



Weekly Newsletter 19th June 2026

Dear members of the Aldercar High School community,

We hope that you have had as good a week as we have. Our busy, vibrant school goes from strength to strength. This week has been packed with a number of successful events and memorable experiences. We hope that you enjoy our weekly newsletter where we share just a few.

Post Ofsted Evening - I want to thank all of the members of the community that attended our post Ofsted evening on Monday. It was lovely to meet so many of you and share my vision for Aldercar High School as well as discuss the details behind the inspection including our areas for improvement.

Uniform Update - Next week the temperatures are forecast to rise to above 30 degrees. Therefore, we will be adapting our uniform expectations. From Monday students will not be required to wear their Aldercar High School blazer, jumper or tie. All other uniform expectations will remain as they are.

Parents Support - We passionately believe that working together will result in better outcomes for your child. Recently some parents have asked how they can support their child. Therefore, we have created this infographic to help.

WHAT A GREAT PARENT DOES

to support their secondary school child

Small things. Every day. Big difference.

LIMIT PHONE TIME, NOT THEIR POTENTIAL

Help them find balance. Too much screen time can affect sleep, mood, focus and mental health. Set clear boundaries and stick to them.

ENCOURAGE AND HELP WITH HOMEWORK

Homework builds independence and reinforces learning. Show interest, ask questions, and provide a quiet space.

GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP = BETTER DAYS

A consistent routine and enough sleep improves concentration, behaviour and wellbeing. Aim for 8-10 hours each night.

READING OPENS MINDS

Reading daily improves vocabulary, empathy, focus and academic success. Encourage reading for pleasure and learning.

EAT WELL, FEEL WELL

Healthy eating fuels their body and brain, improves energy and supports concentration. Encourage balanced meals and hydration.

BE PART OF OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

When parents and school work together, children thrive.

- Communicate
- Attend events
- Volunteer if you can
- Support our values and rules

ATTEND TODAY, ACHIEVE TOMORROW

Good attendance is one of the strongest predictors of success. Ensure they attend every day, on time, ready to learn.

ALSO, GREAT PARENTS...

- TALK AND LISTEN every day**
Build trust and understanding.
- SET HIGH EXPECTATIONS**
Believe in them and expect their best.
- PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE**
Help them take responsibility and problem solve.
- SUPPORT WELLBEING**
Notice how they are feeling and seek help if needed.
- CELEBRATE SUCCESS**
Recognise effort, progress and achievement.

TOGETHER, WE CAN HELP THEM SUCCEED
Thank you for being part of their journey.

INSET Day - Just as a gentle reminder Aldercar High School will be closed on Friday the 26th of June as we have an INSET day.

Aldercar Alumni - One of our ex-students [Ella Keyte] is currently at Bath Spa University. In August she is walking up Mount Kilimanjaro in aid of Meningitis Research. If any members of our community want to support her please follow the link below.

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/uk-kilimanjaro-29th-august-2026-student-ella-choseachallenge68e694892cbf5?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

Exam Update

KS3 exams have started very well. Here is the plan for Monday and Tuesday

Day	Date	Tutor	P1	P2	P3	P4
Monday	22/06/26					Y7 English
Tuesday	23/06/26		Y7 Maths		Y9 Science	

Curriculum Capture: Music

Year 7 are currently working towards their Ukulele assessments. The Ukulele work is based on the 'Just Play' principles they are: explain later, we get better as we play, learn by listening, learn by copying, show don't tell. The 'Just Play' informal learning model was devised and developed by Professor Lucy Green UCL (London). We deliver this through the Musical Futures online website using playalong chord jams and songs; this introduces rhythm patterns, strumming patterns and playing as part of an ensemble.

The Musical Futures website we subscribe to has an option where you can log on at home using a phone, tablet or laptop. (see details below)

www.musicalfuturesonline.org

Aldercar High School subscription website please do not share with anyone not attending this school but feel free to browse and use the student section for ukulele, chair drumming, guitar or keyboard development at home.
Username - [aldercarmusic](#)
Password - [aldercarmusic](#)





Year 8 and Year 9 are currently working through keyboard skills booklet two and keyboard skills booklet three where they learn the basics of playing the keyboard including hand positions, notation, reading notes, reading rhythms, phrasing, right and left hands separate and together.

