

Denefield's vision



Success for life for each and every young person

Welcome to Denefield. Located in the western fringes of Reading and overlooking the beautiful Thames Valley, our exciting and stimulating school aims to ensure that all young people develop the knowledge and values to thrive in modern life.

We call this **'Success for life'** – where students use their hard work and **CHARACTER** values to achieve academic success; develop economic independence; forge positive relationships; support their local environment and community; and look after their own physical and mental health.

At Denefield we focus specifically on nine CHARACTER values. Three of these link to personal attributes – Confidence, Happiness and Articulacy. Three focus on perseverance – Resilience, Ambition and Courage. And the final three ensure Denefield students support and contribute to others – Tolerance, Empathy and Respect. In our view, students gaining excellent qualifications and CHARACTER traits mean they are likely to be extremely successful in life.



There is a caring and stimulating ethos in the school, which enables pupils to make strong progress and achieve well.

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Success for life

Curriculum and learning at Denefield



Denefield's curriculum and lessons are designed to ensure that each and every student reaches their potential and becomes the best version of themselves.

We believe in stretching, challenging, and supporting all students, including the most able and those with specific needs. Our lessons are ambitious, knowledge-rich and engaging, with homework used to reinforce past learning and prepare for future lessons. We have a dedicated homework club, run by our librarian, which offers a quiet and supportive space in which to complete work.

All students pursue a rich and varied curriculum. At Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9), students take:

- the core subjects of English, Maths and Science
- the three humanities subjects of Geography, History and Religious Studies
- two languages out of French, German and Spanish until the end of Year 8. They then continue with one through to GCSE
- a variety of creative and practical subjects - Art, Design and Technology, Food Technology, Music and Drama.
- Physical Education

- Denefield's version of personal, social, health and citizenship education, which we call Success for Life

Students choose their option subjects in Year 9 and begin GCSE and other Level 2 courses after Easter of Year 9. Alongside the compulsory subjects of English Language and English Literature, Maths, Science, PE and Success for Life, students choose four subjects from a range of academic, practical, creative, and vocational options. Students also either take separate Biology, Chemistry and Physics GCSEs, or combined Science GCSE, which leads to two qualifications across the three science subjects. As a result, most Denefield students gain either nine or ten GCSE qualifications. Some of our most able students also take Psychology GCSE as an optional enrichment qualification, starting in Year 9 and finishing in Year 10.

Once they have achieved their GCSE qualifications, students remain at Denefield to take A Level or other Level 3 subjects, begin an apprenticeship, or go to college to study vocational courses.



Leaders have developed meticulous systems to assess and track pupils' progress. Consequently, teachers are able to provide prompt and effective help to support pupils who are at risk of falling behind.

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Denefield's facilities



Denefield's facilities are second to none.

We have seven faculties – English and Media; Maths, ICT and Computing; Science and Social Science; Languages, Business and Travel, Humanities, Creative and Performing Arts, and PE and Health – and each faculty has its own well-equipped suite of rooms.

The school recently invested £9m to create nine new science laboratories, two new food technology rooms, three music classrooms, first class art and technology workshops and studio space, a performance and assembly area, and an extended canteen.

The school benefits from a spacious and inspirational library, as well extensive landscaped grounds with multiple grass pitches and hard courts. Our new floodlit 3G pitch brings first class sporting facilities to the school and local community.



Personal Development at Denefield



We have high extremely expectations of student conduct and self-discipline. We expect our students to arrive on time every day, work hard in all lessons, and complete their homework to the best of their ability. To this end, students are taught and supported by highly qualified and dedicated staff.

At Denefield, academic excellence and personal development go hand in hand. Our students arrive at Denefield as children aged 11 and leave as young adults aged 16 or 18. The school works alongside parents and carers to help students navigate the journey through adolescence and into adulthood. Each student is placed in a tutor group of approximately 25 students from Years 7–11, and into one of four houses – Kentwood, Langley, Norcot or Sulham. We believe that this ‘vertical’ tutoring helps break down social and cultural barriers, creates a supportive atmosphere in the tutor room, and allows learning conversations to take place, both between tutor and student, and student to student. It also helps to prepare students for real-life situations: in social situations and the workplace we mix with people of different ages.

At Denefield, the role of the tutor is extremely important, and we celebrate the positive relationships that exist between our students and tutors. Tutors play a vital role in monitoring the progress of students: supporting them to tackle new challenges, having oversight of homework and setting clear and achievable targets.



Denefield is a wonderful school: my son feels safe and nurtured there. The teaching is excellent and the extended learning is challenging.

Parent

Pupils behave well at the school. They are kind and respectful towards each other and their teachers. Pupils wear their uniform with pride and they take good care of their school environment.

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Extra-curricular activities and CHARACTER development at Denefield



We believe that clubs, activities, trips, and visits are fundamental to students developing their CHARACTER values and achieving success for life.

