

Why Work at Denefield

About Denefield

Denefield is a great place to work. We are a community of staff, students and parents who thrive together. Denefield staff here are loyal, supportive and are proud to work here. They value the school's vision, our excellent students and behaviour culture, our supportive environment and our outstanding premises. They recognise the efforts that have gone into reducing workload, enhancing wellbeing and granting flexible working opportunities where-ever possible. They embrace the professional and career development opportunities Denefield offers. This is a school where every adult, as well as every student, counts and where our motto 'success for life' means as much for staff as it does for our student body.

We regularly seek the views of staff, students and parents. 96% of our staff recommend Denefield – which is 25% above the national average. 85% of parents and carers recommend Denefield – which is 15% above the national average. And the proportion of students who recommend Denefield is also 15% above the national average [Denefield stakeholder surveys November 2025, conducted by Edurio]. It is no surprise that so many of our staff send their children to Denefield, that Denefield has been oversubscribed in Year 7 for over 10 years, and that we have record numbers of applications to our Sixth Form, both from Denefield students and those from other schools.

Denefield's ethos and values

Denefield is a high-performing and high-achieving school. Our GCSE and A-level results continue to be above the national average. We believe that qualifications open doors and we always support and challenge our students to do even better. Our motto 'success for life' is not only about academic achievement however. We aim to develop the whole person and to prepare them for the rich tapestry of life that awaits after leaving school. Most of our Year 11 students stay into the Sixth Form and almost all of our Sixth Form students take up university places or apprenticeships.

Denefield is also an inclusive school. We proudly serve the Tilehurst and wider Reading community, and almost all of our students live within a mile and a half of the school. We believe in developing students whatever their background or academic starting point. We are as proud of those who take up college places or apprenticeships with Microsoft or AWE as we are those who attend competitive universities such as Oxbridge.

Our approach

There is no rocket science in what we do. We believe in rigour, consistency and kindness. Students study the full range of subjects at Key Stage 3 and begin their GCSEs in Year 10. We offer a range of vocational qualifications alongside academic, sporting and creative courses and teach 25 subjects in the Sixth Form. Our clear pedagogy is based around Denefield's 'lesson on a page' and we encourage all faculties to jointly plan and resource all schemes of work. We are passionate about what works for students and what is manageable for staff.

We minimise marking through multi-response systems such as mini-whiteboards and by using visualisers to enable live-marking and we encourage staff to use artificial intelligence to make their jobs easier.

Like all the best schools we have a clear and effective behaviour policy and standards of student conduct are excellent. We have an outstanding welfare and attendance team. We have a house system that operates alongside our tutor programme. There is a plethora of house competitions and we have whole-school celebration assemblies three times a year. We encourage extra-curricular activities alongside day trips and residential visits. We foster opportunities for older students to nurture and mentor younger members of our community.

The local area

Tilehurst is a great place to be. It's pretty much the western-most suburb of Reading. To one side of the school is smart residential housing; to the other sides are fields, woods and views down to the Thames. Travel connections are outstanding – Denefield is a few minutes from junction 12 of the M4 and it is just over a mile to Tilehurst railway station, on the Reading-Didcot line. Regular buses ply the route from Denefield to Reading. There are so many beautiful towns and villages in the Thames valley. Denefield is close to Oxford, Henley and Marlow as well as Reading, though many of our teachers live within walking distance of the school. There is a nursery school on the Denefield site which operates from 7.30am-6.00pm during term time and for three weeks of the school holiday.

Benefits of Working at Denefield

In this section we aim to give you a sample of the benefits our staff receive.

Staff Wellbeing

We are committed to supporting the wellbeing of every member of staff at Denefield, whatever their role. As part of this commitment, we endorse the Department for Education's Education Staff Wellbeing Charter and have also developed our own charter, which sets out additional measures tailored to the needs of our school community. All staff, including their family, can access our Employee Assistance Programme, which provides a 24-hour confidential helpline covering a wide range of personal and professional matters. The programme offers support with counselling, financial wellbeing, legal information, tenancy and housing concerns, medical information, family issues and consumer issues, helping staff receive expert guidance whenever they need it. We also offer funded eyesight tests for staff who regularly use display screens, annual flu vaccinations and access to occupational health services where needed.

