

Somerset Studio School



Families' Handbook

2025/2026



'Developing curious, diligent, dynamic and skillful young people'

The Four Pillars of our school: Our Values

The following is the language and methodology we use to develop and embed our school culture. We use this with stakeholders to support & challenge the school community so that everybody gets to live and work in an environment in which they can thrive.

What? <i>Attribute</i>	How? <i>Skill (the 4 pillars)</i>	Why? <i>Value</i>	Examples
Independence	Self-Awareness (SA)	Employers, family and friends, even new people, all benefit from developing an understanding of their own strengths (praise) and areas for development (action). It's useful to know more about your personality and career aspirations to know how you can achieve success. When you reflect on your own actions and think about reasons for them, you start to be able to predict how you will feel and behave in different situations. This reduces your anxiety, because you know things before they happen.	<i>Your purple pen work Having your equipment Being on time Appropriate attire Completing Independent Prep Exploring your career options Challenging yourself to be your best</i>
Resilience	Self-Regulation (SR)	When you know more about yourself, you can start to control how you respond to new situations. This helps you to feel in control and to make rational decisions which are better for you and better for getting things done.	<i>Using your phone responsibly Choosing how you conduct yourself Meeting your deadlines Focusing on your work</i>
Active Participation	Awareness of Others (AoO)	When you have a better understanding of yourself and can control your actions because you understand them well, you can start to be more sensitive to how others feel and how to respond to them better.	<i>Successful team or group work Supporting your peers Active listening to others Sensitive to others' views Kindness to others</i>
Role Modelling	Relationship Management (RM)	When you have a good understanding of yourself, self-control and an awareness of other people, you start to be able to lead others - setting a direction for others, making your points clear and listening to feedback. This means that you get to influence all the things that matter to you, developing deep and purposeful relationships in work, family and friendships.	<i>Communicating creative ideas Lead others successfully Evaluating group success Adapting to group needs Ambassador for the school Actively modelling sustainability</i>

Our Dress Code

Why have a dress code?

Schools are required to prepare students for adult life - Sixth, Apprenticeship, Higher Education and Employment. In every one of these routes, there will be expectations of professional presentation and conduct. **In professional life, you will often need to demonstrate your individuality and creativity through your actions and words - not your clothing.**

Recommended		Dress Code: Full Checklist
Shirts and Blouses	Smart	
	Undamaged	No
	Plain	
	Long or short sleeve	
	Full length	
Smart Trousers, skirt or dress	Undamaged	Gum
	Smart	Trousers below waist and/or tracksuit/jogger bottoms
	Loose-fitting	Tracksuits or Jogging bottoms unless for PE days
	Waist-high	No Logos/writing/images/symbols or patterns larger than a credit card on any clothing item. No offensive or political wording on any clothing.
Jumper, Jacket, Coat or Waistcoat	Plain	Skirts/dresses/shorts covering must cover to mid thigh (<i>only in this case leggings/tights can be worn underneath</i>)
	Undamaged	Leggings or other skin tight clothing (unless worn with dress/skirt)
	Smart	Heels above 3 inch (7cm)
Shoes and Boots	Dark colour	All clothing must be appropriate for the school environment. Clothing should be full length and not cropped.
	Sturdy soled	Excessive jewellery or false nails
	Block heel (broad heel)	Large earrings or more than 2 piercings
	Ankle-high boots or lower	Nose or other facial ring (specifically rings)
	Smart	Strappy, sleeveless, crop, vest or other over-revealing top
Hair and One Colour Dyes	Natural	Heavy metal items attached to clothing
	Full face exposed throughout	Non 'fully enclosed' shoes e.g flip flops, sandals
Jewellery and Appearance	Simple, discreet, minimal	Hats in lessons
	Small earrings or studs	Excessive, garish or unnatural coloured makeup
	Up to two earrings	Hair: multi-colour, or unnatural colour dyes
	Natural nails	Obscured face or head in lessons
	Simple, subtle makeup	Rips/patching on any item of clothing

Conduct Code

What are our expectations from students around the school?

- ★ Attend school and lessons on time.
- ★ Complete all set work in class by any staff member.
- ★ Complete all independent prep to the best of your ability.
- ★ Bring all necessary equipment.
- ★ Adhere to the school's dress code.
- ★ Treat the school environment with respect, return any school property/equipment and leave each classroom as a tidy space and do not litter.
- ★ Follow all staff instructions.
- ★ Ensure you are polite to all members of the school community.
- ★ Enter and depart each classroom in a calm and orderly manner.

Everybody has a part to play in ensuring that learning is
engaging, thorough and **effective** for all.

Parent/Carer code of conduct

- ★ Phone in to the absence line to inform school of any absences. Leaving a message with the student's name, tutor group and reason for absence **before 8:30am**.
- ★ If you would like a meeting with a member of staff please either email, or call us and we will be able to support in booking this meeting for you. Parents/carers must **not** just arrive at Somerset Studio School and expect staff to be available for a meeting - without prior arrangement, it is unlikely that a meeting will be feasible
- ★ Inform us of any changes to personal details e.g mobile number, address...