Students' progress at different rates so we have a booklet with different pieces of music at different levels for them to follow; we have level 1, level 2 and sometimes level 3 pieces of music. There is also level 4 for exceptional progress, these might be students who have previously had private piano/keyboard tuition.


To encourage student confidence in performing we set the countdown timer several times during a keyboard lesson. After a student has performed, we have a star and a wish through verbal feedback, encouraging students to use subject appropriate vocabulary.

Keyboard Skills Two Booklet







Hedwig's Theme
(Harry Potter Theme)
John Williams



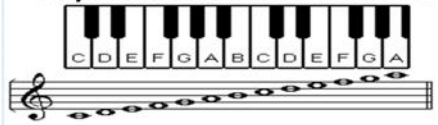
Swan Lake
Composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky




In the Hall of the Mountain King
Composer Edward Grieg




Keyboard Skills Three Booklet







James Bond Theme
John Barry & Monty Williams



Pirates of the Caribbean
Klaus Badelt & Hans Zimmer



Moonlight Sonata
Beethoven



Year 10 are currently coming towards the end of their first year. The GCSE is split into three different areas: Appraising, Composing and Performing.

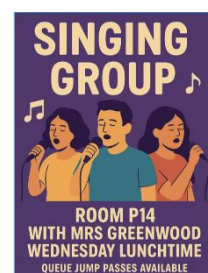
For appraising, they have completed the introduction unit on MAD T-SHIRT, one of the set pieces 'Africa' by Toto, and are currently finishing of area of study 4 'Popular Music'.

For composing they have been working on learning how to create composition through pentatonic scales, chord sequences, motif and ground bass. We are also learning how to use our new software MusicScore Studio.

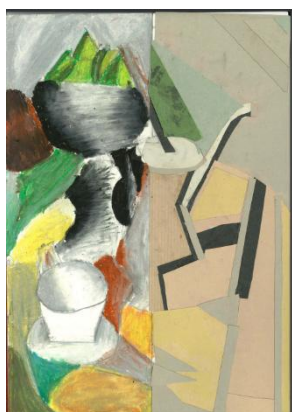
For Performing, students have been working on their solo pieces, we sometimes have lesson time for this but currently it is their homework to rehearse solo skills and pieces every week.

Extra-Curricular

Singing group – our singing group meet every Wednesday lunchtime in P14. We are currently welcoming new members, so please speak to Mrs Greenwood if your child is interested.



Curriculum Capture: Art and Photography



Year 7 students are currently exploring the vibrant, colourful world of Mexican art, experimenting with bold shapes and colours and learning how to express rich cultural heritage through their spectacular repeat pattern designs.

