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Dear Parents, Carers and Families,

Elements of the assembly for Year 11 this week were designed to give them very specific advice about their next steps and how we can support them to make informed decisions about where they want to be in September 2025. There will always be a proportion of people who will suggest that we should be preparing them for jobs in industries that don't exist yet. I'll confess that I've always thought that's an overly simplistic view and probably beyond what a school can do by itself, but I do think we can ensure they have a good education with qualifications they can be proud of and, perhaps just as or even more importantly, ensure they have a sense of both what industries might be there for them and also how they might conduct themselves when they're there. The world of work and British society has changed significantly on a technological basis in the 20 plus years I've been working. The most obvious change has been the invention of and widespread use of smartphones.

The media regulator Ofcom suggests that 89% of 12-year-old children in this country will have their own smartphones. Many of you will have bought your own child their first such device when they transitioned to secondary school and, even if you did feel any misgivings, will have recognised that not doing so would make your child 'different' and therefore you'll have wanted to avoid any potential stigma that might be associated with this. At the same time, many of you will have some awareness of the research that increasingly maps access to smartphones with a rise in anxiety and depression amongst young people across the globe, especially young girls. However, chances are that if you're reading this you're doing so on your phone, that you use your phone to stay connected with family and friends, complete creative work or pursue your passions. If we're using our phones in a positive way, so will our children. Smartphones are a feature of modern life, and we must as a society now think about how best to use them and when not to, not simply wish they weren't here.

The school's position on mobile phones and their use on site is clear and in common with the vast majority of other secondary schools in the country. We know the vast majority of students will bring their phone with them to school, but they shouldn't be using it on school site until the end of the school day when they leave the school buildings. This includes students who arrive early on school site with the school bus and choose to sit in the dining areas. At their best, phones are thieves of time and serve as a distraction; we want students to be focused on their learning. We also ask that they not be used during social time, partially as a blanket rule is easier for everyone to understand but also because it is during these times that students are more likely to engage in inappropriate behaviour with their phones such as taking photos of others to share without their consent. The school rules around this haven't changed. Phones should be switched off and in bags, and we thank you for your support with this. We'll be reminding students of this rule and the reasons for it in their tutor time in the time prior to half term. All of this applies to students in Years 7 to 11. We'll be reminding 6th Form students of their role in

this process and that while different rules apply to them as befits their different status in the school it is important they act as role models to others.

Many thanks for your continued support of the school; I hope you all have a good weekend.



Michael Wright

Please find this week's key messages below.

Closure of access to the school site from the pedestrian gate on Old Pit Lane

Currently a small number of our students access the school from a gate that is on Old Pit Lane, referred to as the Newton Hall gate. From after half term, we're proposing that this gate will remain closed and this point of entry and exit to the school site will be removed. This is for two significant reasons:

- Safeguarding – we must monitor who accesses the school site and one less point of egress makes this easier to do.
- New Build – as many of you know, work is due to start on a new build for the school in the next calendar year. We envisage at this stage that when this starts, we will lose access to this gate and we'd rather find solutions to this now than when construction work starts.

We do appreciate that this extends the journey time to and from school for some students. Therefore, at this stage we're proposing this as a trial from **Monday 4th November until Monday 2nd December** with the option to convert the trial into a permanent change. We will be sharing this information with students during tutor time. Many thanks in advance for your support.

Year 7 Parent/Carer Tutor Evening

Thursday 17th October is our Year 7 Tutor evening from 4pm to 5.30pm in the main hall. This is an evening which provides parents/carers the chance to meet their child's tutor, discuss any initial concerns and celebrate positives during the transition into secondary school. It is also an opportunity for the tutor to find out more about their tutees' interests from a parental perspective, allowing them to develop the important pastoral relationship that will be a key consistent thread through their time here. Bookings are online (see link on letter sent by email) and, if there are no appointments now available, our tutors will endeavour to provide a phone call response if requested.

Key Year 11 Information

- Progress meetings

You should have received your progress meeting appointment via SIMS Report this week. This meeting is an opportunity for you and your child to meet with a senior member of staff to discuss current progress in Year 11 and how they can be preparing for the forthcoming mock exam series, commencing on **Monday 18th November**.

Please note - due to the volume of appointments being conducted, we are unable to change appointments or reschedule. Your child will attend their appointment on their own should you be unable to attend. There will be another opportunity to attend a subsequent progress meeting in the New Year.

- **Raising Achievement Sessions (RAS)**

RAS started on Monday and will run until the start of the November mock series. These are targeted sessions designed to intervene where students struggle with key concepts and/or have knowledge gaps. Students have received an assembly about RAS this week and have been told how they work, why they exist and the importance of attending RAS if they have been selected to attend.

Students were selected to attend up to 3 sessions a week and the majority of the sessions take place at lunchtime, after your child has had a break and time to eat. Some maths, English and French sessions occur after school.

There are two more blocks of RAS, one in January in the build-up to the February mock series and one in April in the run up to the GCSE exam period. If your child doesn't have a session appear on their timetable for this block, it is likely they will be selected for one in the subsequent RAS blocks.

We have asked the students to 'trust the process', and to look at being invited to RAS as a positive thing, one that will help them achieve the outcomes we know they are capable of. Your support in getting your child to these sessions is crucial and much appreciated as we help prepare your child for their mock exams.

St Godric's Car Park

A reminder that this is a private car park and shouldn't be used as a collection point for students.

Department Spotlight – History and Politics

What was it like to work down the mines during the Industrial Revolution? (Year 8). What impact did WWI have on the suffrage movement? (Year 9). Was the supernatural or the rational explanation most dominant in Renaissance medicine? (Year 10). What were the problems faced by the Weimar Republic and how this can be linked to the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party? (Year 11). What was happening in the Near East that made the Byzantine Emperor Alexios ask for help from western Christians? (Year 12: Crusades). To what extent did the Liberal Reforms from 1906-1914 establish the basis of the welfare state? (Year 12: British History). Was Alexander II of Russia the Tsar liberator? (Year 13: Russia). Should convicted criminals in prison retain the right to vote? (Year 12 Politics).

These are just some of the questions which students have been exploring in their history and politics lessons this week and we have heard very thoughtful responses from students as they grapple with a range of evidence in order to form their own conclusions. We have been visiting history lessons this week and speaking with students from Year 7 through to Year 13 about their experiences and learning in history and have been impressed by the confidence with which the students share their historical knowledge. An important part of our work is speaking with students about their

experiences in their lessons: what is it like to be a history student at Fram? A quote from a Year 10 student sums it up perfectly: "There is a lot to learn, because there has been a lot that has happened in the past but the teacher makes it interesting and makes sure we work hard in lessons and in our independent learning so we can remember the knowledge from one lesson to the next. You wouldn't get away with not working hard!"