Behaviour

Behaviour Policy

The sanctions we may use when students do not behave as expected may vary according to the type of misbehaviour. We believe that solution-focused strategies should be implemented to support the student.

Before any sanction, a restorative approach is used by staff to try to de-escalate the situation. Where appropriate a restorative justice meeting is used to repair relationships between students or indeed between staff and students. Students will be encouraged and helped to make amends, renew commitments to keep to the school rules, and/or to make suitable reparation.

This Behaviour Management Policy extends beyond the boundary of the school gates and into the community. Students are expected to maintain our expectations of good conduct to and from school, on transport, educational visits and/or other placements (e.g. college placements). Behaviour cannot and will not be allowed to threaten the health and safety of students, staff and/or members of the public. The Headteacher may wish to apply appropriate sanctions for any poor behaviour off site. The sanction will depend on:

- ★ The level of misbehaviour;
- ★ The extent to which the school's reputation has been affected.

LTLS, Lunch Time Loss:

Lunch time losses are held daily at lunch time. If a student has not met expectations and standards, they will be given an LTL.

ELT, Evening Time Loss:

Evening time losses are held on Friday evenings with Assistant headteacher, Inclusion. If your child receives 3 LTLs throughout the week, they will automatically be given an ETL. There are instances where the behaviour of a student may automatically be sanctioned with an ETL. You will be informed of this by an email/phone call.

Internal Isolation:

If a student has demonstrated poor conduct several times in one day, it can result in the use of isolation. Other more extreme aspects of poor conduct can also result in isolation. Students in isolation will be either parked in a 6th form lesson or a supervised empty classroom. A member of the Leadership or Behaviour Team will contact parents about the use of isolation.

Rewards:

A school ethos of encouragement is central to the promotion of desirable behaviour and this policy works alongside the rewards policy. We have high expectations of work ethic, attendance and behaviour.

Reward postcards will be given out by staff when students display behaviours consistent with our school culture which may lead to community reward trips. Subject based postcards can be sent out to parents and positive phone calls home will further help to encourage positive behaviour.

There are also opportunities for students to be rewarded for 'above and beyond' behaviours in our school, and meeting the aims of being resilient, being independent, being an active participant and being a role model.

Achievement points	Notable mentions	Department Commendation	Headteacher's Positive email	Totalled over term 50	Totalled over term 100
Awarded in lesson for each of the 4 pillars	Weekly segment in the tutor powerpoint and positive email home	Contact from each Head of Department. This is for when a student has been awarded a commendation in a subject area.	Weekly email from Mr Hain for the student with the highest number of achievement points.	Certificate of achievement presented in end of term assembly	For top achieving students in each year: end-of-year-treat
	B&A team	Heads of Department	Headteacher	Tutor	Headteacher

The close monitoring of those receiving the rewards can reveal students who need further support and challenge. This means that ALL students will gain, as a direct result of the Rewards system.

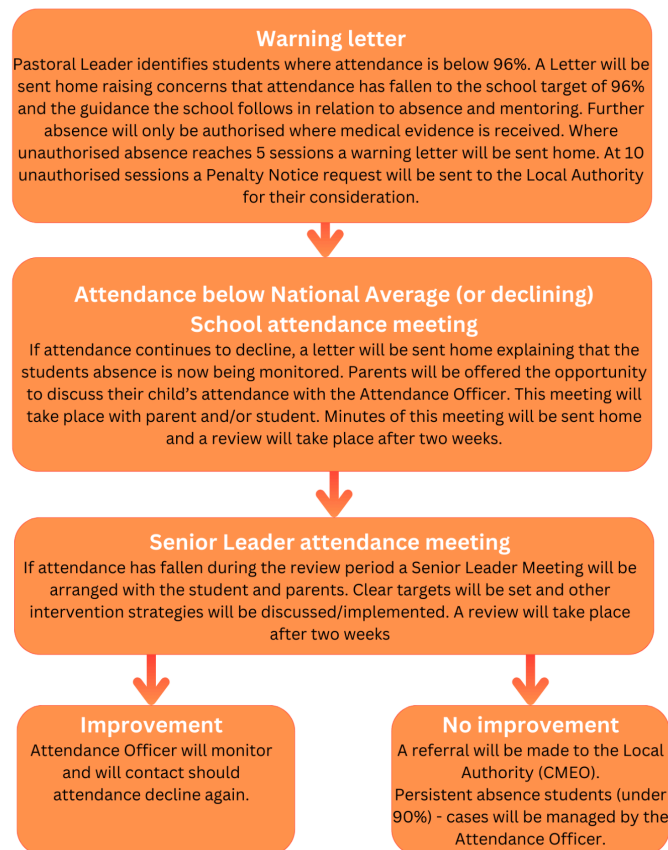
Celebration assemblies are held at the end of the Christmas, Easter and Summer terms and subject awards are also distributed at these

Attendance

Absence

Parents & Carers should notify the school by phoning by **08.30** if their child is going to be absent that day. If parents/Carers have not contacted the school by this time, an email will be sent home to notify that their child has not arrived for morning registration. If no reason for absence is received it will automatically be marked as unauthorised.

