

10 April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

### COVID-19

I hope this letter finds you well and coping with the national lockdown. Alongside our families, we will be coping in our own way with the lockdown measures and, for some of us, it will be a much greater hardship. For those of you who are finding it particularly tough, do not forget that we have shared on our website and social media agencies that are available to help and for you to reach out to.

It is hard for me to believe the transformation that has taken place at Furness Academy since I wrote to you 9 days ago. I have been in education for over 20 years and have had the privilege of being a headteacher for nearly 10 years. I have been lucky to witness the incredible achievements made by young people in the most trying of situations and have been astonished and overwhelmed, many times, by the strength and fortitude that some people have. I have to say, I have been overwhelmed again as I have watched in awe as people in our community have drawn together their collective wisdom, energy, expertise and spheres of influence to achieve 'the art of the possible' in such a limited timeframe to support our NHS. It has been the embodiment of our town's motto, '*Semper Sursum!*'

Last week, a design and build specification for a patient cubicle, submitted by BAE Systems, had been agreed by Morecambe Bay Healthcare Trust. Following this: BAE Systems, LECK Construction, Optech Fibres, Wards Decorators, Athena PTS and Barrow Borough Council came together with the Morecambe Bay Healthcare Trust to plan the transformation of our school, ably supported by our brilliant Furness Academy site and catering team throughout. I have included some photographs with this letter on our social media platform.

It is now Good Friday and, after a herculean effort, the construction teams left this morning for a well-earned rest. I cannot express my gratitude enough for the great care they have all taken to make sure that, when all of this is over, our school will be returned to us as they found it. There is still some more to do, namely to take delivery of the beds, but the Morecambe Bay Healthcare Trust can be confident that it will be ready in time and fit for the purpose of caring for members of our community, should the need arise.

Our Trust primary schools have also been busy with their students and staff creating posters to decorate the newly created wards here at Furness Academy. My deep thanks to Finger Prints who have printed, laminated and delivered the children's designs to us with no charge. They will add the touches of colour, fun, light and love, in a way only children can, in a place and at a time where it will be greatly appreciated.

The response to this national emergency has been, undeniably, truly inspiring by everyone associated with our NHS and we must all do everything we can to help reduce the burden and support where we can. I hope that our school will not be needed, but if it is then the patients will be ably cared for, in a great place, as they recover and regain their strength well enough to go home.

We are also hugely grateful to St Bernard's Catholic High School for allowing us to share their premises so that we can provide the childcare supervision for key workers' children. If you are a key worker and require childcare, then please send an email request to [childcare@furnessacademy.co.uk](mailto:childcare@furnessacademy.co.uk) and we will get back to you.

Thank you, to everyone who has shared their support for what we are trying to achieve. It continues to be a monumental effort for everyone involved and I know that the backing you have given has lifted the spirits of everyone.

Thank you!



Simon Laheney  
Headteacher