

DERBY GRAMMAR GAZETTE



You cannot help, at this time of year, to reflect back at the many highlights and moments that put that extra spring in your step or brings a smile at the end of the day. As I sit and undertake the exercise myself, my thoughts spring to the two outstanding sports days, although less enjoyable was the sensation of standing still as a sixth former accelerated away from me. Two days that will linger long in my memory for the atmosphere and celebration of athletics. I also smile at the excitement and anticipation of the robotics team heading down to London for the finals of the First Tech, the tangible sense of joy following the return from the NEC and the extraordinary sense of achievement at solving the latest problem. Who can forget the robot coming to my rescue when I lost my glasses at Prize Giving?

Talking of which, what an evening! So much to celebrate and to enjoy and how much I enjoyed seeing the smiles as the pupils collected their deserved prizes.

The Garden Party was a perfect introduction to just how much our school means to so many people. Also amusing was the response from many of our alumni including King's Council, surgeons, doctors, CEO's and entrepreneurs who stood just that little bit taller as their former teachers reminded them of all the mischief they caused at the ages of 13 and 14.

To gather together all of our current and future sixth formers for a BBQ and (highly competitive) friendly game of softball was a similar highlight. A relaxed evening, welcoming new families to our family and making new friends and connections over a perfectly cooked (if I can say so myself) burger.

I could go on and on. The new nursery and the excitement as we welcome our first children, the play this week, the Tanzania trip, activities week, DofE expeditions, the gates (I am so pleased with the new gates!) the positive conversations and the great progress made across so many areas of school life. Such fun, and all seemingly under a blue sky...

So. My highlight?

I think I will choose Prize Giving. It was, I hope, a perfect blend of celebration, a great sense of optimism and anticipation but more important of all a real coming together of a community that I am very proud to belong to. Bring on September!

Alistair Bond
Headmaster

HOUSE STANDINGS - THE FINAL SCORE

Would you believe that after a whole year of house activities we have a tie for 2nd place! It's been a great competition this year and hopefully will be even closer next year!

Overall House Cricket

1st Bemrose
2nd Atkinson
3rd Derby
4th Blackton

Sports Day Results

1st Bemrose
2nd Atkinson
3rd Derby
4th Blackton

Overall House Competition

Placing & Points:

1st Bemrose (590)
2nd= Atkinson (480)
2nd= Derby (480)
4th Blackton (350)



DIARY DATES

JULY

29 Tanzania Trek Returns

AUGUST

28 Staff Inset Day - closed to Pupils

29 Staff Inset Day - closed to Pupils

SEPTEMBER

1 First Day Autumn Term for :
Primary, Year 7 & Y12

2 First Day Autumn Term for :
All other pupils

3 Whitemoor Lakes Parent Meeting
3.40pm - Library

5 New Parents Tea - 3.45pm

6 House Cross Country & Tug O War
8.30am - Rykneld Sports Centre

8 Y12 Introduction to A Levels - 7.00pm

10 Y7 Whitemoor Lakes Residential

11 Y10 Introduction to GCSE's - 7.00pm

15 Y11 Parent's Evening - 4.30pm

FIRST TECH UK CHAMPS

Rising to the Challenge: Our Journey at the FIRST Tech Challenge UK Championships

Last Thursday and Friday, Derby Grammar School FIRST TECH Challenge team took part in the thrilling UK Championships held at the iconic Copper Box Arena in East London. This prestigious event gathered 64 exceptional teams from across the country, all showcasing their creativity, engineering skills, and teamwork.

The FIRST Tech Challenge is more than just a robotics competition. It challenges teams to design, build, and program robots to complete complex tasks while also focusing on key skills such as communication, strategy, and community outreach. From programming precision bots to delivering knockout presentations, the team demonstrated exceptional skill, resilience, and that unmistakable spark of ingenuity that FIRST TECH is all about. Teams are judged not only on their robot's performance but also on their ability to collaborate and present their work clearly and confidently.

Our DGS team impressed the judges with a particularly strong presentation, where they explained their design process, programming, and teamwork with clarity and passion - earning them high praise.

After a long first day, the team stayed overnight at an Airbnb in Leighton, East London, just a short distance from the venue. Rested and recharged, they returned to compete on day two with determination

The energy was electric, the competition fierce, and the innovation off the charts. After months of hard work, late nights, and hundreds of design tweaks, our students had the incredible opportunity to compete at the national finals, representing not only their school but the future of UK engineering and robotics.

From programming precision bots to delivering knockout presentations, the team demonstrated exceptional skill, resilience, and that unmistakable spark of ingenuity that FIRST TECH is all about.