- ★ Leave of absence will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.
- ★ No absence due to illness will be authorised **after five consecutive days unless medical evidence is provided (e.g. a letter from GP)**.
- ★ Warning letter re: Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) will be issued after 5 sessions of unauthorised absence and FPN issued at 10 sessions of unauthorised absence.



Phones and digital devices

The Government has stipulated that schools must be mobile phone-free zones. The Trust to which we belong has a Mobile Phone policy that ensures that mobile phones are not

on a child's person at any time during the school day. This will involve the use of a digitally shielded pouch for any phone that is brought on to school site.

If families need to contact children during the school day, they can contact the school by telephone on 01761 438557 or by email at sss-enquiries@somersetstudio.mnsp.org.uk at any time.

Use of Social Media

We recognise that social media is a useful tool that most parents/carers and students often use. We are also convinced by the considerable evidence that prolonged use of social media causes cognitive decline and heightened anxiety in many cases. We ask that families restrict the use of social media for their children's health and long term chances in life.

We ask that, if a problem exists for families, you inform us as soon as possible, allowing actions to be taken before views are posted on a matter affecting the school or its students.

Meet our Staff

Our Senior Leadership Team:

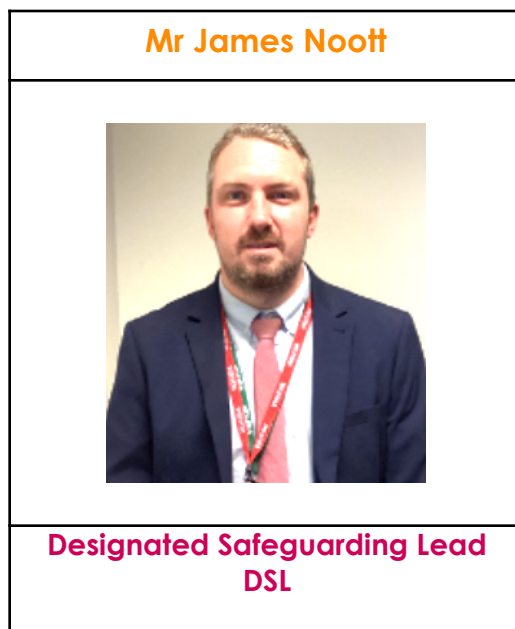
Mr Bruce Hain <i>Headteacher</i>	Mr Lance Bartlett <i>Deputy Headteacher</i>	Mr James Noott <i>Assistant Headteacher</i>
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Our Teaching and non-teaching staff:

Mrs T Hunt - SENDCO & Teacher of Education & Early Years Mrs S Johnson - Assistant SENDCO Mrs N Cantrell - Pastoral Lead & Deputy DSL Mrs C Weale - Inclusion Officer & Deputy DSL Miss H Paillin - Head of Subject (Maths) Mr M Garcia - Head of Faculty (Science) & Careers Leader Mrs A Yeeles - KS5 Science coordinator Mrs W Wood - Health T Level & Health & social care teacher Mrs M - Teacher of English & Creative Media	Mrs L Hain - Teacher of Education & Early Years Mr O Coates - Teacher of Engineering & Maths Miss G Murphy - Exams Officer Ms S Rick - Higher Level Teaching assistant <i>(autism specialist)</i> Mrs E Ford - <i>Engineering & Technology Technician, teaching assistance</i> Mrs N Cavenay - Science Technician Ms C Ansell - Headteacher's PA
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Our Safeguarding Team

At Somerset Studio School, **all our staff** are dedicated to safeguarding **all students**.



Mrs Tash Cantrell	Mrs Claire Bennett	Mrs Caroline Weale	Mrs Polly Malone
			
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead dDSL	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead dDSL	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead dDSL	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead dDSL

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

At Somerset Studio School, we recognise all of our students as individuals. As such, we are committed to ensuring every student has access to a high quality education that allows them to fulfil their potential. The SEND team's focus is primarily on supporting students who have needs additional to or different from others of their age range. The SEND team provides regular monitoring of provision and progress. The benefit of being part of a small school is that the whole staff quickly gets to know each individual student. This enables us to recognise and adapt to additional needs in a timely manner.