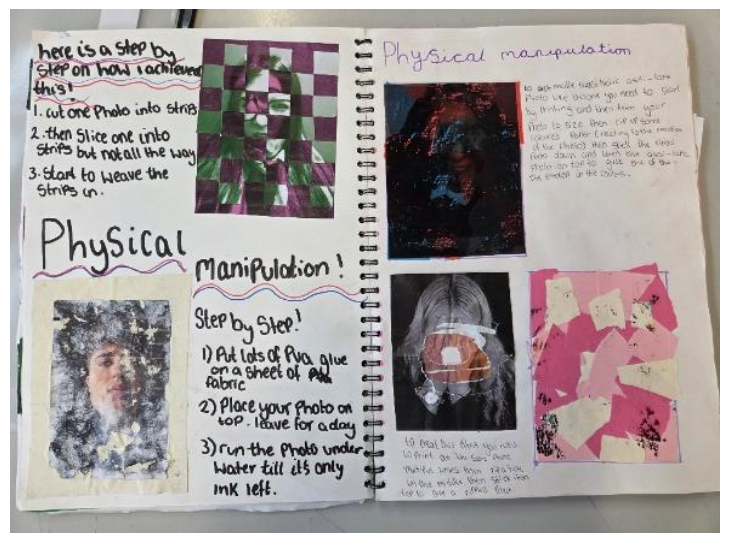
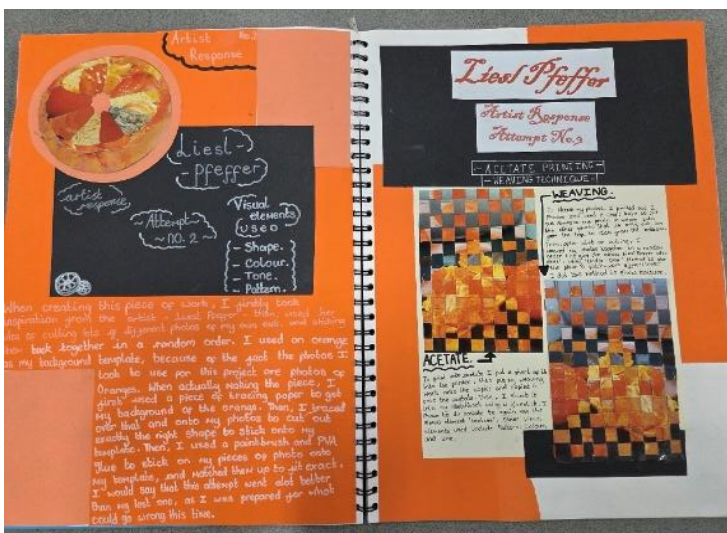
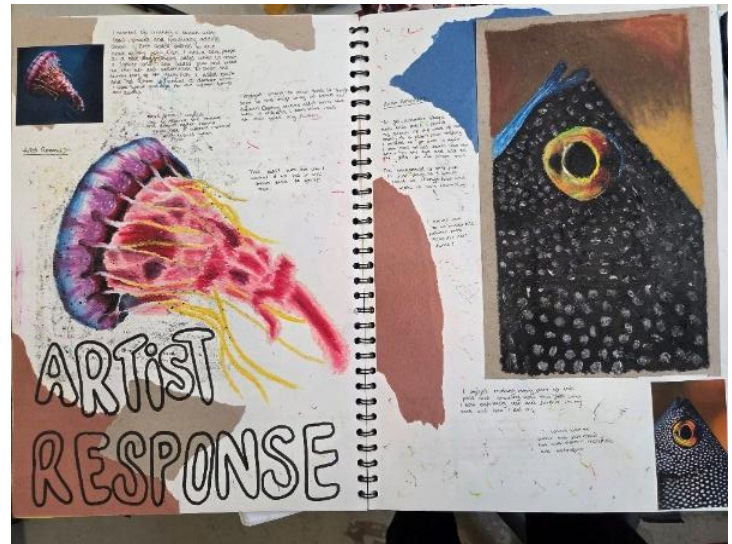
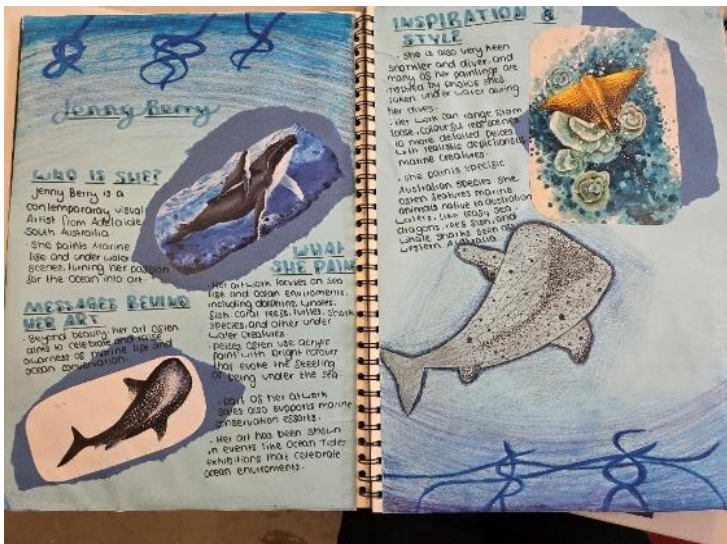
Year 8 are shattering traditional perspectives by tackling still life through the dynamic, fragmented lens of Cubism, challenging themselves to view everyday objects from multiple angles all at once just like Picasso.



