

13<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

Goodness me it is already Christmas! We all have been working flat out and the students have been remarkable in their hard work during lessons and their conduct around the Academy. The Golden Hours continue to be the main focus to drive improvements in progress, making sure every one Golden Hour counts.

### **GOLDEN HOURS**

This half term has seen the introduction of a different start to the day for students in Y7 and 10; three times a week they meet as a year group and complete either a knowledge based quiz or multiplication tables practice test. At these morning meetings students hand in a full page of revision notes that they have made the previous evening to help consolidate their knowledge and secure the learning that is taking place during our exciting Golden Hours – this key skill of making notes will significantly support their ability to revise and retain information in the long term. The students have risen to the challenge each morning and are fully on-board with the new higher expectations and more academic routines.

The year 11 students have taken their first Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs) and I am pleased to report that their attitude and behaviour throughout was exemplary. They have started their final year working hard and making good progress towards their GCSE examinations in June. To support their journey staff have created a 'night club' for students to join, where they can study quietly after school and really boost their grades. As parents/carers you may want to help your child by encouraging their participation in after school activities so that they can reach their full potential.



We would like to congratulate our Year 8 Girls' football team who won the Blackpool Schools Football Tournament and will represent Blackpool in the regional finals in Manchester. This is a massive achievement and we are enormously proud of them all.

### **Go Team Aspire!**

We have opened our doors wide this term and welcomed in younger students and staff from many of our local primary schools (Layton, Boundary and Westminster to name but a few) to take part in various Science and Technology lessons as well as our fantastic Operating Theatres Live event. I am thrilled that the links between our Academy and the local primary schools are really strong and are supporting the improved progress across the transition between year 6 and 7.

### **GOLDEN CULTURE**

Our focus again this year has been to raise expectations, both in and out of lessons. We are entering the next phase of our journey and our standards need to be even higher. The key areas of change are:

- Ban on mobile phones
- Uniform – black shoes, skirts not to be rolled up, black socks (just below the knee) or tights, make up minimal and natural
- GULP – Give Up Loving Pop – A ban on fizzy drinks
- Aspire's Golden Culture

All students are aspiring to achieve their Golden Culture badges. During term 1 and 2, over 200 students achieved 300 or more positive points and were therefore awarded their Bronze Golden Culture Badge by the Principal and Assistant Principal and are wearing them with pride. 8 students have achieved their silver badges for 500 positive points, a fantastic commitment to academy life!

### **Consultation to change the admission number (PAN) from 180**

The Governing Board wishes to propose an alternative number of 160

Reasons:

- As at 24<sup>th</sup> November 2017, the pupil population of Aspire was 617. The highest it has been in the past 4 years is 650.
- Even with only 650 pupils (250 short of PAN), the school building feels very cramped and there is little room for manoeuvre with dining and classroom accommodation. If the school filled to its original PAN of 900 pupils, movement around the building and facilities for dining would become untenable and this could have a very damaging effect on behaviour and safety.
- With a PAN of 160, (total school population 800) the school will still be crowded but this will be more manageable.
- We feel that this reduction in PAN – even within a rising secondary pupil demographic in future years within the North of Blackpool - could be offset by additional capacity provided within Armfield Academy from 2018. This may serve to ‘pull’ some pupils from the Central area to the South area of the town and free other capacity in the North.

### **Dates for your diary:**

**14<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 7.00pm is the Christmas Concert in Hall.** All welcome!

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017 – Charlotte’s Day** (Collecting for Trinity Hospice). All students can wear Christmas Jumpers. There will be a pantomime by the staff, so all students should be in and bring the Christmas cheer with them.

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018 – Year 11 students start their second Pre-Public Examinations**

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018 3:30pm to 5:30pm** is the Year 7 Progress Evening. We invite all parents and carers to come along and find out how well your child is progressing as an Aspire student.

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018 - School Closes at the end of the day for half term**

Please do not forget that the school closes on **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 1.20pm for the Christmas holiday** and re-opens at **8.35am on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018.**

I am really pleased with the attitude and commitment of our students but I would really like to strengthen the relationship with you the parents and carers. It is always our pleasure to celebrate student successes with you in person at our Parents Evenings. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our parents and carers a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year; I look forward to seeing you at all the exciting activities we have planned over the next half term.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Shuttleworth-Brown  
Principal