In the end, DGS finished 12th in their group of 32 teams, an outstanding achievement in a field of 64 top-notch competitors. Their hard work, resilience, and team spirit truly stood out. We're incredibly proud of the team and can't wait to see what they achieve next!

What's Next?

With the confidence gained at the championships and support from visionary partners like Accu, we're already looking ahead to the next challenge. Whether it's perfecting our next bot, mentoring younger teams, or spreading STEM excitement through outreach, we know we're building something truly special.



...AND A SPECIAL THANK YOU

A Huge Thank You to Our Sponsor: Accu

None of this would have been possible without the generous support of Accu, whose sponsorship has been a real game-changer. Thanks to Accu, our team has been able to:

- Access higher quality components and materials
- Increase outreach and STEM promotion efforts
- Travel to and participate in competitions with greater ease
- Dream bigger and achieve more

Their backing didn't just fund equipment - it gave our students the confidence and tools to compete on a national stage. For that, we are truly grateful.

Accu, based in Huddersfield, is a leading supplier of precision engineering components used by some of the biggest names in tech, robotics, aerospace, and medical industries. They've shipped over 750 million parts worldwide — and counting! But what makes Accu truly remarkable is their commitment to the local community and the next generation of engineers.

- In 2023, they invested £1 million in a new HQ at the historic Brook Motors site, creating 200 new jobs.
- Their ethos blends cutting-edge innovation with grassroots support – from world-leading firms to school robotics teams like ours!

⚽ From the Workshop to the Football Pitch

Accu's support of young talent doesn't end in the classroom. They're also the new Official Engineering Partner of Huddersfield Town FC!

As part of their multi-year partnership, Accu has:

- Renamed the John Smith's Stadium to the Accu Stadium
- Introduced STEM-focused fan experiences
- Launched education and community engagement programmes with the club

It's proof that Accu isn't just investing in components – they're investing in people. From all of us – thank you, Accu. You're not just part of our story. You're helping us write the future.



HOW TO SMASH YOUR FIRST...

We know you've only just broken up, but here's some useful tips for preparing yourself for the next school year...

New year, new start! Whether you're heading into a brand-new school or just moving up a year, that "back-to-school" feeling is real. You've got your fresh stationery, shiny new shoes, and maybe even a few butterflies – and that's totally normal! But don't worry – we've got your ultimate cheat sheet for starting the school year with confidence, energy, and a big smile on your face.

1. Chill Out (It's What Holidays Are For!)

Summer isn't the time to panic about school – it's your time to relax and have fun. Go outside, read books you actually like, watch your favourite shows, and hang out with your mates.

When you're feeling chilled, take a little time to think back over last year. What went well? What would you like to do even better this time? Setting a few goals can help give you direction without pressure.

2. Get Your Stuff Sorted well in advance.

Don't leave everything until the night before term starts (we've all done it – it's stressful!).

- **Check Your Kit:** Got pens that still work? Is your bag ready to go? Make a list and grab what you need before it starts to get stressful.
- **Sort Your Study Spot:** Pick a quiet, comfy place at home where you can do homework without distractions (yes, even the dog!). Keep it tidy!
- **Know What's Coming:** Read any info your school has sent out. Knowing your timetable, tutor's name, and where your lessons are can help calm those nerves.

3. Ease Back into School Mode

Nobody likes a 6am alarm after weeks of lie-ins! Start moving your bedtime and wake-up time earlier in the last week of the holidays – your future self will thank you.

- **Get Prepped the Night Before:** Lay out your clothes, pack your bag, and get your snacks and water bottle ready.
- **Fuel Up Right:** Eat foods that give your brain energy – think fruit, nuts, porridge, wholegrain toast. Chocolate might be tasty, but it won't help you concentrate for long!

- **Get Prepped the Night Before:** Lay out your clothes, pack your bag, and get your snacks and water bottle ready.
- **Fuel Up Right:** Eat foods that give your brain energy – think fruit, nuts, porridge, wholegrain toast. Chocolate might be tasty, but it won't help you concentrate for long!

4. Get in the Right Headspace

A new year is full of opportunities – new friends, new subjects, maybe new clubs. Try to focus on what you're excited about rather than what's making you nervous.

- **Set Some Fun Goals:** Maybe you want to try out for the football team, improve your maths, or finally learn to play the guitar. Choose goals that feel exciting, not scary.
- **Picture It Going Well:** Imagine yourself walking into school with confidence, answering questions, and smashing your goals. It helps more than you think!

5. Say Hello and Join In

School isn't just about books – it's also about the people!

