

18 September 2015

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome everyone to the start of the new academic year. This is the start of our second year as a FCAT Sponsored Academy and we are really excited about our prospects for 2015/16. Last year was all about establishing a new vision and direction of travel for the Academy which we achieved very successfully indeed. The response from the majority of the students was excellent and the year finished on a significant high. The Year 11 GCSE August examination results were a true reflection of this extraordinary year with 58% of the cohort achieving A*-C grades in English and 51% achieving A*-C in Maths. 100% of students studying BTEC Music achieved a Level 2 (A*-C grade), 94% in Dance, 93% in French, 86% in Religious Studies and 75% in Art demonstrating the excellent quality of teaching by the teachers as well as the first class learning by the students. Many students achieved excellent examination results providing them with the necessary qualifications to move onto Blackpool 6th form, Blackpool & Fylde College, other training or the world of work. Well done to all of these very successful students, to the parents and carers and to our teachers and support staff; this was a fabulous 'Team Aspire' achievement.

This new autumn term has started with a real 'buzz'. The 144 new Year 7 starters are settling quickly into their new surroundings and represent the biggest year group after our current Year 11's; obviously Aspire's reputation is growing and spreading as we are now taking students from much further afield. The other Year Groups have also settled into our now well established routines possibly because the Year Group roll over provided a taste of their current Year Group classes at the end of last year. All students have responded magnificently to our PAUSE principles:

Punctuality to school is essential; it is a significant 'life skill'. 1 minute late from September leads to 1 hour detention the same night.

95% **A**ttendance to school is non-negotiable. Those who attend regularly do well and there are/will be plenty of rewards for those who do.

Uniform must be correct every day. Black shoes, blazers, ties etc. are essential. Boys with bags are 'cool'.

Safe and Sensible Behaviour must be the norm so every student is safe and secure.

High **E**xpectations & Exam Performance are the keys to student success.

We expect all of our current students to accept, and respond positively to these **key** essentials to the new life at Aspire and for **all** parents and carers to support us.

The first two weeks have shown a significant shift in attitudes by nearly all students. Punctuality so far has been significantly improved with only a small number of students arriving late compared to a huge number in the first weeks last year. Attendance is also vastly improved with whole-school attendance for our first two weeks reaching 96.67% as opposed to 93.57% last year. Uniform has looked first class with students wearing it with real pride. The vast majority of students have been extremely safe and sensible with few cases of awkwardness or insubordination. In fact, there is a real feeling of purposefulness on the corridors and endeavour in the classrooms.

Students seem happy to be back after the summer holidays, enjoying their learning in a busy and safe environment, and being more involved in the life of the Academy. I am confident that our new staff appointments have had the necessary impact to bring the next 'step change' that Aspire required to take it to the next level.

It is important to remember that good and outstanding schools have students who are punctual, attend 100% of the time, wear their uniform with pride, come ready and equipped to learn, are in the right place at the right time and with the right attitude, behave in a polite and respectful way and achieve excellent results. Well! I believe students at Aspire are moving in this direction and that we could quickly become a 'good school' if everyone bought in to our key principles and messages. However, we really do need your regular and constant support and a belief that at Aspire we deliver 'Success, nothing less'.

As highlighted in my summer newsletter our move to the new site on Blackpool Old Road will occur around the October/November half term. On **Thursday 22nd and Friday 23rd October** we shall be organising two Aspirational Days offering the students wider curriculum opportunities with more information sent nearer the time. Students will be expected to be in uniform and adhere to our PAUSE agenda. Our current Bispham Road site **WILL BE CLOSED** to students after we break up on **Friday 23rd October**.

When school closes on Friday 23rd October we SHALL NOT be going back to the Bispham Road Site.

After half term the new school WILL NOT IMMEDIATELY BE OPEN TO STUDENTS. From Monday 2nd to Wednesday 4th November it will be closed to all students. It will be open to all students for the first time on Thursday 5th November at 8.35am via the main school entrance on Blackpool Old Road.

It will in fact be open for ALL teaching and associate staff on Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th November but these days will be used as part of an intensive training package and familiarisation process prior to students entering the new building. This is an essential part of the Health and Safety regulations governing FCAT's occupation of a new school site and buildings some of which we shall share with High Furlong Special School. This is a 'once in a lifetime' process which we must all get right, so please be patient and help us to settle everyone in as quickly as possible.

Finally, please do not forget that it is our annual Open Evening on **Wednesday 30th September from 5.30pm - 8.30pm** on our **BISPHAM ROAD SITE** and the school **will close at 1.20pm** for all students to allow for final arrangements and preparations. There will be a Visitors Day at the New Site on **Saturday 21st November from 11.00am – 2.00pm** for all existing parents/carers as well as new ones.... we look forward to meeting you then.

Yours sincerely



C B Simkins
Principal

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