

SIXTH FORM

AT DARWEN ALDRIDGE COMMUNITY ACADEMY



WELCOME

TO THE SIXTH FORM AT DARWEN ALDRIDGE COMMUNITY ACADEMY



I hope our prospectus will provide you with an insight into the sixth form at Darwen Aldridge Community Academy and enable you to understand the wide range of opportunities, learning resources and experiences available to you.

I believe that we have a fantastic sixth form which can offer the independence of further education, within a structured and successful school. Sixth form students are our most senior students and our aim is for them to play a full part in the life of our academy, to develop their leadership skills, self-confidence and maturity, to realise their aspirations and to act as role models for younger students as part of our school community.

Sixth form students are provided with both academic challenge and support from specialist tutors and teachers, so that they achieve their full potential

across a wide range of curricular and enrichment opportunities. Ofsted recognises that our sixth form goes from strength to strength and this is because of our entrepreneurial spirit, high expectations, passion to succeed and the fact that we pride ourselves on knowing our students well.

I am very proud of our students' achievements and outstanding examination results. In 2019, 45% of our students achieved A*-B grades A and 48% Distinction* - Distinction with an overall pass rate of 96%. The vast majority of our students go on to study at university and many to 'what are considered to be Britain's very best universities' (Ofsted 2017). In 2018, three of our students were accepted at Oxford University and in 2019, 81% of those who applied to gained places in their first-choice university. We are never complacent, and we are always

trying to improve so that we do the best for all of our students.

I understand the move to sixth form is a big step for you. We take transition very seriously. There will be opportunities to attend open events and taster days, where you will be able to sample life as a sixth former.

I hope this prospectus gives you a flavour of what makes us one of the highest performing sixth forms in the region, and one that is graded in the top 10% of schools nationally. If you would like more information or a tour of the academy during the day, please look at our website or contact our sixth form team.

We look forward to meeting you.

Lisa Dolan, Principal



WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT?

25+

qualifications
to choose from



Excellent Achievement

DACA is one of the highest performing state-funded sixth forms in the North West and our students achieve exceptionally well in both academic and vocational subjects.

Outstanding teaching and learning is at the heart of the academy's sixth form experience. You will find your lessons are interesting, innovative and individualised. We place a lot of emphasis on enabling you to become an independent learner with the study skills, know-how and confidence to think for yourself and to manage your own learning programme.

Your friendly, caring, experienced and specialist teachers will take the time to work with you on a one-to-one basis to help you achieve independence. When the time comes, we want you to be well prepared for higher education or your first proper job and be well on your way to success.

Excellent Progress

DACA students gain more academic value than students in any other local co-educational sixth form provision. The Department for Education's Performance Tables, released in January 2019, show that our students make the most progress in comparison with every other co-educational post-16 provider in the Blackburn with Darwen area. This shows that we are one of the highest performing sixth forms in Lancashire because our students significantly exceed their A Level and BTEC target grades.

Small Enough to Know Each of You Well

DACA's sixth form is small in comparison with some of our larger college neighbours. This means that we get to know each of our students well and can personalise their time with us in regard to their wellbeing and their academic and social development.

Opportunity to Combine Academic and Vocational Subjects

You can choose from over 25 A Level and Level 3 BTEC qualifications. You can also combine A Level and BTEC qualifications to suit your personal strengths and interests. A combination programme shows university admissions tutors and employers that you have the high academic ability required to pass A Level qualifications whilst giving you the opportunity to spread out your BTEC assessments over the two years.

Study for 3 or 4 Qualifications and the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

You have the opportunity to study either 3 or 4 qualifications; you might want to start on 4 qualifications to try an extra one out before making your final decisions a few weeks into sixth form, or chose to take your 4th subject through to AS at the end of Year 12 or the full A Level at the end of Year 13. In addition, you have the option to study for the EPQ, a qualification highly regarded by universities, in either Year 12 or Year 13, whichever suites you best.

