



Darland High School

Ysgol Uwchradd Darland

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Headteacher P. Agnew BA NPQH

5th September 2018

Dear Parent,

Welcome to the new School Year.

As I write this, I am preparing to meet each year group in a series of welcome assemblies which we hold every year on this day. This is always a very enjoyable occasion, greeting the nervous, but excited Year 7s and recognising the growing maturity of our established students as they progress through the years. This year promises to be very special, since we will be celebrating, in a series of events throughout the year, Darland High School's diamond jubilee. If you know of any of our original students from 'Class of 1958', then please get in touch with us, since we would love to invite them to visit the school and share in the celebrations.

Once again, the summer has been a very positive period for the school, celebrating as we did last week, excellent exam results which placed us in the forefront of schools in the region. Further details on these exam results together with a round-up of achievements over the last year, will be available in the Governors' Report to Parents, published before half term.

This term we welcome several new members of staff to our busy school:

Mr M Dawson	Teacher of English and Drama
Mr J Howden	Teacher of Science
Ms D McCulloch	Teacher of Maths
Ms C Minshull	Teacher of Maths
Ms A Shoosmith	Teacher of English
Miss C Jones	Teaching Assistant
Miss M Pusey	Teaching Assistant
Miss C Roberts	Teaching Assistant

May I take this opportunity to remind you of some of the ways you can help us maintain our high standards and bring the best out of your child.

Contact numbers and email

Please check that the school has emergency contact details for your child. We need at least one mobile phone number to put in our database, in case we have to get hold of you in an emergency. Last year, we made great progress in obtaining email addresses for our parents, but we realise that people often update and change email addresses. Please let us know of any changes. Remember, our fortnightly letter 'Newyddion' is only sent out by email, as are the majority of letters to parents.

Free school meals.

Are you aware that your child may be eligible for free school meals at school? We are launching a campaign to make sure that every pupil who is entitled to free school meals, receives a healthy and tasty meal in the middle of the day. Applying for free school meals could not be simpler. If you are in receipt of any of the following benefits: Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, Guarantee Element of Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit with income below the HMRC set limit, you will be eligible. Application can be made by returning the attached form to Contact Wrexham, 16 Lord Street, Wrexham. LL11 1LG. We are conscious that the decision to claim free school meals can be a sensitive one for some parents and wish to assure all parents that all free school meal information is treated confidentially. Children on free school meals will not only enjoy a free meal every day, but will be eligible for a host of other benefits, including a uniform grant, substantial reductions on school trips, free stationery, extra study support and more.

Gates and fences

Work has continued over the summer break on improving the security of our school. There is now a fence separating the main car park from the school, with four gates which students can use at the beginning and end of each day. The gate by the school canteen will be kept open to allow access to the school office during the school day, while our new reception building is completed. However, we are insisting that from the first day back (5th September) all areas outside our fence are out of bounds during the school day. This means that students will not be able to access the school from the rear gate and that all gates apart from the canteen one, will be locked from 9.00am to 3.15pm. If you live locally and would like your child to go home at lunchtime, you must write a letter advising us of this and we will issue your child a lunch pass.

Homework

Owing to the success of Show My Homework, our on-line system for setting and monitoring homework, we are no longer issuing students with paper planners (although a basic planner is available from the library, to students who would like one). A timetable showing the days on which subjects set homework is attached to this letter. No matter how old your child is, please help us improve their attainment, by checking the on-line system against our timetable and encouraging the completion of homework. If you are a parent of a Year 7 pupil, a letter giving you the logon and password for your child's account will be sent out shortly. If you are a parent of a child in another year and still do not have the access codes, please email Mrs Helen Holland on HollandH5@hwbcymru.net

Collecting your child

Now the school is close to capacity, it is becoming increasingly difficult to collect children from the main car park by car at the end of the day. Obviously for safety reasons, we would prefer you to collect from the school yard rather than from the main Chester Road, but we urge parents to use the back entrance (Darland Lane), which is a quiet street with ample parking. On no account should parents park or collect children from the bus park, or wait in the clearly marked taxi bays at the end of afternoon school. Please also do not park in front of the shops adjacent to the school, since we have received complaints from the businesses situated there.

Darland bus service

There are a limited number of places available on buses operated by Darland High School. Please contact Mrs J Barnes, Business Manager, on 01244 570588.

