

Furness Academy
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1 April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

This time two years ago I wrote to the school community with the exciting news that we had formally merged into a bigger Trust with Yarlside, Victoria and Parkside Academies and formed Furness Education Trust. It is amazing to think how far we have come in those two years and little did I know how grateful we would be for the benefits and support being part of a bigger trust would be. At that time, we were oblivious as to what was on the horizon a year later and the subsequent first national lockdown due to the global coronavirus pandemic.

So, a year further on and after numerous risk assessment rewrites; the reorganisation of our school to make it as bio-secure as possible; a monumental effort to source laptops and train staff and students in the use of Microsoft Teams for live teaching; two mass lateral flow testing events and the follow up home testing arrangements, and in the middle of all that we had a NHS recovery centre built here in readiness for the darkest predictions that our hospitals would be overrun - we now look to start our Easter break with hope that the national vaccination programme continues to give us the upper hand in this battle. I could not be more proud of the collective efforts that have been made by staff and students across our four trust schools. The camaraderie and the willingness to just get on and do what we can during this time has been commendable.

Sadly, according to the reported figures, the UK death toll due to COVID-19 has surpassed 127,000 people and whilst new cases are falling significantly, there are still new cases each day. Only this morning, we have had a new case in school and a number of children are now required to self-isolate. We hope that our students continue to maintain good personal hygiene, social distancing where appropriate, and behave sensibly and maturely during the break as it is in all of our interests to avoid the activities that might undo all of the hard work and sacrifice we have made so far.

All students have brought home additional testing kits to enable families to identify any new cases early and take the necessary action. There should be enough to test twice weekly and further kits will be distributed when we return to school on **Monday 19 April 2021**.

Until then, I hope everyone manages to enjoy the two week break and especially week two when we hope that national restrictions will be relaxed further.

Thank you, as always, for your support and challenge.

Yours faithfully

Mr S P Laheney
Headteacher & Chief Executive Officer



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