

September 2017

Dear Parent or Carer

As our students begin a new school year I would like to outline some key information which will help you to support your child throughout their time in Year 9. The theme of the year is: "Think about what you can achieve" and this will be emphasised regularly during the year in assemblies and tutor time. A major focus will be activities related to career opportunities as your child moves towards the GCSE options process from February of 2018. Some subjects will begin their GCSE studies this year, so it is a very important time for your child.

I also wish to introduce Mr Chivers as our Pastoral Manager for Year 9 students. Along with myself and other members of the pastoral team, he is responsible for the care and wellbeing of Year 9 students. If you have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact one of us at the school.

Attendance and punctuality at school

If your child is going to be absent from school, please leave a message on the student absence line. If this absence is prolonged, you must contact the school every day. If you wish to request an absence, your child can collect a form from Student Reception and then return it for the attention of the Attendance Officer. If your child does not have an explained absence and is not registered at the start of the school day, you will be notified by a text message.

Students who are late for school are expected to sign in at student reception where they will be given a yellow 'late slip' and are required to then attend a break-time detention. If there is a pattern of lateness this will be escalated to include lunchtime detentions.

Uniform

The school year has started extremely well with the vast majority of our students dressed appropriately in line with school guidelines. Thank you for supporting the school in setting the standards we expect for our students. We have listened to parental feedback and, on the introduction of the new website, intend to ensure that there is further guidance regarding expectations for trousers and formal black shoes.

Careers and transition advice

As a school we are presently seeking to move our careers advice from good to outstanding. We are placing a significant emphasis on this aspect of our provision in STEP (Study, Tutor, Extended learning, Preparation) time. We may ask if you have the capacity to support us with your wide range of expertise in the world of work. Further information regarding our provision and parental support will be on the new school website when it launches.

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Behaviour in lessons

Behaviour in the school is very good and this has been evident again in the first few weeks of term. We have high expectations for the attitude students demonstrate in lessons. If students fail to meet this expectation they will receive a maximum of two warnings before being removed from a lesson. A removal from lesson will automatically lead to a 'leadership detention' after school the following evening. We again appreciate the support and positive feedback we have received from parents regarding these expectations.

Homework

We believe in the value of setting regular homework across our subject areas. Topics will be posted on 'Show My Homework' which both you and your child can access. If you are unsure about this facility please contact Mr Ward at ward.f@framdurham.com. The school uses STEP time to develop skills in independent study but Directorates and Heads of Year also may run homework clubs for students who struggle to organise their time.

Progress Reporting

You will receive a Progress report at the end of each term and the date for Year 9 Parents' Evenings 6 February 2018. If you have any concerns regarding progress please feel free to contact me to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Smith
Head of Year 9