report on literacy and numeracy progression, designed to be read alongside the annual school report.

How to help your child develop his/her literacy skills

- **Encourage good reading habits**

This cannot be overstressed. It is a depressing observation that most students seem to read more when they are in Year 5, than when they are in Year 8! All our Key Stage 3 pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure and at least one form period is set aside for reading a novel in Year 7. Please encourage your child to visit our library, which has a vast range of enticing titles for loan and set aside regular times during the week at home for reading.

- **Check your child's books**

We have a simple corrective marking policy consisting of the following codes used by teachers when marking pupils' work. As a parent, it is very beneficial to spend time talking through any mistakes that your child has made and ensuring that they have made the requisite correction.

Code:	Explanation
SP (written in the margin)	Spelling error –staff underline the word incorrectly spelt inserts correct spelling* and students writes it out three times
//	Begin a new paragraph
P (circle where it is incorrect)	Punctuation error
G – denote in margin next to error	Grammatical error
NS	Not a complete sentence
C	Capital letter should have been used

- **Responding to Feedback**

When looking through your child's books, you will find some pieces of work which are marked in depth and others which are just marked for corrections. All teachers undertake to mark at least one piece of work in depth, every three weeks. The written comments from the teacher for this piece of 'in depth' marking, may well be presented on a special sheet glued into the exercise book, but all feedback will highlight TWO Strengths and at least one Target for Improvement. You should be able to spot where your child has been asked to respond to the feedback (e.g. by practicing a particular skill), since they will have written their comment in green pen. When discussing any piece of depth marking with your child, it is more beneficial to focus on quizzing them on the skills they have learned, rather than on the level they may have received for the work.

Homework

Homework is a vital part of school work. Working at home on tasks set by teachers allows pupils to gain confidence will need in working independently; skills they will need more and more as they progress through school. Homework is not about 'giving the pupils something to do'. Each piece of homework should either be testing a particular skill being developed by the class teacher, consolidating the learning taking place in lessons or allowing students to demonstrate their new-found learning and understanding. It is difficult to be precise as to how much homework you should expect your child to do, but a Year 7 pupil should expect at least 40 minutes on every weekday evening. This rises to around 70 minutes a night for every Year 9 pupil. In order to manage the amount of homework set on any particular day, the school operates a set schedule, which is written into the Pupil Planners by the pupils at the beginning of each term. Each form group will have a unique homework timetable as different classes have different lessons on different days. Parents are asked to sign these on a weekly basis. Homework setting is routinely monitored by form tutors and other staff at Darland.

Darland High School Key Stage 3 – HOMEWORK SCHEDULE 2015-16

	Monday – 1	Tuesday – 1	Wednesday– 1	Thursday – 1	Friday – 1	Monday – 2	Tuesday – 2	Wednesday- 2	Thursday – 2	Friday - 2
7A	En Fr	We Sc	Hi It	En	Ma Te Re	Gg	Ma Te	Ar	Ma En	Sc Mu
7R	En Mu	Sc Hi	It Re	En We	Ma Te	Gg	Ma Te	Fr Ar	Ma En	Sc
7E	En Gg	Hi It	Sc Fr	En	Ma Te	Sc	Ma Te	Mu We	Ma En	Re Ar
7F	En Hi	Sc Re	Ar	En Gg	Ma Te	It	Ma Te	Fr We	Ma En	Sc Mu
7A	Hi Ar	En Ma	Sc	Ma Ar	En Te	It Fr	Sc	We	Ma Re	En Te Gg
7L	Mu	En Ma	Sc	Ma It Re	En Te	Ar Hi	We	Fr Sc	Ma Gg	En Te
7Y	Re Sc	En Ma	Hi We	Ma	En Te	Gg	Ar Sc	Fr Mu	Ma It Fr	En Te

