



Durham
Cathedral
Schools
Foundation

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

DCSF

Brand Toolkit

February 2026



This Brand Toolkit is split into three sections. The first, Our Brand Identity, gives details about our aims and values, and our Foundation, School and House logos and colours. The second section is about our brand voice, our key messaging and a useful glossary of terms and common spelling mistakes. The final section is about using imagery - photos and videos to help tell our story.

Contents

- Welcome to Your Brand Toolkit _____ 1
- What is a brand? _____ 2
 - A brand is more than just a logo _____ 2
 - You are a Brand Champion _____ 2
 - Why having a strong brand is important to you _____ 2
 - How you can be an effective Brand Champion _____ 4
- About our brand identity _____ 4
 - Our brand promise _____ 4
 - Our motto _____ 4
 - Our values _____ 5
 - Our aims _____ 6
 - Our brand story _____ 6
- Logos _____ 6
 - Which logo to use and when – Foundation, School, and House _____ 6
 - Logo elements _____ 7
 - Usage of logos _____ 7
 - Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation (DSCF) logo _____ 8
 - Durham School logo _____ 8
 - Chorister School logo _____ 8
- House logos _____ 9
 - Durham School House logos _____ 9
 - Chorister School House logos _____ 9
- Logo Consistency _____ 10
 - How to use our logo exclusion zone Examples _____ 10
 - Alignment of logo _____ 10
 - Logo placement _____ 10
 - Logo minimum size _____ 11
 - Partner organisations _____ 11
 - Requests to use one of our logos _____ 11
 - Logo colours _____ 11

Logos and backgrounds _____	12
Incorrect logo use _____	12
Brand colours _____	13
Our colour palette _____	13
Core brand colours _____	13
Support brand colours _____	13
Text/type colours _____	13
House/secondary colours _____	14
How to use our brand colours _____	15
Font/typeface _____	15
Main font/typeface – Calibri _____	15
Font minimum size _____	15
Font/typeface principles _____	15
Using our typeface _____	16
Marketing font/typeface – marketing & development teams only _____	16
LL Circular Medium _____	16
Baskerville _____	16
Brittany _____	16
Accessibility _____	16
Overview _____	1
Our tone of voice _____	1
What does our voice sound like? _____	1
What our voice is not _____	1
So, what does this sound or look like in practice? _____	2
Brand key messaging _____	2
Overview of the Foundation _____	2
Overview of each school _____	3
Overview of Houses _____	4
Strategic Messaging Framework _____	6
Communicating using plain English _____	7
Writing – House Style Guide _____	8
Photography _____	1
Permissions and storage _____	1
The key characteristics _____	1

Authenticity _____	1
Connection _____	2
Inclusivity _____	2
Technical characteristics _____	2
Achieving the best images _____	2
Photos of people _____	2
Group photos _____	3
Action shots _____	3
Buildings and our environment _____	3
Teaching and learning _____	3
Video _____	4
Why create videos _____	4
How to create a video _____	4
What to consider _____	4
Instructions for filming yourself on Teams or Zoom _____	5
Organising a professional photoshoot or filming _____	7

Welcome to Your Brand Toolkit

We are delighted to introduce your Brand Toolkit, a comprehensive resource designed to empower you with the essential information and tools needed to communicate confidently on behalf of our esteemed institution.

Within this toolkit, you'll discover a wealth of resources and guidelines carefully chosen to support you as a Brand Champion. As a crucial member of our community, you play a vital role in fortifying and safeguarding our professional brand. By consistently employing the skills and insights provided here, you contribute to the cohesive, skilful, and relevant visual and written communication that defines our identity.

Your Brand Toolkit is a dynamic resource tailored to enhance the impact of every communication you undertake. By adhering to the guidelines provided, you will not only strengthen our collective brand but also ensure that your messages resonate effectively with your intended audience.

We encourage you to explore the toolkit, familiarising yourself with its contents. Whether you're developing written communications, designing visuals, or engaging with various stakeholders, Your Brand Toolkit is your go-to companion for maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and coherence.

Thank you for your commitment to being a Brand Champion for Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation. We believe that this toolkit will prove to be an invaluable resource as you strive for impactful and consistently effective communication.

**This toolkit has been designed for you.
If you have any questions, please contact your
Marketing team at: marketing@dcsf.org.uk**

Our Brand Identity

What is a brand?

A brand is more than just a logo

Our brand is every interaction you have in your professional role - and I mean every interaction. It's everything you do and say, everything you write and design.

You could be talking to pupils, chatting with colleagues, or sending an email to parents or suppliers. You could be sharing a photo on social media, producing a poster, or delivering a formal presentation at an event.

It's how you talk or write about Chorister School or Durham School when engaging with people inside and outside our communities in the UK and around the world. It's what distinguishes our Foundation, Schools, and Houses from other institutions.

You are a Brand Champion

Everyone across our institution is a Brand Champion, including you. You are our brand, as you affect what everyone thinks of our organisation, and, in turn, what they think of you professionally.

Your actions and behaviours have a direct impact on how our institution is seen; through this, you directly contribute to the strength of our brand, and your professional brand. Having a strong brand creates a unified and compelling experience for you, and our parents and pupils, it also contributes to our long-term success.

As a Brand Champion, you will build trust in our organisation through being a positive role model, effectively communicating our values, fostering positive relationships, contributing to recruitment and retention, and engaging all our communities.

It is also about you, as the strength of our brand also influences how you are perceived professionally, i.e., with your colleagues, peers, parents/guardians, pupils, alumni, potential staff, our wider community and beyond.

Why having a strong brand is important to you

1. You will work with exceptional peers.

A strong, well-defined brand and positive reputation attracts top talent. It ensures we are an appealing choice for career-focused individuals (teaching and professional support) seeking employment. A strong brand also contributes to retention by fostering a sense of pride, loyalty, and commitment to the organisation.

2. It will increase your professional reputation.

While rankings consider various factors, including academic performance, facilities, resources, and pupil outcomes, a strong school brand can support and positively

influence these factors, ultimately contributing to higher rankings and recognition within the educational landscape.

3. We will become first choice for parents and pupils.

We will attract high-achieving and talented pupils who seek out reputable educational institutions. We will become the preferred choice for top-performing pupils and their parents, which, in turn, will contribute to our school culture, academic excellence, and rankings.

4. Easier pupil recruitment.

Recruiting will be easier as our potential pupils and parents will fully understand who we are, have a positive perception of us and trust us. A strong brand creates a compelling narrative that resonates with prospective families and increases the likelihood of enrolment.

5. Satisfied parents.

Strong brand alignment among all staff fosters positive relationships with parents, leading to increased positive engagement, trust, and satisfaction. When parents feel we are delivering our brand promise, they are more likely to remain committed throughout their child's education.

6. Happy and high-achieving pupils.

Building a strong brand positively impacts the educational experience and academic achievement. When all staff members embody brand values, they create a nurturing and inspiring learning environment that supports pupil growth, engagement, and success. Consistent brand representation enhances the overall pupil experience, fostering a sense of belonging, motivation, and academic progress.

7. Engaged alumni.

When all staff represent our brand effectively during everyone's educational journey, it forges a strong connection between alumni and the school. Old Dunelmians who experienced a strong brand presence during their time we us are more likely to stay engaged with the school, become advocates supporting recruitment, and contribute to the school and its courses.