High University Progression Rates

In 2019, 81% of students achieved university places, and 81% of those were for their first choice. Students at DACA progress to a wide range of degree courses including art, architecture, biomedical science, chemistry, computer science, dentistry, English, history, interior design, law, maths, medicine, music, nursing, psychology, social work and sport science.

You will receive outstanding support when applying for university, further training or employment. More than 70% of leavers progress to university each year, including Oxbridge, the Russell Group set of universities and specialist vocational colleges; many of these students are the first person in their family to complete a higher education degree.

81%

of students achieved
university places in 2019

WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT?

A Strong Sense of Community

There is a lively and sociable feel to life in the academy. The sixth form is made up of students from both DACA Year 11 and those from a wide range of local schools so you will make new friends quickly. In a recent survey, students were overwhelmingly positive about their experience at the academy's sixth form. Students feel strongly that they are part of a caring and committed community and that this is a key factor in helping them to flourish.

Fantastic Facilities

Our bespoke sixth form facilities are available to you five days a week; before, during and after school. We offer a sixth form workspace, a silent study room, sixth form library, a social space and sixth form cafe for you to undertake work. There is also a wide range of specialist subject equipment and an on-site gym which you may use when you are not in lessons.

Wide Range of Enrichment Opportunities

We offer a wide range of activities designed to make you stand out when applying to universities, for apprenticeships or employment. Opportunities include mentoring lower school students, sports activities such as the football or netball academies, volunteering, arts classes, additional subject support, work experience, charity work and overseas trips. You will be stretched and challenged in new ways. Our unique specialism of entrepreneurship will help you to develop skills and qualities valued by universities and employers alike.

Mutual Respect for Everyone

We embrace diversity and are strongly committed to equality of opportunity, regardless of gender, race, culture, sexual orientation or religious belief, for all students, staff and the wider community.

“We offer a wide range of activities designed to make you stand out when applying to universities, for apprenticeships or employment.”



SUPPORT YOUR LEARNING

In the sixth form we strongly believe that every student matters and we provide outstanding support, both inside and outside the classroom.

The Sixth Form Team

The sixth form is led by four members of staff who are experienced in all matters related to post 16 education. As well as a Director and Deputy Director, there are two academic mentors who are dedicated to ensuring you receive the most from your time in the sixth form.

Your Personal Tutor

You will have your own personal tutor who will always be there to advise you and guide you through the sixth form. Through tutorials, study skills lessons, sessions on wellbeing and the world around you, individual target setting and action planning, your tutor will help you to reach your full academic and personal potential.

You will have regular tutorials to support you in all aspects of sixth form life: advising you on independent study, revision techniques and how to get the highest grades through regular reviews of your academic progress. Your tutor will provide personal advice and support, help with career progression and your applications for university, apprenticeships or employment, and will arrange and monitor any extra learning support you may need.

Independent Study and Supported Study Periods

The leap between Year 11 and sixth form is huge. You are used to having every lesson of the day led by a teacher. In the sixth form, you will have a number of un-directed periods in which you are required to complete independent study. In order to achieve well in sixth form, you will need to complete 5 hours of independent study for each subject every week; you should use this time to complete homework, additional reading, revision materials and past exam questions. In order to support you with the transition to become an independent learner, you will be allocated supported study periods where you will be required to work in the sixth form study area, supported by one of the academic mentors.

Learning Support

We have a dedicated and specialist learning support team to help sixth form students achieve their personal and academic goals. The team has a wide range of experience in supporting students with the full range of special educational needs, disabilities and other health needs.



Health & Welfare

We are fully committed to promoting the health and welfare of all students and take our legal duty of care very seriously. We will take any and all reasonable actions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students. We have a zero-tolerance policy towards any behaviour that causes anxiety or distress to others. All staff receive regular safeguarding training and you can be assured they will respond quickly and professionally to any concerns you raise with them.

