

16 July 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I was delighted to welcome so many of you to our first ever Summer Fair, our vibrant Cultural Showcase, and those who were able to attend the Principal's Open Evening. These events gave me the opportunity to begin introducing myself to the Dixons Fazakerley community—and it's been a genuine privilege to meet many of you.

As a new Principal joining at an unusual point in the year, I know not everyone has had the chance to meet me just yet. I'm looking forward to working in genuine partnership with you to ensure every student at our school thrives.

Listening and Acting: Shaping a Better School Day

Throughout this term, we've listened carefully to feedback from students and parents. In response, we are making several key changes to how our school day and week are structured changes designed to improve the experience for everyone in our community and help us deliver even better outcomes.

From September, the school day will start and finish slightly earlier, and we will move to a new weekly structure. These changes aim to:

- improve communication between home and school,
- reduce overcrowding and queuing during social times,
- enable broader enrichment opportunities, and
- support the continued improvement of teaching and learning across the academy.

Key Changes from September

1. Earlier Start and Finish to the Day

From September, students must be on site by 8:15am, ready for the first whistle and morning line-up at 8:17am. The school day will also finish slightly earlier, especially on Thursdays and Fridays. By starting and finishing slightly earlier, we are able to create meaningful space after lessons for a broader and more ambitious enrichment offer—giving students more opportunities to explore interests, develop talents, and take part in purposeful activities beyond the classroom. These moments of joy, curiosity and connection are vital in helping students build confidence, form lasting friendships, and develop a real love of school.

To support families with essential school items, the DFA Essentials store will open from 8:00am–8:15am daily, offering uniform and equipment for just 10p per item (excluding planners and scientific calculators).



2. Extended Break and Split Lunch

To address concerns about long queues for toilets and crowded social spaces, we are:

- extending breaktime, and
- splitting lunch between KS3 and KS4.

Although lunch will be 10 minutes shorter overall, the reduced congestion means students will benefit from calmer, more accessible lunchtime routines.

3. A New School Week

The new school week will be structured as follows:

- Monday to Wednesday: Six-period days (finishing at 3:05pm)
- Thursday and Friday: Five-period days (with an earlier finish at 2:15pm)

This structure helps balance academic rigour with wider development by protecting time every Thursday afternoon for high-quality professional development—supporting continued improvement in teaching across the academy to ensure your child gets the outcomes they deserve.

4. Promoting Competition and Joy

From September, our PE department will take part in competitive fixtures with other schools every Tuesday during Periods 5 and 6. This protected time will give more students the opportunity to represent the academy with pride, develop teamwork, and experience the joy of competition.

Uniform and Appearance Expectations for September

As we continue to strengthen our culture of high standards, here is a reminder of the adjustments we have made to the school uniform ahead of September.

These changes have two key aims: to reduce costs for families and to increase student choice wherever possible. We ask that all students return in full and correct uniform at the start of term.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7–9)

- Year 7: Blazer (optional), black trousers or skirt, white shirt and tie or open neck blouse, black socks, DFA branded jumper or cardigan, DFA branded tie, black shoes. A school bag large enough to carry A4 books (DFA logo backpack optional).
- Years 8 and 9: Blazer (compulsory), black trousers or skirt, white shirt and tie or open neck blouse, black socks, DFA branded jumper or cardigan, DFA branded tie, black shoes. A school bag large enough to carry A4 books (DFA logo backpack optional).



Key Stage 4 (Years 10–11)

- Full suit (black, grey, or navy blue), DFA branded tie, white or pastel-coloured shirt (pink, blue, green, or yellow). Jumper optional but should match suit colour. Black shoes. A school bag large enough to carry A4 books (DFA logo backpack optional).

PE Kit (All Years)

- DFA branded Akora top, PE shorts or skort, and PE socks. Optional quarter-zip jumpers are available for families wishing to purchase them. In colder months, a black base layer may be worn underneath PE kit items for additional warmth.

Equipment and Organisation

From September, we are making a small number of adjustments to the list of required items to ensure students are better prepared both in and out of the classroom.

In addition to the usual basics (pen, pencil, ruler, eraser), students will now be expected to carry:

- A glue stick – used regularly to secure key resources into planners and booklets, including timetables, knowledge organisers, helping students keep vital information safe and accessible.
- A highlighter – a vital literacy tool that supports our focus on rigorous reading by helping students annotate texts, identify key points, and strengthen comprehension.
- A scientific calculator – specifically the Casio FX83GT CW, essential for mathematics and science lessons.
- Reading book.

Students will also be required to carry three A4 booklets in their bag at all times:

1. A new A4-Sized Planner – More like a diary, this will be used to record key dates, homework deadlines, and messages between home and advisors.
2. Morning Meeting Booklet – Used daily for structured knowledge recall activities.
3. Look, Cover, Write, Check Booklet – Featuring knowledge organisers for all subjects to support retention and mastery.

Replacements will be available at minimal cost every morning from 8:00am–8:15am, from the DFA Essentials Store.

Jewellery and Appearance

We have also listened to students, who expressed a desire for more freedom around appearance. As a result, students are now permitted to wear one plain stud in each ear lobe. These must be removed for PE lessons for health and safety reasons.



We ask families to avoid arranging any new piercings, hair dyeing, razor lines in hair or eyebrows, or other style changes that go against our published uniform policy or may restrict your child's full participation in school. Please also consider the timing of these changes over the summer—it is essential that all students return in September able to meet the same expectations. Our approach only works when every student is treated fairly—and that requires consistency and clarity from the start.