Year 9 are bringing commercial design to life by channelling their inner Andy Warhol; they are studying the bold, everyday aesthetics of Pop Art to design completely original, eye-catching drinks cans that pop with bright colours and striking typography.



Within GCSE, the art and photography students are now experimenting with learnt techniques and processes to develop into a final piece. This will conclude their first of two projects for coursework development. The art students are exploring the vast areas of nature; through artist research initially and then testing materials such as oil pastel, acrylic paint and charcoal. The photography students are exploring textures and pattern through close-up macro work, physical manipulation such as ripping and weaving, digital editing using Photoshop and artist inspiration.



Sports Week

During Sports week all students will participate in different sports to earn points for their House. Each year group will be given a day to complete their year groups 'sports day' shown in the table below.

YEAR GROUP	DATE
8	Wednesday 24th June
9	Thursday 25th June
10	Monday 29th June
7	Wednesday 1st July

- On their year group day, we would like students to come in House colours that are **suitable sports clothing**. If this isn't possible, students are to wear their normal AHS PE kit.
- If unsuitable kit is being worn, students will be told to wear spare kit.
- Students are to bring a drinks bottle – the entire year group will be in the same location for their Sports Day; please make sure they have their name on their bottle.
- All belongings will be kept and locked in the changing area, drinks bottles and inhalers will need to be taken out and given to the teacher running the competition.
- Students who select the football option will need their 3G shoes.
- An Ice Cream van will be available on Wednesday 1st July during Period 5 and after school, change or payment card will be required if students wish to purchase an ice cream.

Year 8, 9 and 10:

YEAR GROUP	DATE
8	Wednesday 24th June
9	Thursday 25th June
10	Monday 29th June

period	Sport selection
2	Football or Benchball
3	Dodgeball
4	Longball
5	AHS assault course
WEDNESDAY 1ST JULY PERIOD 5 TEACHER VS STUDENT EVENT - TBC	

Year 7:

YEAR GROUP	DATE
7	Wednesday 1st July
PERIOD	Sport selection
2	football or benchball
3	dodgeball
4	AHS assault course
5	Period 5: student vs teachers' event - TBC

Sports news

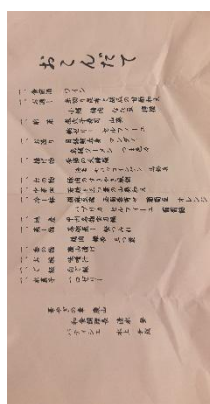
Year 10 student, Erin, competed at the Derbyshire Schools athletics championships last Saturday. She finished 1st in both of her events, 80m hurdles and Javelin. Erin has now qualified for the English Schools finals next month, an amazing achievement. We wish you all the best Erin, well done!



Mr Prest Visits Japan! 🇯🇵

I am very lucky to currently be in Japan for a two-week visit to explore how Mathematics is taught here. I'd like to begin by saying a huge thank you to Dr Matt Woodford from Nottingham Trent University for giving me this wonderful opportunity—and to our school leadership team for allowing me to take part in this experience during term time.

I am now about halfway through the trip, and it has already been an unforgettable experience!



This is the menu for dinner

🌐 A Long Journey Begins...

After leaving Heathrow at 9am on Sunday, I arrived in Tokyo at 7am on Monday morning. Despite the long journey (and some serious jet lag!), Dr Woodford and I managed to find our way around using the trains and underground system—standing out slightly as two grey-haired Englishmen!

I spent the first day exploring central Tokyo and trying some local food. Dinner was certainly an adventure—I sampled tempura seaweed and a dish made from octopus, ginger and spring onion!

🧠 Learning About Learning

On Tuesday, I met professors from Tokyo Gakugei University, along with teachers who have travelled from places such as Vancouver, San Francisco and California. We attended fascinating lectures about how Maths is taught in Japan, with a strong focus on problem-solving and helping students develop a deep understanding.

