

September 2015

Dear Parents

Welcome back to all our students. In particular, I would like to welcome our new Year 7 and the Year 12 students joining us from other schools. I hope they settle in well and find us to be friendly and helpful.

I am writing with some important start-of-term information and news. I would like to begin by welcoming some new staff:

Mike Bowman – Maths teacher  
Debra Clayton – Science teacher  
Chris Cooper – IT and Computing teacher  
Michael Feeney – Science teacher  
Lynsey Gordon - Librarian  
Gemma Hartshorn – Receptionist  
Alex Heslop – Geography teacher  
Kate Hogan – Maths teacher  
Sam Oliver – Science teacher  
Nicola Pickup – Science teacher  
Sarah Watson – Senior Librarian  
Hannah Whyley – Drama teacher

#### Examination results

The examination results this year were very strong and I would like to congratulate our students. At GCSE, 74% of students achieved both mathematics and English GCSEs at grades A\*-C, which will become one of the governments new headline measures. **70% of students achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics.** An amazing 26% achieved five or more A\* or A grades.

At A Level, 64% of examinations were passed at grades A\*-B, and 89% at A\*-C. This represents a fifth year of improving results. Alongside the very successful AS results achieved, **the school ranks in the top 5% nationally** for the progress made by students from GCSE to A Level.

The 2015 GCSE and A Level results compare very well with other local schools and colleges, none of whom equalled us on the headline measures at GCSE and A Level. I would like to thank our staff for their dedication, our parents for their support and our students for living up to our high expectations of them.

There were many success stories across the school, but I would like to publicly recognise some in particular this year.

At A Level, **Biology results hit an unprecedented high of 71% A\*-B placing them in the top 1% nationally for the progress made by students! Drama and English Language and Literature ranked in the top 4% of schools.** The following subjects ranked in the top 20% nationally; Fine Art, Business Studies, Economics, Physics, Psychology and Sociology.

At AS Level, **13 subjects ranked in the top 20% nationally** for the progress made by students; Biology, Business Studies, English Language and Literature, English Literature, French, Geography, ICT, Media Studies, Music, PE, Physics, Psychology and Spanish.

At GCSE, 10 subjects achieved 80% A\*-C or more; English Literature (96%), French (96%), Geography (83%), History (89%) Health and Social Care (100%), Mathematics (80%), Media Studies (88%), Music (92%), Physics (98%) and Sociology (92%).

### New intake

I am delighted that we have a fully subscribed Year 7 cohort again this year, and have welcomed over 100 students in to Year 12, many of whom have come to us from other schools.

We are a rural school and therefore are dependent on students travelling, sometimes some distance, to reach us. If we can attract healthy numbers then we can maintain our broad curriculum and extra-curricular provision and invest in our facilities. Please support us by spreading the word about Farmor's School. Many parents don't realise that there are buses available from the area in which they live. I would also emphasise that if you live in catchment you will get a place if you put Farmor's as your first choice.

### Open Evening

This year our Open Evening is on **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October**. There will be two presentations in the school hall, one at 5.30pm and one at 6.30pm for parents and pupils in Year 6 who are considering joining us in September 2016. The school will be open between 5.00pm and 8.00pm for visitors to meet teachers, witness students at work and view the facilities. Please help us spread the word about this important event. We also welcome parents of younger children who want to see what the school has to offer.

**School closes at 1.20pm on this day to give us time to prepare for the evening. Buses will leave at 1.30pm.**

### Uniform

Year 7 and 10 students, and Year 11 prefects, are returning to school in the new uniform. Thank you for your support in helping us move to a smarter uniform. This change was overwhelmingly supported by students, parents and staff. I appreciate that there is a cost implication for parents but, over time, the new uniform will be durable and affordable.

Students in Year 8, 9 and 11 who have not yet adopted the new school uniform may do so at any point. It is their individual choice. I would ask that these students either remain in the old uniform or move completely to the new one; no mix-and-match!

A new uniform brings the opportunity to establish better standards of dress. We will be unapologetic in being stricter with students moving to the new uniform so bad habits are not allowed to form. Your support in enforcing expectations is appreciated. The full details of our old and new uniform policy is on the website.