	Monday – 1	Tuesday – 1	Wednesday- 1	Thursday – 1	Friday – 1	Monday – 2	Tuesday – 2	Wednesday- 2	Thursday – 2	Friday - 2
8 Conwy 1	Ma, En It	We Te Hi	Sc	Fr Ar	En Ma Gg	Re Sc	We Fr Hi	En Ma Gg	Mu	Sc Te
8 Conwy 2	Ma, En It	Gg Te	Sc	Fr We Hi	En Ma	It Mu	Ar Gg Hi	En Ma Sc	We Fr	Sc Te Re
8 Dyfi 1	Ma, En We	Mu Te It	Fr Gg	Sc Ar	En Ma	Re Hi We	Mu	En Ma Fr	Re	Te Sc
8 Dyfi 2	Ma, En	Hi Sc We	Ar	Fr	En Ma Te	We	Sc Gg Mu	En Ma It	Fr Re	Te
8 Dyfi 3	Ma, En	Ar Fr	It Re Sc	Hi We	En Ma Te	We	Gg Mu Sc	En Ma Fr	Mu	Te
8 Teifi 1	Ma, En	Hi Sc	Gg	Re Mu	En Ma Te	Sc	We Ar	En Ma	Fr It	Te
8 Teifi 2	Ma, En	Fr Sc	Hi	Re	En Ma Te	Gg	Ar	En Ma	Mu It Sc	We Te

	Monday – 1	Tuesday – 1	Wednesday- 1	Thursday – 1	Friday – 1	Monday – 2	Tuesday – 2	Wednesday- 2	Thursday – 2	Friday – 2
9 Conwy 1	Ma Fr It	Pe or Te En Mu	Gg We	En	Te or Pe Sc Hi Re	Ma	Sc We Hi	Ma Fr Gg	Pe or Te En	Hi Te or Pe Sc Ar
9 Conwy 2	Ma It Hi Fr	Pe or Te En Ar	Re We	En	Gg Te or Pe Sc	Ma Fr It	Sc Hi	Ma Gg	Pe or Te En	Te or Pe Sc We Ar
9 Dyfi 1	Ma Gg Re	Pe or Te En	It We	En Fr	Te or Pe Sc	Ma	Sc Ar Hi	Ma	Pe or Te En	Te or Pe Sc Mu We
9 Dyfi 2	Ma Hi	Pe or Te En Gg	Re	En	Te or Pe Sc We	Ma	Sc	Ma We Fr	Pe or Te En	Te or Pe Sc It
9 Teifi 1	Ma Ar Hi	Pe or Te En	We Mu	En	Te or Pe Sc	Ma Gg	Re Sc	Ma Hi	Pe or Te En	Te or Pe Sc It
9 Teifi 2	Ma We	Pe or Te En It	Ar	En Re	Te or Pe Sc	Ma Mu	Sc Fr	Ma Hi	Pe or Te En	Te or Pe Sc Gg

How to help with homework

You can begin by quietly observing how your child completes homework. Notice how they are spending their time—are they getting up and down, working hard, or daydreaming? You can reward progress, even when it's small. Ask your child to set a weekly goal—for example, whenever possible complete homework on the night it is set. Let your child suggest a way to celebrate success. With homework, as with many things, incentives and rewards work better than punishment.

This helps to create good habits and helps to support the development of delayed gratification- a key characteristic of successful people. What gets rewarded- gets repeated. The following ideas may be useful to you.

- Practical Help with homework - think of homework as “getting good” at something
- Have a quiet space and plan a time for homework.
- Have a set place for materials needed for the homework task.
- Ensure completed homework gets back to school (is it in the school bag!)
- Practice the habit of turning off all outside noise: phones, television, music, chatter. This will help learning.
- Form the **Do it now** habit. Set reasonable time limits for homework and balance this with hobbies and other interests Ten to twenty minutes of deliberate practice, experts say, can be worth an hour of aimless practice.

Tracking and assessing progress

Target Setting

All pupils in Key Stage 3 have a target set for them by the school in every subject they follow. At Darland, we expect most pupils to make at least two levels of progress over the three years of the Key Stage. In order to make these targets more meaningful to pupils and to provide milestones at the end of each year, sub-levels are set to indicate the expected progress at the end of each year. By subdividing each level into three, we can indicate the confidence of a learner at each level. The levels progress 4c, 4b, 4a, 5c, 5b, 5a, 6c, etc. For example:

- 5a indicates a very solid Level five and close to a Level 6.
- 5c would indicate a lower end Level 5.
- 5b would be firmly in the middle.

The school uses a range of data to arrive at challenging targets for each pupil. These are principally the Teacher Assessment National Curriculum levels attained at the end of Year 6, together with the CAT tests which all Year 7 sit at the beginning of Year 7. CAT stands for Cognitive Ability Test and is a measure used by thousands of schools in the UK to measure potential. The main data used to calculate the targets for an individual student starting Year 7, will be the levels achieved at the end of Key Stage 2.

e.g. Child X attained level 4s in her core subjects at the end of Year 6.