How you can be an effective Brand Champion

As a Brand Champion, you should:

1. **consistently align your role's activities and teaching practices with our brand values and educational philosophy.** This ensures a cohesive and unified experience for pupils, parents, and our wider community.
2. **participate in professional development opportunities offered to enhance your knowledge, skills, and instructional approaches.** This continuous growth and improvement will not only benefit our organisations and pupils, but it also strengthens your professional competence and job satisfaction.
3. **contribute to a positive school culture by collaborating with colleagues, sharing best practices, and fostering a supportive and inclusive environment.** By being a Brand Champion, you will enhance your professional reputation and create a fulfilling and rewarding work environment.

Ultimately, by being an effective Brand Champion and strengthening our brand, you will elevate your own effectiveness and job satisfaction and contribute to the overall success of the institution.

About our brand identity

Durham School and the Chorister School have educated children from Durham and beyond for more than 600 years. The Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation (DCSF) was established in 2021 bringing together these two prestigious institutions.

Building on the previous brand identity of our Schools and our proud history, we have updated and improved key elements to meet modern accessibility standards and to help us convey our values more effectively.

Our brand promise

“The Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation (DCSF) is underpinned by its values. We want DCSF to make its MARK on every pupil, and we want every pupil to make their MARK while they are with us.”

Dr Michael Alderson, Principal DCSF

Our motto

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

Within a community shaped by moral integrity and kindness, we aim to cultivate responsibility and ambition to ensure that every Dunelmian can thrive, be happy, and make a positive mark in the world.

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

Our values

Our values are: Moral Integrity, Ambition, Responsibility, and Kindness; they underpin all that we do. Each value has a clearly articulated group of behaviours that will help you and pupils to understand and demonstrate MARK. For more information see Strategic Messaging Framework below.



Our aims

At Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation, we are ambitious for pupils, you (staff) and the wider school community. [Click here to view our aims.](#)

Our brand story

Our mission is to provide pupils with a complete education; one which instils in them an aspiration for achievement, respect for others, and confidence for life.

At Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation, we bring together six centuries of experience in nurturing our pupils at Chorister School (ages 3 to 11) and Durham School (ages 11 to 18). Combining our academic excellence with an extensive co-curricular offering, we want our pupils to leave us as mature and responsible young adults, instilled with the skills required to tackle the challenges ahead of them.

Logos

Our logos symbolise the essence of Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation (DCSF), comprising Durham School, Chorister School, and all associated Houses. They embody our commitment to a comprehensive educational journey from ages 3-18, capturing our storied heritage and forward-looking ethos.

Which logo to use and when – Foundation, School, and House

- **Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation (DCSF):** is the name of the whole of our organisation. It encompasses both our Schools, all our Houses and all teams and societies.

When you should use it: As the DCSF logo, represents our entire organisation, it should be used when discussing initiatives, events, or news encompassing the entire Foundation. It's crucial for communications that relate to the full scope of our educational journey or Foundation-wide activities. Even when utilising the Foundation logo, the specific school identities must also be acknowledged to maintain brand consistency and recognition.

- **Durham School and Chorister School:** the two schools are key, as they are our brand names and logos so are well known across all our external audiences. The schools are positioned within the Foundation.

When you should use them: As Durham School and Chorister School logos are central to our brand identity, recognised widely by our community and prospective families. These logos should be prominently featured in communications specific to each school's pupils, alumni, teams, or school-specific news and events. This ensures clarity and strengthens our brand's visibility in all external engagements.

Note: the naming of the Chorister School has been simplified for the purpose of brand communication but may still be referred to as ‘the Chorister School’. Please be aware that we no longer use a capitalised ‘The’ at the beginning.

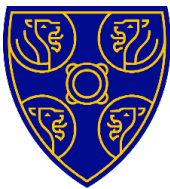
- **Houses:** there are eleven Houses across our two Schools.

When you should use them: As our Houses are integral to the pupil experience, they have their distinct logos, which should be used exclusively to highlight House-related activities or news. In such instances, the overarching school brand should remain the primary focus, with House identities supporting the broader narrative.

Logo elements

All our logos (Foundation, School, or House) are made up of two main elements:

1. **our shield:** A modern interpretation of our legacy, blending Durham blue and yellow with a stylised St. Cuthbert’s Cross, symbolising our heritage and future.



Our shield reflects our heritage and our future; it’s an evolution of the founding school’s previous logos. Retaining the traditional Durham blue and yellow, combined with a modern evolution of the four lions (which now become carriers of St. Cuthbert’s Cross), our marque is a unique expression of who we are. Our shield is used in all our brand logos to reflect who we are and for consistency.

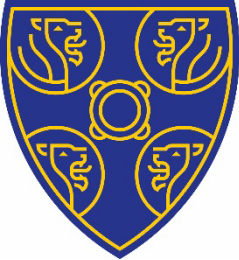

2. **the wordmark:** The textual component of our logo, ensuring brand recognition.

Usage of logos

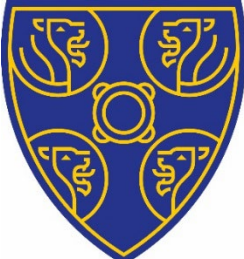

Primary logos, featuring the shield with the accompanying wordmark to the right, are the standard and you should use these. These logos are fixed designs and must remain unaltered in any form. The format, channel, or materials you are using may need the alternative logo variant.

For all instructions regarding logo placement, colour usage, or partner collaborations, please read the relevant sections in this toolkit. If you still have any questions, please contact your marketing team.



Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation (DSCF) logo

Standard Logo	Vertical Logo
 <p>Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation</p>	 <p>Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation</p>

Durham School logo

Standard Logo	Vertical Logo
 <p>Durham School</p>	 <p>Durham School</p>







Chorister School logo

Standard Logo	Vertical Logo
 <p>Chorister School</p>	 <p>Chorister School</p>


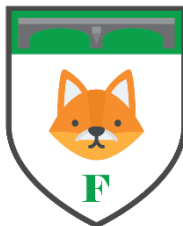
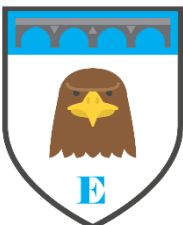
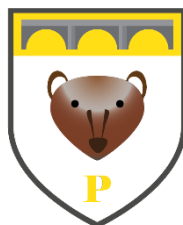

House logos

House logos should only be used when communicating specifically about a House.

Durham School House logos

School House	The Caffinites	MacLeod House
		
Pimlico House	Poole House	Lodge House
		

Chorister School House logos

Kingsgate	Framwellgate	
		Chorister School Boarding House
Elvet	Prebends	Barrington House
		

Logo Consistency

Modification of any of our logos in any manner, including stretching, font substitution, or element repositioning, is strictly prohibited.

Any logo used must be surrounded by a clear space (exclusion zone), defined by the initial letter of the Foundation, School, or House name, to ensure its prominence and readability.

