

DARTFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

DGGGS TIMES

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FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am delighted to be able to write the introduction to our first newsletter of 2026-2027. The new academic year has started very positively, with students in all year groups demonstrating our school values, including our new sixth value of integrity, and meeting our high expectations. Attendance and punctuality have been excellent, and our new Year 7 and Year 12 have settled in very well and are already very much part of our school community.

As parents/carers will be aware from my start of year letter, it was fantastic to be able to begin this academic year by celebrating superb GCSE and A Level examination results. Students excelled in both their GCSEs and A Levels, enabling them to progress to the next exciting stage of their lives. Most Year 13 students are continuing with their education at university to study a range of courses from Medicine and Engineering at the University of Cambridge, History and Engineering at the University of Oxford, Neuroscience at King's College London, Mathematics and Computer Science at Imperial College, London and Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Durham University.

Students in both Years 11 and 13 worked extremely hard in partnership with our expert teachers and committed support staff, demonstrating remarkable dedication and commitment to do their very best. We are very proud of all their achievements.

The first term of the new academic year has been extremely busy. Students in Years 11 and 13 started the year by sitting September Assessments which provided both teachers and students a valuable opportunity to identify areas of strength and development to support students' learning and progress in the coming months. Whilst the academic curriculum is clearly a significant part of the school experience at DGGGS, we also place great value on the opportunities to develop other skills and interests, and very importantly, to make a difference to our school, local and wider communities.

We strongly encourage all students to get involved in the extensive range of extra-curricular clubs, House competitions, charity initiatives and important events, such as our Black History Month programme, Culture Week, World Mental Health Day and the European Day of Languages activities, all of which have taken place this term.

The last few weeks of Term 1 have been a very busy but exciting time for our school as we welcomed hundreds of visitors to our prospective Year 7 Open Evening and Open Morning. On both the Open Evening and Open Morning, students were a credit to the school; comments from visitors were extremely positive, particularly praising the students' enthusiasm, confidence, excellent communication skills and their pride in our school. As always, I am very proud to be the Headteacher of our very special school.

I hope that you enjoy reading this edition of the newsletter, which contains reports of various trips, events and news.

As with all aspects of school life, we are always keen to hear parents'/carers' feedback; if you have any comments or suggestions, please email school@dartfordgrammargirls.org.uk.

After our busy and positive start to the academic year, I hope that all our families have an enjoyable and restful break.



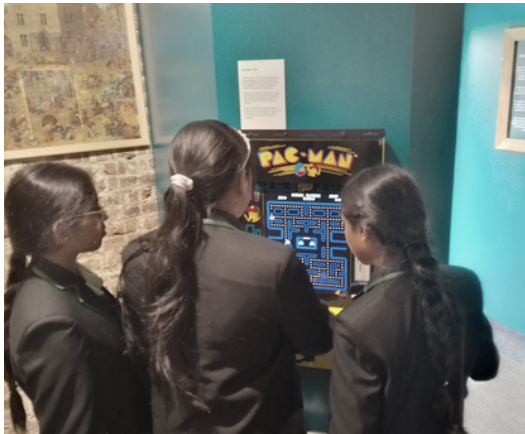
Sharon Pritchard

TRIPS

YEAR 7 HOUSE VISITS

The Year 7 House Visits to Chartwell, Hever, Ightham, Knole, Leeds and Penshurst were a great success, providing students with a wonderful opportunity to explore these historic buildings and grounds. Throughout the visits, students demonstrated genuine curiosity, asking insightful questions and engaging thoughtfully with the history and heritage of each location. The trips also offered valuable opportunities for students to bond with their form groups, strengthening friendships and building a sense of community beyond the classroom.

Most notably, their impeccable behaviour was remarked upon by both staff and members of the public, reflecting the maturity, courtesy and respect shown by our Year 7 students throughout the visits. We are incredibly proud of the way that they represented our school.