The SEND team is:

SENDCO: Tracey Hunt thunt@somersetstudio.mnsp.org.uk

Assistant SENDCO: Sarah Johnson sjohnson@somersetstudio.mnsp.org.uk

Pastoral Leader: Natasha Cantrell ncantrell@somersetstudio.mnsp.org.uk

Inclusion Officer: Caroline Weale cweale@somersetstudio.mnsp.org.uk

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

Our School Day

(from September 2026)

Timing (when)	Activity (what)	Rationale (why)
8.55am to 9.05am	Tutor-coach time	<i>For am registration, Meet & Greet, Safeguarding, Primary point of contact</i>
9.05 to 9.55	Lesson 1	<i>Later start: reflects considerable evidence that older teenagers' biorhythms shift sleep patterns later in the night</i>
9.55 to 10.45	Lesson 2	
10.45 to 11.05	BREAK	<i>Many students need sustenance at this time</i>
11.05 to 11.55	Lesson 3	<i>Doubles where possible to facilitate independent learning, development of understanding of the world of work, extended research skill development</i>
11.55 to 12.45pm	Lesson 4	
12.45pm to 1.05pm	MSS Reads/cultural capital	<i>Development of literacy, love of reading, career aspirations and British Values; pm registration</i>
1.05pm to 1.45pm	LUNCH	<i>Shorter due to no need with small numbers to have a longer break</i>
1.45pm till 2.35pm	Lesson 5	<i>Double lessons where possible to facilitate independent learning, development of understanding of the world of work, extended research skill development</i>
2.35pm to 3.25pm	Lesson 6	
3.25pm	End of school day M, T, W, F	<i>No change to the end of school, facilitating existing transport constraints</i>
3.25-4.05	R+D club	<i>Students measurably perform mental tasks better when engaged in extra-curricula activity</i>

Physical Fitness

Yr 10 Physical Fitness sessions are on **Monday Afternoons**

Y11 Physical Fitness sessions are on **Friday Afternoons.**

We have Mr Noott and Mr Coates who take students for these sessions running a variety of different physical activities each week.

Physical Fitness Kit:

Students are required to come into school in their PE kit/clothes on PE days and will stay in them all day. **Physical Fitness Kit is only for Physical Fitness days and on all other school days, the dress code must be adhered to.**

Physical Fitness kit is the following:

- ★ T shirt of your choice (*Note: this must meet the rules for graphics on page 5*)
- ★ Shorts/Joggers
- ★ Appropriate footwear (trainers/astros)

Because we use a 3G artificial pitch, students are not likely to come home dirty, but please consider that the clothes will wear out faster with the use they will get. We do not recommend students wearing expensive branded clothing options.

Required Equipment for lessons and Exams

The school requires parents to supply a minimal maintained equipment list for lessons and exams. If your child receives free school meals or you are otherwise unable to supply the equipment below, please let the school know in the first week of school term and we will organise this for them.

KS4

Pen (black or Blue ink-Biro is ideal), Pencil, Rubber, Ruler, Compass, Protractor, school bag and Lanyards

Calculator: Minimum for GCSE exam: fx-83G CW or fx-85GT CW. Top rated for GCSE and

KS5

Pen (black or Blue ink-Biro is ideal), Pencil, Rubber, Ruler, Compass, Protractor, school bag and Lanyards

Calculator: Minimum for T level Engineering Casio FX-991EX

Lanyards: All students must have these to verify their ID when entering the school and for all exams - this is a Safeguarding requirement and the means of making any purchase from the school canteen, with a printed QR code linked to ArborPay for each student. If your child does not have one please drop us an email to let us know and we can support you in ordering a replacement lanyard on Arbor at a small cost.

Research and Development (R&D)

The following is a list of clubs your child can choose between for enrichment. It is important to note that as a STEM school, **we expect students to attend one of the following options:**

CLUB TIMETABLE					
Time / Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lunchtime 1:20PM- 1:40PM (Unless stated otherwise)	Table Tennis (Hub) Debate Club (R22)	Table Tennis (Hub) Touch Typing club (R22)	Table Tennis (Hub) Reptile Club(R28)	Table Tennis (Hub) Games Club (R22)	Table Tennis (Hub) English Catch up (R22)
Afterschool 3:20-4:00PM (Unless stated otherwise)	Independent Prep Support (R2) 3:20PM-4:15PM	Study Squad (R23)	Warhammer (R28) 3:20PM-4:15PM Film Making club (R2) Fabric fusion 3:20PM-4:30PM		

Chess & Card/Board games always available in the hub
2025/2026

The Purpose of Independent Prep

An important part of our mission is to prepare young people for the next stage of their lives. In all aspects of work and home life, independent preparation often makes the difference between success and failure. Describing this as "homework" would not be accurate - it's so much more than that. If tasks are directly set by teachers, there is a specific need in a timeline, but even if a specified task is not set, the need for independent prep remains, to safeguard against failure.

National long term statistics suggest that regular Independent Preparation leads to better outcomes - not just in terms of exams, but in terms of long term chances in life, because it is such an important skill in both work and home life.

At **Sixth Form (years 12 and 13)**, students should put in at least 2 hours, five times a week. In the lead up to key assessments, there will need to be additional Independent Preparation and more hours in which to do it. **Students can accommodate eight of these ten hours in school during study periods making use of the private study areas in the Hub and unused classrooms.** This is why students have a full time commitment during the four days that they are in school.

For all students, if they struggle to manage their workload, we will work closely with them and their families to provide opportunities to get back on track.