That evening, we enjoyed a traditional Japanese meal. Later that night, I experienced something completely new—my first ever earthquake! It measured 5.5 in magnitude. Everyone else stayed very calm, so I decided to do the same and head to bed.



Mr Yamada teaching a Maths lesson

🏫 A Day at School in Tokyo

Wednesday began early with a 6am walk to a local shrine with one of the professors. It was peaceful and a lovely way to start the day—very different from the packed underground train that followed! It was the most crowded train I've ever experienced, but everyone remained incredibly polite.

At Takehaya School, I observed Maths lessons on sequences and dividing fractions. With the help of a translator, I was able to follow both the teachers and students, and I have been very impressed by the quality of the lessons. At the end of the visit, I presented the school with a plaque from our school as a thank you.



Mr Yamada being presented the plaque



Mount Fuji

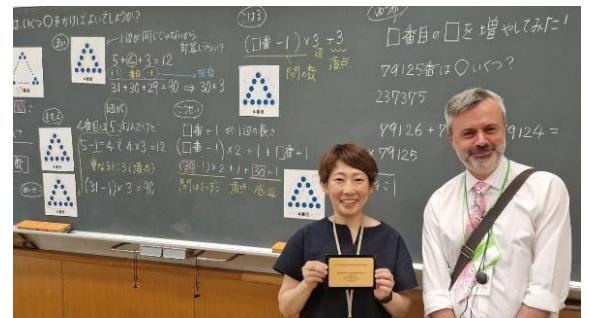
🎉 A Warm Welcome

On Thursday, we travelled to a district on the outskirts of Tokyo. On the way, I was lucky enough to catch a glimpse of Mount Fuji! We also stopped at a Mochi factory—and anyone who knows me won't be surprised to hear that I thoroughly enjoyed sampling these sweet treats.

At Saijo Elementary School, we received a wonderfully warm welcome. The students performed traditional Japanese songs, gave us handmade cards, and spoke to me in fantastic English. I have been so impressed by these 10-year-olds confidently asking me questions—although they haven't heard of Notts County yet... something I may need to work on!

👥 Teachers Learning Together

One of the most interesting parts of the trip so far has been seeing how teachers work together in Japan. After school, I attended a staff meeting where teachers discussed a lesson planned for the next day. They shared ideas and suggestions to improve it and will observe the lesson and provide more feedback afterwards. It's a brilliant example of teamwork and continuous improvement.

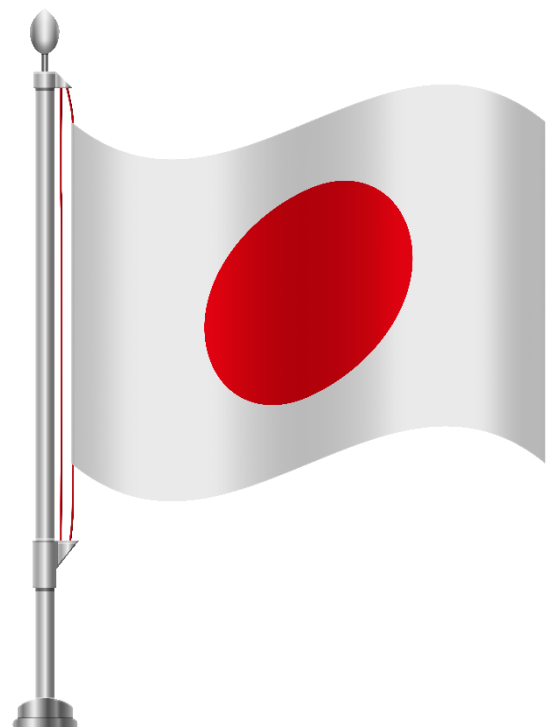


👉 What's Next?

Tomorrow, I will be spending a full day with a class, joining them for lessons in Music, Japanese, and Maths—and even having lunch with the students!

I'm really looking forward to seeing more, learning more, and sharing the rest of my experiences with you in next week's newsletter.

More updates coming soon... stay tuned! 📺



Post-16 inclusion Provision

Students in Post-16 Inclusion have been working really hard on their topic work. They have been researching the 48 Countries taking part in the 2026 World Cup. Each student has been finding out two interesting facts about each Country.