WAKEHURST PLACE YEAR 13

Our Year 13 Biology trip to Wakehurst was a great opportunity to explore conservation and biodiversity. We went on a conservation walk, identifying different plant species, including a giant English oak and the endangered Ginkgo biloba, while collecting leaves along the way. We also saw natural waterfalls and visited the Millennium Seed Bank, where we learnt about how seeds are collected, processed and preserved for conservation, including seeing some of the world's largest and smallest seeds. In the afternoon, we carried out a gel electrophoresis practical, using micropipettes and loading the gels ourselves, and learnt how DNA analysis can be used to investigate timber. We also explored the plant collections, seeing a 30-year-old cactus, blue orchids, aloe vera, vanilla and ginseng, as well as a unique cactus filled with beads that made a waterfall-like sound when shaken. Overall, it was a really enjoyable and memorable experience.

Dide 13A



GOETHE INSTITUT

On 15th October 2026, Year 10 GCSE German students travelled to London to visit the Goethe-Institut, a German institute that is named after the talented polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (a fact I learned on the day). On that day, they were running a careers roadshow, and we had the opportunity to explore a range of interactive workshops and listen to a myriad of talks that enhanced our engagement with German culture, careers, and education, and also had the chance to immerse ourselves in the language by speaking German to people running the workshops. Some examples of things we took part in were interpreting booths, translation workshops, and finding careers to suit us. We had a lot of fun and left feeling more motivated to work hard to excel in German, both for the grades and the doors it opens to the wider world.

Heritage, 10I

Finding a career to suit you workshop

In this workshop we got a chance to participate and when we said our name, where we are from and we got stickers and badges. We filled our booklet and completed career-related translations in German. This was an enriching experience that was a great opportunity to practise German vocabulary.

Workshop with interpreting booth

At the Goethe Institute, I participated in a translation workshop with a German professional. The speaker spoke a series of German sentences which I then had to translate. Personally, it was a fantastic opportunity to enhance my German interpreting skills and experience real-life German careers. Attending the Goethe institute spiked my interest for the German language and lifted my passion to pursue it in the future. Overall, it was a great experience for all the students.

Hoorish 101

I really enjoyed the interpreting booth (probably mostly because I got to do Danish). But I'd still say it was a great learning experience as well. It was quite challenging because of how fast they were speaking. But I found it really fun to do! (I got a cool metal badge).

Asthma, 101

At the Goethe Institut, we watched a video in German and had to translate it into English. It was a good opportunity to put my German skills into practice outside a classroom setting. I found it interesting to see how much I could understand and translate, and it gave me a better idea of what interpreting involves. Overall, I enjoyed the experience and it made learning German feel more practical and engaging.

Aahithya, 101

Studying German at the University of Cambridge talk

During this talk, we all got the opportunity to discover the vast range of paths that Germany can take you on in Cambridge University. We learnt about the variety of clubs, support and degrees offered there and the speaker's personal experience that inspired me greatly.

At the Goethe Institute, many participated in the workshop about studying German at Cambridge. I found this talk especially intriguing because I found out lots about what subjects German could be studied alongside as well as what opportunities German speakers could receive and it made me realise that German was more useful than I thought it was.

Furthermore, I discovered new information about the university itself and I enjoyed it very much.

Stephanie, 101

Translation workshop

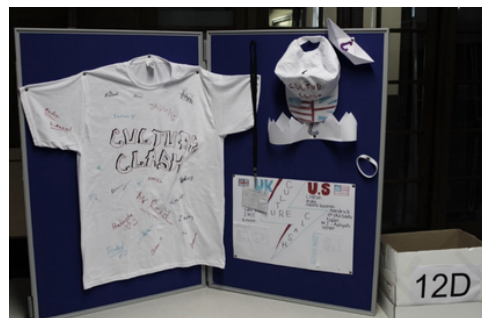
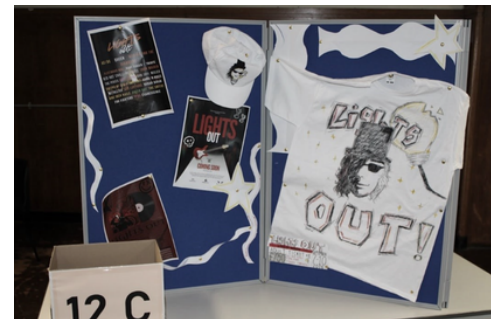
In small groups, we had a go at creative translation, which for me, was so interesting because in academic translation, we usually deal with translating things into "good English" – as close to the original wording as grammatically possible. However, this workshop was about preserving the *meaning* while being able to creatively alter the actual wording and imagery used by the writer. We started by creatively translating some German idioms, and then we moved on to an actual children's poem and discussed what we thought the idea behind it really was. It was an extremely enjoyable and enriching experience, and we also had a good laugh when we shared our (quite ludicrous) results.