Denefield runs a full and varied programme, including:

- Sports clubs and teams, including girls' and boys' football, rugby, cricket and netball – these opportunities are being significantly enhanced by the new floodlit 3G pitch
- Music and drama clubs and performances, including autumn, Christmas and spring concerts, and annual music and dance festivals
- Duke of Edinburgh Award opportunity for all students from Year 9 onwards
- Participation in the Combined Cadet Force, run jointly with Pangbourne College, for all students from Year 9 onwards
- GCSE Psychology offered as an optional extra for most able Year 9 students, with the examination taken in Year 10
- Construction of electric racing cars and competition in regional and national Greenpower competitions



- Wide range of local trips and visits, including visits to Windsor to study castle development, Geography field visits, and trips to London to visit art galleries and sites of architectural interest
- International trips including the annual Sports Tour, most recently to Barcelona, the History visit to Ypres, trips and exchanges organised by the Languages, Business and Travel Faculty, and Creative and Performing Arts Faculty visits to Berlin, Venice, and Rome
- Annual drop-down CHARACTER days to enable students to work on personal development and teamwork challenges
- Annual Race for Life event, participated in by all students, to raise awareness and funds for Cancer Research UK



Just to say thank you: my daughter enjoyed the Duke of Edinburgh practice weekend and I feel much more confident about her skills, as does she!

Parent

The wide range of clubs and activities on offer are appreciated by pupils. Pupils and staff are rightly proud of the many successes of the school's sports teams in local and national competitions.

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Supporting students and working with parents and carers



Transition from primary school to Denefield

We work hard with our primary partners to ensure our new Year 7 students are confident and ready to learn when they arrive at Denefield. We do this through:

- Events at Denefield for Year 5 and 6 students
- After-school Kids' College for Year 5 and 6 students
- Our Transition Co-ordinator visits all primary schools to meet Year 6 students coming to Denefield and their teachers
- Transition day in July of Year 6, which is followed by our Summer School during the holidays – a week's exciting activities including sport, art, teambuilding, orienteering and competitions
- Dedicated Year 7 induction day in September

Most able students at Denefield

Many Denefield students are exceptionally able and the school supports and stretches these students in a number of ways.

Expectations and aspirations are high. Teachers are aware of students' abilities and push them to produce exceptional work and achieve the highest grades. The most able students take three separate sciences at GCSE, while the most able Year 9 students can opt for Psychology GCSE as an after-school enrichment course, taking the GCSE exam at the end of Year 10. These

students then gain 11 GCSEs and are in an exceptional position to apply for the most prestigious courses at the most competitive universities. The school also employs a Most Able Co-ordinator, who regularly monitors the progress of most able students, and arranges the school's programme of extra-curricular activities for our most able students.

Access and Inclusion

Denefield works closely with West Berkshire Local Authority to ensure appropriate provision for disabled students and those with sensory impairments. Denefield values all of its students and provides extra support where appropriately. Teaching staff are closely aware of students' needs, including those with SEND, and employ a full range of teaching styles to ensure no student is excluded from learning. Inclusion and intervention staff work closely with parents/carers, external agencies, and other relevant stakeholders, to provide a personalised learning experience which is appropriate for each student.

Partnership between parents, carers and the school is crucial to the success of Denefield students

We provide information on what students will study through our website and regular curriculum information evenings. We provide feedback on students' progress through regular reports and annual parent-teacher consultations. We survey parents and carers (as well as students) each November and hold a Parents' Forum three times a year to give parents and carers a further opportunity to influence the direction of the school. We encourage parents and carers to contact the school if they have any concerns or questions.

The Denefield Sixth Form



A high proportion of students choose to remain at Denefield at the end of compulsory schooling and progress into Years 12 and 13.

They have the opportunity to pursue advanced studies in a wide range of academic and vocational courses and benefit from a high-quality learning environment. Denefield offers over 25 courses in the Sixth Form, from traditional academic A Levels such as English Literature, History, Biology, Chemistry or Physics, to practical A Levels and vocational qualifications including Art, Photography, Psychology, Business, Health and Social Care and Sports Science.

Our aim of encouraging student responsibility within a framework of care, guidance, support, and challenge continues in our approach to the Sixth Form. Small classes led by experienced, specialist teachers and access to first-rate private study facilities are combined with close monitoring of progress by tutors to ensure that individual achievements are of the highest standards.

Sixth Form students are expected to play a leading role in the life of the school through service and leadership within the house structure. There are many ways in which a student can contribute. This may be as part of the Sixth Form Leadership Team, as a House Captain, or as a mentor to younger students in their house during tutor time. It may also involve leading charity events, helping to run extra-curricular clubs or supporting younger students through paired reading.