MCAS App Update

We understand the frustrations many families have faced with the current MCAS app, particularly around behaviour updates. Work is underway this summer to rebuild the behaviour module and ensure that, from September, communication will be more timely, consistent and reliable. Thank you for your patience and support as we continue to improve this system.

Staff Departures

At the end of this term, we say goodbye to several valued colleagues who are moving on:

- Miss Rangel (Modern Foreign Languages and Pastoral Team)
- Miss Nelson (Mountain Rescue)
- Miss Moore (History)
- Mr Freeman (Science)
- Miss Byrne (Design Technology)

We're grateful for the contributions they've made and wish them the very best for the future. In particular, I want to thank Mr Ollerton, our Vice Principal, who will be moving on to a new leadership role at Lathom High School. His wisdom, calm, and generosity have been critical in helping me settle into the role this term. I'm deeply grateful for his support, and I know he'll make a powerful impact in his next school.

Heads of Year for 2025/26

We are pleased to confirm the following Heads of Year from September:

- Year 7 – Rachael Roberts | rroberts@dixonsfa.com
- Year 8 – Abigail Clayton | aclayton@dixonsfa.com
- Year 9 – James Walshaw | jwalshaw@dixonsfa.com
- Year 10 – Anthony Gallagher | agallagher@dixonsfa.com
- Year 11 – Eden Sandland | esandland@dixonsfa.com

We also say goodbye to Miss Littlemore and Miss Chokhman, who are leaving the pastoral team to pursue new opportunities outside the sector. Any further pastoral updates will be shared in the new academic year.



Strengthening Community: Summer Camp for Year 5 and 6

As part of our commitment to strengthening community links, we're delighted to host our first DFA Summer Camp for Year 5 and 6 students on Wednesday 20 and Thursday 21 August, from 10:00am–2:00pm.

Having secured HAF funding, we are also working with external partners Xeno-Music to widen our holiday offer. Following this initial camp, we are planning a longer Easter camp, an extended summer programme, and a Christmas offer—helping to keep our doors open and purposeful during the holidays.

Student Return Dates

To ensure a smooth and purposeful start to the year:

- Year 7 students return on Monday 1 September for their induction day.
- All other students (Years 8–11) return on Tuesday 2 September.

Students must arrive by 8:15am, ready for line-up at 8:17am. Starting the day with calm and clarity is key—and we appreciate your support in embedding this from day one.

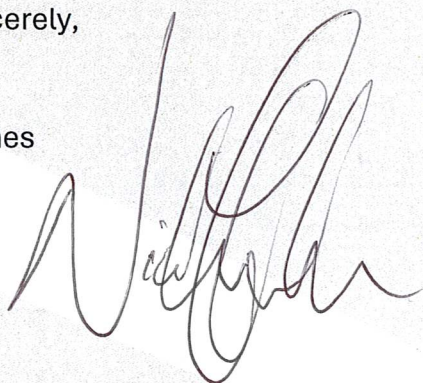
Thank you again for your continued support this year. I hope you and your family enjoy a safe, restful, and joyful summer break together.

One final request from me: please encourage your child to read regularly over the holidays. We know that reading is the single biggest difference-maker when it comes to a child's academic outcomes and life chances. Just 20 minutes a night can make all the difference—to their learning, their vocabulary, and their confidence.

I look forward to welcoming all our students back in September with renewed energy, high expectations, and a shared commitment to helping them become the best version of themselves.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Hughes
Principal

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nick Hughes', written over a faint, large, stylized background graphic that resembles a compass rose or a star.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cultural Routines - Start of Day	Staff Onsite 08:05 Briefing at 08:07	08:15	08:15	Staff Onsite 08:05 Briefing at 08:07	08:15
	Line Ups 08:17 - 08:20	Line Ups 08:17 - 08:20	Line Ups 08:17 - 08:20	Line Ups 08:17 - 08:20	Line Ups 08:17 - 08:20
	Morning Meeting				
08:20 - 08:45					
08:45 - 09:35	Lesson 1	Lesson 1	Lesson 1	PDS/Collaborative	Lesson 1
09:35 - 10:25	Lesson 2	Lesson 2	Lesson 2	Lesson 2	Lesson 2
10:25 - 10:45	Break				
10:45 - 11:35	Lesson 3	Lesson 3	Lesson 3	Lesson 3	Lesson 3
11:35 - 12:25	Lesson 4	Lesson 4	Lesson 4	Lesson 4	Lesson 4
12:25 - 12:55	LOW PEAK Lunch	LOW PEAK Lunch	LOW PEAK Lunch	LOW PEAK Lunch	LOW PEAK Lunch
12:55 - 13:25	HIGH PEAK DEAR Time	HIGH PEAK DEAR Time	HIGH PEAK DEAR Time	HIGH PEAK DEAR Time	HIGH PEAK DEAR Time
13:25 - 14:15	Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lesson 5	Lesson 5
14:15 - 15:05	Lesson 6	Lesson 6	Lesson 6	Coaching/Deliberate practice	
Cultural Routines - End of Day	Culture Coms until 15:30	Culture Coms until 15:30	Culture Coms until 15:30	Whole school/Dept PG until 16:05	Culture Coms until 14:40