

**IMPORTANT
INFORMATION
DUKE'S SIXTH FORM
2025-26**

Key Staff 2025-26

Principal Director Secondary
Deputy Principal
Head of Sixth Form and Careers
Careers Adviser

Mr Ruston Atkinson	
Mr Ben Line	Ext. 371
Mrs Danielle Towers	Ext. 370
Miss Natalie Cain	Ext. 392

Sixth Form Tutors

12A Ms A Fear
12B Mrs M Barker

13A Miss L Hart
13B Ms L Gatti

Faculty Leaders

English
Creative Arts
Humanities
ICT
Maths
Science
Sport
Vocational Studies

Ms Emma Wardle	Ext. 328
Mr Selwyn Thompson	Ext. 345
Mrs Claire Carter	Ext. 358
Miss Lisa Hart	Ext. 327
Mr Daniel Naylor	Ext. 383
Ms Su Fletcher	Ext. 323
Mr Richard Hunter	Ext. 337
Mrs Michelle Barker	Ext. 327

Student support during post 16 study

We pride ourselves on the strong guidance and support that we offer to our students throughout their time at sixth form.

Within Duke's we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all of our students. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where everyone is respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that affective support, protection and justice is in place.

For a copy of the Safeguarding policy please see the school website.

Sixth Form Team

The Sixth Form team are based within the common room and are on hand all day to support students. The team oversee academic progress, attendance, progression, enrichment, tutoring, pastoral issues and concerns.

Within Sixth Form we aim to create an environment where students feel secure, valued and are encouraged to talk in the knowledge that they will be listened to.

Learner Welfare

We aim to create a school learning environment where pupils feel secure, valued and are encouraged to talk in the knowledge that they will be listened to. We have a number of staff who have roles dedicated to ensuring that children are safe and those who are able to support in a range of different ways. We also work in partnership with the NHS, CYPS, and other agencies to support our young people where those needs cannot be met by the school.

Within Duke's Secondary School & Sixth Form we have one Designated Safeguarding Lead, and four Deputy Designated Leads. Any concerns should be reported to Mrs Chapman in the first instance, or if unavailable, to any of the Deputy Designated Safeguard Leads, Mrs Towers – Sixth Form. Parents/Carers can reach these staff via the switchboard on 01670 816 111.

The following websites offer support for families and children:

www.kooth.com - emotional and mental health support for children and young people aged 11 and 24.

www.qwell.io - free, safe anonymous mental wellbeing support for adults in the new www.

www.youngminds.org.uk - supporting, children, young people and parent / carers.

[Keeping Children Safe Online \(adobe.com\)](http://Keeping Children Safe Online (adobe.com)) – online safety advice and support.

Tutor groups

You will join a tutor group with a personal tutor who will take special interest in your welfare and progression. You will be required to attend tutor period each day where you will have the opportunity to discuss your progress and any concerns you may have. You will also have the opportunity to take part in a number of PSHE related activities.

UCAS applications

We operate a comprehensive system of support throughout the application process ranging from group tutorials and off-timetable sessions to 1:1 tutoring. Students also have access to the online platform 'Unifrog' and a Google Classroom which supports them to make informed decisions about courses and institutions.

Careers information and guidance

We have a school Careers Adviser and Careers Leader who works closely with students in Sixth Form, to support entrance into university, apprenticeship or employment. Careers support ranges from 1:1 meetings, assemblies, CV writing tutorials, employability seminars and in-house careers conferences along with a range of external opportunities.

Enrichment

All sixth form students are expected to take part in enrichment activities each week. The activities are designed to enhance key skills which employers and universities look for. Activities include work experience, Future Ready Programmes, NCEA Sport, Arts Award, Mandarin, E-Sports, Extended Project Qualification, in lesson support, GCSE Maths and GCSE English. Students may also choose to take part in enhancement activities such as charity committee, student council, residential visits, summer schools, student or workplace shadowing, music lessons, first aid, Leadership programmes and MOOCS (massive open online courses).

Monitoring Your Progress in the Sixth Form

When you enter the Sixth Form your target grades are calculated using your average GCSE score. We regularly review your progress towards your target grades through whole school data captures and mock examination periods. Updates on your progress are provided on a half termly basis. Any level of underachievement is quickly identified and intervention put in place to support you to improve.