Attendance Matters – Finishing the Year Strong

As we approach the final weeks of the academic year, we would like to thank students and families for their continued support in maintaining strong attendance. Every lesson counts, and the habits built now will make a real difference to progress and success.

Our most recent attendance data shows that, across Years 7–10, attendance is currently sitting at around **91–92% overall**. While this reflects a solid level of commitment, it remains below our school target of **95%+, which is the level needed for strong academic progress**.

There are some fantastic positives to celebrate:

- **Year 7** continue to lead the way, with attendance regularly in the **mid-90s**.
- Many tutor groups across all year groups are consistently above 95%, showing what is possible with strong routines

However, we are also seeing:

- A slight dip in attendance across **Years 9 and 10**, where figures are closer to **90–91% on average**
- Increased absences creeping in as we move towards the end of term

Why Attendance Is So Important

- Missing just **1 day per fortnight = nearly 10% of learning lost**
- Lessons build on each other – gaps quickly become bigger barriers
- Good attendance supports confidence, friendships and wellbeing

Our Focus for the Final Weeks

We are asking all students and families to make a renewed push to:

- Attend **every day, on time**
- Avoid unnecessary absences
- Maintain strong routines right through to the end of term

A Direct Ask for Parents and Carers

We need your support to help your child finish the year strongly. Please:

- Make a clear commitment that your child **attends every day for the remainder of term**
- Avoid booking holidays or non-essential appointments during school time
- Contact school early if there are barriers to attendance so we can support you
- Talk positively about school and reinforce the importance of being in every lesson

Your partnership makes the biggest difference — strong attendance at home leads directly to success in school.