In Year 11, students will need to start with 45 minutes four times a week, increasing this to six times a week in preparation for mocks (November and March) and, of course, for their final exams in May/June.

In Year 10, students will need to start with 30 minutes four times per week, increasing this to 45 minutes four times a week, from January.

There will be **no such thing** as *"I haven't got any Independent Prep"*. The best way that Parents and Carers can help their young people succeed, is to quiz them on *"what assignments do you have this week?"* and *"let's have a look at them together"* - you don't need to be able to complete tasks to be able to help! Simply, encouraging your children to get into a routine of Independent Prep will support them to become skilled learners and more successful in both work and home life.

For example; if your child does say *"I haven't got any Independent Prep"*, please remind them that they have assignments, revision materials, quizzes and much more on their Google Classrooms for each and every subject they study. Quite often, the best preparation is to go over the work that was completed in the previous lesson, to look at the schedule of topics or checklists to see what's coming next, or to try some quizzes on the topics to deepen their understanding. Ultimately, in years 11 and 13, the best form of preparation is the completion of past exam papers in timed conditions - marking these (using the examiners' mark schemes), correcting them and then revisiting the gaps in understanding and knowledge - finally, having another go.

Teachers will make assessments of the level of Independent Preparation that students complete and feedback to you in reports and parents/carers' evenings - they may contact you directly, if they think there is too little Independent Preparation going on and that this is reducing the likelihood of success.

As always, we are here to help. The key thing is that Independent Preparation is a life skill: it is not the teachers' responsibility to conjure activities every week, though they may choose to do so. It is the children's responsibility to prepare.

Frequently Asked Questions (Parents & Carers)

What do I do when I ask my child what Independent Prep they have and they say, they haven't got any?

Please direct them to, or join them in looking at their Google Classroom assignments. If they have completed the tasks set, ask to have a look at the completed task to see if the quality/quantity looks good. If it does, encourage them to look at the revision, checklists, quizzes and past paper resources for the relevant subject/s.

What happens if we haven't got an available digital device for my child to work on?

Please email your child's tutor if that is the case: under some circumstances, we can provide one. Meanwhile, if there is a family device that is just not available at that time, perhaps a rota for its use could be put in place by negotiation, so that your child knows exactly when and for how long they can complete their Independent prep. If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please contact your child's tutor - we may be able to help.

What happens if we haven't got a quiet place for my child to work?

Again, please email your child's tutor. Meanwhile, we can arrange for time in school for your child to complete Independent Prep - perhaps lunch, after school or during private study lessons (if applicable). We can also provide a digital device during this time, in a small number of cases.

What happens if I can't help with the content of the Independent Prep?

Don't worry! It is NOT your responsibility to teach - it is our responsibility to make sure resources and, occasionally, set tasks are in place and it is your child's responsibility to complete the Independent Prep. If your child is struggling, they have supportive resources in Google Classroom (as well as web searches, including YouTube "explainos") and a lifeline of email to their subject teacher if they cannot complete the Independent Prep without additional teacher input. As always, if your child is struggling to reach out, please let us know directly. We now also have SENECA full suite which is a self-marking learning platform: independent prep set through this allows students to repeat questions that they found tricky the first time and provide extra tuition to help them complete the assignment.

My child has an Education HealthCare Plan. I struggle to get my child to work at home.

For students with EHCPs, we often provide Independent Prep time within the school curriculum time. We will be in close contact with you to make good use of this time in school and to help your child develop the Independent Prep skills needed for life, until they feel more comfortable working elsewhere. For more information, please contact our SENDCO, Tracey Hunt on thunt@somersetstudio.mnsp.org.uk

My child says that they work better when they have ear/headphones on, listening to music - could that be true?

Yes, it might well be. All people are different, but a common theme is that, to complete meaningful study, some people need to control what their senses are receiving, otherwise they are distracted. It can be the case that listening to music helps people to complete their independent work because it blocks out other sounds that are unpredictable and distracting. This level of control often reduces anxiety in students too, making the learning activity more fruitful. It is much less likely that irrelevant audio AND visual stimuli will help in the completion of independent work, however: TVs, computer games and social media are likely to sabotage effective learning.

Can I receive assignment details directly from SENECA, by request?

Yes! Please email sss-enquires@somersetstudio.mnsp.org.uk with your request, stating which subject and the level of detail you would like to receive. This is brand new and may have some bugs to fix over term 1.