You will have regular one-to-one tutorials with your subject teachers on a termly basis and your overall progress will be monitored by your Form Tutor and the Sixth Form team. This is to help you achieve your potential.

If you experience problems in any of your subjects you should raise this with your subject teacher in the first instance. If you are still worried you should speak to a member of the Sixth Form team. Any changes you want to make to your programme of study should also be discussed with the team and must be approved by the Head of Sixth Form. Our aim is to ensure that you are guided to maintain a programme of study that will allow you to access your chosen career path.

Study Areas

Independent study periods are spent in the Sixth Form area which provides a comfortable and well-equipped environment in which to work. Students have access to large work spaces and are given their own Chromebook when they join the sixth form, allowing them IT access in all lessons and outside of school.

For those students who wish to work in silence there is also a silent study room timetable which operates throughout the year and students have access to the main school library.

Study areas are also available within each department. In particular, Art and Design students are provided with their own work space within the studio which they are encouraged to use during study periods. This area allows students ready access to equipment and an opportunity to showcase their work.

Homework/ Independent Study

Sixth Form study is very different to GCSE study. All sixth form students are expected to partake in much more independent study than previously. Workloads are also higher both at school and at home. As a consequence, study skills such as time management and organisation become increasingly important in order for students to keep on top of their workload. The following information outlines what successful independent study at post 16 entails.

What do I need to know about home study?

Academic courses

Exam board guidelines say that students taking A-level subjects should be carrying out at least 3 hours independent study per subject per week.

Independent study can consist of:

- Re-reading and re-writing class notes
- Using notes to make mind maps or flash cards
- Organising files
- Carrying out additional reading or research
- Attempting past paper questions (accessible through all exam board websites)

Vocational courses

These courses are assessed largely on completion of coursework assignments rather than examinations, although most courses now have examination modules which have to be passed in order to pass the overall qualification. There is not a recommendation of how long a student should carry out independent study per week as there is with academic courses, but those students who carry out more regular and effective study practices are generally those who achieve the higher vocational grades of D/D*.

Independent study can consist of:

- Researching for assignment work
- Writing assignments
- Making suggested corrections to assignment work
- Revising for examined modules

Important note: BTEC rules are very strict about the meeting of coursework deadlines. If you do not meet a deadline you may fail the course.

Homework/ independent study is a part of Sixth Form life and we expect students to complete all work set and hand it in on time. Students who fail to submit work by the deadline set will be expected to stay in school until 5.30pm to complete it.

Library

The library is open to all students from 8.00am until 4.00pm Monday – Thursday and 8.00am until 3.30pm on a Friday. The library is a quiet place for study/revision as well as giving the opportunity to borrow books for both work and pleasure. There is a wider reading section specifically aimed at sixth form students with resources which have been selected by teaching staff in the English department.

Resources

Students have access to a bank of resources within the sixth form area. These include copies of subject text books, university prospectuses and a careers library. A further careers library is available within the main school library. The sixth form also have a dedicated careers Google classroom advertising; apprenticeship, job and work experience vacancies and other information/ opportunities.

Students are provided with their own Chromebook laptop for the duration of their time in sixth form.

Equipment

Students are expected to provide their own stationery and files to organise work. Some form of planner whether digital or hard copy is recommended as it is very important for students to record homework and deadlines as well as specific events that are happening within the sixth form.

Lockers

Every student has access to a locker. The school has combination padlocks which are available to sixth form students with a £5.00 deposit; however should students lose or damage their padlock they will be expected to pay and additional £5.00 for a replacement.

Praise

Staff can nominate students who have worked well in lessons for 'Sixth Form Student of the Week' and ultimately 'Student of the Year'. A celebration assembly takes place at the end of each term where students are awarded prizes for attendance, extra-curricular activities and work within their subjects.

Mobile Phones

Sixth Form students are allowed to use mobile phones in the sixth form area but they are not permitted elsewhere on site. If a member of staff sees a student using a mobile phone during the academic day, it will be confiscated. Phones will be kept in the sixth form safe until the end of the day, when they can be collected. If a student's mobile phone has been taken off them three times, parents/carers will be asked to come into school and collect them.