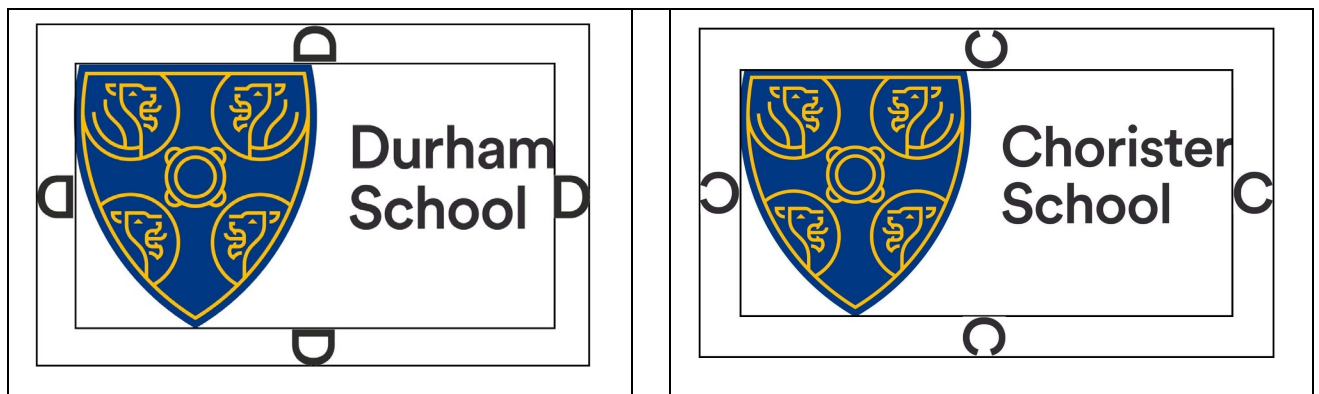
How to use our logo exclusion zone Examples

Whenever you use one of our logos, it should be surrounded with clear space to ensure its visibility and impact. The exclusion zone around the logo prevents any graphic element from interfering with its integrity.

The guidelines below show the logo exclusion zone. Please ensure no other graphic elements or text are placed within these zones.

The logo exclusion zone is defined by using the size of the first letter of the name of the Foundation, School, or House logo it is, i.e., D – Foundation and Durham School, C – Chorister School etc. We use this technique because it scales with the size of the logo.

can be seen below. The larger the logo, the larger the exclusion zone becomes. This exclusion zone is a minimum and should be increased wherever possible.



Alignment of logo

The shield and detail on outlined logo and the full shield logo have a slight difference in scale – this is so that they’re both the same size overall and have a fixed relationship with the logotype. Never try to recreate the line-only version by simply removing the shield. Only use supplied version of logos.

Logo placement

The default logo placement is in the top left corner. All logos should always appear left aligned on all communications and marketing materials unless the background colour or image does not allow it. **Please contact your marketing team for any clarification needed.**

Logo minimum size

Our logos have been designed to reproduce at a minimum width of 30 mm. On the web, the minimum size of the logo is 113 pixels width. There is no maximum reproduction size of the logo.

Partner organisations

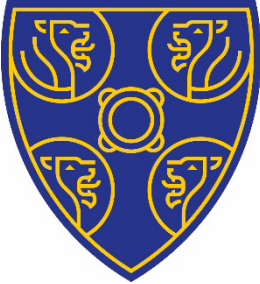
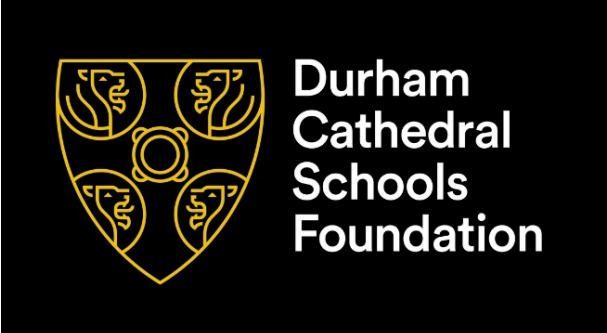
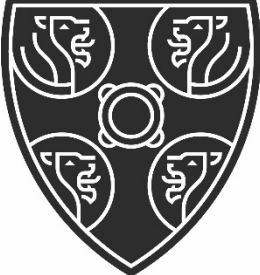
If a partner wants to use our logo, or you are designing something which includes a partner logo, **contact your marketing team for advice.**

Requests to use one of our logos

If you receive a request from an external company/organisation asking for permission to use one of our logos, **contact your marketing team** so they can liaise with them directly.

Logo colours

Foundation and School logos are available in full colour, yellow/white, and monochrome options to accommodate various backgrounds and ensure legibility across all media. Transparent backgrounds (PNG) are recommended for non-white surfaces to maintain visual consistency. All colour options are listed below:

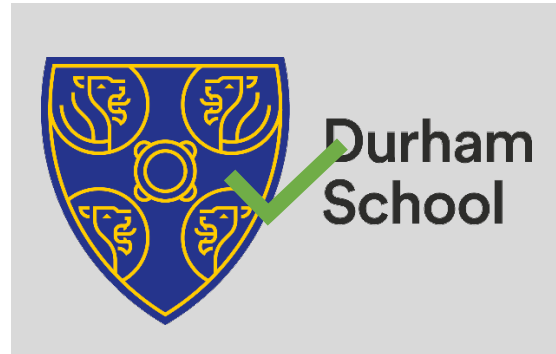
<p>A.</p>	<p>Full colour – always use this format.</p> <p>Blue/Yellow for our Shield and Ink for the wordmark – default.</p> <p>Blue/Yellow for our Shield and White for the wordmark – used if the background is dark. In exceptional circumstances, if the background is very dark and placing the logo would result in it being illegible, then the white logo option must be used.</p>	 <p>Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation</p>
<p>B.</p>	<p>Yellow logo/White Wordmark</p> <p>The yellow outline logo with a transparent background can be used when option A (full colour logo) clashes with the background, e.g., if the background is an image and there is enough contrast.</p>	 <p>Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation</p>
<p>C.</p>	<p>Black logo and Wordmark</p> <p>This black and white (monochrome) option has been designed to give you flexibility. This should be used when logo options A and B cannot be seen clearly.</p>	 <p>Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation</p>

Logos and backgrounds

If you are placing one of our logos on a non-white background or photograph/video, **DO NOT** use a logo with a white background (jpeg), use one with a transparent background (PNG) - see example below. **Contact your marketing team if you need any advice.**

Incorrect logo use

Backgrounds



Care should be taken to ensure our logos are always used correctly.

- The Shield should not be used in isolation – unless posting on social media
- The logo should not be stretched or distorted in any way.
- The fonts in the logo should not be altered in any way.



Need brand advice and/or support?

Contact your Marketing team at: marketing@dcsf.org.uk

Brand colours

Our colour palette

Our brand colour palette includes historic colours associated with Durham School and Chorister School, combined with additional supporter colours that give our brand scheme some flexibility and a modern outlook.

Note: CMYK should be used for printing and RGB should be used digitally. If you need any advice, please contact your marketing team.

Core brand colours

There are three logo core brand colours: Durham Blue, Durham Yellow and white. The blue and yellow colours originate from the colours of Durham Cathedral.

Durham Blue



HEX: #26358c
RGB: R:38, G:53, B:140
CMYK: C:100, M:94, Y:9, K:1


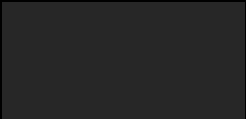


Durham Yellow



HEX: #ffcc00
RGB: R:255 G:204 B:0
CMYK: C:0, M:20, Y:100, K:0

Support brand colours

As well as the core brand colours of Durham Blue and Durham Yellow, there are four additional support brand colours you can use. You can also use white.