- **Catch Up with Friends:** Message a few mates before school starts so you're already feeling connected.

WEEKS BACK AT SCHOOL

- **Be Friendly:** Smile, say hi, and include others. If you're new, don't worry – everyone feels nervous, and chances are someone else is waiting for you to say hello first.
- **Get Stuck In:** Clubs, teams, drama, music – whatever you're into, give it a go! You'll learn loads and make awesome memories.

6. Be Ready for the First Few Days

The first few days back can feel a bit full-on – new faces, new teachers, new timetables... it's a lot! But don't worry, you're not expected to know everything straight away.

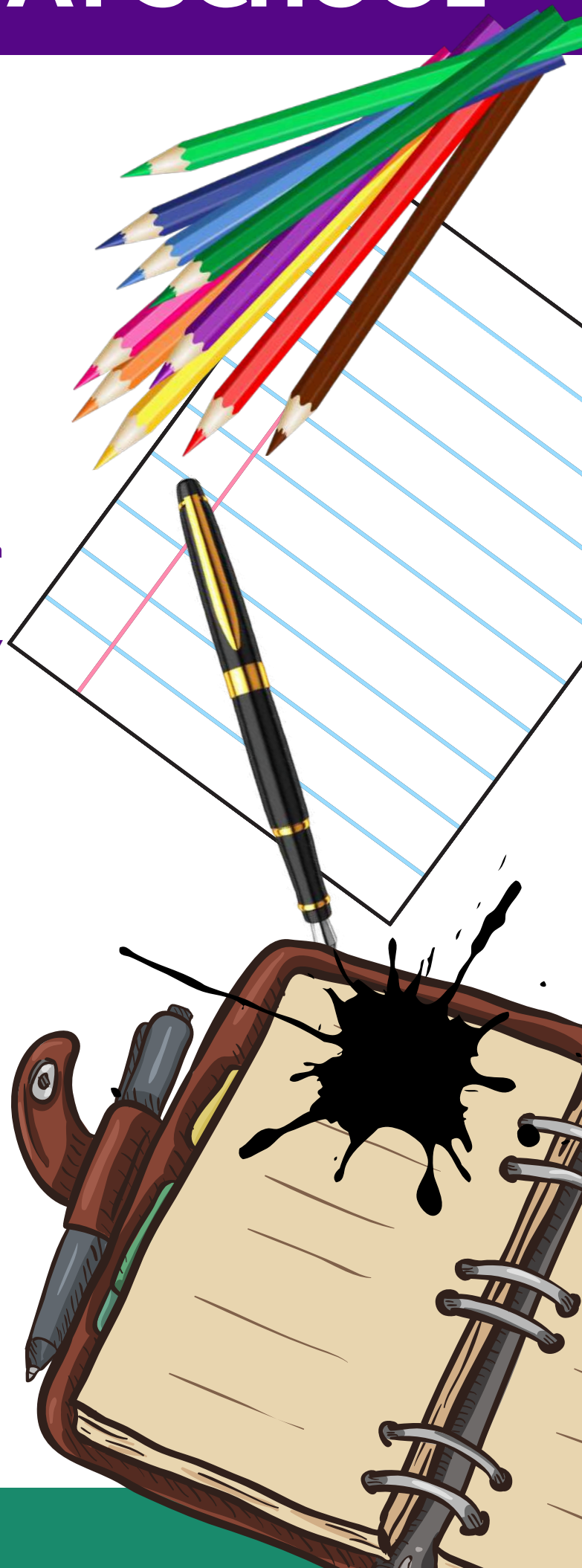
- **Listen Up:** Your teachers will explain the rules, where to be, what you need – all the important stuff. Pay attention and you'll soon get the hang of it.
- **Ask Questions:** If something doesn't make sense, just ask! There's no such thing as a silly question – everyone's learning together.
- **Be Kind to Yourself:** It's normal to feel a little unsure in the first few days. Give it time – things will start to click, and soon it'll all feel familiar.

7. Check In and Keep Tweaking

Once you're a few weeks in, take a step back and check how things are going.

- **What's Going Well?** Are you feeling organised? Keeping up with homework? Making new friends? Celebrate those wins!
- **What Could Be Better?** Maybe you're finding mornings tricky or struggling with a subject. That's okay – talk to your tutor, teachers or someone at home. There's always help.
- **Stay Flexible:** Life changes, and so do you. If something isn't working, try a different approach. That's how you learn and grow.

Happy
Summer



IS LATE-NIGHT DIGITAL USE HARMFUL?



