

DARTMOUTH ACADEMY

Secondary Newsletter

December 2025

Be your
Best Self

COURAGE · COMPASSION · AMBITION





As we reach the end of a very busy and festive autumn term, I would like to take a moment to reflect on what has been a wonderful run up to Christmas for our whole school community.

The final few weeks of term have been packed full of events, celebrations and memorable moments, all of which have showcased the talent, commitment and spirit of our pupils and staff. One of the highlights was our Celebration Evening, where it was a real privilege to welcome sporting icon Martin Johnson to present awards to pupils from across the school. It was also a special opportunity to celebrate last year's Year 11 pupils as they returned to collect their GCSE certificates. The evening was a powerful reminder of the courage, compassion and ambition our pupils demonstrate every day, and we are grateful to Martin for sharing such an inspiring message.

Alongside this, we have enjoyed a range of fantastic performances that truly captured the magic of the season. Our nativity performances, carol concerts and talent shows were a joy to watch and reflected the confidence, creativity and teamwork of our pupils. These events take a huge amount of preparation, and I would like to thank both staff and pupils for the time, care and enthusiasm they brought to making them such a success.

Christmas dinner was another much-anticipated moment, bringing the school together in a warm and festive atmosphere, and of course we cannot forget the eagerly awaited staff Christmas surprise, which provided plenty of smiles and laughter to end the term on a high.

As always, I would like to thank our staff for their dedication and hard work throughout a demanding term, and our families for their continued support. Most importantly, thank you to our pupils, who continue to make our school such a vibrant and rewarding place to be.

I hope you all enjoy a well-earned break, spend time with family and friends, and return refreshed for the new term. We look forward to welcoming everyone back to school on Monday 5th January.

Warmest wishes for a happy and restful Christmas.
Paul Girardot and
The Dartmouth team

Our future successes are built on the work we do today,

Dates for the diary

January 2026

5th – Back to school

16th – Y11 Sleepover

21st – Y9 Parents' Evening

27th – Y11 PPE Week

February 2026

9th – Y6 Mock SATs

11th – Y8 Parents' Evening

13th – Y8 & 9 Sleepover

March 2026

2nd – Y9 Vaccinations

11th – Y9 Options Evening

14th – Silver DofE training weekend

16th – School closed, staff training day

21st – Bronze DofE training weekend

Attendance Matters

This year's attendance by Year Group:

Reception – 93.8%

Year 1 – 95.1%

Year 2 – 96.2%

Year 3 – 95.7%

Year 4 – 94.7%

Year 5 – 94.1%

Year 6 – 94%

Year 7 – 93%

Year 8 – 93.1%

Year 9 – 90.7%

Year 10 – 92.4%

Year 11 – 92.5%

School attendance for the year so far is currently

93.1 %

Thank you for supporting our target of 96%



Dear parents/ carers,

Following on from our parent survey responses it has become clear that some parents have expressed concern about the use of smartphones in school. There have been well publicised drives in schools both locally and nationally along with government guidance on the matter. At Dartmouth Academy we are seeking the views of parents and carers on whether Dartmouth Academy should introduce a complete smartphone ban. Gathering this feedback will help us understand community perspectives and ensure that any decision made is informed, balanced and in the best interests of our pupils' wellbeing and learning.

This is a simple yes/no survey with space for an additional comment should you wish to add any. It will take seconds to respond and will be invaluable in shaping our plans moving forward. This will remain open until Friday 30th January 2026.

[Smartphones in school – Fill in form](#)

Primary Phase Christmas Message

As we come to the end of our Christmas celebrations, we would like to take a moment to reflect on what has been a truly special and memorable time in our Primary Phase community.

Over the past few weeks, our school has been filled with festive joy and excitement. The children thoroughly enjoyed taking part in a school talent show, watching the wonderful pantomime performed by Rainbow Theatre, and celebrating the Christmas story through our EYFS Nativity, which was a delight for everyone who attended. These events brought our community together and created lasting memories for our children.

Firstly, a heartfelt thank you to our wonderful staff. Your dedication, flexibility and willingness to go the extra mile ensured that every event and classroom celebration ran smoothly and was enjoyed by all. Your hard work and commitment truly made this festive season special.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to our parents and carers for your positivity, understanding and continued support- particularly when we had to change the venue for our Carol Concert. Your encouragement and cooperation helped ensure the event remained a warm and uplifting occasion.

Finally, and most importantly, thank you to our children. You have been fantastic role models throughout the Christmas period, showing kindness, respect and care for one another. This was especially evident during our Christmas dinner, where the thoughtfulness and generosity you showed truly reflected the spirit of the season. We are incredibly proud of our Primary Phase community and the warmth, generosity and togetherness shown over the past few weeks. We hope you all enjoy a restful and happy break, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back in the new year.

Mrs Tierney and the Primary Team



Staff Farewell...

At the end of this term, we say goodbye to two valued members of the Dartmouth team.

After seven years at Dartmouth, we bid farewell to **Hettie Eggleton**, our Geography teacher. During her time with us, Hettie has inspired a love of the world and its people in countless pupils through her passion, subject expertise and commitment to high-quality teaching. She has been a dedicated and much-respected member of staff, and we thank her sincerely for the contribution she has made to the school community.