School Calendar & Key Dates

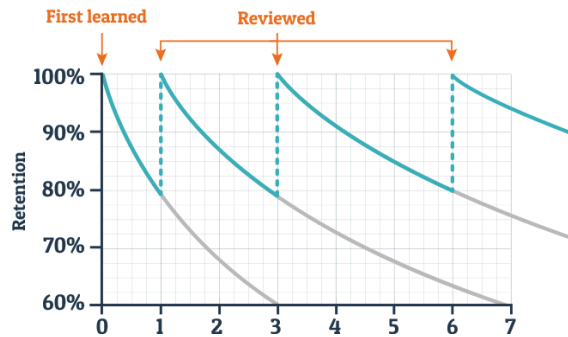
- ★ Every fortnight, the Headmaster produces and emails home a **Headteacher's Letter**. This letter has been rebranded by the students called **"STEMpire"** and it outlines the week and further ahead for students, staff and families. You will find advanced notices of anything you or your child may need to know for the term or year ahead.
 - ★ The school sends emails out for invites to events (parents'/carers' evenings, social events etc.) directly as and when they apply with enough notice to plan around.
 - ★ Term Dates and Calendars can be found on the school website (under 'About → Calendars') or following this link: [Calendars - Family Absence in Term Time - Somerset Studio School](#)
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Parents'/Carers' Events

All year groups have at least 1 Parent's' & carers' evenings a year. These are held in person and booking will be done via Arbor. Please ensure you have downloaded the Arbor app to book appointments.

Appointment times will show until they are fully booked and then you will still be able to click but no timings will appear. Bookings close the day before the parents evening.

How can I support my child's achievement?



All homework and coursework deadlines are set on **Google 'Classroom'**. Parents will be given a login approximately 2 weeks into term where they can see all assignments for their child:

- ★ what is due,
- ★ when it is due
- ★ If it was completed on time.
- ★ Keeping up to date on '**Google**

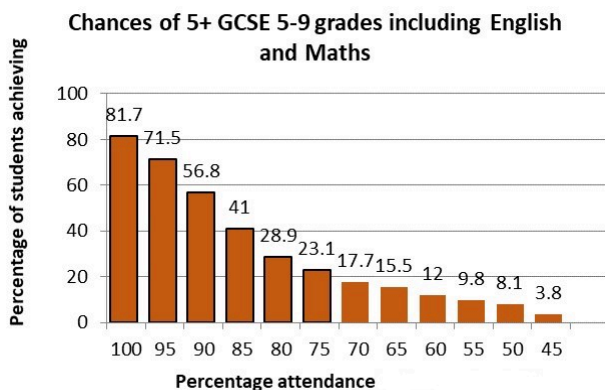
Classroom' is an excellent way to engage with your child in conversations about their school life, what they might want to do when they leave and more.

Data indicates that when parents and carers take '**active interest**' in the education of their children, it increases their average final grade by **0.54** levels, so any conversation you have on the topic of school has value.

Data also indicates the most effective single method of raising results is for the student themselves to teach others how to do a task. So called 'Visible learning' increases final level by an average of **1.44** levels. **Consider asking your child to teach you what they have learned as part of your conversations with them.**

Memories are lost over time as they are not revisited. Revisiting a topic you have discussed with them for as little as 2 or 3 mins more than once over the next 2 years is the most effective way to retain knowledge.

What difference does student attendance make?



★ The school fully appreciates there are a great variety of legitimate reasons for missing a lesson or a day from school.

★ As a consequence, some students will unavoidably not gain the attendance they wish to have.

★ Data across schools shows a clear and strong connection between attendance and outcomes for students.

★ If it is at all possible for a student to attend

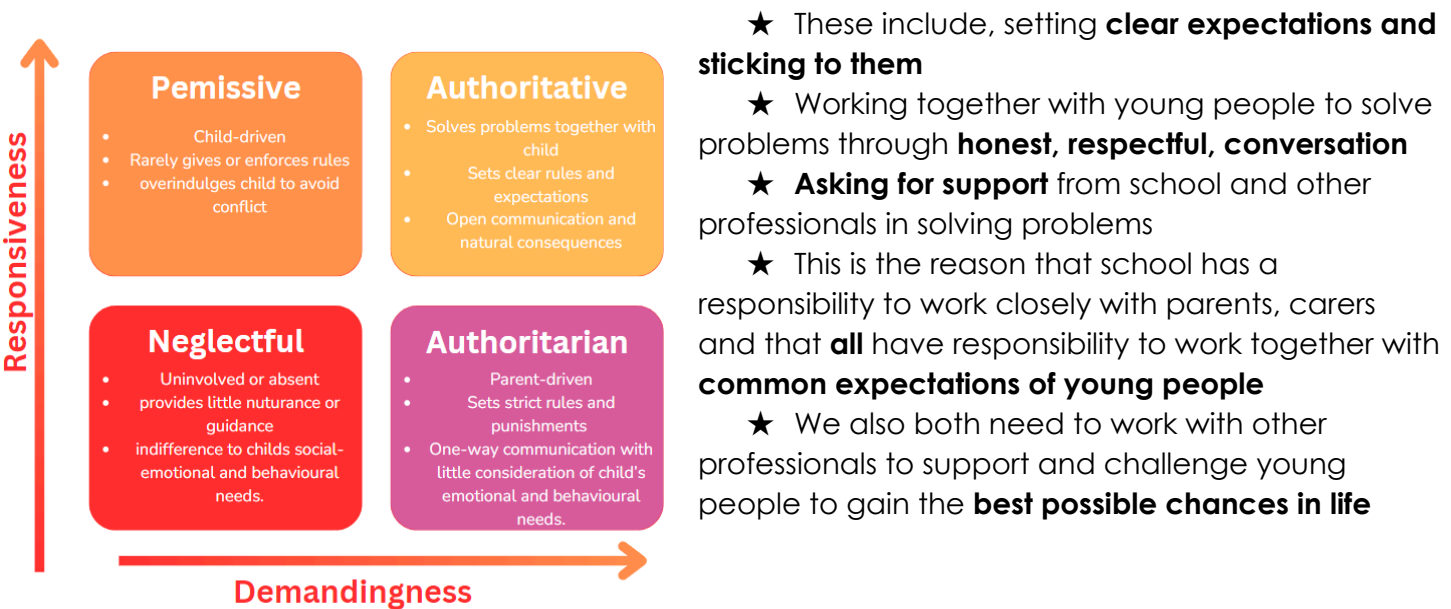
school in KS4 and KS5 it is of paramount importance for them to be here.