In today's digital world, gaming and screen time have become a significant part of life for young people. Whether it's crushing levels in your favorite game or scrolling endlessly through social media, it's easy to lose track of time, especially in the evenings. However, spending too much time on devices before bed can have serious effects on your health, both immediately and in the long term.

Many studies have shown that excessive screen time before bed can interfere with sleep patterns. The blue light emitted from screens suppresses the production of melatonin, the hormone responsible for regulating sleep. According to the Sleep Foundation, young people who spend hours gaming late at night often struggle with falling asleep and experience disrupted sleep cycles.

Excessive gaming and screen use don't just affect sleep—they can take a toll on mental health as well. Research published by the National Institute of Mental Health suggests that prolonged exposure to screens and digital stimulation can increase stress levels and anxiety in young people.

The consequences of excessive device use before bed extend beyond poor sleep and mental health struggles. Over time, it can contribute to obesity, cardiovascular issues, and vision problems.

- **Obesity:** Sitting for long hours gaming instead of engaging in physical activity can lead to weight gain. Lack of movement combined with late-night snacking increases the risk of developing health issues like diabetes and high blood pressure.
- **Cardiovascular Issues:** Sedentary behavior has been linked to an increased risk of heart disease. Studies show that young people who spend excessive time on screens are more likely to develop high cholesterol and hypertension later in life.
- **Vision Strain:** Staring at screens for hours before bedtime can cause digital eye strain, leading to headaches, blurred vision, and discomfort.

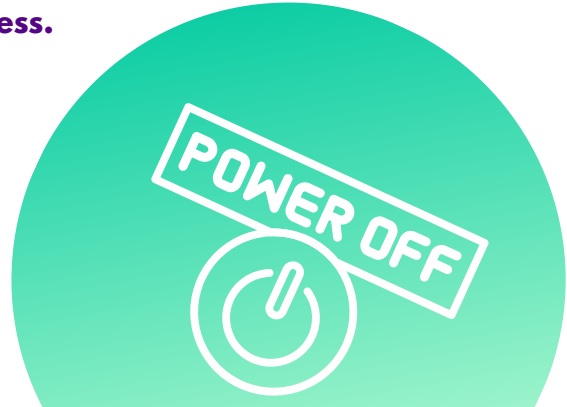
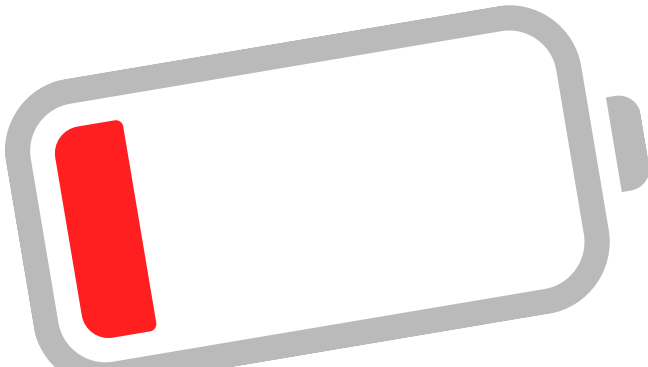
HOW YOU CAN BREAK THE HABIT...

Reducing screen time before bed is crucial for better health. Here are some steps to help manage evening device use:

1. **Set a Screen Curfew:** Try to turn off screens at least one hour before bedtime. Instead, engage in relaxing activities like reading or listening to music.
2. **Use Blue Light Filters:** If you must use a device at night, enable night mode or use blue light filtering glasses to reduce exposure.
3. **Prioritize Physical Activity:** Balance gaming with physical exercise to keep your body healthy and reduce sedentary behaviour.
4. **Limit Social Media Before Sleep:** Avoid scrolling through social media, as it can increase anxiety and overstimulation.

Gaming and screen time can be entertaining and even beneficial when done in moderation, but recognizing the negative effects of excessive night-time device use is key to maintaining good health. Setting boundaries and making small adjustments can lead to better sleep, improved mood, and long-term health benefits.

Are you ready to take control of your night-time routine? Cutting down on screen time might just be the best move for your health and happiness.



ACTIVITIES WEEK

It's very quiet in school this week as our pupils enjoy so many varied adventures on Activities week. Across the next few pages we'll bring you up to date with what they've been up to!

Once again, on Monday afternoon, the Library was transformed into a buzzing hub of innovation and excitement as Robot Wars made its much-anticipated return. Pupils gathered with enthusiasm to design, build, and battle their very own custom-made robots in a hands-on session that blended creativity, engineering, and a touch of competitive spirit. Working in small teams, students used a range of materials to construct their robot frames before diving into the tech side - programming their machines and preparing for battle.