Careers Guidance

We have specialist staff in the sixth form who are always available to provide you with informed and impartial advice to help you make the right choices for your future. Our in-house advisers will provide you with detailed information on a wide range of careers, apprenticeships, degree courses and gap year opportunities.

Counselling Service

Every sixth form student has access to a confidential counselling service with our two full-time in-house professional counsellors. This helps ensure that you enjoy your time in the sixth form and achieve personal and academic success.

“DACA provided the perfect pathway to achieve my goal and get onto the football scholarship programme in the US.”

Bailey, Year 13



Working with Your Parents

In the sixth form, you need some independence and responsibility for your own learning in order to prepare you for your next steps to university or employment. We provide this freedom in a very supportive context with close monitoring and guidance. We absolutely believe that you will achieve more when we all work together: students, parents, carers and staff, and we therefore encourage your parents and carers to be as involved as possible with your education, whilst giving you the space you need to mature into independent adults.

We endeavour to keep your parents and carers informed and up to date about your progress in the sixth form through a variety of methods, including regular progress and attendance reports, an annual Futures Evening with visiting universities and Student Progress Evenings where you and your parents can discuss your academic development with your subject teachers and tutors.



16-19 Bursary Fund

The academy's 16-19 Bursary Fund is designed to help students who face the greatest financial hardship. The support is funded by the Government and administered by the academy. A bursary is money that you use to pay for education-related costs such as clothing, books, equipment, visits, daily transport and lunch. There are two elements:

A Guaranteed Bursary of £1,200 per year if you meet one or more of the following criteria:

- You are in or have recently left local authority care
- You get Income Support (or Universal Credit in place of Income Support) in your name
- You're disabled and get both Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit, and either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in your name.

A Discretionary Bursary which provides means-tested support if you face financial hardship but do not qualify for the Guaranteed Bursary. Priority will be given to:

- Students eligible for free school meals
- Students whose families receive child/working tax credit and/or an annual gross household income of less than £16,190.

Priority will then be given to students with household incomes between £16,190 and £24,000 for any remaining money awarded to the academy by the government.



Challenging the Most Able Students

We encourage all sixth form students to stretch and challenge themselves academically. We provide a range of extra qualifications and experiences to allow students to further themselves in preparation for the most competitive university places and degree apprenticeships. Some of the opportunities we offer include:

Extended Project Qualification

The Extended Project Qualification is a free-standing qualification which is highly valued by universities as it demonstrates your skills in independent learning, academic writing and carrying out an extended research project. It is worth up to 28 UCAS points and is equivalent to half an A Level. The EPQ provides you with the opportunity to develop an individual research paper on a subject of your choice with one-to-one support from a member of staff. You can explore an aspect of a subject you are studying, choose a topic in which you have a personal interest, complete a project about an issue that concerns you or create an artefact such as a piece of art, design, music, a performance or an event.

University Widening Participation Schemes

Whilst our achievement levels are high, we are situated in an area with lower progression rates to university and for this reason, we work with a number of universities to enable you to take part in their widening participation schemes, helping you to gain entry into the most prestigious and competitive universities.

The Future Oxbridge Scholar's Programme

This provides support for academically-talented students interested in applying to Oxford or Cambridge Universities, or who are applying for a competitive entry course such as medicine or dentistry. This provides a range of stretch and challenge activities to assist students in developing the intellectual, practical and personal skills and knowledge they will need to gain a place in an Oxbridge College. The programme includes a personalised independent research plan and reading list, regular Oxbridge style tutorials and interview practice with a subject-specialist, attending master classes and public lectures at local Russell Group universities, participation in essay writing competitions and an annual residential visit to St John's College, Cambridge or Queen's College, Oxford.

CURRICULUM

You can combine A Level and BTEC qualifications in a combination which suits your personal strengths and ambitions.