All Sixth Form students take part in a wide-ranging programme of community service: some support teachers in lessons at Denefield, others work at local primary schools or our partner special school or involve themselves in community groups and projects. These opportunities provide valuable experience which can enhance a student's CV or university application, broaden ambitions, and help increase confidence and the skills of leadership and organisation.



Pupils make consistently strong progress in most subjects in the main school and the Sixth Form.

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Destinations and careers



Part of achieving success for life is ensuring that students have positive destinations and careers to progress to once they leave Denefield.

Student aspirations are high, and we are delighted at the number who progress to top universities or take up competitive and highly sought-after apprenticeships. In 2021, two-thirds of Year 13 students progressed to university, with just under half of those gaining places at the prestigious Russell Group universities – in 2021 these included Medicine at Birmingham, Law at Exeter, and History and Politics at University College London. These successes are the result of

foundations laid much earlier in school. Students learn about career and university opportunities and expectations in Success for Life lessons, and our dedicated Careers Adviser runs a full programme of careers activities. Sixth Form tutors and the Sixth Form Team provide specific support to help students navigate apprenticeship and university applications.



Exam results and destinations 2021

Denefield is delighted with the examination success and progress of its students. School results in 2021 were:

GCSE results:

29%	9 – 7
65.1%	9 – 5
81.2%	9 – 4
99.4%	9 – 1

A level results:

29%	A* – A
59%	A* – B
87%	A* – C

Level 2 Vocational results

35%	L2 Distinction* – Distinction
50%	L2 Distinction* – Merit
80%	L2 Distinction* – Pass
100%	L1 Distinction* – Pass

Level 3 Vocational results

63%	Distinction* – Distinction
94%	Distinction* – Merit

These results included ten students who gained grades AAA or above. 66% of the year group progressed to university, 10% took up apprenticeships, 19% went into employment and 5% took a gap year.

Uniform requirements



Denefield has its own distinctive uniform. There are good reasons for this. The most important is that our students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and uniform helps us create a sense of our school as a community.

Moreover, smart appearance is very important for students' self-esteem, and this will inevitably have an impact on their behaviour and the quality of their learning. Some of our students, understandably, like to show they can keep up with the latest trends in teenage fashions. This puts other students, and their parents/carers who have limited resources, under unnecessary pressure. A school uniform removes these distractions and allows students to concentrate on their learning. We ask parents/carers to resist reacting to each change of fashion where school uniform and hairstyles are concerned. Often what is fashionable is unsuitable for wearing at school. We have kept our uniform as simple as we can with the maximum number of standard items easily obtainable at reasonable prices from many retail and mail order outlets. School branded items are obtainable online from our uniform suppliers, Price & Buckland, and at on-site sales events. All items of clothing and equipment should be clearly named. Designer logos

and fashion items are not acceptable. For health reasons, students also need a comfortable rucksack with wide shoulder straps to carry their books and folders. This should, preferably, be plain black, dark grey or navy blue. No other type of school bag is permitted.

Jumper

V-neck, long sleeved, black with electric blue trim and school logo.

Polo shirt

White with school logo.

Trousers

Plain black, full length to cover ankles, suitable for business wear. Jeans, flares, tight trousers, or leggings are not allowed: see the school website for acceptable examples.

Skirt

Denefield tartan skirt, no more than 8cm above or below the knee: this is the only acceptable school skirt.

Socks/tights

Socks must be black or white, tights must be black or natural. Socks and tights may not be worn together.

Shoes

Plain black with minimal decoration, firm-soled, water resistant and polishable. Heels should be of a sensible height to ensure safety when moving around the school. Doctors have recommended no more than 4cm.

Boots, including ankle boots (eg Kicker boots or any other brand), are not allowed. Trainers, trainer-like shoes, pumps, and other casual footwear are also not acceptable uniform.

Outdoor coats

An outdoor coat in a plain, medium to dark colour would be most appropriate. 'Hoodies', denim, leather or fur jackets are not acceptable as an alternative to a coat and must not be worn to school.



PE kit

For reasons of safety and hygiene, students must wear appropriate kit for the activity they are undertaking.

Compulsory items:

Black/electric blue polo shirt with school logo

Black shorts – plain with no logos/branding

Black football/rugby/hockey socks

White sports socks

Moulded football/rugby boots. These are suitable for both grass and the 3G pitch surface and students therefore need just one pair of boots. (Please note that the following types of footwear are not suitable for the 3G pitch: trainers, metal tipped studs, plastic screw in studs or AstroTurf boots).

Trainers

Gum shield

Shin pads

Optional items:

Reversible black/electric blue long sleeve sports shirt with school logo

Black/electric blue skirt

Black tracksuit bottoms – plain with no logos/branding

Black leggings – plain with no logos/branding

Black crew neck sweatshirt – plain with no logos/branding

Jewellery

Nothing of any great value should be worn as the school cannot take responsibility for its loss. Items should be discreet, and students should not wear anything that could be a danger in lessons such as PE, science or D&T. Students may wear one necklace, one bracelet, one ring, one stud in each earlobe maximum. No facial jewellery, other than studs in ears, may be worn. All jewellery must be removed for PE.