Durham Green	Durham Grey	Durham Blazer Blue	Ecclesiastical Purple *
			
HEX: #00522e RGB: 0, 82, 46 CMYK: 100,0,44,68	HEX: #272727 RGB: 39, 39, 39 CMYK: 0,0,0,85	HEX: #021240 RGB: 2, 18, 64 CMYK: 97 72 00 75	HEX: #572C5F RGB: 87 44 95 CMYK: 72 93 33 23

* Only use in reference to Chorister School. Do not use in large blocks or with Durham School brand.

Text/type colours

When you are typing, black is the default colour to use. As a back-up you can also use white or Durham Grey. Use the best fit for your communication or marketing materials. Please do not use yellow or blue for text.

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

House/secondary colours

Durham School House colours

School House Blue



HEX: #001A70

RGB: R:0 G:26 B:112

CMYK: C:100 M:87 Y:0 K:20

Macleod Green



HEX: #035F1D

RGB: R:3 G:95 B:29

CMYK: C:87 M:0 Y:100 K:50

Poole Silver



HEX: #8A8D8F

RGB: R:138 G:141 B:143

CMYK: C:45 M:34 Y:34 K:0

Caffinites Red



HEX: #DA291C

RGB: R:218 G:41 B:28

CMYK: C:0 M:95 Y:100 K:0

Pimlico Blue



HEX: #6CACE4

RGB: R:108 G:172 B:228

CMYK: C:59 M:17 Y:0 K:0

Lodge Gold



HEX: #C6962C

RGB: R:199 G:150 B:44

CMYK: C:0 M:24 Y:78 K:22

Chorister School House colours

Kingsgate



HEX: #ED1C24

RGB: R:237 G:28 B:36

CMYK: C:0 M:88 Y:85 K:7

Elvet



HEX: #00AEEF

RGB: R:0 G:174 B:239

CMYK: C:100 M:27 Y:0 K:6

Framwellgate



HEX: #069514

RGB: R:6 G:149 B:20

CMYK: C:100 M:0 Y:53 K:37

Prebends



HEX: #FFDE17

RGB: R:255 G:222 B:23

CMYK: C:0 M:13 Y:91 K:0

How to use our brand colours

Using tints of the core and support brand colours, and the use of white space, is encouraged to create dynamic and well-structured communications.

These options broaden the colours of our brand palette and give you more variety when creating marketing and communication materials.

The below grid shows the different opacity/transparency settings you can use for each colour to provide more variety when designing materials.

Remember, when typing, black is the default colour to use, but as a back-up you can also use white or Durham Grey (best fit).

100% Opacity 0% Transparency	75% Opacity 25% Transparency	50% Opacity 50% Transparency	25% Opacity 75% Transparency
---	---	---	---



Font/typeface

With accessibility in mind, our fonts help us establish a consistent identity throughout all our communications. The logo font, and all directly published documents use Circular. The other font used (for most users) is Calibri. *(Formerly we used Open Sans and before that DM Sans. We are moving to Calibri as it is available to most users without installing any new fonts.)*

Main font/typeface – Calibri

The font/typeface you and everyone should use is Calibri.

Calibri is a standard Windows Font. If you use a Mac or other non-windows device you may need to download and install it. Instructions on how to download and install Calibri can be found here: <https://www.cufonfonts.com/font/calibri>

Font minimum size

For screen, the recommended minimum size is 12pt. For print, the recommended minimum size is also 12pt, in exceptional circumstances the absolute minimum font size is 8pt.

Font/typeface principles

- **Arrangement of text** - written communication is always ranged left. This provides the eye with a constant starting point for each line, making text easier to read. Use sentence case and never set sentences solely in capitals.
- **Line spacing** - line spacing has a major effect on legibility. It should be carefully considered.

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

- **Letter spacing** - when using larger text, attention should be paid to letter spacing.

Using our typeface

The use of headings, subheadings, and body text can use size, weight, and colour to allow our audiences easier navigation of written content. While not a linear process, some general rules for establishing a clear hierarchy within our visual communications are recommended:

Format	Calibri
Headings	16pt-18pt Bold
Subheadings	12-14pt Bold
Body Text	12pt

Marketing font/typeface – marketing & development teams only

LL Circular Medium

LL Circular Medium is our marketing core brand font and is used only by our marketing and development teams in all our official marketing publications and online channels (including our website).

Baskerville

Is our Serif Font – used for publications like the Dunelmian where the readability of close compact text is improved by having serifs. A google fonts.google.com/specimen/Baskerville

Brittany

Our script font choice is Brittany. This is primarily a Canva font but is also available online.

Accessibility

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires us as a service provider to take reasonable steps to ensure all printed material, communications, and marketing activities are accessible to people with disabilities.

Our brand and this toolkit have been prepared considering best practice. Typefaces have been chosen for their legibility, and grids have been provided to ensure an uncluttered design.

Suggestions have been made to help determine sufficient contrast between type and backgrounds, and are also reflected in the guidance on photography. Some documents may need to be made available in plain text formats.

**Any questions when designing your document,
or, you need it checked, contact your Marketing team at:
marketing@dcsf.org.uk**

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

Our brand voice

This guidance provides a single reference point for everyone who talks, writes, and communicates for the Schools, Houses and/or the Foundation - whether internal or external, print or web.

Overview

This is your guide to sharing who we are with the world. Our Tone of Voice is as important to our identity as our visual look and feel.

Each reinforces the other, creating brand consistency. Expressing our brand with one voice makes us believable, avoids confusion and helps all our audiences easily understand who we are and what we stand for.

Our tone of voice

What does our voice sound like?

When we communicate, our verbal/visual/written communication should be:

- **Authentic** – real, genuine, and trustworthy.
- **Accessible** – easily understood and free from jargon. Use Plain English.
- **Aspirational** – inspiring and motivating.
- **Assured** – open, warm, welcoming - we are a supportive community.
- **Authoritative** - confident and backed up with solid facts - we have a reputation for excellence.

Along with our values (Moral Integrity, Ambition, Responsibility, and Kindness), we should always aim to consistently demonstrate these attributes. We need to tell our story. Be real. Be emotive. Be it our history, recent developments, or our plans. Be it our successes, pupil successes, or more.

What our voice is not

- **Parental**: we should talk *to* our audiences, never *at* them.
- **Bland**: bring facts and messages to life with energetic, enthusiastic language and engaging stories.
- **Arrogant**: always stick to the facts and substantiate claims so we will never sound arrogant; it's okay to say we are the best, if we can prove we really are.
- **Over-friendly**: be warm, but professional. If you try too hard to be friendly it can sound patronising.

The elements of our tone of voice should always be considered together, i.e., Authentic, Accessible, Aspirational, Assured and Authoritative. You should adapt our tone to reflect the subject being communicated, the channel, and the audience. This means you need to select the traits from the above list that most closely match your needs. For example, the tone adopted for a funding application will sound more authoritative, but addressing a parent, pupil on social media will need a warmer tone.

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

So, what does this sound or look like in practice?

Put yourself in the shoes of the audience you are communicating with.

- Who are you talking to? Do they already know about us and the subject you are writing about?
- What do they need to know and how is it relevant to them?
- What do you want to achieve from this communication? To complete an action, to be informed or something else?
- Words, combined with any images, must engage, influence and/or motivate your reader to action.

Write and speak in plain English.