If you have any nearly-new uniform which your children have grown out of (including PE kit) which you would like to donate to our nearly-new uniform shop, please drop it in to the school office. It would be really helpful if this was washed and ready to pass on.

### Improving the facilities for students

Further improvements to our site have been put in place over the summer. We have created a third, bookable IT room to meet the rising demand of teachers and students. This room will be supervised at lunch times to support students in completing homework tasks.

Our outside eating area, 'the quad', has been enhanced with new fencing and shrubbery, and the addition of an outdoor servery where students will be able to purchase drinks, sandwiches and snacks at break and lunch time without joining the main dining queue. The catering facilities have also been upgraded and rebranded with an exciting new range of dishes.

We have extended the number of lockers to ensure the new Year 7 students have access, if desired, to a safe storage space. Various refurbishment projects are underway in our ongoing drive to create modern, functional spaces.

### Photographs

Photographs of students will often be used in publicity material and the media. If you would like to withdraw consent for your child's image to be used in this way please let us know, in writing.

### Holidays and absence

I would like to remind parents that all holiday absence must be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence', by law. Taking a holiday during term time does damage your child's education. I appreciate the cost differences, but I would ask you to consider the hidden cost in terms of children falling behind in their studies. I am, however, able to grant permission in exceptional circumstances, for example travelling to attend a funeral. Please collect a form from the school office to inform the school / request permission if you intend to take your child away from school for a period during term time.

The government have moved the threshold for students being considered as 'persistent absentees' to 90%. This equates to 1 day off every fortnight, or around 4 weeks over the school year. Our own expectation is that most students should be able to attend over 97% of school days, unless there is a serious or persistent medical reason for their absence. Please help us in ensuring your child is a regular attender.

### The start and end of the School Day

Our driveway is very busy at the start and end of the school day, particularly when the primary school pupils are arriving or leaving at the same time as our students. We therefore encourage students to either travel by school bus or by foot. Where parents need to drive their child to or from school please be aware of the following:

- Students may be dropped off or picked up by car on the school site. Students can be dropped off by pulling in to the car park or over to the side of the road on the roundabout. Students may be picked up by parents pulling in to the car park but parents will be asked to wait until the buses have left before leaving the site. This is to ensure the safety of children so please be patient. Please do not exit through the entrance to the car park.
- No cars should be parked on the roundabout towards the end of the school day so that buses are able to queue. In particular, please do not park on the inside of the roundabout so that students are encouraged to cross the road in between parked buses to reach you. This is very dangerous and puts your child at risk of an accident.
- Please use the roundabout to turn around and do not perform U-turns on the drive
- Please drive slowly and with caution when approaching, leaving or when on the school premises
- The Earnest Cook drive at the back of the school is not to be used by students or parents.

If you need to pick up your child by car at the end of the day, my suggestion is to park in the town car park at the bottom of the back drive and ask your child to walk down and meet you there. This is safer and less stressful for everyone.

### Buses

Being a rural school, getting the students to and from the school is difficult. Some of our buses are run by Gloucestershire County Council and we have no control over these routes. Some buses are contracted directly by the school. Over time, the bus routes and times vary as students join or leave the school. Sometimes these changes benefit some whilst disadvantaging others. We endeavour to give as much notice as possible about changes. I would ask that, should you have a concern or query over transport, you contact the school. I appreciate your patience and cooperation in this matter.

### Fair Processing Notice

Farmor's School processes personal data about its pupils and is a "data controller" in respect of this for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998. It processes this data to:

- support its pupils' teaching and learning;
- monitor and report on their progress;
- provide appropriate pastoral care, and
- assess how well the school as a whole is performing.

This data includes contact details, national curriculum assessment results, attendance information, characteristics such as ethnic group, special educational needs and any relevant medical information.

This data may only be used or passed on for specific purposes allowed by law. From time to time the school is required to pass on some of this data to local authorities, the Department for Education (DFE), and to agencies that are prescribed by law, such as the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), Ofsted, the Department of Health (DH), Primary Care Trusts (PCT), and organisations that require access to data in the Learner Registration System as part of the MIAP (Managing Information Across Partners) programme and Careers and Advisory Services. All these are data controllers in respect of the data they receive, and are subject to the same legal constraints in how they deal with the data.