The highlight of the session came when the robots came to life on the battleground. Using a clever software system, students were able to link their phones directly to the robot "brains," turning their creations into fully radio-controlled contenders. With wheels spinning, claws grabbing, and strategies forming on the fly, the atmosphere in the room was electric. Cheers and laughter filled the air as battles commenced, showcasing not only the pupils' technical skills but also their ability to problem-solve, adapt, and work as a team. Robot Wars continues to be a standout enrichment activity that inspires innovation, collaboration, and a whole lot of fun!



ACTIVITIES WEEK

Pupils from Year 9 enjoyed an action-packed adventure yesterday as they visited the Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre. The day was filled with excitement, challenges, and team spirit as students took part in a range of outdoor activities designed to test their resilience, coordination, and confidence. From navigating the waters during a thrilling kayaking session to scaling heights on the climbing wall, every moment brought a new opportunity to step outside comfort zones and embrace the great outdoors.

One of the highlights of the day was the Aerial Challenge course, where pupils tackled a series of high ropes suspended above the ground. Encouraged by their peers and instructors, they swung, balanced, and climbed their way through the course with determination and enthusiasm. The trip not only provided an exhilarating break from the classroom but also helped build teamwork and leadership skills, leaving pupils with a real sense of achievement and plenty of stories to share.



ACTIVITIES WEEK

Year 7 and 8 had another energetic day this week, starting with a lively morning session led by one of the school's favourite visitors - Skipping Henry. A much-loved and frequent face at Derby Grammar School, Henry brought his usual charm and high-energy enthusiasm as he led pupils through a range of fun skipping routines and challenges. With music pumping and ropes whirling, students learned new tricks, worked on their coordination, and certainly got their pulse rates up! Henry's sessions are always a brilliant blend of fitness and fun, and it was fantastic to see everyone encouraging one another and throwing themselves into the activities with such enthusiasm.

The excitement didn't stop there. In the afternoon, pupils were treated to an engaging session with a visiting magician, who amazed them with classic sleight-of-hand tricks before revealing a few secrets and teaching them illusions they could perform themselves. Laughter and gasps of wonder filled the room as students tried out their own mini magic shows. The day concluded with thrilling escape room challenges, where problem-solving, communication and teamwork were key as they raced against the clock to solve puzzles and crack codes. It was a fantastic, fast-paced day packed with movement, mystery and memorable moments.



RYKNELD SPORTS CENTRE 20% DISCOUNT

Did you know that as members of the DGS community, you can enjoy a fantastic 20% discount at Rykneld Sports Centre? So if you're looking for Summer Holiday activities - this could help you out!



Whether you're looking to keep fit, try a new sport, or simply have some fun, Rykneld Sports Centre offers a wide range of facilities and activities suitable for all ages and abilities.

This exclusive 20% discount is available to all DGS families, so make the most of the opportunity to get active during the break. For more information on available activities and to take advantage of the discount, simply visit the Rykneld Sports Centre page on our website. Don't miss out - take a step towards a healthier and more active Easter break at Rykneld Sports Centre!

For more details, visit:
<https://www.derbygrammar.org/rykneld-sports-centre>

SUMMER CAMPS AT DGS STILL TIME TO SIGN UP!

We're thrilled to announce that DGS will be launching its very first on-site Summer Camp this year – and it's set to be a season full of adventure, creativity and non-stop fun!

Running from 7 July to 22 August, our action-packed camp is open to all children from Reception through to Year 8 – and you don't need to be a DGS pupil to join in the fun!

Whether your child loves outdoor exploration, sports, crafts, games or making new friends, our Summer Camp promises something for everyone. With a warm, friendly atmosphere and access to our beautiful grounds and facilities, children will have the chance to try new things and lots of engaging activities. There will be early bird offers, sibling discounts, and weekly booking discounts available – so it's the perfect time to plan ahead and secure your place.

- ◆ Children will need to bring a packed lunch
- ◆ Flexible booking options available
- ◆ Open to all, not just DGS families

For more information email
daycamps@inspiredlearninggroup.co.uk



6TH FORM BBQ & COCKTAILS

Last Friday evening, the sun shone down on a wonderful Derby Grammar School tradition as we welcomed our Sixth Form community—past, present, and future—for a relaxed and memorable BBQ and Cocktail evening on the school lawns.

The event brought together our current Year 12s, the outgoing Year 13s, and all the new families who will be joining us in September. With the school grounds bathed in the soft glow of a warm summer's evening, it was the perfect setting for conversation, connection, and celebration. The Library was transformed into a stylish cocktail bar, where colourful cocktails and mocktails flowed freely, while outside, Mr Bond and Mr Smyth manned the BBQs with their usual flair, cooking up a feast for all to enjoy.