Heritage, 101



NEW YEAR 12 COHORT

The Year 12 induction program combined both academic lessons and opportunities to make new friends and get to know the Sixth Form staff and students. Students had the opportunity to work as a team to compete for Housepoints and gain Form Group Awards. Many staff commented on the incredibly positive first impressions this new year group have made in the first few days. They are already demonstrating our School Values of Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Excellence, Dedication and Creativity.



EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES

What a wonderful way to celebrate the European Day of Languages! Students enjoyed a week of activities celebrating languages and cultures.

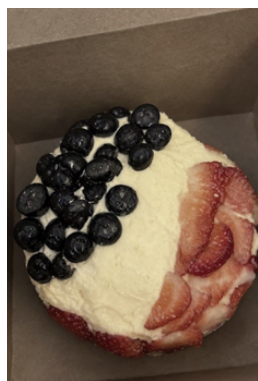
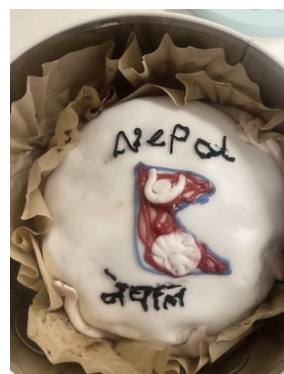
On Monday, students decorated flags or designed their own. Tuesday's Just Dance session gave them the chance to try traditional dances, while Wednesday's Language Club continued to explore different cultures. Students also enjoyed an assembly about the importance of learning languages, hosted by Mrs Spatz and our senior Language Ambassadors.

On Thursday, our Year 7 students showcased their creativity by preparing cakes for our annual bake sale. Their impressive decorations reflected the theme of "Culture", and Friday's sale was a great success!

Alongside these activities, Year 7 and Year 8 students created posters on the theme "Languages Unite", which will be entered into a national competition organised by the Global School Alliance.

Thank you to everyone who took part and helped make this such a memorable week!

The MFL Faculty



A MESSAGE FROM THE LANGUAGE LEADERS

If you walked down the corridors a few weeks ago, you probably heard a mixture of different languages, some laughter, and maybe some slightly out-of-tune (but very enthusiastic) singing! This is because we were all celebrating our annual event "The European Day of Languages".

The international event is celebrated on 26th September every year. Run by the Council of Europe, the day doesn't just celebrate the languages spoken in Europe, but instead shines a light on the cultural diversity we have on a global scale. At DGGGS, this date reflects the diversity we have in our school (with over 70 different languages spoken), and we celebrate through games, competitions, and so much more.

We kicked off the week with a special whole school assembly. The assembly was a wonderful opportunity to show inclusivity and diversity within our school via poetry and music. It was a special moment that really demonstrated the talent and dedication of students at our school.

The excitement didn't just stop there though: we launched the annual Year 7 Cake Competition (Bake-Off) again this year. Year 7 were on a mission to bake and decorate a cake that showed either their culture, language or a country of their choice. The creativity on display was impressive, giving the judges a huge challenge to pick just one winner. Even better, we turned the entries into a bake sale afterwards, providing students the opportunity to have an insight into different cultures while all money raised went to the British Red Cross.

Other highlights from the week included an interesting session at Languages Club all about Mauritius. Learning about Mauritian culture and saying a few phrases was a great challenge. We also held a multilingual Karaoke on stage in the main hall that was fun and exciting. Seeing everyone sing in languages they knew/were learning was quite an experience! We had international dancing, poster competitions and special activities in lessons too.

Newly recruited Language Ambassadors from all year groups will be joining in with activities throughout the year and we look forward to planning the next events together.

A huge thank you goes to the MFL Faculty for helping to run all of the activities, events, competitions and assemblies.

If you missed out or you're already missing the excitement of the EDofL events, don't worry: you can always come along to Languages Club in ML7 every Wednesday lunchtime to keep the celebrations going. If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to talk to us as we'd be more than happy to help. The week will be one we will never forget, so thank you to everyone who took part, baked, sang, performed or just cheered us on!