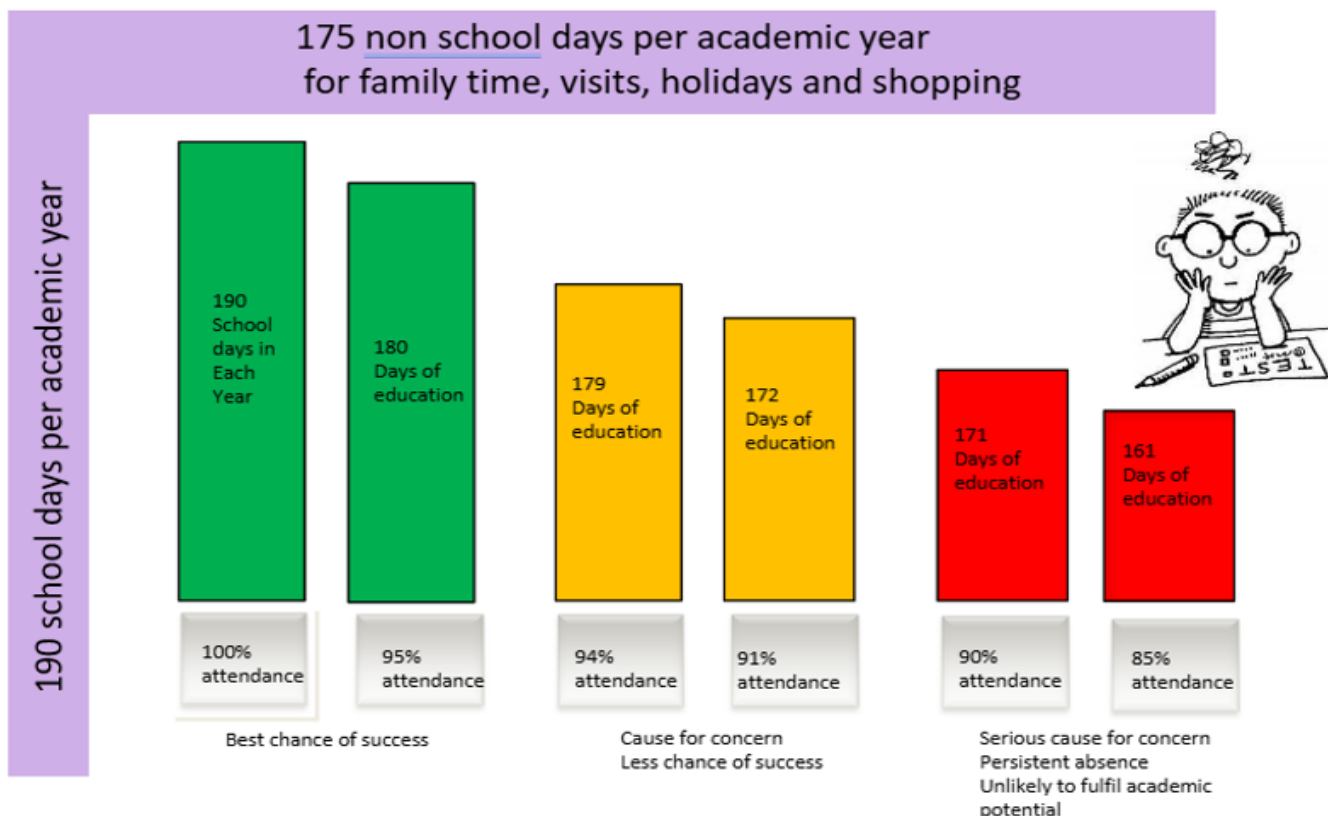
Let's Finish Strong

We would love to see all year groups pushing attendance closer to (and beyond) **95%** over the coming weeks. A strong finish now will set students up brilliantly for September and beyond.

Thank you for your continued support—together we can make every day count.

Good Attendance Means

being in school at least 95% of the time (between 180 & 190 days)



DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION-FUNDED

HOLIDAY CLUBS IN DERBYSHIRE

it's about me

Derbyshire's Holiday Activity and Food Programme

2026

MORE INFORMATION

Did you know that, as well as free school meals during term time, your child can also access funded spaces at holiday clubs?

Through the Department for Education's Holiday Activity and Food Programme, known in Derbyshire as It's About Me, children can attend local holiday clubs packed with fun activities, learning opportunities and healthy meals—all at no cost to you.

If your child is aged 4–16 and eligible for benefits-related free school meals, they're entitled to funded places at It's About Me holiday clubs.*

Our clubs offer a wide variety of activities, including sports, arts and crafts, cooking, dance, music, and more—so there's something to suit everyone! Each session also includes a nutritious meal to keep children happy, healthy and energised throughout the day.

Every club runs its own unique programme depending on its location, meaning there's always something new to discover.

Not eligible? Many clubs also offer paid places, so every child can still get involved and enjoy the fun.

IMPORTANT DATES

SPRING

Bookings open: 9th March 2026
Holiday clubs open: 30th March 2026 - 10th April 2026

SUMMER

Bookings open: 29th June 2026
Holiday clubs open: 23rd July 2026 - 4th September 2026

WINTER

Bookings open: 30th November 2026
Holiday clubs open: 21st December 2026 - 31st December 2026

All dates exclude bank holidays and weekends.

HOW TO BOOK

- 1 Get your unique IAM/ HAF code from your child's school
- 2 Go to our website itsaboutmederbyshire.co.uk
- 3 Follow our handy How to Book Guide
- 4 Subscribe to the It's About Me Newsletter

*See website for full eligibility criteria.



MORE INFORMATION:
itsaboutmederbyshire.co.uk



Diary Dates

Wednesday 24th June - Thursday 25th June – Year 7 London Residential

Wednesday 24th June - Year 8 Sports Day

Thursday 25th June - Year 9 Sports Day

Thursday 25th June - Transition evening for new Year 6 students

Friday 26th June - Inset Day - no students in school

Monday 29th June - Year 10 Sports Day

Wednesday 1st July - Year 7 Sports Day

Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd July – Year 6 Transition days in school

Friday 3rd July - Year 11 Prom

Thursday 9th July - Careers Fayre

Monday 13th July - Howitt/Shipleigh Celebration Awards evening

Thursday 16th July - Ormonde/Gregg Celebration Awards evening

Thursday 23rd July - Break up day

Kind Regards

Phil Smith

Proud Headteacher Aldercar High School

'Every child known, every lesson counts, every future unlocked'

Chair of the Inclusion Strategy Group

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