

16 February 2026

Dear families,

After half a year into my Principal role at DAA I wanted to take the opportunity to share some of my thoughts on what I have seen since being here.

Dixons Allerton has the potential to be an outstanding school, it should be the heart of our community, with just under 2000 students attending. We have been doing lots of work on self-determination with our students, at present we have around 80% of the cohort that do their very best every day, this is sometimes overshadowed by the 20% of students who find meeting our expectations difficult. I need to be clear, I have the highest expectations of the students who attend the academy, these will not be lowered. It is only through holding students to account for their actions will we really see a change in self-determination.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Mrs J Crolla, who will join DAA as our Head of Secondary, this does not change my role nor my time at DAA but does allow us to build capacity to help improve our standards further. Mrs Crolla comes from Dixons Cottingley and is very excited about taking up her new role. She will start after the February half term, and I am sure you will all give her a warm welcome.

When we return it will be Ramadan for many of our community, I respect and admire the many people that will be observing this period, please make sure you have read our support letter on our website to help manage our expectations during this time.

It has been great to have met and spoken to numerous parents who all want the same thing, for their child to be successful and to achieve well in school. For this to happen we rely on the support of all of our parents to help reinforce our expectations by adhering to the policies we have in place.

Having high expectations does sometimes mean that we have a high level of corrections, this is part of self-determination, do we choose to take the right path? Every time? I am encouraging all students to really think about the choices they make and to think about what actions they can take to reduce the number of times we don't get it right. I don't like to see the number of corrections we currently have, but if expectations are not being met then there must be a consequence. An individual report will be sent out later this week showing your child's behaviour and achievement points since the start of the academic year, please make sure you have discussed what this shows with your child. We have a fresh start after the half term, and I expect to see our students showing self-determination and making the right choice every day.

Two of the easiest expectations to rectify are:

- Being on time to school – Students must be in their collective learning space for 8:15am, this means to be on time they must be getting to school for 8am at the latest, students need time to get to their locker and collect their things and move to collective learning before 8:15am. Too many students are still walking through the door at 8:15am this means they will be getting a correction for this.
- Being equipped – Students equipment is checked every morning; there is the opportunity to buy equipment first thing if they have items missing. Students without the correct equipment means the learning in lessons is slowed. Can you please make sure your child has the necessary equipment as per our expectations for after the holidays.

I have been listening carefully to the students' feedback about the quality of our food, and I am happy to say that after the February break the students will find a better selection of foods on offer and changes to the way this is served. I am hoping this change will help support my mission of being able to listen and support the students of DAA to ensure they have a better all-round experience of their school life.

Attendance at DAA is one of my greatest concerns, there is a direct link between excellent attendance and outstanding results, simply put, the more a student is in school the more likely they are to succeed. I am counting on the support of all parents to reduce the amount of absence students are taking, it is sad to say that only 131 students are at 100% in the whole school, with only 444 students meeting the Trust expectation of 97% or above. For those that are meeting this expectation I thank you for this and please continue to do so.



Many of our community will be observing Ramadan when we return, we understand the commitment this takes, please read our guidance on the expectations on students during this time. [DAA Ramadan 2026](#)

As a result of Ramadan, we have moved two key dates to allow the time for our families, students and staff to break their fast with their family. The two planned parents evening will move from Thursday to Monday that week as below:

Monday 2nd March - Year 9 parents evening. From 2:45pm finishing at 4:45pm.

Monday 16th March - Year 7 parents evening. From 2:45pm finishing at 4:45pm.

I wish you all a safe and happy break, looking forward to seeing you all on 23 February.

Kind regards



Richard Wilson

Principal

