



August 2026

Dear Year 11

Welcome to one of the most important years of your school life.

Over the past four years, you have grown enormously. You have overcome challenges, celebrated successes, built friendships and become more resilient. Every experience has helped shape the young people you are today, and you should be incredibly proud of how far you have come.

Now, your final year begins.

Year 11 is about much more than GCSE examinations. It is about preparing for your future and giving yourself as many opportunities as possible. The grades you achieve this year can open doors to sixth forms, colleges, apprenticeships and careers. They give you choices and the freedom to pursue your ambitions.

Be ambitious for yourself. Set your sights high. Believe in yourself as much as we believe in you. Never allow anyone to lower your expectations of what you can achieve. Year 11 is also your final year at Smithills. Embrace it. Get involved, support one another, enjoy the memories you will create and leave knowing you have given everything you can.

Success this year will not come from luck. It will come from the habits you develop every single day. Turning up on time, completing your work, asking questions, revising consistently and giving your best effort every day will make all the difference. Character is not defined by what you do when a teacher is standing beside you. Character is defined by what you choose to do when no one is watching. The choices you make when nobody is watching will shape the results you achieve.

There will be times when the work feels difficult. That is completely normal. Keep going. Every lesson matters. Every piece of homework matters. Every revision session matters. Small improvements made consistently over time lead to remarkable outcomes. Remember that you are not expected to do this alone. Every member of staff is here because we believe in you and are committed to helping you succeed.

One of the most important ways we will support you this year is through our Pathways to Success programme. These compulsory after school sessions take place every day from 3.15pm until 3.45pm and are designed to give you the strongest possible chance of achieving excellent GCSE results.

Day	Subject	Attendance
Monday	Maths	Compulsory – essential for success
Tuesday	English	Compulsory – essential for success
Wednesday	Science	Compulsory – essential for success
Thursday	Humanities (Geography or History)	Compulsory – essential for success
Friday	Options	Compulsory – essential for success

These sessions are an investment in your future. Your teachers are giving their time because they believe in you and want to see you fulfil your potential. Use every opportunity available to you.

You are also invited, together with your parents and carers, to our **Pathways to Success Evening on Thursday 24th September at 4.00pm**. This will provide valuable information about what you need to do to make the most of Year 11 and achieve success in your GCSEs.

As you begin Year 11, remember these five principles:

- **Be ambitious.** Believe in yourself and aim high.
- **Work hard every day.** Small, consistent efforts lead to outstanding results.
- **Do the right thing,** even when no one is watching. Character matters.
- **Use the support available.** Attend Pathways to Success, ask questions and never be afraid to seek help.
- **Stay organised and look after yourself.** Manage your time well, maintain a healthy balance and keep a positive mindset.

This year will not always be easy, but it will be worth it. Every lesson, every decision and every hour of effort brings you one step closer to achieving your goals.

We believe in every single one of you. We know what you are capable of achieving, and we cannot wait to celebrate your success next summer.

You've got this!

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "C. Dewse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'C' and a distinct 'D'.

C. Dewse
Headteacher