Repeat offenders will have letters sent home and possibly further sanctions put in place.

Behaviour

Although we do not expect behaviour to be an issue in sixth form, a behaviour policy operates in line with whole school procedures. We expect that all pupils will follow our Code of Conduct and will show that they possess the Student Competencies that go towards making a great learner.

Detentions

The school tries to give parents/carers 24 hours' notice when keeping students back for after school detentions.

Our behaviour and discipline policy complies with the Department for Education advice for schools:-

'Parental consent is not a requirement for any Academy to keep a child in detention'

If you have any concerns about the detention, please contact Mrs Towers or the teacher who gave the detention.

Detentions will be issued to students who arrive late. Each Wednesday sixth form students will be expected to make up any time they were late in the previous week by staying until 4.00pm. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to put provision in place for collecting a student after a detention. Any student arriving late will not be permitted to leave site at lunchtime or sign out early.

Any student who misses a deadline or does not submit homework on time will be expected to stay for 'Working Wednesday' until 5.00pm to complete it.

Attendance

Your child's attendance at school is vital to his/her success. It is also compulsory. It is your duty to ensure that your child/children attend school. Our strategy sets out clearly our expectations of parents/carers and the consequences for those who do not meet the requirements.

At Duke's we are committed to working with parents and carers to ensure all students achieve as high a level of attendance as possible. The Government regards at least 95% attendance as an expectation for all students; at Duke's Sixth Form, all students are set a target of achieving 100%, and where this is not possible at least 96%. This means that you should aim to ensure your child has no more than 7 days off in an academic year.

For safeguarding reasons, Duke's has a responsibility to ensure that all students are accounted for during school hours. It is a requirement that Duke's students are in the school building by 8.30am. If a student has been marked as absent without a reason, a text message or an email will be sent home informing you that your child is not in school. (If a student is in school but not in registration, it is their responsibility to make sure they get a registration mark to avoid unnecessary contact with home). Please respond to the text or email as a matter of urgency with a reason for your child's absence. If your child is too ill to attend school, or will be absent for any other unplanned reason, please contact school providing the following information:

Day 1 Please contact school before 9.00am and provide a reason for your child's absence. Brief reasons for absence ("illness", "unwell", "poorly", "not feeling great" do not provide sufficient information about the absence) and estimated length of absence. To report the absence please email attendance@dukes.ncea.org.uk or alternatively you can telephone the school and speak to the sixth form team directly on extension 370.

Day 2, 3 and 4 Contact before 9.00am to update us about the absence.

Day 5 Provide medical proof of the absence re. FAO Attendance Officer via email. It is a parent/carer's responsibility to automatically provide this information. The absence will not be authorised without it. Proof could include a GP's appointment card, copy of prescription or proof of medication taken. Please note that we are aware that doctors do not routinely provide medical certificates, but if a student is absent for 5 days or more there is an expectation that they are ill enough for you to have consulted a medical professional and therefore there should be some proof that the consultation has taken place.

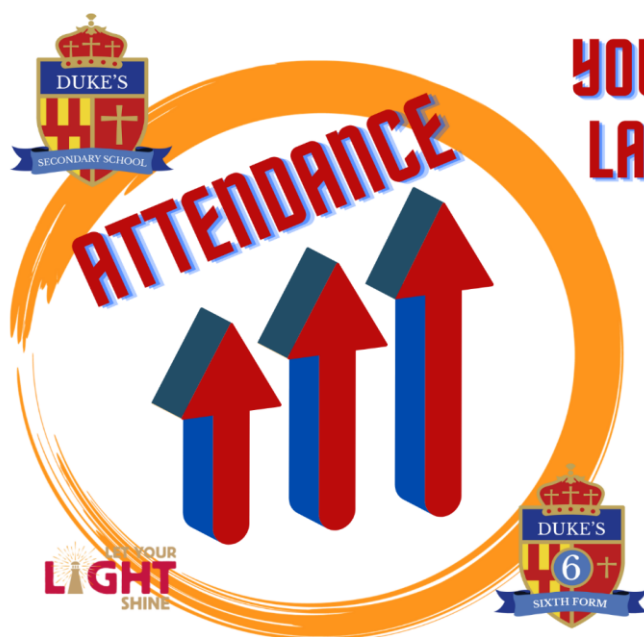
Routine medical/dental appointments and driving lessons should not be made in school time.