- ★ We appreciate there can even be a financial price with things like holidays costing more, however as you can see from the chart opposite it typically comes at an otherwise unseen price.
- ★ This is the reason that schools set the required attendance at 95% for KS4 and KS5. We owe our children every opportunity we can give them for choices and success in their future.

What difference does parenting/caring make?

There is infinite variety in approaches by parents and carers, meeting the unique needs for every child

Some **general principles** tend to lead to better life chances (**authoritative** - neither permissive nor authoritarian):



Software & Apps we use

To help us keep up to date with your young person we use a number of different softwares and apps. We appreciate your support in accessing these and using them to keep in touch with us. [Families Links Webpage](#)

Arbor

Parent app: All communications & payments are made through this. We are a cash free school. Please login for the first time [using this link](#) & then download the app. Information about login details were sent at the start of the term.

Somerset Studio School

Please download Arbor

Google - Parent Arbor App

Apple - Parent Arbor App

Google - Student Arbor App

Apple - Student Arbor App

Arbor Families portal- Find the answers to your question here.

All our payments and communications will be moving to Arbor in September 2025.

Please check your emails for details of how to login!

Arbor

Please download the Arbor App

Somerset Studio School

School site specific URL of <https://someset-studio-school.uk.arbor.sc/?/home-ui/index>

Curriculum

Our curriculum drives our vision for the development of passion, skills, understanding and knowledge of Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths, in addition to Engineering, Enterprise and Creative Media in years 10 and 11. We interweave the development of employability skill, with the aid of our industry partners, to make the ideal personalised futures of our students a reality and, in so doing, reduce the gap in the UK's employment market for young people with these skills. We fulfil our legal duty in providing English Language and Literature to GCSE in years 10 and 11 and offer students in our Sixth Form the opportunity to gain English Language and/or mathematics at grade 4 or above, if they have not yet secured these gateway qualifications.

Literacy Programme:

Every week, students will have a lesson focused on developing functional Literacy skills. We work in groups to ensure that individual needs are being addressed, but broadly follow the same curriculum. Students will complete **Reciprocal Reading** through their PSHE lesson guided by a member of staff. This will be followed by a period of time using a package called **Bedrock Learning**.

Reciprocal reading focuses on developing reading strategies for accessing longer pieces of text and teaching reading success. It is thematically linked to PSHE and is an excellent way to build crucial reading skills in an engaging way, requiring students to activate prior knowledge, predict, clarify meanings, question authors and summarise their learning. Bedrock learning is a computer package that focuses on developing students' reading and vocabulary skills. Students will also be able to access Bedrock at home and are expected to use it as part of their Independent Prep. Parents will be sent home login information so that they can check on their child's progress and support their skill development.

You might ask why. Well, [GL Assessment](#) analysed the data from more than 370,000 secondary school pupils across the UK in one of the largest studies of its kind. They discovered that:

- A quarter of students at 15 have a reading age of 12 or below.
- There is a significant correlation between student reading ability and eventual performance across all subjects at GCSE, which is just as strong in maths and sciences as it is in arts subjects.
- Indeed, the correlation between good literacy and good student outcomes at

GCSE was higher in maths (0.63) than in some arts subjects like history (0.61) and English literature (0.60).