To find out more about what you will study in each subject, what it will enable you to progress onto and the GCSE grades required, please refer to our course information pages. The A Level and BTEC subjects we plan to offer for September 2020 (subject to recruiting minimum numbers) are:

English

A Level English Language
A Level English Literature
BTEC Level 3 Creative Digital Media Production

Maths

A Level Mathematics
A Level Further Mathematics (must be chosen in Year 12 as a 4th subject)

Science

A Level Biology
A Level Chemistry
A Level Physics
BTEC Level 3 Applied Science

Humanities

A Level History
A Level Geography
A Level Sociology
A Level Psychology
A Level Philosophy and Ethics (R.S.)
Applied A Level Criminology
BTEC Level 3 Travel and Tourism
BTEC Level 3 Health and Social Care

“I have always been supported at DACA. The staff and environment bring out the best in me and will help me reach my full potential.”

Zoe, Year 12

Modern Foreign Languages

A Level French
A Level Spanish

Business, IT and Entrepreneurship

A Level Computer Science
BTEC Level 3 Business
BTEC Level 3 Information Technology

Arts and Technology

A Level Fine Art
A Level Photography
A Level Textiles
A Level Graphics
BTEC Level 3 Performing Arts

Sport

BTEC Level 3 Sport (double option)
BTEC Level 3 Public Services

English and Mathematics GCSE

If your GCSE mathematics and/or English language grades are below a grade 4 you must continue studying these subjects in the sixth form until you achieve the required grade. Many employers and training institutions regard a 5 as the preferred grade in English and mathematics and so we encourage all students without a 5 to opt to re-sit GCSEs in these subjects alongside their level 3 courses, although this is currently not compulsory.





LIFE STYLE

There's more to life in the sixth form than just gaining your qualifications. We want you to achieve your potential and flourish inside and outside the classroom.

Whether you're thinking of progressing straight to university, into an apprenticeship or into full-time employment after the sixth form, we recognise the importance of making yourself stand out from the crowd. That's why we have a wide range of exciting enrichment activities for you to take part in, uncovering hidden talents and developing new skills. Our huge selection of activities include:

- AfriDACA - visit Uganda to deliver literacy and numeracy skills to the children of the Acholi tribe
- Ski and snowboarding visits
- Music and dramatic productions
- Volunteering and work experience placements
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- Sports Leader and Sports Ambassador Programmes
- Student rock & pop bands
- Subject specialist UK and international visits to exciting locations such as Munich and Rome
- Student leadership board, new for 2019.

Football and Netball Academies

Our sports academies give you the opportunity to combine your academic studies with playing competitive sport at a high level. You will be able to improve your playing skills and play against some of the best college and academy teams, both regionally and nationally, as well as apply for scholarship opportunities in America and other countries. Our facilities are recognised as some of the best in the region at this level and include a full size floodlit 3G pitch, two FA standard pitches, a state-of-the-art sports centre, a well-equipped free gym and fitness studio and a multi-use games area.


As well as weekly competitive fixtures, all sports academy students receive weekly specialist coaching from professional coaches, including Emma Dovey (Great Britain International and Manchester Thunder captain). The programme covers skills training, technical and tactical understanding, fitness training and sports leadership. Player fitness is regularly monitored through individual training plans including a focus on diet and nutrition. You will also have the option to undertake coaching and refereeing qualifications. Please check our website for current trial dates.

Work Experience

Work experience is crucial in helping students to gain places at university, especially competitive entry courses in subjects such as medicine, dentistry and nursing, and in the world of work. We therefore encourage all Year 12 students to complete a substantial work experience placement in the area of work in which they wish to pursue. We take full advantage of our local partnership schools to ensure that all students interested in teaching, social work and childcare can partake in longer term placements in order for them to stand out at interview.

The Bridge Business Centre

The Bridge is a unique business centre housed within DACA, consisting of 11 office pods which provide flexible, modern workspaces for businesses to support their set up or growth. Students in the sixth form can access support which takes them through their start-up journey from idea generation, through market research, finance and marketing, to customer service, using their enrichment time to start and run their own business.