Notification of appointments during any part of the school day should be communicated to school in advance. This information is requested:

- To allow registers to be pre-populated with the information so that class teachers are aware a student will be absent from their lesson
- To avoid time being spent trying to locate a student who is not in school for a genuine reason
- For safeguarding purposes, to help ensure the authenticity of an appointment

Students should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment; a full day's absence will not usually be authorised.

Attendance Strategy Summary		
	96.1% - 100%	Rewards for tutor groups Selected for trips Celebration board in Sixth Form Area
	90.1% - 96%	Support from specialist staff to improve attendance Head of Sixth Form tracking Regular phone calls 4-week monitoring periods Meetings and attendance panels in school Withdrawal of 16-19 Bursary payment
	90% or below	Referral to Academy Education Welfare Officer Further monitoring periods Withdrawal of 16-19 Bursary payment Warning notices- Place in Sixth Form reviewed



**YOU WOULDN'T BE
LATE FOR WORK.**

**5mins late per day = 3
days lost learning**

**10mins late per day =
6.5 days lost learning**

**15mins late per days =
10 days lost learning**

**The bells rings at
8.30am.**

Duke's Secondary #attendancematters

Signing In and Out Policy

Morning Registration

- All students should be in school in time for the start of morning registration at 8.30am. All students should sign in with their form tutor
- Any students arriving late should sign in at reception

Break time

- Students are permitted to sign out during break time as long as they return for lessons on time.


Lunch time



- Students are permitted to go home at lunchtime if they have written permission from their parents
- Students should leave school during the first 10 minutes of lunchtime
- Students returning to school will re-enter the building via the main reception and sign in
- All students who return following lunchtime will be expected to return on time for the start of lesson 5

Signing out during lesson time

- Any student wishing to sign out during lesson time should do so at the Sixth Form office
- All medical appointments and driving lessons should be made outside of school hours
- Students are permitted to sign out following their last lesson of the day. This privilege will begin following the October half term holiday, for those students with over 95% attendance.

Each half term the sixth form team collect data on the academic progress of students. Any student causing concern as a result of lower than expected progress, behaviour, punctuality or attendance may have their signing out privileges removed. Parents will be informed in writing when this privilege is withdrawn.


Arbor

We're using Arbor's free Parent Portal and Arbor App

We've chosen Arbor to help us manage our school.

Arbor is a simple, smart and cloud-based MIS (Management Information System), which helps us work faster, smarter and more collaboratively as a school. The Arbor App and Parent Portal mean we can keep you informed about your child's life at school in a much more accessible way. Log into Arbor to see and update your child's information, get live updates and make payments or bookings on the go!

The Parent Portal works on Google Chrome (computer or laptop) and you can download the Arbor App from the App Store or Google Play Store on your phone (Android 5.0; iOS 10.0 and upwards).

How to get started

1. Wait for your welcome email from us telling you Arbor is ready – you won't be able to log in before
2. Click the link in your welcome email to set up your password
3. Go to the App or Google Play Store on your phone and search 'Arbor'
4. Click 'Install' on Android or 'Get' on iPhone then open the App
5. Enter your email, select the school, then enter your password
6. Accept the Terms & Conditions and enter your child's birthday

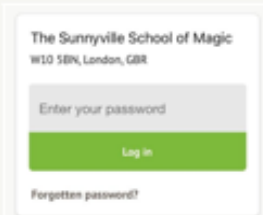
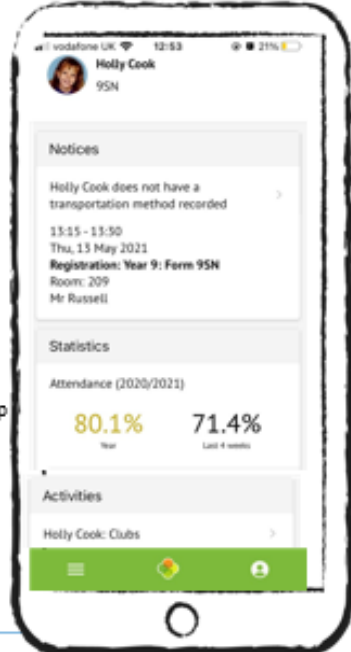
Need help using Arbor?