Assessment and monitoring this year.

The main change this year is that all students will be formally assessed in each of their subjects at approximately 8 week intervals throughout the year, in a series of 5 Tracking Points (TPs). At each TP, all students will receive formative feedback from their teachers on their assessment tasks. The grades the students achieve in these periodic assessments will be communicated to parents in a printed Progress Review, sent out immediately after each TP. In order to simplify matters, we will be adopting a common grading currency across all year groups, based on the GCSE grades A*-G. These will be scaled for Years 7 and 8 to encompass the entire ability range for those age groups, but for students in Year 9, 10 and 11, GCSE marking criteria will be used.

Parent Guidance Evenings Years 8 & 9 and 10 & 11.

Following on from the success of these evenings last year, we will again be holding three evenings at the start of the year where you are invited to come and find out more about what your child will be studying over the year and how you can support them in their progress.

Each evening starts at 6.30pm and will last no longer than an hour.

Thursday 13th September. Guidance evening for parents of students in Years 10 and 11

Thursday 20th September. Guidance evening for parents of students in Years 8 and 9

Settling in evening. Year 7. Thursday 27th September. 4pm – 6pm

This is an ideal opportunity for parents of new pupils in Year 7 to meet their child's form tutor and find out how they have been settling in. The focus of this evening is pastoral rather than academic, but senior staff will be there to answer any questions you may have about the curriculum. In order to make this event run more efficiently, we will be writing to all parents to ask them to make appointments with their child's form teacher.

Parents Evenings

As you can see from the calendar below, there will be a parents evening for each year group at a set date in the year. In order to avoid the difficulties with arranging appointments with staff we are launching a new online booking system where you will be able to select appointment times with your child's teacher via the Parent Teacher online App. More details to follow.

Online payments

Payment for lunch money and extracurricular trips is now made much simpler by the use of Wrexham's online payment facility. Parents of pupils in Years 8-11 should already have their unique access codes (please contact the office if you did not receive this last year). Year 7 parents will receive their codes shortly and in the meantime should make payments for meals and trips by cash or cheque.

Key dates this year. An extended version of this calendar will shortly be available on the website.

AUTUMN TERM 2018

6 th September	Year 7 photographs
13 th September	6.30pm Parents guidance meeting (Years 10 and 11)
20 th September	6.30pm Parents guidance meeting (Years 8 and 9)
24 th September	Whole school photograph
27 th September	4pm-6pm Year 7 settling in evening
4 th October	Open Day
8 th – 10 th October	Year 7 residential trip to Kingswood.
25 th October	Sponsored Walk and Charity focus day.
26 th October	School closes for half term
5 th November	School opens after half term
7 th November	Progress Reviews to parents (TP1)
21 st November	6.30pm Parent Forum
23 rd November	Training day. School closed to students.
26 th November	Year 8 Parents Evening
4 th December	Year 10 Parents Evening
10 th December	Trial exams start for Year 11
19 th December	Performing Arts evening.
21 st December	Whole school cinema trip and Christmas assembly. End of term

SPRING TERM 2019

7 th January	School opens for pupils.
15 th January	Year 11 Parents evening.
16 th January	Progress Reviews to parents (TP2). Parents Forum 6.30pm
29 th January	Year 9 Pathways (Options) evening.
7 th – 8 th February	School Show. Little Shop of Horrors
22 nd February	School closes for half term
4 th March	School reopens after half term.
6 th March	Year 9 photographs
20 th March	Progress Reviews to parents (TP3)
21 st March	Year 9 Parents evening
12 th April	End of term

SUMMER TERM 2019

29 th April	School opens for pupils. National tests for students in Years 7, 8 & 9
2 nd May	Year 7 parents evening
9 th May	Awards evening
15 th May	Progress Review and pastoral report to parents of Y11 (TP4). 6.30pm Parents forum.
24 th May	School closes for half term.
3 rd June	School reopens after half term
5 th June	Progress Reviews and pastoral report to parents of Years 7-10 (TP4)
11 th June	Year 7 exam week
17 th June	Year 10 exam week
26 th – 27 th June	Year 6 induction days
28 th June	Training day. School closed for students
1 st July	Year 8 exams start
18 th July	Activity day
19 th July	School closes for end of term

Yours sincerely

Mr P Agnew
Headteacher