“I know I can rely on the sixth form team and the resources within DACA to ensure I achieve my dreams and goals.”

Josh, Year 12

RESULTS

We are very proud of our students' achievements and outstanding examination results.

A Level Qualifications

- Average A Level Grade C
- 45% A*-B Grades in 2019
- 98% A Level Pass Rate

BTEC Qualifications

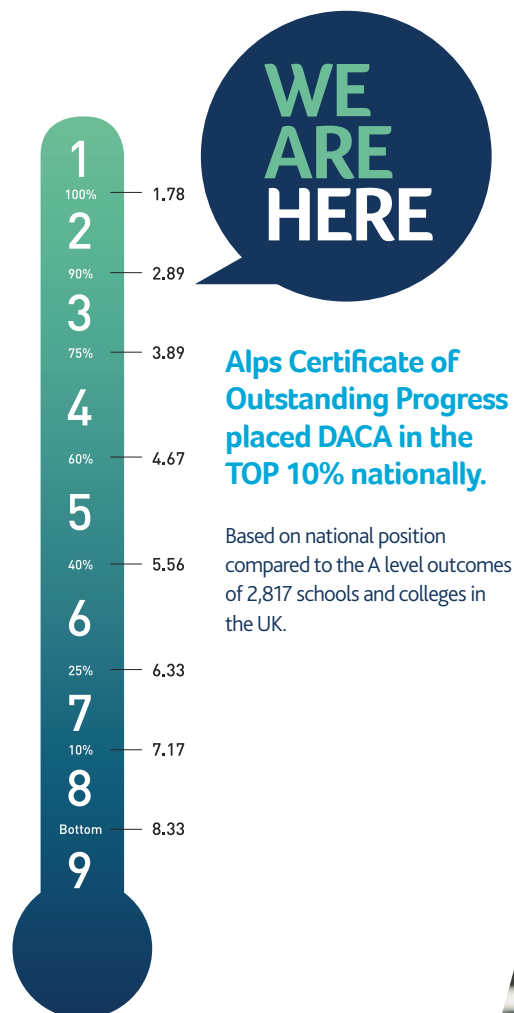
- Average BTEC Grade Distinction
- 48% Distinction* to Distinction Grades in 2019
- 99% Level 3 BTEC Pass Rate

Access to Level 3 Course

- Mathematics GCSE progress 0.38 (National Average is 0)
- English GCSE progress 0.67 (National Average is 0)
- 100% Level 2 BTEC Pass Rate

University Progression

- In 2019, 81% of Year 13 leavers secured university places.
- In 2019, 81% of students that applied to university secured their first-choice.
- In 2018, 3 students began studying at Oxford University, reading Art, Biomedical Science and Medicine.



Ofsted
RATED
GOOD

Ofsted graded DACA as Good in 2017, and we are aiming to become Outstanding in our next inspection.

Entry Requirements

As a general guide these are our entry requirements; however, these may vary depending on the subject you wish to study. For more information about the entry requirements for particular subjects, please see the respective course guide. We will discuss these with you during your sixth form Interview.

- 3 A Levels - At least 5 grade 6s, including English language and mathematics
- Level 3 BTECs - At least 5 grade 5s, including English language and mathematics
- A smaller choice of BTEC subjects - At least 5 grade 4s, including English Language and mathematics
- Access to Level 3 - At least 5 grade 3s, including English language and mathematics

The Access course is specifically designed for you if you show academic potential but achieve a number of grade 3s, including English language and mathematics, in your GCSEs but still want to be able to progress onto a university degree, high quality employment or a higher level apprenticeship.

Choosing the right course is an important factor in ensuring your sixth form experience is a success; for this reason, we offer you the opportunity to begin your studies in four subjects, having the option to reduce to three after you have had a chance to properly try them out and decide which ones you really enjoy and are best suited to.

