

Furness Academy
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December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly, I would like to express my thanks to you all for your ongoing support this year. It has been a wonderful and busy first term and, together, staff and students have been working incredibly hard on all aspects of school life.

It was lovely to welcome so many Year 7 students in September and it has been great to see how confident they have become over the past 15 weeks as they have settled into their new surroundings. Our recent survey with them has been overwhelmingly positive. As always, there has been a huge amount going on this term and far too much for me to include in my letter. It is all included on our social media platforms which are bursting with just some of the stories of success, talent, academic progress and civic duty that our students, your children, have been up to this term.

We are also delighted that so many young people and their families are choosing Furness Academy for their secondary education. So many, in fact, that the figures we have received from Westmorland and Furness Council indicate that we will be oversubscribed again next year. Of course, children who applied from one of our Trust primary schools - Parkside, Victoria, Yarlside, Newton Village and Lindal & Marton academies - are guaranteed a place and it is great to see those primaries thriving as part of Furness Education Trust.

An exciting new development is that our trust will be increasing to seven schools in the new year with Walney School joining Furness Education Trust. We are really looking forward to welcoming the staff and students of Walney School and getting started with a number of exciting projects. We are privileged to be responsible for the teaching and care of over 2,600 young people.

As we know, Christmas is a time of giving and I am immensely proud of our students and our staff for their generosity at this time. We are aware that within our school community there will be people who will struggle this Christmas. We have worked in Culture Curriculum on the concept of philanthropy and have subsequently surpassed our previous years' collections. Mrs Stanway's office, once again, became an Aladdin's cave, storing the donated gifts and purchases following the staff collection. Over 50 families have received a personal delivery earlier this week and our hope is that it will bring a spark of happiness to those who may be less fortunate than ourselves. Thank you to everyone who has kindly donated.

We are finally able to change our clumsy School Information Management System (SIMS) to a cloud-based Management Information System (MIS) called Arbor in January. This transition will allow us to communicate with you more efficiently and effectively. As part of this change, the current SIMS Parent App. will no longer be available after 31 December. In its place, we will introduce the **Arbor Parent App.** and **Parent Portal**, designed to keep you better informed about your child's school life in a more accessible and user-friendly way. Please note that the Arbor Parent App. and Parent Portal will not be fully integrated until a few weeks into the new year. We will provide detailed instructions on how to register and use these platforms nearer the time. Thank you for your support as we implement this change.

Staff

At the end of this term, we will say goodbye to two members of staff. Mrs Anoushka Anderson, Teacher of English, is moving on to a promoted post within the English department at St. Bernard's Catholic High School. Miss Ellyse Rochford, Cover Supervisor and staff governor, is following her heart and moving to be with her partner and taking up a new job for a school in Manchester. We wish them all the very best for their future endeavours and hope that they can put to good use all they have learnt and experienced working at Furness Academy.



Furness Education Trust
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Park Drive, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA13 9BB



We will be welcoming two new members of staff to Furness Academy: Mr Alexander Dyke will be joining the science department and Mr Daniel Woolridge will be joining the maths department.

Last day of term

For our last day, **Friday 20 December**, we will again be participating in a Christmas Jumper Day. As part of our Student Voice commitment to support local charities, this year's collection will be split between Barrow Homeless Shelter and Barrow's mental health support service 'SAFA'. Our neighbours at SAFA (Self-harm Awareness For All) are committed to supporting those in our community facing issues with their mental health. Their contact details will be in the directory 'Supporting Families Over Christmas' which has been sent to all our families. The suggested donation for participating in the event is £1.00, but we will gratefully pass on any donation you feel able to make at this time. Students who do not have a Christmas jumper are still permitted to wear non-uniform and take part in the end of term festivities. Donations can be made in cash during form time on Friday. Thank you also for your generous donations to Barrow Foodbank. Collectively, we have provided the equivalent of over 800 meals. **Students 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.

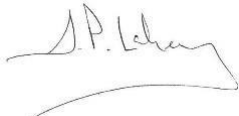
Start of Spring Term 2025

Looking forward, we reopen on **Tuesday 7 January 2025 at 8.40am** for all students and will continue to run our '*Magic Breakfast*', which is a free breakfast service for all students and staff. It begins at 8:00am. It has been great to see well over 100 students access it each day so far and I hope many more take up the offer in 2025. I have heard it said that nothing in life is free, but this truly is a free breakfast, so please take advantage of it.

Finally, it has been an incredibly busy and productive term at Furness Academy and one which I feel honoured to be a part of. We are in your debt and I would like to express my thanks to all parents and carers who have trusted us, supported us, tried to work with us, and very often encouraged us over this year.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a peaceful, restful break.

Yours faithfully



Simon Laheney
Headteacher & Chief Executive Officer

TERM DATES 2025

Spring Term 2025

Term Begins: Tuesday 7 January

Half Term: Monday 17 February to Friday 21 February

Term Ends: Friday 4 April

Summer Term 2025

Term Begins: Tuesday 22 April

Bank Holiday: Monday 5 May

Half Term: Monday 26 May to Friday 30 May

Term Ends: Friday 18 July

Autumn Term 2025

Term Begins: Wednesday 3 September

Half Term: Monday 27 October to Friday 31 October

Term Ends: Friday 19 December