We also say goodbye to **Rachel Burris**, our **Early Years Lead**, who has been at Dartmouth for three years. Rachel's care, enthusiasm and dedication have helped shape a nurturing and stimulating start to school life for our youngest pupils. Her leadership and commitment to Early Years education have had a lasting impact on children, families and colleagues alike.



Both Hettie and Rachel have dedicated their lives to teaching, and as they now move on to new opportunities, we know you will join us in thanking them for everything they have given to Dartmouth and wish them every success and happiness in the future.

What have we been up to:

Year 11 GCSE & All through Values Awards Evening

We were delighted to host a special Awards Evening celebrating the achievements of our pupils. The event brought together pupils, families, and staff for an occasion that recognised both academic success and the embodiment of our school values: **Courage, Compassion, and Ambition.**

Guests were welcomed with canapés and refreshments, accompanied by a musical performance from one of our talented pupils. Alongside the presentation of GCSE certificates, awards were given to nominated pupils in each of the three values categories, with the winners proudly receiving trophies.

The evening featured inspiring speeches from last year's Head Boy and Head Girl, who reflected on their experiences and offered encouragement to the next cohort. We were also honoured to present **Duke of Edinburgh certificates**, handed out by a Commander from Britannia Royal Naval College.

A highlight of the night was the keynote address delivered by **Martin Johnson**, England rugby legend, whose message about resilience, teamwork, and striving for excellence resonated strongly with students and families alike.



Our future successes are built on the work we do today.

These are all the nominations for our awards evening on 19th November.

Courage – Summary Nominations

- **Max MB** – Stepped up with confidence to captain his football team in their first ever league match.
- **Miya P (Past Year 11)** – Persisted with determination to study Triple Science despite early setbacks, achieving excellent results while overcoming significant personal challenges.
- **Alec C** – Showed huge bravery by taking his first ever flight and spending a month in Borneo, travelling independently for the first time.
- **Glen L** – Demonstrates daily courage by working exceptionally hard across all subjects while learning English as an additional language, always remaining polite and kind.
- **Will D & Emelia T (Past Year 11)** – Displayed great confidence and bravery presenting at a major London conference for YPAG.
- **Cain B** – Continues to show courage through sustained effort and self-regulation, pushing on even when things feel difficult.
- **Bethany C** – Shows extraordinary courage in managing medical challenges while working hard every lesson; her resilience in tutor reading and on Sports Day was remarkable.
- **Ashfi D** – Moved to a new country with no spoken English and has shown outstanding resilience, courage in forming new friendships, and rapid progress—already shining in netball after only three lessons.
- **Leo M** – Approaches school with joy and positivity despite difficulties outside school, showing remarkable resilience during a challenging family period.
- **Felix W** – Embraced the challenge of joining a new school in a new country, showing courage by taking part in a house quiz despite personal hurdles.
- **Reuben G** – Shows courage in PE by tackling every challenge with determination, making exceptional progress through effort and grit.
- **Miya C** – Demonstrated exceptional confidence and courage presenting at a London conference to academic and medical professionals, as well as at several community events.

Compassion – Summary Nominations

- **Brodie A** – Gently and patiently supports his peers by sharing his understanding of concepts.
- **Maisie S (Past Year 11)** – Consistently kind to everyone and never has a bad word to say, creating a warm and positive atmosphere.
- **Kayden H** – Showed deep empathy when speaking to a visiting journalist, recognising that the most meaningful part of the Borneo trip was the people and communities they met.

- **Keegan M** – Regularly helps other students with patience and positivity, showing exceptional compassion, particularly towards a friend he supports daily.
- **Zuzia S** – A selfless, caring presence who supports her friendship group and those around her with kindness.
- **Kenya Y** – Consistently demonstrates care and thoughtfulness towards others.
- **Year 10 Sports Ambassadors (Eboney, Romilly, Rebecca, Zuzia, Isabella)** – Show great compassion in running a multi-skills club for KS1 pupils, offering encouragement, patience and kindness to every child who attends.

Ambition – Summary Nominations

- **Luke B** – Actively seeks to extend his mathematical learning by pursuing opportunities through Exeter Maths School.
- **Nicole L (Past Year 11)** – Inspired by her Prolific trip, Nicole is ambitiously building a future in the marine industry, already completing powerboat qualifications and enrolling on a specialist marine course.
- **Amelie Y (Past Year 11)** – Overcame shyness to take on major leadership roles, becoming Head Girl and confidently speaking in whole-school assemblies.
- **Ben T** – Shows ambition through his strong involvement in the wider community, including serving on the regatta committee.
- **Louis N** – Demonstrates a strong work ethic in Year 11, consistently going above and beyond expectations.
- **Charlie D** – Shows determined ambition to succeed, making significant academic and personal progress in his time at Dartmouth.
- **Harry S** – Displays exceptional ambition through his deep knowledge, extensive independent research and ability to form sophisticated arguments with maturity and insight. Harry has also been instrumental in setting up the youth council
- **Oakley G** – Demonstrates ambition across many areas, especially in swimming where his determination has enabled him to become an accomplished swimmer.
- **Macie L** – For all of her work with the Devon Young Farmers and championing of such a pivotal industry in our part of the country. And being recognised as an outstanding member of the group.