Contact the school office if you have questions about Arbor, the App or Parent Portal. Tell us the type and model of your phone, e.g. an iPhone SE, and include screenshots or screen recordings. To safeguard student data in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Arbor only works directly with schools.

Some tips to try:

1. Ensure your username is the email address you use for Arbor. Ask us to check the email address linked to your account.
2. Reset your password from the login page, or ask us to do this.
3. If the login email was sent to you more than 96 hours ago, the password link will have expired. Ask us to send it again.
4. Ask the school office to check that your email address has not been used twice - e.g. on another guardian or child's profile.
5. Enter the birthday of one of your children to log in.

Only relatives who are Primary Guardians of a child can access the Arbor App

Duke's School Parent/Carer Guide 2023/24Page 11

Sixth Form Dress Code

At Duke's Sixth Form we want our students to feel like young adults and as a result, do not impose a strict dress code. Sixth form students should remember that they act as role models for younger students and we expect that they will present a clean and tidy appearance at all times, appropriate for an educational environment.

The following items are not acceptable;

- Outdoor coats or hats/ hoods inside the building
- Ripped or torn clothes
- Loungewear or pyjamas
- No revealing clothing- no strapless or shoulder less tops, short tops which do not meet the waistband of trousers/skirts, short skirts, shorts, plunging necklines, see through leggings and vest tops are not appropriate.
- Offensive slogans
- Fluorescent coloured clothing

- Tattoos must be covered up
- No shorts other than for the purpose of Sporting activities
- Jumpsuits/ bodysuits
- Onesies

If students are not wearing appropriate clothing they will be sent home to change.

If you have any concerns about buying the wrong types of clothing/footwear please contact Mrs Towers as we do not want parents/carers to spend money on something that is not appropriate to wear.

Hair

Extreme hair styles are not permitted in school. This includes designs shaved into heads or partially shaved heads. Outrageous colours such as bright pink, green, blue, red, dipped ends or under colours will not be accepted. Only natural colours will be permitted.

Students who come into the school with such hair colours will be asked to dye their hair back to an appropriate colour. Students who do not conform to the policy will have to complete work in isolation until the colour is changed. Sanctions will be put into place and parent/carers contacted for those students who come into the school with partially shaved heads.

Jewellery and Make-up

Sixth Form students are allowed to wear minimal make-up and jewellery. All tattoos should be completely covered and facial piercings are not permitted.

PE

Sport students are required to wear PE kit on the days they have practical sport lessons.

Water

The school provides students with access to water fountains. They are only expected to fill water bottles brought in from home during break times, lunch and independent study periods.

Toilets

Toilets are placed around the school, however, there are two sixth form only toilets situated on the IT corridor. It is expected that students will make use of these during break times, lunch and independent study periods only and not during lessons. All female toilets have sanitation bins.

Medicines

The school has a strict policy regarding medicines:

- **No medicine is allowed in the school** unless an appropriate agreement to administer medicine form has been completed and approved by the Principal Director. Forms are available from Reception.
- All medicines are kept in a locked cabinet in an Admin Office. If prescribed medicine, we only accept medicine in its original container with the pharmacy sticker attached, showing pupil's name, dosage etc.
- Pupils who keep medicine in school need to bring a drink with them to take their medicine.
- Any pupil found in possession of medication on them will have it taken off them. This is for the safety of all our pupils.

Holidays

Students should not be taken out of the school for holidays during term time, it has a detrimental effect on their education, severely disrupting their progress and impacting on their attainment levels. This not only affects the student who is absent, but impacts on the rest of the class as the staff have to provide extra support to bridge the knowledge gap. Leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Catering

Our canteen is a cash free zone. There are cash revaluation stations in place throughout the school which students can use to credit money on their account. Lunch costs £2.55 for a main meal and dessert. Students are also able to buy drinks and snacks at break time. For this, extra credit will be required.