April, 11P, and Heritage, 10I (The Language Leaders)

"HELLO YELLOW"

Our school community came together to wear yellow, raise awareness of mental health and show our support for young people. We are delighted to have raised an amazing £96 for mental health charities through our donations.

Our lunchtime World Mental Health Day event was also a huge success, with students enjoying mindfulness colouring, positive affirmation bracelet making, biscuit decorating, sweet treats and memory-making activities. It was fantastic to see students from different year groups connecting, chatting and supporting one another in a positive and welcoming environment.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the day and helped make it such a success.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

We had a fantastic time celebrating AfroFest, enjoying an afternoon filled with music, creativity and fun! Students took part in dancing, biscuit decorating, keyring making, and bookmark and flag colouring, providing a wonderful opportunity to relax, socialise and celebrate together.

As part of our Black History Month celebrations, we also held a special assembly exploring "Changed Lives Through Science" and "Our Voices, Our Culture and Music", recognising the achievements, contributions and influence of black individuals throughout history and the world around us today.

A big thank you to everyone who helped make AfroFest and our Black History Month celebrations such a success!



YEAR 8 NETBALL RALLY

Huge congratulations to our fantastic Year 8 Netball teams who dominated the local schools' Netball rally on Thursday 1st October. Both squads put on a masterclass in grit, determination, and teamwork, moving the ball beautifully across the court. A special shoutout to our Pink Team who were crowned overall tournament champions. After tying on points with Northfleet School for Girls, the Pink Team clinched the trophy thanks to a superior points difference. A tournament highlight was a spectacular 10-0 victory over the DSTC B Team. We are incredibly proud of both teams for their stellar performances and sportsmanship.



DGGGS U16 VS FARRINGTONS SCHOOL U16

DGGGS U16 produced a brilliant team performance at Glebe FC on Wednesday 24th September, beating Farringtons School 5–0. Three goals before half-time gave DGGGS a commanding lead, and the team kept up the pressure after the break to complete a memorable win.

Florence was unstoppable in front of goal, scoring a hat-trick and striking the woodwork twice more. Taya added a goal from centre-back, while Erinayo capped an excellent all-round display with a fifth. There was plenty to celebrate at the other end of the pitch, too. Poppy made three excellent saves in goal, and Darcy showed her versatility by starting in goal before moving to the right wing. Manuela and Amanda were excellent in defence, with Amanda covering a huge amount of ground. Fortune provided superb cover for the midfield, while Mayowa and Amy contributed on the wings.

Deborah delivered an outstanding performance on the right wing, and it was fantastic to see Rosie A-U make such a strong return after a year out. Players of the match: Florence and Deborah. A terrific result and a real team effort from everyone involved!

Final Score – DGGGS 5– Farringtons 0

POEM BY DIVINE (YEAR 10)

A beginning is heaven, a pardon, for the past, a new month is drawing by and doing so, fast. Drawing close, September first is drawing near, and when the bells of the new month ring, this is what I will hear.

It is not a fresh start, a cloak to shrink or enlargen. It is merely a reminder that time has no sense to pardon.

We think a fresh start is a forgiver of sin, like time is our kin which we wear like borrowed skin and we can lift up our chin with pride once day one has finally arrived, because a fresh start means all have forgotten who you are inside.

Our life is a sketchbook, but we never turn the page. This art, engraved in charcoal, is a mural of your years on display, so no matter what you say, try to masquerade or stay, time is flying by and you're not on the plane.

No matter the first, the last, the symbol of the new, try to turn that page, forget, and it will still be you.

This drawing of life is not kind, its rags are worn, its corners are jagged and torn, crammed into that canvas are all the things about yourself that dawn till dusk you will mourn.

Parts are dark, smudged to mutation. But don't they say that art is subjective to one's appreciation?

September first. But why don't the suffixion? September alone feels like pained affliction. A contradiction, to ignore what's there, a blessing, a new month devoid of despair.

You may lose who you were, a lamb to the slaughter, follow the course of a new ocean, whilst being the river's daughter.

We're taught that occasions are what drive us to change. What care should we have for ourselves if it is the 30th, and not first on that day?