In addition, we participate in the Bike to Work Scheme, limit the hours during which staff are encouraged to send and receive emails, provide designated working spaces, offer free onsite parking and operate a refer a friend scheme.

Pension Schemes

Teaching staff are enrolled in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), while support staff are enrolled in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Eligible staff are automatically enrolled into the relevant scheme from their first day of employment with us.

Both pension schemes provide secure, government-backed benefits and include employer contributions, offering valuable long-term financial security.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

You can find out more about the Teachers' Pension Scheme at <https://www.berkshirerpensions.org.uk>

Some of the benefits include:

- Defined Benefit pension (guaranteed income for life) – Your pension is based on your salary and length of service, giving you a secure and predictable income in retirement.
- Generous employer contributions – Your employer contributes over 28% of your salary into the scheme, significantly enhancing your pension.
- Tax-relief on member contributions – Your own contributions benefit from tax relief, making it a highly efficient way to save for the future.
- Index-linked pension growth – The value of your pension increases each year in line with inflation, helping your benefits keep pace with the cost of living.
- Family protection benefits – Includes an in-service death grant and long-term survivor pensions for spouses, civil partners or nominated beneficiaries.
- Ill-health retirement support – If you become too ill to teach, you may be able to access your pension early, with the possibility of enhanced benefits if you are unable to work.
- Flexible retirement options – You can choose to retire from age 55 and can convert part of your pension into a tax-free lump sum.
- Government-backed security – The TPS is one of a small number of UK pension schemes backed by the government, providing strong long-term stability.
- Portable across teaching roles – Your pension follows you if you move between eligible teaching posts.
- Online pension management – Simple, secure access to your pension information through the 'My Pension Online' service.

Local Government Pension Scheme

You can find out more about the Local Government Pension Scheme at <https://www.berkshirerpensions.org.uk>

Some of the benefits include:

- Secure, Defined Benefit Pension – The LGPS provides a guaranteed pension based on your career average earnings, offering predictable income in retirement.
- Generous Employer Contributions – Employers pay a significant contribution towards your pension, helping you build valuable benefits over time.
- Inflation Protection
- Tax Relief on Contributions
- Flexible Contribution Options.
- Family Protection – The scheme provides life cover and, in the event of your death, pensions for your spouse, civil partner or eligible children.
- Ill-Health Protection
- Flexible Retirement Options Tax-Free Lump Sum Option – At retirement, you can choose to convert part of your pension into a tax-free lump sum.
- Online pension management through Engage Member Services

Both pension providers offer webinars and information on their websites, including details for new joiners, guidance on how to make the most of your pension, and support with planning for retirement.

Enhanced sick pay, maternity Pay and Paternity pay

We offer enhanced occupational sick pay, maternity pay and paternity pay for both teaching and support staff. These benefits increase with length of service and provide generous periods of full and half pay where the relevant criteria are met, ensuring that employees are well supported during periods of ill health or family leave.

Supporting You and Your Family

We write all our policies with our staff firmly in mind, ensuring they are employee-focused and family-friendly to support a positive work-life balance. Each year, we actively welcome and consider requests for flexible working, and we offer a range of arrangements including part-time roles, term-time only working, job shares and, where appropriate, compressed hours. Our aim is to provide flexibility wherever possible so that colleagues can balance their professional responsibilities with personal and family commitments.

Holiday Entitlement

Our support staff receive a minimum of 25 days' annual leave each year, in addition to bank holidays. Annual leave entitlement increases with both length of service and grade, rising to a maximum of 33 days' paid leave for eligible staff.

Annual Pay Increases

Our staff work hard and deserve to be rewarded for this. Support staff receive annual pay increases in line with grade boundaries. We expect and support all main scale teachers to get an annual pay rise. We work in a culture of complete transparency and avoid surprises about pay progression. We encourage main scale teachers to apply to be remunerated on the upper pay spine. These pay rises, of course, are in addition to the annual government and local government pay uplift.

Your next steps

Denefield is full of kind, caring staff who love working with young people and working collaboratively with each other to change people's lives. If you feel you fit this mould and that you like what you've heard about Denefield, then please consider joining us. I am always happy to meet potential staff, whether you are thinking of applying for a particular vacancy or are just browsing for the future. Please do get in touch – I would be delighted to meet you.