Pupils, as data subjects, have certain rights under the Data Protection Act, including a general right to be given access to personal data held about them by any data controller. The presumption is that by the age of 12 a child has sufficient maturity to understand their rights and to make an access request themselves if they wish. A parent would normally be expected to make a request on a child's behalf if the child is younger.

If you wish to access your personal data, or that of your child, then please contact the relevant organisation in writing. Details of these organisations can be found on the following website [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/dataprotection](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/dataprotection) or for those pupils/parents where this is not practical, a hard copy can be obtained from the school.

For pupils of 13 years and over the school is legally required to pass on certain information to Careers and Advisory Service providers on request. This information includes the name and address of the pupil and parent, and any further information relevant to the Careers and Advisory Service's role. However parents, or the pupils themselves if aged 16 or over, can ask that no information beyond name and address (for pupil and parent) be passed on. If as a parent, or as a pupil aged 16 or over, you wish to opt-out and do not want Careers and Advisory Service to receive from the school information beyond name and address, then please contact the school.

Your attention is drawn to (Layer 2) of this Fair Processing Notice, which gives supplementary information about the processing of pupil data by the organisations mentioned above, and gives greater details of how the pupil data is processed and the rights of parents and pupils This can be obtained by visiting [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/dataprotection](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/dataprotection) or by requesting a hard copy from the school using the details above.

#### Home to School Transport

Please read the guidance issued by the Local Authority regarding behaviour on the school buses. These expectations also apply to students who travel on the buses from Swindon and Cricklade.

#### Documents attached

The following documents are attached to this letter:

- Code of Conduct for pupils who use home to school transport.
- Sanctions for unacceptable behaviour on home to school transport.

Thank you for taking the time to read what has been a fairly long letter.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely



Matthew Evans  
**Headteacher**

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PUPILS WHO USE HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

We want you and all other passengers to stay safe and travel in comfort. You must agree to the following code of conduct before we issue your bus pass. Your school and parents (or carers) will be alerted if you do not keep to this code and we will withdraw your transport assistance if breaches are reported to us.

### 1. Your bus pass

- Carry your bus pass with you whenever you travel to and from school.
- Be ready to show your pass to the bus driver, if it cannot be produced then the driver may refuse transport.
- Only use your pass to travel on the route that has been approved.
- Do not use anyone else's pass or allow another person to use yours. This is a criminal offence and a bus operator may choose to take action against you.

If you lose your pass, contact the county council's Integrated Transport Unit who will arrange a replacement. A fee will be payable for a replacement pass. Telephone the ITU on 01452 425387.

### 2. Your pick-up point

- You are responsible for getting to your bus's pick up point.
- Arrive at the pick-up point before your bus is due. The bus will run to a timetable and will not wait if you are late.
- If a bus is late, be prepared to wait at the pick up point for 20 minutes but no longer. Agree with your parents what to do if the bus does not arrive (e.g. return home or go to a friend's house to organise alternative transport).

### 3. Keeping safe when getting on and off the bus

- Queue sensibly, well away from the edge of the road.
- Allow passengers leaving the bus to get off before you try getting on.
- Get on and off the bus in an orderly way so you do not hurt yourself or other passengers.
- If you need to cross the road once you have left the bus, make sure the bus has been driven away so you can see other vehicles and their drivers can see you.

### 4. On the bus

- Stay in your seat once you are on the bus and always use the seatbelt if one is provided.
- Do **not** speak to or distract the driver unless there is an emergency.
- Do **not** stand in front of the driver on the stairwell.
- Do **not** use emergency exists or doors unless the driver instructs you to, or if there is a genuine emergency.
- Do **not** eat, drink or smoke on the bus.
- Foul, abusive language and bullying will not be tolerated.
- Do **not** carry real or replica weapons.
- Do **not** throw items or damage the inside or outside of the bus. If damage is caused the police will be contacted.
- If the bus breaks down or is involved in an accident, follow the driver's instructions. Do not leave the area unless given specific approval by the driver.