If you will be worth anything on the first, then why wait for the clock to strike past? For wheat will still grow to be wheat, even if at first glance, people mistake it for grass.

Divine, 10H

THE JOURNEY OF FINDING YOURSELF

Who am I?

My name is Sarah and I am in 12A. I take Biology, Chemistry, and Maths. For my electives, I take the Arts Award (Academic Elective), Volleyball (Sports Elective) and BSL (Enrichment Elective). I've had a very interesting journey of discovery starting at DGGGS Sixth Form. For some much needed context, I'm not an internal student. This means that I had never set foot in this school before my very first day on Friday 4th September.

Believe me, there is nothing scarier than entering somewhere new and having to learn your way around, make new friends and fall into step with a strange system.

Induction Events

Despite this, our first induction event on Friday was a truly amazing day, filled with fun induction activities that tested my creativity, helped me to meet new people and get a feel of the school where I would spend the next two years of my life. I was able to collaborate with others through different team building activities such as newspaper towers and start learning content in my chosen subjects.

I had a few worries starting in the Sixth Form, namely: being one of the only members of my old school in this new environment, afraid of navigating the new terrain alone and the fear that I was either too quiet or too loud for my classmates! There were a few instances at the start of term whereby I thought I wouldn't make any friends and had chosen the wrong school for Sixth Form.

But things started to change the following Monday where we had to come together as a form and design a music festival. I once again had to do the hard job of integrating, pushing myself out of my comfort zone to meet new people. It was lovely to see members of my form coming together to make something amazing, despite only having less than a day to put it together. My form came up with a Hip-Hop inspired festival with a play-on-words title (ZENIORS), designed by Shahneela. It was wonderful to help out with designing the tickets and poster for it and to see the creativity within the members of my form.



I can look back at that time and confidently tell you that I already see how I have changed, making more of an effort to talk to people, not just in my form, but in other forms.

I now have a good network of friends and people that I can relate to about anything, from GCSEs to similar hobbies and culture! Another thing I gained was pride in the midst of the school community, due to the kindness of the students and the supportiveness of the teachers.

Start of Term: Time for a Reality Check

The first few weeks were filled with assemblies, specifically presentations for our electives (Sport, Enrichment and Academic). In these assemblies, we learnt about the diverse and exciting opportunities provided by the school, giving us temporary relief from the A level subjects we chose and another opportunity to explore the amazing catalogue of activities the school has for us across the next two years.

Over the next few weeks, we started to get into the flow of our regular timetables, abiding by the uniform rules, taking our first sixth form pictures and getting our new lanyards. I think I can speak for most Year 12s when I say that things didn't start to get real until the first tests of the year.

For most, it was a nerve-racking experience to have to sit a test so early, for others, it was a reminder of the start of a longer journey of never-ending assignments and deadlines! But one thing that most of us share is the jump from GCSEs to A levels, in terms of our subjects.

Now, I won't lie and say that it was a crazy and larger-than-life jump because it was not! I will say that it was definitely a change. For me, taking Biology, Chemistry and Maths, especially for the sciences, there is some GCSE content you have to unlearn because it was oversimplified. For example, in Chemistry, Electronic Structure has its lowest energy shell that fills only 2 electrons and every shell after that can only fill a maximum of 8. However, at A level, we learned that each shell increases by a different amount. The first and second shell stay the same, however, from the third shell, it becomes 18, 32, 50 and so on.

There were other greater details to electronic structure that we have had to pick up at A level. This pattern was similar for Biology, having to learn more about Carbohydrates, Water, Lipids and many more things.

However, for subjects like Maths, it follows on from GCSE quite closely, with topics like straight line graphs, rationalising the denominator and surds. For someone like me who enjoyed all of these subjects at GCSE, it helps me to keep a positive attitude when I may get things wrong and pushes me to try all the more harder.

I have also had the wonderful opportunity to experience my first Open Evening for the new Year 7s. I was fortunate enough to be singing with the Gospel Choir twice over the course of the evening and help out with the Maths department. When I say help out, I mean assisting (playing!) with the giant sudoku in MA3! I am the type of person who loves to solve complicated puzzles, so this was an amazing experience. I was also blessed enough to make new friends in the process, playing with Ifeoluwa, Harsana, Ragavi and Lathuja.