Make-up

A discreet amount of make-up may be worn, but this should not be obvious. Nail varnish should not be coloured. Acrylic and gel nails are not allowed.

Hairstyles

Parents/carers are asked to help us maintain the right atmosphere in school by encouraging hairstyles that are appropriate for a place of work. Extreme hair colours and styles are not acceptable.

Sixth Form dress code

Denefield Sixth Form students are role models for younger students, and their standards of dress are an important part of the culture of our Sixth Form. We are a Sixth Form based on a school site that has high standards of dress as a part of the values and ethos, and we expect Sixth Form students to lead the community by example, reflecting these standards. We also believe that the way we dress influences our mindset. We have a dress code that stops short of a prescriptive uniform, with the aim to have a smart appearance that allows a degree of personal expression.

Mobile phones

Denefield is a mobile phone-free school. Mobile phones must be out of sight and out of sound from the moment students enter the school gates in the morning to the moment they leave the school site at the end of the day. Any mobile phones, headphones or other associated devices that are seen or heard on site will be confiscated. Sixth Form students may only use their mobile devices in the common room.

Admission arrangements



Admissions 2021–2022

The following is a summary of the trustees' policy for admissions. The full version can be found on the school's website.

Admissions number

The admissions number for entry to Year 7 in September 2022 will be 180 students.

Year 7 entry

The school uses the West Berkshire Admissions Service which will publicise the school to prospective parents in the same literature as for other West Berkshire schools.

The Denefield Trust Board is the admissions authority for the school. Since 2010, Local Authorities have been required to produce a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools in their area and to exchange information on applications with their neighbours. Admissions to Denefield in Year 7 are administered by West Berkshire according to the co-ordinated scheme. All applications are considered on an equal preference basis against the over-subscription criteria for each of up to three preferred schools, NOT considered on the basis of first preferences before other preferences. The admissions timetable is detailed overleaf.

If applications from students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or Statement of Special Educational Needs which specifically name Denefield are received prior to the closing date for the receipt of admissions, then offers will be made to such applicants in preference to normal admission categories. These offers will be taken into account in the calculation of the number of places available for other applicants.

Where the school is oversubscribed, after the admission of students with an EHCP or statement naming the school, places are allocated according to the over-subscription criteria as outlined below.

A. Looked after children

B. Catchment area students

These are children whose permanent home address is in the school's designated catchment. Where necessary, priority will be given to siblings in catchment. The home address is taken to be the address at the closing date for applications in the normal admissions round (31 October 2021). Where parental responsibilities are equally shared, the home address will normally be considered to be with the parent with whom the child spends the majority of time and nights Monday to Friday; this will normally be expected to be with the parent/carer that receives the student's child benefit, where this benefit is still available. Where there is any doubt about the split of the residence then the relevant address used will be that at which the school and Local Authority are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week.



Criteria C to E apply to children whose permanent home address is not within the school's catchment area. Priority is not given to children attending local primary partnership schools.

C. Siblings

These are students with a brother or sister including step/foster sibling and children of the parents/carers partner living in the same family unit. Children living at the same address in a family unit are therefore deemed to be siblings even if there is no actual relationship between them. Children who are siblings but living at different addresses to each other will not be treated as sibling for the purpose of the admissions criteria. A sibling is considered to be one who is already on the roll of Denefield School, and in relation to admissions at Denefield School's first point of entry, will continue to attend compulsory education at the school during the following academic year.

D. The children of a member of staff who has been employed at Denefield for a minimum of two years, or who has been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skills shortage.

E. All other applicants.



Tie breaker

Priority will be given within any of the above over-subscription criteria to the applicant whose permanent home address is nearest to Denefield. Distances will be measured using the West Berkshire Admissions Geographical Information System taking a straight line between the home address and the school using the unique property identification points within the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG).

Admissions timetable 2021/2022

31 October 2021	Closing date for applications
01 March 2022	Offers and refusals made to parents/carers by West Berkshire Council on behalf of the Denefield Trust Board
20 March 2022	Closing date for parents/carers to accept offer
30 March 2022	Closing date for appeals

Admission appeals

Any parent not offered a school place at their preferred school has the right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. This can be for a place at one or more of their preferred schools and against an alternative school place that has been allocated by West Berkshire council. Information on how to appeal will be provided with the result of the application. Appeals must be lodged by the dates set out in the co-ordinated and in-year admissions scheme for the normal admissions round or within 21 days from the date of the offer or refusal letter.



I would like to thank all the staff at Denefield for the time and care that they have given to my son whilst he has been at the school. You have all been truly inspiring.

Parent