Careers:

Gatsby Benchmark	Details	Key Stage 4	Key stage 5
1	A stable careers programme	PSHE programme focuses on preparation for WEX, application skills and Post-16 Pathways. A range of trips and visit are in place to help students to gather information about pathways and providers.	PSHE programme focuses on Post-18 pathways and applications, including student finance. A range of trips are in place to help students gather information about pathways and providers.
2	Learning from career and labour market information	All students are provided with information and guidance on the range of options available to them at Post-16. Parents and students are invited to attend the Sixth Form Information Evening. Outside speakers are invited into the school to discuss options eg apprenticeships, employment, further education. Our Futures Padlet is updated weekly with University information, Apprenticeships, Work Experience Opportunities and Online courses. A termly newsletter is shared with parents with up-to-date careers advice. Drop down days presented by Barclay's Life Skills	All students are provided with information and guidance on the range of options available to them at Post-18. Outside speakers are invited into the school to discuss post-18 options. Students visit pathway specific events to gather information.
3	Addressing the needs of each student	Support, guidance and advice sessions are tailored to the individual student's needs. These are identified by the tutor, our SEND team, 6th form Leadership team or Careers lead at Somerset Studio school. Our assembly programme includes both National Careers Week and Apprenticeship Week so students have information on career options that are following a more vocational route.	
4	Linking curriculum learning to careers	Every Subject Area integrates employability skills and subject specific employability routes into their curriculum. As a STEM school, we integrat a range of activities, trips and events are in place to engage our young people.	
5	Encounters with employers and employees	For 2024, we are launching our first Somerset Studio School Careers Fair where employers from a range of sectors are invited to attend. ALL students will have allocated time to meet employers and gather information. Year 10 students attend a CV writing workshop and mock interviews delivered by representatives from the world of work. KS5 students attend assemblies and workshops run by representatives from the world of work. Again, from 2024 we will host Mock interviews for Year 12 students facilitated by employers	
6	Experiences of workplaces	All students in Year 10 are expected to find work experience and a week is set aside as Work Experience Week.	All students in KS5 are studying T-level qualifications, This incorporates an industry placement that lasts a minimum of 315 hours (approximately 45 days). This provides our young people with an invaluable opportunity to put their learning, knowledge and skills into practice in a real workplace environment.
7	Encounters with Further and Higher Education	KS4 students are invited to visit local universities and students work with academics from HE. Representatives from FE and HE also invited to attend our Careers Fair which all students attend.	KS5 students attend a range of workshops delivered by HE, FE and apprenticeship providers. Opportunities for Open Days are identified and promoted with Sixth Form students. All Sixth Form students attend the UCAS conference.
8	Personal Guidance	By the end of KS4, all students will have an opportunity to meet either with, Ms Windsor, Careers Advisor or with Mrs Cooper (Careers Lead) in order to access advice and guidance.	All Sixth Form students have access to our Careers Advisor, Ms Windsor. They also have 1:1 guidance sessions from HE providers through our partnership with the University of West of England

Work Experience

Work Experience (yr 10)

Contact: Mr Gracia, Careers Leader
mgarcia@somersetstudio.mnsp.org.uk

TOP TIPS FOR FINDING A PLACEMENT

Ask parents to use networks of friends and work colleagues for useful contacts. It is much easier to find a placement if they have a named contact to approach.

Research local companies in their chosen field – they should always write to a direct contact, which they should be able to find via the website or by calling them direct.

Send a brief CV and covering letter stating clearly when they are available and what they want, whether it is work experience, a part-time job, voluntary work or work shadowing.

Think more widely about where they can find experience, directing them to volunteering, seasonal work and gap year websites.

Think 'around' their chosen subject – especially if direct placements are highly competitive. For example, medical students can gain as much from a placement in a care home as in a hospital. If students in previous years have had successful placements, arrange an event where current students can talk to them to get an insight and share contacts.

Search local authority websites for work experience placements in areas such as housing, environmental health, arts centres, communications, HR and planning. If you are finding it difficult to find a placement please contact Mrs Cooper as we may be able to help with alternatives such as virtual work experience.

WHAT IS WORK EXPERIENCE

Work Experience is a Government scheme which is described as “a placement on an employer's premises in which a pupil carries out a particular task or duty, more or less as would an employee, but with an emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience.” The experience involves taking on the role of a young worker and engaging in work tasks and processes, developing employability skills and experiencing work environments.

It is an important part of 'being ready for work' which allows students, of all abilities, to gain knowledge about the world of work through a “real life” situation.

Year 10 Students CANNOT work:

- in a tattoo studio or any other skin piercing environment
- on board a registered boat or ship
- in any gambling context
- in a cinema or night club
- behind a bar
- in a travelling fair ground or circus

Apart from the shipping rule the above also apply to under 18s.

There are also restrictions on the types of activity students cannot do on work Experience.

All Students CANNOT:

- work above two metres fall height i.e. 2 metres above ground level outdoors or floor level indoors
- work with toxic substances
- be exposed to radiation
- use power driven tools and machinery
- work in excessive noise, heat or cold
- work in confined spaces: mines, chimneys, storage tanks, tunnels, basements etc.
- drive tractors, quad bikes, earth moving machines etc.

THINGS STUDENTS CANNOT DO

Employment law and work experience law are not the same. Work experience, or education law, allows students below the minimum school leaving age into workplaces which employment law would not, such as industrial settings. However, a number of employment laws and guidelines which are age related still apply in a work experience setting.

Certain situations are not allowed for work experience for students under a certain age.

Work experience will be held for a week in term 5. This was be Monday 11th May to

Friday 15th May 2026.