- Be clear and concise, and avoid jargon, obscure terminology, and cliché - no matter how technical or academic the subject. [View plain English section.](#)

You should:

- address your audience directly - where appropriate, engage the reader by talking to them as 'you' rather than 'parents, pupils etc'.
- be active, not passive – use Durham School, Chorister School, or the Foundation, and refer to 'we' where appropriate.
- explain any unusual words/technical terms – do not use overly familiar language, slang, or acronyms.
- use verbs instead of nouns.
- use positive language.
- ensure our brand values shine through.

Brand key messaging

To support you went creating content (email, presentation, poster), below are some key messages about our foundation and schools you can use in your communications to ensure we are all using the same messages consistently.

Overview of the Foundation

- **Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation (DCSF)** is a charitable trust that oversees two independent schools in Durham, England: Durham School and Chorister School. Established in 2021 DCSF guides the strategic direction of both schools.

The Foundation's pupil journey is more than just learning; it's about joining a lifelong family. Pupils thrive in a nurturing environment, where teacher dedication extends beyond the classroom, promoting holistic growth. Former pupils become part of a strong Old Dunelmian network, staying connected with their schools and each other, reflecting the Foundation's commitment to lifelong personal and professional development.

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

Overview of each school

- **Chorister School** was established in 1416 as a school for the cathedral's choirboys, and since 1994 has offered co-educational education for ages 3-11 in Durham, England. It has a history dating back to the 11th century. It's dedicated staff and excellent facilities ensure all children can learn, work, and play happily in safe and secure surroundings.

With a belief that 'a happy child is a learning child,' the school is renowned for its top academic rankings and exceptional musical education. Pupils have the unique opportunity to join the prestigious Durham Cathedral Choir and perform in the awe-inspiring Durham Cathedral.

- **Durham School** is an esteemed co-educational independent institution located in Durham, England. Re-founded by Thomas Langley in 1414, it dates back to the building of Durham Cathedral in 995. In 1844, the school relocated to its present site and, in 1985/86, embraced co-education.

Renowned for its outstanding academic performance, Durham School consistently ranks among the nation's top institutions. Alongside its academic excellence, the school places a strong emphasis on extracurricular activities, offering a diverse range of sports, clubs, and societies for its pupils.

Note: Durham Cathedral School Foundation (DCSF) is our legal entity. Chorister School and Durham School are our trading names.

Overview of Houses

Chorister School Houses

Since its establishment in 1416 and transitioning to co-educational learning in 1994 for ages 3-11, Chorister School introduces newly named houses: Framwellgate, Elvet, Kingsgate, and Prebends, inspired by Durham's iconic bridges and featuring corresponding animal logos.

These houses are central to nurturing a sense of community and play a crucial role in the comprehensive development of pupils. Through activities that promote teamwork, camaraderie, and healthy competition, the houses embody the school's belief that a happy child is a learning child, fostering an environment where early years to Y6 pupils can thrive.

This refresh, crowned by a pupil-led rebranding effort at the end of academic year 2022-23, not only enriches the school's sense of unity but also reinforces the ethos that joy and learning are intertwined.

With distinctive mascots like the Kestrel, Eagle, Fox, and Pine Marten, these houses underscore a commitment to fostering environments where collaboration, friendship, and spirited competition thrive, aiming to cement these new identities as core elements of the school's legacy.

We look forward to our new House names becoming strong pillars of our school.

- Kingsgate was formerly Alnwick-Flambard, House Mascot – Kestrel
- Elvet was formerly Dunstanburgh-Pudsey, House Mascot – Eagle
- Framwellgate was formerly Bamburgh-Skirlaw - House Mascot – Fox
- Prebends was formerly Langley-Warkworth, House Mascot – Pine marten

Durham School Houses

Durham School, steeped in tradition and excellence, offers a unique house system that forms the cornerstone of its vibrant school community. Each of the six distinctive houses - Caffinites, MacLeod, Pimlico, Poole, and The School House (Bungites) - provides a nurturing environment where pupils grow academically, socially, and emotionally, fostering a sense of belonging and school spirit.

- **Caffinites House.** An emblematic structure of sandstone from the years 1913-14, is hidden behind a lush privet hedge on Quarryheads Lane. This residence, honouring Benjamin Charles Caffin, a notable former Second Master, offers a comforting 'home away from home' for approximately 100 day boys. The House emphasises a holistic pastoral care approach, with dedicated Housemaster and Junior Housemasters for different year groups, ensuring an atmosphere of support and care.
- **Lodge House.** Our newest house is a Girl's Day House for up to 72 girls. Named after Miss Millie Lodge, who joined Durham School as their first female teacher in 1918, and who went on to become the first female headmistress of two of the Foundation's constituent schools, Dunelm and Bow Schools.
- **MacLeod House.** Since its inception in 2005, MacLeod House has been dedicated to supporting the increasing female pupil population at Durham School. Symbolising the legacy of Mr. Norman MacLeod, an esteemed Housemaster, it is situated alongside Pimlico House, offering state-of-the-art facilities with its 2006 extension. A strong pastoral framework is maintained by the Housemistress and Junior Housemistress, nurturing a cohesive and supportive environment for the girls.
- **Pimlico House.** Established in 1985 for Durham School's inaugural female pupils, now accommodates over 70 girls, offering panoramic views of Durham Cathedral and the riverbanks. This house, near the main campus, provides cosy study-bedrooms and a communal space, ensuring a secure and supportive setting for both boarding and day pupils, fostering their well-being and communal engagement.
- **Poole House.** Set in a serene location close to the main school facilities, Poole House has been a boys' sanctuary since 1924, named in homage to Robert Henry John Poole, an alumnus and former Second Master. It caters to a diverse pupil body, including part-time, weekly, and full-time boarders, offering a peaceful retreat for relaxation and social interaction, enhancing the boarding experience.
- **School House.** Affectionately known as 'Bungites' in honour of the Reverend Dr. Henry Holden and dating back to at least 1844, is Durham School's oldest boys' house. Centrally located, it boasts exceptional views of the school's sports grounds, providing a historical yet dynamic living and learning environment for both boarders and day pupils. Leadership and pastoral care ensure a supportive atmosphere that fosters community, discipline, and personal growth among its members.

Strategic Messaging Framework



Confidence for life. Respect for all.

Communicating using plain English

English is not always the first language of those we are talking to. We should always use plain English so our communications and the information we provide is accessible to everyone. Our audiences are many and varied. We have more technical conversations with some than others.

So, we should aim to write clearly and concisely using everyday language.

Writing in plain English has a few golden rules:

- write as if you are having a face-to-face conversation with your reader.
- refer to us as Durham School, Chorister School, the Foundation or House, and wherever possible/relevant say 'we'.
- use language your reader will understand.
- use the active voice. 'David took the test', not 'the test was taken by David'.
- do not use contractions like 'we're', 'we've', etc. This is too informal.
- avoid using buzzwords and jargon.
- do not use pompous, overly formal, or long words if there's a shorter, more human alternative (use 'buy' instead of 'purchase', 'help' instead of 'assist', 'about' instead of 'approximately' and 'like' instead of 'such as').
- only use technical terminology where you really must and only once to explain the term.
- do not use words that have a different meaning in common use from the specific subject you're writing about. For instance, pizzas and post are 'delivered', not abstract concepts like improvements or priorities.
- keep sentences short – 15-20 words is ideal.
- do not repeat yourself.
- avoid tautologies.
- Keep to your subject – do not waffle.

Writing – House Style Guide

Large and complex organisations such as ours face significant challenges in communicating in a coherent and recognisable style. This is due to the multiplicity of points from which material is developed and published.

