

1. Update: Mobile Phone Ban

This initiative has been very well received from a staff perspective so far. It has been wonderful to see more students talking, playing, and interacting with one another without the distraction of screens. We've also noticed a marked improvement in how well students are settling into Lesson 6 after lunch.

Below are the cumulative totals of phone confiscations, correct as of 20.06.25:

- Year 7 – 20
- Year 8 – 31
- Year 9 – 59
- Year 10 – 58
- Year 12 – 39

We hope you've found the change to be a positive one too. We will shortly be sending out surveys to both parents and students, and I look forward to sharing a fuller picture with you when we next meet.

2. Science Department Concerns: *"Why are Year 7 and Year 8 not achieving high grades in their tests? Is it because the curriculum is not being finished or because students have had too many supply teachers to make progress?"*

Thank you for raising this – it's an important question, and I've spoken directly with the Science department to ensure I give you the most accurate picture.

Firstly, on student achievement in Science assessments:

- Year 7 have completed multiple assessments across the year:
 - Their average scores have been:
 - KO2–4 (smaller topics): 52%
 - KO5–8 (larger topics): 47%
 - End-of-year exam (so far, 9 topics assessed): 45% average, although not all data is yet submitted.
 - Their very first assessment was teacher-judged via practical work, and their final KO will be assessed in this final week of term.
- Year 8 have seen the following assessment averages:
 - KO1–2: 62%
 - KO3–4 (included the notoriously challenging Waves topic): 47%
 - KO5–7: 58%

- Their second end-of-year exam will take place shortly, and not all final data is yet in.

These figures reflect a realistic spread of attainment across a broad range of topics and assessments. Bandings on DPR have been based on both these formal scores and teacher judgement, which includes consideration of classwork, engagement, and progress.

On staffing concerns:

There have not been any long-term supply teachers in Science for over two years. While there may have been occasional short-term cover as with any department, the team has been stable, and the curriculum has been delivered by subject specialists.

On curriculum coverage:

All KOs (Knowledge Organisers) have been, or are on track to be, taught and assessed. The department has made deliberate decisions about the sequencing and weight of topics, and no significant curriculum gaps have been identified. It's important to recognise that at Key Stage 3, students are still developing their scientific literacy, analytical skills, and confidence with exam-style questions. Some topics are more abstract and challenging than others – for example, “Waves” in Year 8 typically sees lower results nationally, not just here.

We don't expect all students to be achieving top grades at this stage – our focus is on building secure foundations that will allow them to flourish at GCSE. That said, we always want to ensure progress is strong, and we continue to review our teaching, assessment and support strategies to challenge all students, particularly the most able.

3. School trips: *“ski trip 2026-27 is there an opportunity for parent volunteers to attend?”*

Thank you for your interest and support regarding the ski trip. We really value the enthusiasm parents show for these opportunities.

However, we don't include parent volunteers on trips like the ski trip. One of the key aims of residential experiences is to build students' independence, resilience, and confidence away from home — and we find that they grow the most when they're encouraged to step outside their comfort zone without the familiarity of family nearby.

The trip will be fully staffed by trained school staff who know the students well and are experienced in supporting them throughout the week — both on and off the slopes.

4. Duke of Edinburgh: *“Is there an opportunity to start in Year 9?”*

Thank you for the suggestion regarding starting the Duke of Edinburgh Award in Year 9.

The rules have recently changed to allow students to begin the Bronze Award at a younger age, and we're pleased to say we will be starting to roll it out to Year 9 students.

Up until now, we've only run it in Year 10, and we've never had feedback from staff or parents to suggest it impacts on GCSEs — partly because of when in the year we run the programme.

To ensure no year group misses out, we'll continue to run it for Year 10s as well during the transition period. This will allow us to phase it in properly and ensure the same quality of experience for all students.

We're excited to be expanding the offer and will share more details with parents and students in due course.

5. Work Experience: *"2 weeks and 2 days is too long..."*

The Department for Education is reforming Careers Advice and Guidance this year, and it is expected that two weeks of work experience will be established as the 'gold standard' for schools. There is a clear shift towards embedding employer encounters more widely across the curriculum.

However, we have noted your concerns, and from the 2025–26 academic year, we will be removing the two days at the end of the work experience period and requiring students to return to school for those days.

6. Financial Literacy and GCSE Statistics — *Curriculum Update*

Thank you for your question regarding Financial Literacy and GCSE Statistics for next year.

The exam board removed the Financial Literacy qualification, which gave us the opportunity to review and refine the course. We've kept the most relevant and engaging elements — such as personal finance — and removed duplication with other areas (e.g., democracy, which is already covered in PSEC). As a result, it's now a streamlined one-year course delivered in Year 10, which also allowed us to ensure PSEC is timetabled for all year groups.

As for GCSE Statistics, this is a separate curriculum decision. For 2025-26:

- Sets 1–3 will continue to take GCSE Statistics.
- Other sets will have additional Maths time instead, as this is where students most benefit from consolidating their core skills.

For higher-ability students, the Statistics course is highly relevant to future careers and develops their mathematical thinking further during what can otherwise be a "drift year" before GCSEs intensify.

These changes are all about ensuring the right balance between stretch and support, and we'll continue to review the curriculum regularly to make sure it meets students' needs.