Being in the Sixth Form, I have also had the opportunity to experience Private Studies and Frees and have learnt how to effectively use my time during them. I mostly use these periods to catch up on homework, revise or organise my notes for my subjects. I have also recently used frees to work on the Harvest Box with Richa.

The Harvest Box is an amazing opportunity to showcase your creativity and togetherness as a form whilst showing your compassion for those who are less fortunate. As a new entrant, working on the Harvest Box has shown me how much the community at Dartford cares about having a healthy competitive spirit and pride in the community.

Finally, one other amazing event that I have been privileged to experience is the Bowling Trip for Year 12s on 25th September. It was another experience whereby I was able to break out of my shell and channel my inner competitive spirit. It helped me to place first in my group and connect with more people.

Conclusion

Overall, I have truly enjoyed my experience in the Sixth Form so far! I know that it has only been a few weeks and it may be too early for me to form an opinion about a school I have no prior knowledge of and still get lost in.

However, I know that the friendships I have fostered, the interesting subjects I am studying and the welcoming community I have seen have made my experience all the sweeter.

Sarah, 12A

END OF TERM 1 HOUSEPOINTS RESULTS AND HOUSE ASSEMBLIES

A huge well done to everyone for your hard work and contributions to your Houses throughout Term 1!

	Ongoing
Chartwell	1137
Hever	1486
Ightham	1464
Knole	1778
Leeds	1008
Penshurst	1680

A special congratulations to Knole, who finished top of the Housepoint totals and are our Term 1 winners! As a reward, Knole has won a House non-uniform day during Term 2. Further details will be shared at the start of Term 2.

Well done to all Houses for your efforts so far. Keep earning those Housepoints, getting involved and showing your House spirit – the competition is far from over! Keep going, everyone! Who will finish top at the end of Term 2?

INTERNATIONAL CULTURE WEEK

What a fantastic week we have had celebrating culture, diversity and our wonderful school community. Our Culture Dress Day was a brilliant start, with students and staff proudly wearing cultural dress and sharing their heritage. At lunchtime, students came together to take photos, celebrate with friends and enjoy a special Year 12 and Year 13 Fashion Show, led by our Head Students and Student Leadership Team.

Our Cultural Fest was another highlight, with students getting creative making keyrings and decorating biscuits, enjoying delicious sweet treats, dancing and listening to music together. It was fantastic to see so many students getting involved and having fun.

The week culminated in our annual International Evening, where students from across the school took to the stage to showcase their incredible talents through music and dance. From Bollywood and Bhangra to Afrobeats, Bharatanatyam, Arabic singing and gospel, it was a truly memorable celebration of the cultures represented within our school.

We are incredibly proud of our students for the enthusiasm, creativity and confidence they have shown throughout the week. A huge thank you to our Student Leadership Team, staff, parents and everyone who helped make the celebrations possible.

We have had a week full of colour, creativity, music, food, dance and, most importantly, community; what a way to celebrate what makes our school so special!



Term Dates 2026-2027

STAFF TRAINING DAY	Tuesday 1 st September 2026		
STAFF TRAINING DAY	Wednesday 2 nd September 2026		
STAFF TRAINING DAY	Thursday 3 rd September 2026		
TERM 1	Friday 4 th September 2026		Friday 23 rd October 2026
STAFF TRAINING DAY	Friday 9 th October 2026		
HOLIDAY	Monday 26 th October 2026		Tuesday 3 rd November 2026
TERM 2	Wednesday 4 th November 2026		Friday 18 th December 2026
HOLIDAY	Monday 21 st December 2026		Friday 1 st January 2027
TERM 3	Monday 4 th January 2027		Friday 12 th February 2027
HOLIDAY	Monday 15 th February 2027		Friday 19 th February 2027
TERM 4	Monday 22 nd February 2027		Thursday 25 th March 2027
HOLIDAY	Friday 26 th March 2027		Wednesday 7 th April 2027
TERM 5	Thursday 8 th April 2027		Friday 28 nd May 2027
HOLIDAY	Monday 3 rd May 2027 – Bank Holiday		
HOLIDAY	Monday 31 st May 2027		Friday 4 th June 2027
TERM 6	Monday 7 th June 2027		Friday 16 th July 2027