

23rd February 2016

Spring 2016 Newsletter

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we return to school after the February half term holiday there is plenty to report about our developing Academy and everything to look forward to in the coming months. As mentioned in my previous newsletter students and staff have settled down remarkably well to new routines and facilities in our new building. It certainly feels very comfortable and familiar, in fact, it feels very much like 'home'. This may be because the building is not very big and apart from the Sports Hall and All Weather pitches it has no outlying buildings/areas to manage or 'police'. Students are all extremely visible at all times, both inside and out, so they are very safe indeed.

Mr Topping (Deputy Principal) continues to ensure that the finishing touches to the Academy are completed to a very high standard. Since we opened on 5th November 2015 the corridor walls, on each of the three floors, have been decorated with fabulous murals depicting famous people from the relevant subjects and their place in their histories. Just before we finished for half term a huge 'Welcome' mural was added to the dining room area on the lower floor and a very striking British Values mural was added to the second floor area near the Humanities Faculty. All classrooms have seen the addition of colour matching large display boards for students work and information over the past week. Outside the stone steps to the All Weather pitches have been completed in order to make fire evacuation safer whilst the planning for a sizeable weatherproof shelter is nearing completion; this should be in place after the Easter holidays.

However, after an excellent start in our new building the students appear to have been very unsettled since their return after the Christmas holidays. We feel this might be due to the very poor weather, especially the constant rain and high winds, as well as a significant period of examinations for the older students. It is crucial that all year groups settle down quickly on their return to our well established PAUSE mantra, and that you as parents and carers support us wholeheartedly as we drive forwards our standards and expectations.

Punctuality to school is essential; it is a significant 'life skill'. 1 minute late will result in a 1 hour detention the same night.

95% Attendance 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 and girls with bags are 'cool'.

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

High Expectations & Exam Performance are the keys to student success.

It is also highly important that all students take a **PRIDE** in the presentation and quality of their work in all subjects. Also that they are 'ready for learning' by bringing the correct attitude and equipment to all lessons.

Please remember Aspire's motto is '**Success nothing less**'.

PTO

In this respect here is a short summary of the progress of each year group.

Many **Year 7's** now need to become more mature especially in social and non lesson times. They have been at 'big school' for half a year now but some are still behaving in a silly and disruptive manner. This is so much so that some may have to spend early mornings, break and lunchtimes outside if they refuse to behave in an appropriate way; their litter is also theirs to move and put in a nearby rubbish bin!! Many others have made an excellent start to their Aspire careers so well done and please keep it up.

The majority of **Year 8's** continue to make first class progress but there are signs of complacency and adolescent behaviour creeping in with some. Please keep focused since there is some exceptional talent in this particular year group.

Most **Year 9's** have finally started to settle down and are now making pleasing progress. The small number of 'silly boys' is reducing as Key Stage 4 examination subjects are being enjoyed by the large majority of students.

Year 10 are also starting to make a very good year group after some difficult years in Key Stage 3. Well done and keep concentrating on your own progress and do not be distracted by others.

Year 11 have faced considerable pressure from GCSE Mock Examinations just before half term and as a consequence their behaviour and attitude deteriorated considerably. It is crucial that they get back 'on track' and learn from their Mock Exam results so they improve considerably in the summer.

Please note the following important diary dates:

Friday 26 th February 2016	Y11 PE revision trip to Borwick Hall 12.40pm
Wednesday 2 nd March 2016	Vaccinations – Y8/9 catchups; all Y10/11
Thursday 3 rd March 2016	Year 11 Parents Evening 3.30pm to 6.00pm
Thursday 10 th March 2016	Y8 Options/Parents Evening 4.30pm to 6.30pm
Friday 18 th March 2016	Y11 Science revision trip to Borwick Hall 12.40pm
Monday 21 st to Tuesday 22 March 2016	Y7 trip to Anglesey
Thursday 24 th March 2016	School finishes at 3.00pm for the Easter weekend
Friday 25 th March 2016	Good Friday (school closed)
Monday 28 th March 2016	Easter Monday (school closed)
Tuesday 30 th March 2016	School re-opens for all students at 8.35am
Thursday 31 st March 2016	Y7 Success Matinee 3.45pm
Friday 8 th April 2016	School finishes at 3.00pm for the Easter Holiday
Monday 25 th April 2016	School re-opens for all students at 8.35am

May I remind everybody **again** that short stay car parking for visitors and adults is at the front and side of our school and not in Highfurlong Special School car park. Soon we should have our own longer stay car park at the front of school; it is just being completed.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your continued support of everything we do in school to ensure the best outcome for your children.

Yours sincerely



C B Simkins
Principal

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