

11 September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

It has been wonderful to see our students return to school and the classrooms filled with the noise and energy that only young people can bring. Despite the regimented lunchtime and break arrangements, the directed movements within the corridors, increased handwashing and sanitising stations and face masks, in amongst it all there is a strong sense of normality. Staff and students have adapted swiftly to the new routines and lessons are underway with real purpose. Our new Year 7 students, some in their oversized school uniforms (you will grow into them), have made a super start to their new school and we look forward to all that lies ahead in the coming term. Thank you all for your support in adapting to the new routines and arrangements this new academic year has brought with it.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome all of the new teaching staff we have starting with us this year and they are listed below. As you will be aware, Furness Academy has grown in popularity over the past few years and has been significantly over subscribed with applicants for Year 7 places. We approach that time of year again and parent/carer(s) of Year 6 students will be busy considering which secondary school to choose. If you happen to know anyone in this position and would be happy to recommend our school, please direct them to our school website where details of our 'Virtual Open Evening' on Wednesday 16 September at 6.00pm can be found.

New teaching staff:

James Crayston	Teacher of Maths
Hayley Curbishley	Subject Lead for Design & Technology (Maternity cover)
Stephanie Davies	Teacher of Maths
Alannah Hartley	Teacher of Science
Megan Fitzpatrick	Teacher of Geography
Rachel Kipling	Teacher of English with Drama
Anoushka Moir	Teacher of English
Victoria Rogan	Teacher of English

The strength of our student numbers enables us to plan ahead with confidence and proceed with a number of projects as intended. Of course, restrictions imposed by the pandemic will make some of our developments take a little longer but, hopefully, when we do reach it, the new norm will be a better one.

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

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 in 2015-16 with the school council and it has remained in place since. Our normal confiscation procedures will be followed if students use their mobile 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 telephone 01229 484270, option 2, and we will take care of it.

Student Entrances

All student entrance gates are closed at 8:40am and any students arriving after this time will need to use the main reception entrance. Due to the COVID-19 measures, it would be helpful if students do not arrive before 8:30am as they are unable to enter the school building unless they are here for 'magic breakfast'. This will help to restrict large gatherings of students where it will be difficult to maintain a social distance.

Road Safety

Thank you to the vast majority of 'school run' parents and carers who do, indeed, exercise safe, considerate and lawful practice with regard to dropping off and picking up their children at Furness Academy. Please continue to do this in the best interests of everyone's safety.

However, can I remind the small number of parent/carer(s) who pull up on the double yellow lines or, even worse, the zig zags leading to the pedestrian crossing, or use the academy access road to carry out 'U' turn manoeuvres, to resist the temptation to do this as it is neither safe, nor legal, and adds to the congestion problems in the immediate vicinity of the academy, thus further compromising safety. Thank for you co-operation and understanding in this matter.

Student absence due to COVID-19 symptoms

If students are displaying any of the 3 symptoms, then they must not attend school and parent/carer(s) must make arrangements for them to be tested. The school should be informed of the test result immediately and, if the test is negative, the student can return to school if they are well enough to do so. Tests can be booked at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested> or ordered by telephone via NHS 119.

We understand that there has been some difficulty for parent/carer(s) to obtain a test appointment. If parent/carer(s) have been unable to book a test appointment on the first day of absence after making two attempts, then parent/carer(s) can contact the school on the second day and we will log a booking on your behalf.

Finally, as I mentioned this morning in our whole school assembly where I was beamed into every classroom via Microsoft Teams; I think we are realising that the world is about people and not material possessions. It has been an incredibly difficult time for many and with further restrictions announced this week, there is no doubt that we are nowhere near the end of this pandemic. I shudder when I think about all the heartbreak that is still ahead of us. However, kindness is winning and we should all be proud of ourselves and the way we dealt with the national lockdown. I still find it hard to believe that in the midst of it all our community came together to build a hospital in our school in less than 6 days, and words cannot do justice for all of the NHS and key workers. This coronavirus has not uncovered the true, terrible truth about human nature, it has merely exposed something we have always known, that there are good people who behave courageously in a crisis. This gives us hope that when we have defeated this virus that, whatever the new norm may be, it will be a better one.

Thank you, as always, for your support and co-operation.

Yours faithfully



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Headteacher



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