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Dear Parents, Carers and Families,

In a previous letter I wrote that I was keen to meet with members of the wider community and forge links that allow us all to collaborate in ways that benefit everyone. At least one parent read this and nudged the principal of a local college who contacted me. We met this week so we could talk about ways to best help the students of this area, both for their benefit and for the long term good of Durham. We talked about the benefit of working in partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes for our region and our shared community. That means supporting students in getting where they want to be and making it clear that their hopes for their future are our hopes too.

This year every member of our outgoing Year 13 students, those who'd finished their A' levels or level 3 qualifications, made it to their destination of choice. As a school, we repeatedly share the message with students that it's not the qualifications they get while they're here that are themselves important, it's the destinations that they lead to. Meeting with students we'll frequently ask, "what do you want to be when you grow up?" or variations on that question with the aim being to have a greater sense of what the aspirations of our students are so that we might share these aspirations, help them get where they want to be and with you as families to celebrate their success when they do. When I met with current 6th form students this week their answers ranged from fashion marketing to English teaching to "not sure yet." We'll aim to help every one of them get there and try to provide clarity to those who are unsure, as we do for all our students.

Finally, and perhaps on a different note, as you may or may not be aware we've been meeting with different groups of parents over the last few weeks and asking people to complete a survey when they do. One Year 7 parent wrote that their son was finding it hard to make new friends, was feeling lonely but also out of a sense of embarrassment didn't want to talk to anyone about this. I spoke with two Year 7 students recently who'd been commended to me by their Head of Year for inviting students who didn't seem to have anyone to have lunch with to sit with them. Staff can help facilitate this in a kind and unobtrusive way. As the survey is anonymous, we can't contact this parent directly which is why I'm using this forum to reach out. These feelings are sadly not uncommon for some students when they reach secondary school and it can all feel a little overwhelming. We can help. No child should feel like this so please do get in touch if your child feels the same way.

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.

Students in the News

Leo Humphries in Year 7 is currently wowing and entertaining audiences as part of the international arena tour of Les Miserable. Leo performs the lead role of Gavroche alongside stage legends Alfie Boe and Michael Ball.

Mr Lamb, Curriculum Lead for Music, also says his piano lessons in school are coming along very nicely...

Congratulations Leo, we wish you every success.

Key Year 11 Information

- Progress meetings

You should have received your progress meeting appointment via Class Charts 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 will be starting 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.

Class Charts will update over the weekend, and you will be able to see which RAS your child has been selected for. Students may be 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.

Reading at FSD

On Friday 4th October, Year 7 will complete the summer reading project with a visit from author Ross Montgomery. Year 7 students can bring in their copies of *I Am Rebel* to school on that day to get them signed at a special assembly.

If you would like to support reading at Fram you can do so in a number of ways. Firstly, we welcome donations of second-hand books; these go to our free reading library in Student Reception. If you would like to donate in this way, please hand the books in to Student Reception and explain that they are for Dr Smith. Secondly, the independent bookshop Collected Books currently host our library wishlist. This will be in place until the 25th October, and you can find it online at www.collectedbooks.co.uk/collections/framwellgate-school-durham-library-wish-list . If you donate a book via this wishlist, it will be delivered directly to our library.

Year 6 Open Evening

The Year 6 Open evening was a fantastic evening with hundreds of prospective parents and students visiting our school to find out what we are all about. The success of these evenings is due to our student guides and representatives. The feedback from our visiting families is always that our students are excellent ambassadors for the school, and we absolutely agree so a huge thank you to everyone who helped. Students will be awarded additional achievement points by their teachers to recognise this contribution

Lunch time late bells

To help with the orderly and prompt movement of students around our large site we ring two bells at the end of lunch, one at 1.50pm and another at 1.55pm except for on Wednesdays when the pattern is 1.55pm and 2.00pm. This first bell indicates that students should start moving to lessons, the second indicates when we expect students to have arrived meaning those arriving later than this will be recorded as late. Many thanks in advance for your support with this.

Parent/Carer Information Evenings

A reminder of the dates and times of Parent Information Evenings. This will be an opportunity to hear in person from senior and key pastoral staff about the outline of the academic year for your children. The Year 10 and 11 events will feature the Heads of English, Maths and Science giving specific guidance on how to support your child in these key subjects.

- Year 10 Wednesday 9th October 6.00pm
- Year 11 Monday 30th September 6.00pm

Access to the school from Newton Drive

Local residents have again contacted the school with concerns about traffic around the school entrance on Newton Drive. The road is narrow and there is a sharp bend, along with an entrance to a local primary school. Please can we ask everyone to be considerate of the high volume of traffic that will be trying to access this area in the morning and at the end of our school day. We'll be sharing this message with students as well.

Attendance

You should have received a specific letter about the importance of school attendance from Mr Ward earlier this week. There is some specific legal information contained in that letter that applies to all parents and carers. One of the most significant determinates of good outcomes at school, allowing students to access the right destinations for them, is attendance.

Department Spotlight - Geography

Throughout the week, we have been visiting geography lessons and speaking to students about their learning and experiences in geography and it has been wonderful to see how focussed, engaged and enthusiastic the students are about their learning. We have seen some excellent work including Year 7 exploring climate graphs and understanding the biomes of the savannah, Year 9 discussing the human geography of the different economic areas within Africa, Year 11 investigating the human activities leading to deforestation, as well as Year 13 grappling with the water cycle.

Throughout the term we will be doing the same in other subject areas and can't wait to see the students in all their different subjects. Many thanks to those students who were involved in student voice and spoke with such honesty and enthusiasm. If you would like to find out more about the curriculum that children follow in each of their subjects, then you can find all of the curriculum overviews on our website: [Subjects - Framwellgate School Durham \(framdurham.com\)](https://www.framdurham.com/subjects)