- We would expect this child to be aiming for a level 6 at the end of Year 9 (two levels of progress)
- Working backwards from the target of a level 6, the End of Year Target for Year 8 would be 5a and the End of Year Target for Year 7 would be a 5c.

Feeding back on progress towards the End of Year Target

Once a term, every pupil is given two grades by each of their subject teachers. These grades are collated onto a single document (called a Progress Review), shared with the pupil and sent home to parents. The two grades are:

1. **Current predicted Level (CPL).** This is the split level that the teacher thinks that the pupil is on track to achieve at the end of the school year. By comparing this grade with the end of year target, it is possible to see how the pupil is progressing. I.e. if the pupil has an end of year target of 5c in a particular subject and has received a predicted level of 4c, then it is clear that the pupil is under-achieving, since the teacher is communicating that he/she does not think that the pupil will achieve the target.

2. **Attitude to Learning Grade.**

Student performance is hugely linked to a work ethic, a willingness to remain focused in lessons, to respond to feedback given by teachers and to improve learning by answering questions and making a positive contribution to the ethos of the classroom. We are very keen to support a positive mindset with the constant message that

through hard work and application everyone can learn and make progress. We therefore also track Attitude to Learning.

Attitude to Learning Grades

ATL 1

Resilient conscientious students who always arrive on time, fully equipped, with homework completed to a high standard. They are focused and engaged in their learning throughout the entire lesson, and all work produced is of the best quality. They make a positive contribution to the learning ethos within the classroom and are always highly motivated to learn.

ATL 2

Determined focused students who regularly arrive on time fully equipped with all homework completed. They are focused throughout the lesson and regularly produce work of a good quality. They make a worthwhile contribution to the learning ethos within the classroom and are focused in their learning.

ATL 3

Students who sometimes show a focused approach to learning and who often arrive equipped with homework completed. They can be distracted from their learning and the completed work set is not always as good as it should be. They sometimes make a worthwhile contribution to lessons but need to engage with learning with a greater focus throughout and not become distracted.

ATL 4

Students who lacks focus and seldom come to lesson equipped or ready to learn. Homework response is poor. In lessons they are often distracted and they sometimes prevent others from learning. They do not contribute to a positive learning ethos and sometimes hinder the ethos by spoiling the mood of the classroom.

NB. In Year 7, National Curriculum Targets are not set for the students until after Christmas, since we want to give the teachers time to assess the true potential of each pupil. However, in the autumn term, parents will receive a Progress Review containing Attitude to Learning grades for each pupil.

How to ensure that you have a happy, stress-free child

According to a recent survey, 43 per cent of 13- to14-year-olds say they feel stressed every single day. Over time, it drains the body and can leave us on edge, tired, angry, or depressed. New research shows a direct link between student stress (measured by chemical levels in the body) and school performance. Chronic stress harms students' ability to think clearly and control their emotions. When stress closes us down, we lose our ability to think straight. When the stress lifts, it feels like our minds open up. Chronic stress harms our ability to reason clearly and manage our emotions.

What causes stress in young people?

- School demands and frustrations.
- Negative feelings and thoughts about themselves.
- Changes in their bodies.
- Problems with friends or peers at school.
- Problems in the family or chronic illness.
- Financial strains.

- Unsafe living environment or neighbourhood.
- Death of a family member, relative, or close friend.
- Moving or changing schools.
- Taking on too much or having too high expectations.

These strategies can help to reduce stress

- Exercise and eat regularly.
- Avoid excess caffeine and high sugar drinks.
- Learn relaxation exercises (such as correct breathing).
- Build a circle of friends who can provide positive support.
- Rehearse situations that cause stress and practice positive responses.
- Break a large task into smaller, more attainable tasks.
- Turn negative “self-talk” into positive. Negative: “I can’t do this.” Positive: “I’ll do the best I can.”
- Learn to feel okay about doing a “good enough” job—don’t insist on perfection, from yourself

Take a break

When children seem out of control, encourage them to take a break. A snack, a walk around the street and breathing deeply—changing the scene like this can work wonders. Sometimes all it takes is a brief distraction. This should help your child learn to think long-term, control anger, and become more self-aware.

Motivation

Research tells us motivation to learn is influenced by two factors:

When we value what we’re trying to learn and secondly when we believe there’s a reasonable chance we will succeed. That combination is what makes all of us want to start something and want to keep at it when it gets hard.