Our Christmas Fair was a wonderful success and a truly festive occasion enjoyed by all. The school was filled with Christmas cheer, fantastic stalls, and a great sense of community, making it a memorable event for everyone who attended.

A huge thank you must go to **DAF** (Dartmouth Academy Friends) for their incredible organisation and for the time and effort they so generously gave. Their dedication, hard work, and attention to detail ensured the fair ran smoothly from start to finish. We are extremely grateful for everything they do and for the commitment they show in supporting events like this.

If you would be interested in joining our friends' group, please contact reception.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Christmas Fair such a special day.



Pupils who have signed up for our next expedition to Cambodia in 2027 were also busy fundraising at our Christmas Fair!



Our future successes are built on the work we do today.

Mental Health Support This Festive Season

You can still access support over the holiday period



kooth

We're online every day including Christmas Day
Sign up for free at [kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)

Kooth counsellors will be available to support young people, everyday over the festive period! Visit www.kooth.com

Call free day or night on
116 123

SAMARITANS

Feeling low?
Anxious?
Struggling to cope?

Text SHOUT to 85258
for free, confidential support, 24/7

childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME
childline.org.uk | 0800 1111

Childline is a service provided by the NSPCC. NSPCC 2021. Registered charity. England and Wales: 268429, Scotland: SC037317 and Jersey: 284. It is a member of the NSPCC Network. Campaign by The Coe, Catherine Pinner and Clapton Road Studios. J09231223 P122854.

THE MIX

We're here

Here's how you can get support over the holidays, from the 25th December - 2nd January:

Crisis messenger	Social media / articles	Email
Chatbot	Counselling	Community

themix.org.uk



Call 111
select mental health option



FULLY FUNDED
FOR ALL CHILDREN AGED 5-14
ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFIT RELATED
FREE SCHOOL MEALS
(£25 PER DAY FOR PUPILS NOT ELIGIBLE)

FESTIVE SPECIAL
10am DAILY FOOTBALL
-3PM & MULTI-SPORT
ACTIVITIES

NUTRITIOUS COOKED
MEAL EVERY DAY

NUTRITION
GUIDES

MAGICIAN & ENTERTAINER

LOCAL TRIPS

CERTIFICATES, PRIZES
and much more!

ANIMAL
HQ VISIT

FOR LOCATIONS, DATES AND BOOKINGS PLEASE VISIT
SHEARSOCCE.CO.UK

OR FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ADAM SHEARER 07967 124844

TOTNES | NEWTON ABBOT | DARTMOUTH



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our community...**

ONE DAY
**FREE
PASS**

Scan the QR
code, pop in
your details &
your pass will
be on it's
way!

**GYM OR
SWIM PASS**
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With six centres to
choose from across
Devon...

Dartmouth Leisure Centre
Ivybridge Leisure Centre
Meadowlands Leisure Centre
Parklands Leisure Centre
Quayside Leisure Centre
Totnes Leisure Centre

fusion

Citizens' Advice/ESW Project

Support for families in ESW schools with housing, personal finance, benefit entitlements etc.

Tracy Doody – South Hams schools

tracy.doody@southhamscab.org.uk

Abby Read – Teignbridge Schools

abigail.read@citizensadviceiteignbridge.org.uk

One day per week – time limited project

Simple referral process – A very quick and easy way to support our families.

- Support with Early Help meetings/ Attend school events/ Advice surgeries



Making Christmas Manageable

Citizens Advice

Simple ways to enjoy the festive season without overspending

Christmas can be a great time to relax and spend time with family, but it often comes with extra costs and pressure to spend more than we'd like. With household budgets already stretched, a bit of planning can make a real difference.

1. Set a Realistic Budget

Work out what you can comfortably afford to spend and stick to it. It's easy for small extras to add up, so keep a list of what you need — and what you don't. If you can, set aside a small amount each week to spread the cost.

2. Keep Gifts Simple

Children often remember the fun and attention more than what's under the tree. Low-cost or homemade gifts, or pooling together for a "Secret Santa" within the family, can keep things fair and affordable for everyone.

3. Plan Food Carefully

Christmas dinner doesn't need to be over the top. Planning meals in advance helps avoid waste, and sharing the cooking with friends or relatives can save both time and money.

4. Make the Most of What's Local

There are plenty of free or low-cost events in Teignbridge over the festive period — from school fairs to community activities. These can be a great way to get into the Christmas spirit without spending much.

5. Don't Feel Pressured

It's fine to say no to things that stretch your budget. A walk to see the lights, a film night at home, or a board game with family can make just as good memories as anything that costs money.

Need a Bit of Advice?

If you're worried about money or would like some support with budgeting, benefits, or local services, the **Citizens Advice Schools Project** can help. You can speak to your school for a direct referral.

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