

July 2021

Dear students, parents and carers

Not for the first time, I would like to thank you all for your patience, goodwill, support and cooperation throughout this last year. We have all had to make a number of compromises and adapt to the changing COVID-19 situation and, like you, I am hopeful that the government's strategy will win through. There is no doubt 'covid fatigue' is setting in. There is increasing frustration for those having to self-isolate and the impact on family life, businesses unable to open properly and the constant COVID-19 related updates that dominate our media and news. It is against this backdrop that I could not be more proud of the mature way our students have conducted themselves here at Furness Academy. They have been a real credit to their families.

The link below provides the latest information for parents and carers about the changes proposed for schools as we start again in September. There are a number of changes, but the three key parts of the new guidance from September are:

- we will no longer require students to be taught in 'bubbles';
- students will no longer be required to immediately self-isolate if they are a contact of a positive case in school. Instead, they will be required to take a PCR test if they are contacted by NHS Track and Trace;
- we are expected to carry out two on-site lateral flow tests for all consenting students during the first week of the new academic year.

Please do follow the link below for more information on this and other matters COVID-19 related.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/step-4-update-what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges>

Despite all of this, I hope you have been kept well-informed via social media, the family bulletin and the website about the wide range of successes and events your children have been involved in this academic year. It is a real pleasure to work with so many young people who get involved, take opportunities offered to them and just do life on purpose.

Congratulations to Aimee Robinson and Billy Ashton who will be Head Girl and Head Boy for the academic year 2021-22. I am confident they will contribute enormously to the leadership of the school next year, ably supported by their deputies, Bethany Dacre and Jack Reid, and the team of prefects. Their first job when we start back, will be to help us welcome another bumper and over-subscribed year of new Year 7s to the Furness Academy family.

Staffing

The end of the summer term is always a happy time with the holidays to look forward to, but it also a thought provoking time as familiar faces prepare to depart and we will be saying goodbye to the following members of staff:

Retiring after over 35 years between them, of diligently keeping our school buildings clean and in a shipshape fashion, are Sue Nelson and Doreen Thompson. Like many others who work behind the scenes, quite often their work can go unnoticed until, of course, it is not done and then we realise just how important they are. Thankfully, in Sue and Doreen's cases, they have never let this happen. They will both be missed by those they have worked with for their high standards, sense of humour and the kindness they have always shown to everyone they meet. We wish them both a long and restful retirement.

Also retiring is Denise Backhouse. One of our many unsung heroes: a modest and unassuming person who just gets on doing a fine job. Denise builds excellent relationships with students and colleagues and is thoroughly conscientious at all times. She is a consummate professional and has been such a reassuring presence in the sometimes intimidating world of special educational needs. I know there are many students who owe their success to the nurturing and support they received from Denise during their time here. I often feel that one of the ways Furness Academy has the edge, is in the quality and dedication of its support staff who really bring special qualities. Denise has been a classic example of this for 14 years and fully deserves a really happy future.

Moving on to pastures new are Ray Graham, Rebecca Ivey and Jess Mitchell.

For the past two years, Ray and Rebecca have both made substantial contributions to our science department and will both be a credit to their new schools. Both are looking to continue their careers over in the north east (not together I hasten to add!), and we wish them every success with their future careers.

Finally, we offer congratulations to Jess Mitchell on her promotion to Head of Technology at Morecambe Bay Academy. After 14 years' service to the students of Furness Academy and Thorncliffe School, we know there are many students who have received the wisdom and skill from a talented artist, dressmaker and teacher. Stepping up to a new promoted position in a new school is an exciting and anxious time and we are certain that Jess will be able to take her experiences from her time with us and turn them to her advantage. We wish her and her family the very best of luck with their new chapter.

New starters

Reflecting the successful and continued growth in student numbers, we welcome 7 new teachers and 7 new teaching assistants who will be joining us in September. I will formally introduce them all to you when I write at the beginning of the new school year.

Final day arrangements

The academy will close to students for the summer break on **Friday 16 July 2021**. Students will attend periods 1-4 and will be dismissed at **12.40pm**. Should your child be entitled to a free school meal, arrangements will be in place to order a sandwich for collection just after 12.40pm. Students do not need to wear their school uniform on Friday and instead can come to school in their own clothes.

Arrangements for the start of the new academic year 2021-22

Autumn term starts for students in Years 8,9,10 and 11 on **Monday 6 September** at **8.40am**. There is no requirement for students to continue with the lateral flow testing during the summer break, but we would strongly encourage all students to do a lateral flow test on the Sunday evening before they return on the Monday. We can provide families with additional test kits if they require them.

And so, another year draws to a close and, from my perspective, it has been another successful, enjoyable and at times taxing one. I have too many people to thank for the support of the staff team this year and I am deeply grateful. We are in your debt, and it continues to be our privilege to work with you and your children.

Yours faithfully



Mr S P Laheney
Headteacher