The evening provided the perfect opportunity for new students to ease any nerves, make friends, exchange WhatsApp details and Snapchat handles, and get a real sense of the vibrant, welcoming community that defines our Sixth Form.

Parents mingled with staff and current pupils, and there was a genuine buzz of excitement in the air as our new joiners began to picture themselves stepping confidently into life at Derby Grammar School this September. For our Year 13s, preparing to head off on their Tanzanian adventure, it was a chance to share stories and offer advice to those preparing to take their place.

As the sun dipped lower, everyone gathered on the field for a lively game of rounders, where staff and parents bravely took on the students—proving that experience (and a bit of competitive spirit) still goes a long way!

A huge thank you to everyone who came along and made the evening so special. It was a perfect reminder of the strong bonds and shared spirit that make our Sixth Form so unique. We're already looking forward to more social events like this in the coming academic year!



TEAM BUILDING WITH Y'S 7&8

Today, our Year 7 and 8 students are diving headfirst into a full day of exhilarating team-building activities, designed to challenge, inspire and unite. We're thrilled to be working with the brilliant team at No Limits, a dynamic company known for delivering high-energy, purpose-driven experiences that build confidence and camaraderie.

From the first challenge, the school grounds were buzzing with excitement, laughter, and competitive spirit, as students tackled a variety of creative and physical challenges in their teams.

Each activity is designed not only to test physical ability, but to strengthen communication, leadership, problem-solving, and trust within the teams. Whether it's navigating a tricky obstacle course, solving a puzzle against the clock, or working together to achieve a common goal, every challenge earns the team valuable points. But here's where it gets even more exciting – those points can then be traded for equipment and resources needed for the grand finale: the ultimate team challenge. Think Hunger Games vibes – but without the hunger, and without the life-or-death stakes! Just plenty of fun, determination, and clever strategy.

The final challenge will push every team to draw on the skills they've honed throughout the day, using their hard-earned resources wisely and thinking on their feet. It's all about collaboration, resilience and a good dose of tactical planning – and of course, a sense of humour! It's fantastic to see students stepping out of their comfort zones, cheering each other on, and discovering new strengths in themselves and their peers.

Today isn't just about games; it's about building bonds, celebrating teamwork, and making memories that will stay with them long after the final whistle is blown.



ROCK BOTTOM

Primary School Rocks the Stage with Stone Age Spectacle

On Wednesday evening, the School Hall was transformed into the bustling prehistoric town of Rock Bottom as our talented Primary pupils took to the stage for their much-anticipated production. Packed with energy, humour, and a healthy dose of classic 'dad jokes', the performance was a roaring success from start to finish.

Rock Bottom follows the story of young inventor Bobby Cobblestone, a curious and creative thinker who dreams of a life beyond the daily grind of working in the local quarry. But when Bobby stumbles upon a villainous plot involving stolen inventions and power-hungry townsfolk, he must rally his friends, outwit the baddies, and save his town from disaster-with plenty of laughs and catchy tunes along the way!

The entire cast embraced their roles with boundless enthusiasm and infectious joy. From slapstick comedy to high-energy musical numbers, the children lit up the stage with their confidence and character. Whether they were cavemen, townsfolk, or the mischievous inventors themselves, every pupil brought something unique to the performance. The atmosphere in the Hall was electric, with families and staff beaming with pride. It was clear to everyone watching that the pupils were having the time of their lives - each and every one fully immersed in the fun of the production.

A special shout-out must go to Zak, who ran the tech for the show with professionalism well beyond his years. The lighting, sound, and transitions were flawless and added a polished edge to the evening's entertainment. Huge congratulations to our amazing Primary pupils for yet another fantastic performance, and a heartfelt thank you to Mrs Simpson for her dramatic input and the whole Primary Team, led by Mrs Genders, for their dedication, creativity, and hard work. Rock Bottom was an absolute triumph and a brilliant example of the magic that happens when young people are given the chance to shine.



PRIMARY ADVENTURES

Bouncing into the Summer Holidays

The Primary School pupils had an absolutely amazing time on their recent trip to Oxygen in Derby, the exciting Freejumping trampoline park that offers wall-to-wall fun and adventure.

From the moment they arrived, the children were bursting with excitement, eager to explore the different zones, leap into foam pits, and bounce across giant trampolines. The venue buzzed with laughter and energy as the pupils challenged themselves on obstacle courses, played dodgeball with their friends, and discovered new tricks with every jump.