This document provides a guide to issues of language, style, and spelling which will help to ensure greater consistency in our approach to these issues. It is unlikely to be comprehensive or to cover all possible issues and colleagues are invited to suggest other areas or circumstances in which guidance would be helpful.

Abbreviations

It is not necessary to use full stops in or after abbreviations where there is no likelihood of confusion: GCSE, BSc, BA, MA, PhD, BT, eg, ie, etc, inc, sq. When they appear in text, &, %, ie and eg should be spelt out in full as ‘and’, ‘per cent’, ‘that is to say’ and ‘for example’. In tables, headings, or when you need to save space, the abbreviations may be used but not with full stops.

The first time that an abbreviation is used, it should be written out in full and followed by the abbreviation in brackets. This applies to the name of the Foundation and School as well as departments, clubs and societies within it. The abbreviation alone can then be used in sentences that follow.

Affect/effect

- The film really affected me. (Think ‘**a**-ffect’ for the ‘**a**-ction’ - the verb.)
- What is the effect on his health? (Think ‘**e**-ffect’ for the ‘**r**-**e**-sult’ or ‘cons-**e**-qu-**e**-nce’ - the noun.)

A level

A level not A-Level or ‘A’ Level. A level can be used as an adjective (eg A level physics) or as a noun A level. In both cases it should be written as A level. This is in line with how UCAS, gov.uk and both Oxford and Cambridge Universities

Apostrophes

- Use apostrophes to show possession (the pupil’s notes (singular), the boys’ changing room (plural), the children’s seats - NB: the apostrophe + s attaches to the end of the original word, whether singular or plural).
- Add only an apostrophe if the things or people possessing already end in ‘s’ (Students’ Union, lecturers’ offices, Mr. James’ class.)
- Do not use apostrophes for plurals unless it is to denote possession (in the 1960s, MAs, PhDs – these do not need apostrophes. ‘1960’s fashion’ would).
- Use an apostrophe to show that a letter is missing (isn’t, can’t, it’s)
- Pronouns like ‘his’, ‘hers’, ‘ours’, ‘yours’, ‘theirs’ and ‘it’s’ do not need apostrophes.

Biannual/biennial

- Biannual - twice a year.
- Biennial - every two years.

Capital letters

Do not use capitals:

- Avoid unnecessary capitals in all headings and text. In headings the first word should be capitalised with remaining words capitalised only if a proper noun, name or if a specific title or position is involved.
- For example: The British school system, not the British School System.
- internet not Internet
- web not Web
- Use lower case for seasons and semesters. For example: The prospectus will be updated in spring 2008.
- Use lower case for points of the compass: east, west, north, south. For example: Schools in the north east, the south of Scotland, southern Europe.

Do use capitals:

- Capitalise the names of books, films and other major works in the usual way. So, capitalise first words and all words apart from prepositions and conjunctions of fewer than five letters. For example: Leading from the Middle.
- The Government takes a capital letter if it refers to the present British Government; but a previous government takes a lower case initial. If used adjectivally, government takes a lower case.
- Use upper case for definite geographical places, regions, areas and countries: South-East Asia, The Hague, the Midlands, the Middle East, the West (as opposed to the Developing World), the West Country, Western Europe.
- School or Foundation. Lower case should be used when referring to schools of foundations generally.
- Principal (referring to ours), all others are principal.
- Departments: Teaching:
 - Art
 - Biology
 - Business Studies and Economics
 - Chemistry
 - Computer Science
 - Design Technology
 - Drama
 - English
 - Geography
 - History
 - Latin and Classical Civilisation
 - Learning Support
 - Mathematics
 - Modern Foreign Languages
 - Music
 - Photography
 - Physical Education
 - Physics
 - Politics
 - Psychology
 - Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

Non-teaching:

- Admissions & Marketing
 - Development, Alumni and Events
 - Finance & Administration
 - IT
 - Estates
 - International
- Course titles (A level Drama and Theatre Studies), but not when referring generally to the study subject (for example: a good background in mathematics is essential).

Century

- 21st century, 20th century (noun); 21st-century (adjective), eg in the 21st century (noun); but a 21st-century dilemma (adjective).
- 300 AD or 300 BC not 300AD or 300BC.

Circa

Abbreviate simply as c. (roman) followed by a space, eg c. 1342.

Compare to/with

- Compare to - liken to.
- Compare with - make a comparison.

Contact details

Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation
Quarryheads Lane
Durham DH1 4SZ
Email: enquiries@dcsf.org.uk
Tel: +44 (0)191 731 9270

Web addresses should not include http, or the www eg dcsf.org.uk

Dashes

Use short dashes (ens) when there are no spaces between words, ie 2000-2005, 5,000-word dissertation, and long dashes (ems) when there are spaces between words, ie first-year module – British cinema.

Dates

- Friday 10 August 2007 not 10th August 2007, 10th August 2007 or August 10 2007.
- 2007-08 not 2007-2008 or 2007/08.
- Decades should be expressed as 1960s (not 1960's or '60s).
- 21st century, 20th century (noun); 20th-century (adjective).
eg "20th-century toy, I want to be your boy"

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

Dependent/dependant

- I am dependent on him. She is my dependant.

Double spacing

Once used in the days of mechanical typewriters, double spacing is now not necessary. Always use a single space after a comma and full stop.

Email

Email and email not E-mail and e-mail.

Fewer, less

- For countable nouns use 'fewer': There were fewer boys than girls.
- For non-countable nouns use 'less': There was less wine than water.

Historical periods

Capitalise names of widely recognised epochs in anthropology, archaeology, geology, and history: the Bronze Age, the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Victorian era, the Enlightenment, the Third Reich; or periods named after specific dynasties or people: the Tudors, Elizabethan. But lower case medieval, baroque.

Houses

- Senior School Houses should be referred to in the following styles.
- The Caffinites. Pupils are known as "Caffinites" (abv. C)
- Langley House – now defunct (abv. L)
- Lodge House – not The Lodge (abv. Lo)
- Macleod House - (abv. M)
- Pimlico House – (abv. Pim)
- Poole House – (abv. P) Pupils are known as "Pooleites"
- School House – *inf.* "Bungites". (abv. S) Pupils are known as "Bungites".

Hyphenation

- Full time (noun), full-time (adjective), eg the referee blew the whistle for full time; she has a full-time job.
- First year (noun), first-year (adjective), eg he is in his first year; he is a first-year undergraduate.
- World-class not world class.

Initials

Use a space but no full stops between personal initials: A M Smith

International

Refer to international not overseas pupils.

Inverted commas (quotation marks)

Use single " inverted commas, reserving double "" inverted commas for a quotation within a quotation and for direct speech.

Italics

- Use italics for titles of published books, periodicals, dissertations, plays, films, paintings, newspapers.
- Titles of articles and features in periodicals etc are set in Baskerville type and enclosed in single quotation marks.
- Use italics for foreign words which have not become part of the English language.

Newspaper titles

Generally, in italics and with lower case 'the': the Guardian. Exceptions to this are The Times and The Economist.

Numbers

- Use words for numbers below 10 unless they are in tables.
- 10 upwards as figures, so 10 not ten, 29 not twenty-nine.
- Spell out any number that begins a sentence, eg One hundred and ten people graduated this year.
- Use commas for numbers of four or more digits: 1,000 not 1000.
- £100 million or £100m not £100 m.
- £10,000 not £10k, although £10k is acceptable in internal documents.
- Fractions are hyphenated as adjectives (one-third full), but not as nouns (one third of the population). The course runs for two years but it is a two-year course.
- Spell out ordinal numbers in text: first, second, third (not 1st, 2nd, 3rd).