Alternatively you can pay for school meals via the Arbor parent app.

For students who are entitled to free school meals, £2.55 per day will automatically be credited to their account and will be accessible from 10.30am onwards. They can add extra credit to this to use at break time for snacks and drinks if they wish by bringing in money and using the revaluation stations.

Students will be told how much money they have left on their account. It is their responsibility to make sure they have enough credit to pay for their meals. Students cannot get change back so if they are given £10 then they will need to place it all onto the system. If a student forgets to bring money in for their dinner or does not have enough credit, every effort will be made to contact the parent/carers to ask for money to be brought in.

Sixth Form students also have access to a separate self-catering facility including a microwave, hot water station and fridge. This is open all day. The balcony is a social zone which gives students the chance to relax and unwind. There is also a vending machine in this area, selling drinks and snacks. Students are also permitted to leave the site at break and lunchtime.

Timing of the Sixth Form Academic Day

All students are expected to arrive by 8.30am.

All students to be in tutor rooms by 8.30am		
Start	Finish	Period
8.30	9.00	AM TUTOR
9.00	10.00	P1
10.00	11.00	P2
11.00	11.20	BREAK
11.20	12.20	P3
12.20	13.20	P4
13.20	13.55	LUNCH
13.55	15.00	Period 5

Post 16 Transport

The Northumberland County Council's Post 16 Transport Policy offers free transport for eligible students. The eligibility criteria are contained within the Post 16 Transport Policy which is published on the Council's school transport web page.

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/School-transport-1/Transport.aspx>

Applications are now open. If you feel your child meets any of the criteria used to determine eligibility for either (i) assistance with transport costs or (ii) travel on school bus services commissioned by the Council then you are encouraged to apply as early as possible. This will ensure students are in receipt of their travel permit in good time before the start of the new Academic Year in September. A one-off administration fee of £50 is required with each application unless you are applying on grounds of low income.

Further information and application forms are available online

https://form.northumberland.gov.uk/form/auto/post_16_student_travel

Drop off by car

The turning circle at the front of the school is reserved for the use of disabled passengers. For all others, please drop off in one of the streets adjoining the school. It is not far for students to walk to the school from the main road, and this helps us to keep a car-free and safe environment around where pupils are moving on foot. After 3.45pm it is possible to enter the turning circle to collect or drop off for evening events. A pass can be arranged if your child has a major issue that means they need to be dropped off at Reception.

16-19 Bursary

The Government currently provides funding for young people aged 16-19 to support participation in post-16 education and training. Students can apply for either a Vulnerable Bursary or Discretionary Bursary.

The bursary is paid to enable students to attend sixth form and expenses will be paid either directly into student's bank account or 'in kind' for example by purchasing travel passes, clothing or books. Students may also apply for support with one off costs such as trips, university visits and interviews.

Students will be given application forms and a copy of the full eligibility criteria when they join the sixth form in September. Once an entitlement is clarified, parents will receive a letter detailing how much students are eligible to claim and how this will be paid.

Policies

School policies can be viewed on our web page: www.dukes.ncea.org.uk

Term Dates 2025-2026

	DATE ON WHICH SCHOOL WILL CLOSE	DATE ON WHICH SCHOOL WILL OPEN
STAFF TRAINING DAY	Monday 1 September 2025	
Summer 2025		Tuesday 2 September 2025
October Mid-Term	Friday 24 October 2025	Monday 3 November 2025
Christmas 2025	Friday 19 December 2025	Tuesday 6 January 2026
STAFF TRAINING DAY	Monday 5 January 2026	
Spring Mid-Term	Friday 13 February 2026	Monday 23 February 2026
Easter 2026	Thursday 2 April 2026	Monday 20 April 2026
MAY DAY	Monday 4 May 2026	
Summer Mid-Term	Friday 22 May 2026	Monday 1 June 2026
STAFF TRAINING DAY	Friday 26 June 2026	
Summer 2026	Friday 17 July 2026	Wednesday 2 September 2026

Students are not expected to attend school on Teacher Training Days.

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@Dukes_Sixth_Form