It was the perfect opportunity for the children to burn off plenty of energy after a busy term. The physical activity was not only great fun but also fantastic exercise, giving them a real sense of freedom and movement. Staff were thrilled to see how the experience brought out the children's confidence, teamwork, and enthusiasm. Whether they were somersaulting into the airbag or racing each other across the performance trampolines, every child had a smile on their face and left the park beaming.

Trips like this are such an important part of the school experience, and this one was certainly a highlight of the term. A big thank you goes to the staff who made the day run so smoothly and to the team at Oxygen for creating such a fun and safe environment. The children returned to school tired but happy, full of stories to share and already asking when they can go back again!



PRIMARY ADVENTURES

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT

Way, way back...

The Primary School pupils were treated to a truly spectacular experience yesterday as they travelled to the Curve Theatre in Leicester to see Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, featuring the brilliant Joe McElderry - X Factor winner - as the Pharaoh.

The production, fresh from the London Palladium and now on its UK tour, was a dazzling display of music, colour, and storytelling. Our students were incredibly lucky to see such a high-calibre performance, and the excitement was palpable from the moment the curtain rose.

The iconic Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice musical did not disappoint, bursting with toe-tapping (and sing-along!) songs, stunning visual effects, and more glitter than you could imagine. The energy on stage was infectious, and the cast's enthusiasm lit up the theatre.

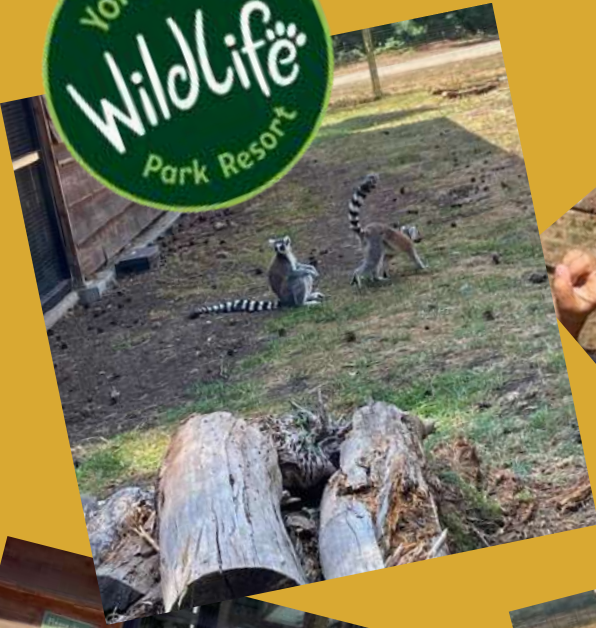
Joe McElderry's performance was a highlight, captivating the audience with his charisma and vocals in a role packed with humour and flair. The children were entranced from start to finish, completely immersed in this timeless tale of dreams, resilience, and technicolour triumph.

As one of the most beloved musicals of all time - having played in over 80 countries and enjoyed countless runs in the West End and on Broadway - Joseph proved once again why it holds such an enduring place in hearts around the world. The trip was a perfect opportunity to introduce our pupils to live theatre at its very best, and the experience will no doubt stay with them for years to come.

A huge thank you to the staff who organised the day and made it such a memorable adventure for everyone involved.



PRIMARY ADVENTURES



This week, our Primary pupils enjoyed a truly unforgettable day out at the award-winning Yorkshire Wildlife Park, located just outside Doncaster in South Yorkshire. Known as the UK's number one walk-through wildlife adventure, the park offers a unique opportunity to explore over 70 different species in spacious, naturalistic enclosures. From spotting polar bears and lions to wandering through Lemur Woods and Wallaby Walkabout, the children were absolutely captivated by the variety of animals and the up-close experiences the park provides.

What makes Yorkshire Wildlife Park stand out is its strong conservation ethos. The park is not only home to endangered and rescued animals but also actively contributes to global wildlife protection through its charity, the WildLife Foundation. The children learned about important conservation efforts across the world and were encouraged to think about their own role in protecting our planet and its animals. Educational talks and informative displays throughout the park added real value to the day, blending fun with learning in the best possible way.

Blessed with glorious sunshine, the children made the most of the fresh air and open space, enjoying picnic lunches and outdoor play with smiles on every face. It was a day filled with excitement, discovery and laughter — a perfect end-of-term treat and a brilliant reminder of the joy of learning beyond the classroom. We're so proud of how engaged and enthusiastic the children were, and we know they'll be talking about this adventure for weeks to come!

PRIMARY ADVENTURES



Our Primary School students enjoyed a memorable day immersed in the natural splendour of the Peak District this week – one of our most cherished local areas of outstanding natural beauty. Just a short journey from school, the Peak District never fails to please with its dramatic landscapes, winding trails, and peaceful woodlands.