Old Dunelmians

Former pupils, or alumni, of all schools within the foundation are known as Old Dunelmians. This can be abbreviated to OD or ODs. When referring to individual ODs it is traditional to place their abbreviated house and years in the following style. Eg "John Ranson (P, 1951-57)" or "Molly Hunter (Pim, 2023-25)".

Alumni is plural for male, and mixed gender groups. Alumnae is female plural. Alumnus is male singular and alumna is female singular. In most cases Old Dunelmian or OD are better choices.

Over

Our House Style is to say, 'more than', rather than 'over'. There are more than 5,000 international students at Durham University – not, there are over 5,000....

Percentage

Use per cent rather than percent or % (except in tables).

Practice/practise

- She practises the piano every day (verb) (Think 'practise' and 'advise' - I advise you to practise more). She set up practice as a lawyer (noun) (Think 'practice' and 'advice' - My advice for your practice is...).

Principle/principal

- It's against my principles (Principles = **e**thics).
- She is the school's new principal (principal = **a**uthority/**m**ain).

Programme/program

As in A level programme, but a computer program.

Qualifications

- A levels not A-Levels or 'A' Levels
- GCSE, BSc, BA, MA, PhD not G.C.S.E. etc
- BTEC not bTEC or btech

Spelling

Some commonly misspelt words

- accommodation
- dependant (person); dependent (adjective)
- enrol, enrolling, enrolment
- focused
- liaison/liaise
- licence (noun), licensing; licensed; to license (verb)

ise / ize

- Our house style is to use -ise- (British English not American English).
- civilised not civilized
- organised not organized
- civilisation not civilization
- organisation not organization

We use the following:

- adviser not advisor
- Continental Europe not continental Europe
- co-ordinator not coordinator
- co-operation not cooperation
- coursework not course work
- en suite not ensuite or en-suite
- field trip not fieldtrip
- field work not fieldwork

- focuses not focusses
- GCSE or GCSEs – no full stops
- you take a full-time course, but you study full time (same for part-time/part time)
- healthcare (when used as adjective – healthcare professions), otherwise health care
- online not on-line
- problem-based learning
- supervisor not superviser
- under way not underway
- website not web-site
- world-class not world class

Time

5.30pm not 5.30 pm or 17.30

Titles

- Mr not Mr.
- Mrs not Mrs.
- Ms not Ms.
- Dr not Doctor
- Prof not Prof.
- Full names eg Mr A Persons

Website

- website not web-site
- No https in urls on posters etc. eg dcsf.org.uk
Do need to use full web addresses withing links eg

World-class

- World-class not world class

Years

2005-06 not 2005-2006 or 2005/06.

Imagery

Photography

Using photography to portray life at Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation, Chorister School, and Durham School establishes an emotional connection with our key audiences, informing, inspiring, and engaging them.

Images are a key element of our identity. They are invaluable in showing Durham's people and assets and helping to communicate our story.

When delivering teaching sessions, an event, society activity - or even if you're just walking around Durham City or the School and see a fabulous view - please take some photos and share them with the marketing team.

Permissions and storage

Pictures and videos are processed under the grounds of Legitimate Interest, NOT Consent. Before using, we need to check that individuals or, in the case of pupils, their parents, have not informed us that they do not wish to have their image used. Permission may be changed and removed at any time. Marketing are able to update you as to whether or not a photograph can be used. Originals of all images taken for the Foundation, School or House should be shared with your marketing team for indexing and storage.

The key characteristics

Our photography should portray life at Durham in a clear and evocative way, establishing an emotional connection with our key audiences, informing, inspiring, and engaging them.

Our photography will reflect a confident, collaborative, inclusive, and inspiring tone of voice. It will be user-focused, always with the audience in mind and fully aware of the message we are looking to convey.

Our photography should feature the following characteristics:

Authenticity – real, genuine, and trustworthy.

Our photography will reflect the world-class nature of our School and the uniqueness of Durham city.

- Wherever possible, use 'real' people as the subjects of photography e.g., actual pupils who are studying with us.
- Avoid "could be anywhere" photography by incorporating Durham's surroundings.
- Use natural light where possible, or light sources found within the environment. This conveys a sense of honesty.
- Wherever possible, look to 'capture the moment' rather than set up scenarios. Our audiences can tell when a photo has been staged.

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

Connection

Our imagery should form an emotional connection with our audiences, creating interest and generating excitement. Subjects should be:

- Happy (without over exaggerating).
- Engaged.
- Intrigued.
- In the moment.

Inclusivity

Our photography should reflect and celebrate the diversity of our people. We must be conscious of achieving a broad, diverse mix of people across the breadth of our communications.

Technical characteristics

- **Bright light:** Where possible, shoot in bright light to convey energy, happiness and optimism. Avoid dark, dimly lit locations which will convey the opposite.
- **High colour contrast:** Where possible, use high contrast photography to convey confidence, vibrancy, and positivity.

Achieving the best images

In general, shoot images with plenty of space around the subject. Think about whether you need space to add text, whether your image will include the Foundation or School logo in the top left corner, whether you need to allow for the fold in a double page spread etc.

During the briefing process and/or when taking the photo, think about where the image will be used to achieve the best results.

The [School's Instagram feed](#) , the [website](#), and institution publications are a great source of inspiration.

Photos of people

For portrait photos, where possible, put people in context and capture your subject in a relevant campus/city location e.g., chemistry pupil in the lab. This will create more of an interesting story and a clearer relationship between the person and their place in the school.

Try to capture images of your subject in more than one setting, this will help to:

- capture different aspects of the person's experience and relationship to Durham;
- show off different areas of the Foundation and Schools;
- maximise the cost-effectiveness of the shoot and give a greater shelf-life to the images available to use;
- give you more choice – sometimes the shoot you initially had in mind will not work as planned.

Group photos

Avoid extreme landscape and extreme portrait shapes when photographing groups of people. Instead, consider the pointers below.

- Construct a natural scene – if you need to construct a scene, try and arrange the group into a scene that feels natural. This could be as simple as them all sitting around a table having coffee together, or it could be a scene that aims to show them collaborating on a project or working together in a lab.
- Think about creative composition – most group photography involves participants being lined up in one or two vertical lines. This will always look forced; think about how you can place the group throughout the foreground, middle and background of the shot. For example, in a lab setting, it might work to have some group members further back behind a different lab bench working with others closer.
- Sometimes you have (little to) no choice – it is important to point out that sometimes a photograph must be taken of a group of important people together. In these situations, it is advisable to try and get a variety of posed-for and candid group shots.

Action shots

These should capture people engaging with others and/or their environment. The emphasis is more often on the action rather than the person. Always keep the audience in mind and the message you're aiming to convey. Where possible, consider the following:

- always try to capture a natural scene rather than setting one up;
- setting up the camera ahead of a timed/planned action or event taking place;
- capturing the action from a range of angles and perspectives, e.g., close-ups of a lab experiment as well as wider angle shots;
- avoid the person looking straight at the camera whilst the photography is taking place.