Praise more, correct less

Praise your children when they tackle something difficult! But remember to praise their *effort*, not their *talent*. Focusing on talent actually makes children less likely to persist when challenged. But praising children for effort makes them want to work harder.

Develop CuriosityIt makes the mind active instead of passive

Curious people ask questions and seek answers. Like a muscle, the mind becomes stronger with use—so mental exercise builds brain power. It prepares the mind for new ideas. When you are curious about something, your mind expects and anticipates new ideas related to it, this helps learning. Curiosity helps you see possibilities that often hide below the surface. The lives of curious people are rarely boring—new things are always drawing their attention.

Resourcefulness is developed with curiosity

Resourceful children deal effectively with new or difficult situations. They can find information on their own and make do with what they have. As a parent, you encourage resourcefulness when you avoid the instinct to rescue your child, sometimes we need to let them fail, then provide help when they have another attempt. , ask questions, and

Encourage problem-solving

Is there another way to get what I want? Is the desired result really the best result?

Who has information that might help me? What else can I try?

Be the biggest and steadiest fan of your child’s efforts

Make every effort to attend their key events, when they look back at their childhood will they see each key memory with you present or absent?

Make small gestures that show you care, it’s not just material things teenagers want –it’s attention

Be generous with your praise. “When they tell me that they love me—when they actually tell me that, you know—it’s so reassuring to me.”

The importance of a growth mind-set

Research tells us that how we view talent and so called natural ability has a big impact on whether we commit to learning or not. Some people (adults and children) have a fixed view. They hold the view that you are basically good at something or you are not (particular talents). Other people have a more open mind-set and believe effort is the key to learning. It is vital that the fixed mind-set view is challenged and the importance of effort and correct practise as the determining factors in learning are promoted.

Here is a summary of the two attitudes.

We urge you to encourage the ones on the right

Fixed Mind-set	Open Mind-set
Believes ability is related to gifts	Believes ability is related to effort
Believes intelligence is fixed	Intelligence can be improved
Failure is due to lack of ability	Failure often linked to effort
Likes tasks that they will lead to success	Likes challenging tasks
Avoids challenge	Embraces challenge
Gains ego related praise	Gains praise based on effort
Prefers feedback information comparing them with others	Prefers feedback on how to improve
Feel threatened by the success of others	Curious about the success of others
More likely to cheat to succeed	Unlikely to cheat to succeed

Key dates in the school year.

AUTUMN TERM 2015

- 9th September – Year 7 photographs
- 30th September – Year 7 Progress Review
- 7th October 4.00pm – 6.30pm Year 7 settling in evening
- 8th & 9th October Year 7 Geography trip
- 20th, 21st, 22nd October Year 7 Outdoor Experience
- 21st October 6.30pm – 8.00pm Halloween Disco
- 23rd October – school closes for half term

- 2nd November – school opens after half term
- 4th November – Progress Reviews issued to Years 8 and 9
- 12th November – Numeracy in the workplace day for Year 8
- 27th November – Staff training day
- 10th December – Performing Arts evening
- 14th December – School Carol Service
- 18th December – Whole school cinema trip and Christmas assembly
- 2nd November – Friday 18th December 2015

SPRING TERM 2016

- 4th January – Staff training day
- 5th January – school opens for pupils
- 13th January – Crucial Crew (safety training) for Year 7
- 27th January – Progress Reviews issued for Years 7 and 8
- 3rd February – Year 9 Pathways (Options) evening
- 4th February – Year 9 Catspaw theatre production on relationship guidance
- 8th February – Mary Poppins PTA trip (evening)
- 12th February – school closes for half term

SPRING TERM 2016 cont...

- 22nd February – school reopens after half term
- 2nd March – Year 9 parents evening (reports issued)
- 10th March – HPV vaccination for Year 8 girls
- 24th March – Eisteddfod for Years 7 and 8. School closes

SUMMER TERM 2016

- 11th April – Staff training day
- 12th April – school opens for pupils
- 28th April – Year 8 parents evening (reports issued)
- 3rd – 6th May – National literacy and numeracy tests
- 11th May – Progress Review issued for Y9
- 27th May – school closes for half term

- 6th June – school reopens after half term
- 8th June – Year 7 parents evening. (reports issued)
- 16th June – School Awards evening
- 20th June – Year 7 exam week starts
- 23rd – 24th June – Year 8 Geography trip
- 27th June – Year 8 exams start
- 18th & 19th July Activities days
- 20th July – school closes for end of term