From the moment the children stepped onto the footpaths, excitement filled the air as they explored rolling hills, trickling streams, and wide-open spaces that seemed to stretch endlessly into the horizon. As they wandered along the well-worn routes, the children took time to pause, listen, and breathe deeply – experiencing that rare sense of calm that only nature can provide.

Surrounded by towering trees, singing birds, and the gentle rustle of leaves, there was a palpable feeling of serenity. For many, it was a chance to slow down and simply enjoy the world around them, with no distractions – just fresh air, friends, and the sound of boots crunching on gravel. Staff and pupils all remarked on the sense of wellbeing that came from being truly present in such a beautiful, unspoiled setting.

At lunchtime, the group settled down on a grassy knoll overlooking a sweeping valley to enjoy a well-earned picnic. With the sun shining overhead and panoramic views all around, laughter and conversation flowed easily. It was more than just a walk – it was a day of connection, reflection, and joy. Moments like these remind us all of the importance of spending time outdoors, recharging in nature's embrace. The Peak District gifted us not only stunning views but also a gentle reminder of how good it feels to be still, breathe deeply, and soak in the simple pleasures of the great outdoors.

BRONZE AND SILVER D^{of}E



Over the past couple of weeks, our Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award participants have been putting their navigation skills, teamwork and resilience to the test as they set off on their much-anticipated expeditions. Led by our dedicated staff, the groups have braved the hills, the unpredictable British weather, and the challenge of carrying all their kit on their backs – all with admirable determination. A couple of weekends ago, our Silver Award students, made up of Year 11s, headed deep into the heart of the Peak District for a two-night adventure.

Over the course of three days, they successfully navigated their way across the dales, demonstrating not only excellent map-reading and leadership skills, but also impressive perseverance and team spirit.



More recently, as part of our Activities Week, the Year 9 students took on the Bronze Award expedition. Their journey took them through the stunning landscapes of the White Peak around Matlock, setting off towards Birchover and completing a scenic loop back. This was many students' first real taste of independent trekking, and they rose to the occasion brilliantly – setting up tents, cooking their own meals, and supporting each other through every mile. It was heartening to see so many young people embracing the outdoors, learning to trust in their own abilities, and growing in confidence with every step.



The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is far more than just walking through beautiful countryside – although that's certainly a bonus! It offers young people an invaluable opportunity to develop life skills such as self-reliance, problem-solving, and leadership, all while strengthening friendships through volunteering, learning new skills, or simply spending time away from the distractions of daily life, participants gain a stronger sense of who they are and what they're capable of.

At Derby Grammar School, we're proud to support our students on their DofE journeys – experiences that not only create lifelong memories but also help shape them into confident, capable, and compassionate individuals.

30TH ANNIVERSARY GARDEN PARTY

Last Sunday, Derby Grammar School proudly celebrated a major milestone with our 30th Anniversary Garden Party and Open Day – a joyful and heartwarming occasion that brought together past, present, and future members of our school community. The day began with great energy at Rykneld Sports Centre, where the much-anticipated Old Boys vs Sixth Form hockey match took place. It was a fiercely contested game, with our former students proving they hadn't lost their touch, but our Sixth Form boys showed real grit, determination, and sportsmanship. Despite a defeat, they held their heads high and gave the alumni a run for their money – a brilliant start to what would become a truly memorable day.

Back on the school grounds, the garden party was in full swing, transforming our beautiful lawns into a vibrant hub of celebration and connection. Former students, some visiting for the first time in decades, returned 'home' to relive fond memories, reconnect with old friends, and share stories of their time at DGS. There was laughter echoing through the corridors as alumni explored familiar classrooms, marvelling at how much had changed – and how much had stayed reassuringly the same. On the lawns, families relaxed on picnic blankets and hay bales with glasses of Bucks Fizz in hand, tucking into freshly baked pizzas and enjoying a fantastic line-up of live music that set the perfect summer atmosphere. Traditional lawn games added a playful touch, keeping younger visitors entertained while adults reminisced and caught up.

We were also delighted to welcome a number of prospective families, who had the chance to experience first-hand the showcase of everything that makes our school so special – not just the academic excellence or the beautiful setting, but the strong sense of belonging and family spirit that underpins everything we do. There was a genuine sense of pride in the air as current students, staff, and alumni came together to celebrate 30 years of Derby Grammar School – a place where friendships are made, futures are shaped, and memories last a lifetime. We couldn't have asked for a more perfect way to mark this special occasion