Buildings and our environment

These will showcase Durham at its best. Images could range from extreme close-ups that capture intimate details of our facilities and buildings, to wide angle shots that show the scope of our city and campus. Where suitable, people should be included in the photos. For external building shots, consider the following:

- sunrises/sunsets;
- clear blue, bright skies;
- seasonal changes e.g., autumn leaves or snow in winter;
- interesting angles and perspectives of your building – try to capture a range.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning shots should portray a high level of connection. We want to show our pupils engaged in their subjects and their peers; strong individual facial expressions or body language can help with this. When photographing large groups of pupils in class, focusing on an individual within the group can often provide a focus point and create an emotional connection.

Where possible try to:

- capture active engagement rather than passive learning;
- capture eye contact between teacher and pupil;
- include relevant facilities in your photo to add more context;
- include a diverse group of people;

Video

Applying our identity to videos can help add a level of trust and authenticity. The ever-changing digital world and our target audiences' engagement with video content has increased demand to produce, curate, and share top-quality video content.

Why create videos

Videos are valuable marketing and communications tools which can be used across Foundation and School online channels, including the website and social media.

Academic departments may want to create a video to promote a course, to showcase graduate profiles, or promote an event, etc. Other departments may want to create content to inform pupils and staff about services, initiatives, and policies. Please bear in mind that video production may need to be funded by the department.

How to create a video

If you are looking to create a professional high-quality video to promote Foundation, School, or House activities, **you must contact your marketing team as soon as you can - absolute minimum 2 weeks prior to filming.**

Just wanting to create a short film with your mobile for social media use? Read sections 'What to consider', 'Other video tips and resources', and 'Permissions – photography and video'. Also contact your marketing team for a quick chat.

What to consider

- Where will the video be used? Is there really an audience for it?
- How are you going to use/promote the video? Have you got a network to help share it or will you need to use School channels?
- What is your call to action? What do you want your viewers to do after they've watched your video? Book an Open Day? Email someone? Comment on a social media post? Whatever it is, make sure you give the viewer the tools they need to make that happen. For example, this could be a web address or the Facebook handle of the social media account.
- Does it feel like Durham? Does the tone and style of your video reflect Durham? Have you considered the tone of voice? It's important that our videos reflect the distinctiveness of Durham, so think about how you are capturing this in your video.

- Choose the best approach – videos can be anything from short cinema commercials to mini documentaries profiling pupils and staff.
- A lot of our videos are targeted towards potential parents or pupils, while others are geared towards professional Old Dunelmians. Different audiences will react differently to the same video, so think about who will be watching it.
- Find the right pupils and staff to participate. Using real Durham people will give your video an authentic feel. Instead of giving them scripted lines to recite, come up with good interview questions that will lead your subjects to say what you want in their own words.
- Which buildings or locations do you want to show off in your video? When choosing locations, think about when you'll be shooting, whether there will be people around, and what the sound and light will be like.
- Filming can be very time-intensive, and you may end up recording as much as an hour of footage for each edited minute in the final video, so consider the enormous job ahead for the video editors.

Instructions for filming yourself on Teams or Zoom

Video can be a fantastic tool for staying connected and engaging with your community. These basic guidelines will help you film compelling, high-quality videos of yourself from your home using tools you already have on hand.

Setting your scene

Whether you're using a video camera, smartphone, or laptop, there are a few simple steps you can take to make sure you're capturing clean, clear footage. You can also use these scene-setting tips to help light and frame Zoom or Teams video calls.

Background

- Make sure your subject—you, in this case—is the focus of the frame. Avoid backgrounds that are overly busy or include a lot of extraneous motion. Whenever possible, ensure that other people's faces are not in view.
- If you're filming in front of a flat wall, sit far enough away to avoid casting shadows behind you.
- If you have space, you can add depth to your shot by sitting or standing in front of corners. This will draw the viewer's eye to your subject.

DO add depth to your shot by filming in front of a corner. **DO NOT** sit too close to a flat wall; it can cast distracting shadows.

Lighting

- The best at-home lighting is daylight. Try to position yourself facing a window (or set up a light if daylight is not an option) with your face pointing about three-quarters of the way toward the light.
- Make sure that there are no bright lights behind your head, like windows, lamps, or even a sunlit wall.

Confidence for life. Respect for all.

- Avoid overhead lights if possible. They can cast unflattering shadows on your face.

DO position yourself in front of a window, facing the light. **DO NOT** have a bright light behind your head.

Framing

- If you're using a smartphone, make sure you're recording in landscape orientation (horizontal).
- Rest your camera on a flat surface to ensure that the frame is not off kilter or at a weird angle. Keep the horizon line level.
- Position the camera at eye level. When speaking to the camera, you should be looking straight ahead toward the lens, not up or down.
- Leave some room between the top of your head and the top of the frame.
- You do not always have to be in the middle of the frame; sitting off centre adds visual interest.

DO film video in landscape orientation. **DO** position your camera at eye level and try sitting off centre.

Recording your video

Capturing Footage

- If you're filming on a smartphone, use the back camera, which records higher-quality footage than the front-facing 'selfie' camera.
- Whenever possible, avoid handheld shots. If you do not have access to a tripod, you can prop your recording device on a stack of books, a windowsill, etc. If your shot is steady and level, it should look great.
- Always do a test shot: get in position, hit record, and say a sentence or two. Then watch the clip to make sure your visuals and audio are set up the way you want them.
- Wait three seconds after you hit record before you start speaking to ensure that your words do not get cut off. Similarly, when you're done speaking, wait three seconds before ending your recording.
- Speak slowly and clearly. You're doing brilliantly!

Capturing Audio

- Set yourself up in a quiet, preferably empty, space to minimise unwanted background noise.
 - If you must choose a well-lit room or a quiet room, prioritise the quiet room. It's important that viewers can hear what you're saying.
- If you're in a home with other people, let them know you're filming a video and ask that they remain quiet until you're finished.
- If you're filming on a smartphone, turn on Do Not Disturb so your phone does not buzz during your shoot. (And ask your housemates to do the same!)

- Be sure to switch off anything that could contribute to background noise, such as air conditioners, fluorescent lights, or clanky radiators.
- Remember: if you can hear it, the audience will hear it. If there's a dog barking outside or fire engines driving by, wait until the noise has subsided before continuing.

Other video tips and resources

- Whether sitting or standing, make sure your appearance is neat and tidy (clothes smoothed out) and your back is straight.
- Avoid clothes with thin stripes or busy patterns, which can cause feedback on camera.
- When in doubt, start your sentence over or rephrase as necessary. It's always better to have too much footage than not enough - if something feels unnatural, try saying it a few different ways.
- Powder or oil-blotting sheets are great tools to make sure your face does not appear too shiny on camera.
- Do not use the zoom function on a smartphone. It degrades the quality of the footage. If you want to get a closer shot, move your smartphone closer to your subject.
- Additional resources:
 - [The 7 Best Smartphone Video Editing Apps in 2019](#)
 - [10 tips for recording better video with your smartphone](#)
 - [12 Simple Tips for Making Your Videos Look More Professional](#)
 - [13 Videography Tips for More Professional-Looking Videos](#)
 - [How to Look Your Best on a Webcam](#)

Organising a professional photoshoot or filming

Think you need a professional photoshoot for an event or sporting fixture?

An absolute minimum of two weeks' notice is needed.

Contact your marketing team at: marketing@dcsf.org.uk

We already have several photographs on file with permissions in place, so we may have what you need. Again, get in touch with your marketing team.