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Our ref: SPL/mw

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Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you and your children had a great summer, although I must admit that even though it is only the third week in September it does seem an awful long time ago. I am sure that you have enjoyed reading about the fantastic GCSE examination success stories of our students in the local media; as one year group departs, we, of course, have been delighted to welcome in 197 Year 7 students to Furness Academy. It has already been an incredibly busy beginning to the new academic year and everyone has made an impressive start and the climate for learning is warm and purposeful.

You will be aware that we were inspected by Ofsted earlier this week on Tuesday 19 and Wednesday 20 September and I would like to thank all of you who took the time to complete the 'Parent View' questionnaire. Until the report is finally published you will understand that I am unable to share with you the official outcome. I will, however, say that I am incredibly proud of all of our students and staff and the work that they all do each day to make this a special place. I can confirm that during the inspection the behaviour of our students was really good and in the lessons that I observed the teaching and learning was good and effective. I will let you read into that and draw your own conclusion.

We have also had some important facility developments that have taken place over the summer break with upgrades to our library and ICT facilities. The largest development, however, was the expansion to our catering facilities with a new and extensive dining area for the students. It also incorporated a new catering pod where we are now serving an even wider variety of new options to our lunchtime menu.

**I would like to draw your attention to some key information and reminders.**

### **School Equipment**

Please ensure that your child has a suitable school bag and brings with them a well-stocked pencil case including spare pens, pencils, scientific calculator and a ruler, and their student planner each day. We will be making sure that everyone has the basic equipment each morning. If you have any urgent problems please do contact us.

### **Homework**

We know that all the academic research tells us the importance of homework to students' success at secondary school and beyond. It is therefore vital that students develop the good habits of studying outside of their timetabled classes. Each student will receive a homework timetable and we ask, as always, for your unwavering support here to ensure that your child is not left behind. Please do contact us if you have any concerns.

### **Mobile Phones**

Students are allowed to bring mobile phones to school, but their use is restricted to certain times and places. An acceptable use policy was agreed last year with the school council and it remains in place this year. Our normal confiscation procedures will be followed if students use their phones outside of the agreed policy and your co-operation and support will be much appreciated. The most effective way to get any urgent message to your child is to contact the reception on 484270, option 2, and we will take care of it.

### **Student Entrance**

Both student entrance gates are closed at 8:40am and any students arriving after this time will need to use the main reception entrance. If they are late without a good reason then they will receive a sanction in line with the attendance and punctuality policy. We made significant improvements with regard to students' punctuality last year and we would like to eventually eradicate poor punctuality altogether.

**Attendance**

Good attendance of staff and students is vital at the academy if your child is going to reach their full potential. The aim is for staff and students to have 100% attendance, but we do understand that sometimes we can be ill and that some appointments or events are unavoidable in term time.

It is common sense that poor attendance will have a negative impact on a student's educational attainment, but it is difficult to quantify just by how much. We can calculate that a student who only has 80% attendance from Year 7 to Year 11 has effectively been absent for a whole school year. Similarly, a student who has 90% attendance for 5 years has effectively been absent for half a school year.

Again, when we analysed this year's Year 11 results, we found a distinct drop in performance for students who had below 95% attendance. I cannot stress enough how important it is to be here all day and every day if at all possible.

We are determined not to let students coast or fall behind and have high expectations of attendance (above 96%) and attitude to learning, completion of homework and hard work in general to ensure they are successful.

We continue on our journey to have everything in place to deliver excellent results over the coming years and to provide a fantastic education for your children.

Thank you all for your support and co-operation.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S.P. Laheney', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Mr S P Laheney**  
**Headteacher**