Admissions

Admission is open to all Year 11 students in the area. Assuming places are available, the Department for Education's current post 16 funding structure permits us to admit students into the sixth form, provided they have not reached their nineteenth birthday and they meet the published entry requirements.

The offer of a place in the sixth form is dependent on the student securing the appropriate GCSE grades (or equivalent) to meet the entry requirements for each of their preferred subjects.



HOW TO APPLY

Step 1 - Do your research

Read the sixth form prospectus and the individual course guides. If you are thinking about progressing to university, you might want to look on www.ucas.com to see what the entry requirements are for the subject you want to study at degree level.

Step 3 - Apply

The best way to apply is online at www.sixthform.daca.uk.com. Complete the application form, remembering to list the subjects you would like to study in order of preference. Choose your courses wisely as we will use these to form the basis of our sixth form timetable.

Step 5 - Work hard to achieve the very best GCSE and level 3 BTEC grades you can

It is crucial that you work as hard as you can, from as early as you can, in order to gain the best grades possible in the summer. Sixth form places, university places and employment opportunities all depend on you achieving the respective minimum entry requirements, and in many cases, the highest grades; so in order for you to have an abundance of choice in the future, you must achieve the highest grades you can.

Step 7 - Enrol

When you get your GCSE results in August, come to the sixth form centre with your exam results and speak with one of the sixth form team to complete your enrolment.

Step 2 - Visit us

Arrange a personalised visit to look around the academy during the school day. You will be able to speak to staff and current sixth form students about the courses you want to study as well as other opportunities we have to offer you.

Step 4 - Sixth form interview

This 20-minute individual appointment is our opportunity to get to know you and give you advice based on your long-term career ambitions. As well as telling us why you want to study the courses you've chosen, this is your chance to ask us the questions which matter to you. You will need to bring your current GCSE predicted grades and attendance percentage, and we will take these and your future aspirations into consideration when advising you on the best subjects to take to progress to the destination of your choice at the end of Year 13. You will then receive an offer stating the GCSE grades you will need to achieve to be able to start your preferred study programme.

Wherever possible, we encourage you to bring your parents or carers to your interview. Although you are maturing rapidly, you cannot under-estimate the importance of family support; as the people who know you best, it is important that they are involved in important decisions about your future.

Step 6 - Year 12 induction day

Everyone holding an offer will be invited to an induction day in the summer term, after your GCSE exams. This will give you an opportunity to meet your teachers and fellow students and sit your first lesson in each subject. You will be issued with course handbooks and some preparatory reading and work to complete over the summer holidays to ensure you are ready for level 3 learning at the start of September.

Step 8 - Start your courses

The time has come for you to get stuck into your new courses. Try not to be too nervous, everyone is very friendly; before you know it you will feel completely at home and will be making excellent progress.



Apply online at www.sixthform.daca.uk.com

VISIT THE SIXTH FORM

The Sixth Form
Darwen Aldridge Community Academy

Our open events enable Year 10 and 11 students and their parents or carers to gain an insight into the courses, the enrichment opportunities and the personalised support available to students in the sixth form at DACA. For further information, or to arrange an appointment to find out more, please contact the sixth form team on 01254 819500 or via e-mail at sixthform@daca.uk.com.

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Darwen
Lancashire
BB3 3HD

01254 819517
sixthform@daca.uk.com

We are situated in the heart of Darwen town centre with excellent road, bus and train links. The bus station is a one-minute walk away and has frequent bus services throughout the region. The rail station is a five-minute walk away and has frequent connections to Blackburn, Preston, Burnley, Bolton and Manchester. There are even plenty of spaces to secure your bicycle!

Principal: Lisa Dolan
Head of Sixth Form: Fiona McMahon



Darwen Aldridge Community Academy is a member of the Aldridge Education family of schools. By the age of 25, all Aldridge graduates will have experienced an outstanding and enjoyable education and be able to sustain the life of their choice. They will be independent, thriving economically and making a real, positive contribution to their communities. Lives transformed through entrepreneurial education.