You need to be aware that many bus operators monitor the behaviour of passengers using CCTV. CCTV footage will be used as evidence if drivers or passengers are hurt or the bus damaged.

For more information on evacuation of school buses, please read the County council leaflet – Safe Exit.

If you breach any of the points within this Code of Conduct, the County Council has the right to withdraw transport assistance at any time. For further information please refer to the “Sanctions for Unacceptable Behaviour” procedure.

## HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRANSPORT

### **Sanctions for Unacceptable Behaviour**

From time to time it is necessary to impose sanctions on children and young people who fail to conform to an acceptable standard of behaviour on County Council provided transport from home to school/college.

We believe that a parent or legal guardian must take responsibility for their children's behaviour on the way to and from school. It is their duty to ensure that their children understand why it is essential to behave properly in the transport provided. Young people over the age of 18 are responsible for their own behaviour and should adhere to the code of conduct. Children and young people must understand themselves, that poor behaviour, especially that which puts at risk the safety of any other child, driver or road user, will lead to a ban on use of the transport provided, and the responsibility of transporting their child to school will transfer to them without any financial support from the County Council.

In return, we will ensure that contracts are monitored to ensure compliance with the law and the contract offered. We will investigate any complaint received from any other party, and be seen to act against anyone who contravenes the policies and agreements entered into. We recognise that the decision whether or not to carry a child or young person is for the Operator, although we will encourage that Operator not to take such a step before discussing any proposed action with the County Council and the Head Teacher of the school involved.

As part of its commitment to providing a safe environment for the transport of children and young people to and from school, we have determined a procedure for dealing with cases of poor behaviour reported to us, and have adopted the following list of sanctions that may be applied in certain circumstances. This is not an exhaustive list, nor is it a definitive statement that in every case the sanction indicated will be applied regardless of other circumstances. Each case will be considered on its individual merits, but if it is proposed to vary from the examples given, consultation will take place with the school and operator concerned.

The sanction will be applied jointly by the Transport Entitlement Team Leader, Children and Young People's Directorate and the Home to School Transport Co-ordinator, Environment Department. Any Appeal will be considered jointly by the Access and Support Services Manager, (CYPD) and the Transport and Procurement Manager, (Environment Department), whose decision will be final.

### **TARIFF**

#### **1 Day Ban**

- Not wearing seat belt.
- Shouting and swearing.
- Disobeying an instruction from the driver or any teacher on duty.
- Eating and drinking on the bus.
- Leaving rubbish on the bus. \*
- Sticking chewing gum on seats. \*

\* The culprit may also be required to clean up any mess that may be caused.

#### **1 Week Ban**

- Any repeat of an offence referred to above that resulted in a 1 day ban.
- Misuse of bell.

- Shouting and swearing at driver or, in the case of commercial routes, any other fare paying passenger.
- Smoking.
- Lack of consideration to other fare paying passengers on commercial routes.

### **1 Month Ban**

- Any repeat of an offence referred to above that resulted in a 1 week ban.
- Misuse of emergency exit.
- Misuse of main entrance door.
- Fighting.
- Bullying.
- Specific and unnecessary distraction of driver.
- Running around vehicle.
- Throwing of objects inside or outside vehicle.

### **1 Term Ban**

- Second offence referred to above that resulted in a 1 month ban.
- More serious examples of offences that would normally attract a 1 month ban.
- Damage to vehicle, graffiti, vandalism etc. \*
- Assault on driver or other fare paying passenger on commercial routes. \*\*
- Possession of drugs and offensive weapons, including replicas. \*\*

\* The operator may also require compensation for any damage caused, and such an offence may also lead to the matter being reported to the Police.

**\*\* This is a criminal offence and will lead to the matter being reported to the Police Permanent Ban**

- Third offence referred to above that resulted in a 1 term ban.
- More serious offences that would normally attract a 1 term ban.

### **Notification**

Operators will report any unacceptable behaviour to the County Council who will investigate the incident, including the recovery of any CCTV footage, and enforce the appropriate ban outlined above as necessary. Parents will be notified of this action by letter, or where an instant ban is justified, by telephone and later confirmed in writing.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to transport the child to school whilst the ban is in place.