

Dear Parents and guardians,

I hope that you and your family are well. We are looking forward to welcoming your child back to school in September.

As you are aware from letters that have been sent to you over the last few weeks, September will see the launch of the new Fortis Academy, previously known as Great Barr Academy. As part of these changes Fortis Academy will operate a Foundation Academy for year groups 7 – 9 and a Senior Academy for year groups 10 – 13.

Therefore, I am writing to you today in order to formally introduce myself in the role of Headteacher, Foundation Academy.

This is an exciting time for the Academy, allowing staff to focus solely on the year groups 7 – 9 and preparing them for the GCSE courses that they will be studying in year 10 when they join our Senior Academy. PLEASE NOTE, TRANSFER TO OUR SENIOR ACADEMY IS AUTOMATIC, YOU DO NOT NEED TO APPLY. We are passionate about supporting the development of your child as they move into their teenage years. We will do this through focussing on the following three core values:

Character

Developing young people through character helps them develop positive personal traits. Character is key in developing the whole child and the virtues that lead to a pupil becoming successful. Character will be taught through the curriculum and all pupils will have access to opportunities that help to develop their character through a range of experiences and activities such as representing the school during a performing arts project, playing in the school netball or football team, taking part in Duke of Edinburgh award or working in the local community to make a positive contribution.

Resilience

Developing resilience within our pupils will form our second core value. We want our pupils to be able to adapt and cope with the problems and barriers that life can present.

We will do this by ensuring our pupils have regular exposure to exploring four key themes.

Awareness – Noticing what is happening around them, both in the local context/community and the wider world.

Thinking – How to interpret what is happening around them and how they fit into the big picture.

Relationships – Reaching out to others for support and developing the skills to be able to support others, particularly through the development of teamwork and collaboration.

Health – Supporting pupils to be physically and mentally fit in order to tackle the challenges that life throws at them.

Resilience will also apply to how pupils approach their learning, being unafraid of making mistakes and having the determination to apply themselves again and again in order to succeed.

Aspiration

We will support the pupils to develop high aspirations.

We want all of our pupils to aim high. For some pupils it may be setting the aspiration of being in school 100% of the time, for others it will be achieving challenging grades across English, Maths and Science to ensure they are ready for their next stage of learning and ultimately go on to university. It is also important that we acknowledge that for some pupils aspiring to learn a trade through vocational pathways will enable them to achieve great things and will provide them with their own unique challenge. We will be relentless in ensuring pupils understand that everyone has strengths and can make a positive contribution. A high aspiration mindset will help all our pupils to be successful.

Kerry Inscker Executive Principal Andrew Williams Acting Headteacher

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We want to instil an enjoyment of learning for all pupils within Foundation academy. Through embedding and applying the three core values across Foundation Academy pupils will develop into successful pupils and be ready for their next stage of learning.

As we share with you our three core values of Character, Resilience and Aspiration we would also like to recognise how students in our current year 7 and year 8 have shown these attributes during lockdown. Parents will be pleased to hear that students have worked hard to make progress in all their studies and we have had the privilege of receiving many examples of outstanding work. We have been celebrating these on our weekly bulletins and look forward to sharing the success of our new year 7 students in September. All students in these year groups have been sent/set work, which enables them to meet the demands of the curriculum over this period and ensure they are continuing to make good progress. In September students in our current year 7 and year 8 will begin their learning in their current form groups and sets to ensure that they feel confident and settled.

Returning to School in September

Start and Finish Times Autumn Term

Detailed plans have been created in order for the Academy to fully open to all pupils at the beginning of September. The dates and timings of year groups returning are set out below. Please note that these times are in place to accommodate social distancing requirements and will revert to the usual times of the day once the risk of infection has passed.

School day start Time

Year 7 – 9.20am Monday 7th September

Year 8 – 9.35am Tuesday 8th September

Year 9 – 9.55am Tuesday 8th September

School day finish Time Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri

Year 7 – 3.10pm

Year 8 – 3.20pm

Year 9 – 3.30pm

School day finish Time on **Wednesday** only

Year 7 – 1.30pm

Year 8 – 1.40pm

Year 9 – 1.50pm

In order for the Academy to maintain social bubbles for year groups these start and finish times will be the same every day until further notice.

If a student needs to wait for a sibling then students should speak to their form tutor on the first day back. All other students must not arrive at school before the start time and then leave site at the time stated above. Further information is included on the attached document Health & Safety Information for Academy Re-Opening.

Uniform

Students should be in full uniform upon returning to school

Year 7 – A uniform letter has been sent out to parents this week. The academy will issue a tie to your child when they start in September, this will be free of charge as a welcome gesture to our new pupils and families.

Year 8 and 9 - All students in Foundation academy will be issued with a new school tie and Fortis Academy Badge for their blazer at no cost. We would be very grateful if you could support your child by sewing the new badge onto their blazer.

There will be one change to the school uniform in Foundation Academy. Pupils will now wear a light blue shirt. This has changed from the white shirt previously worn. We are grateful for your support in ensuring that your child is wearing the correct uniform ready for September.

As a staff at Fortis Academy we are looking forward to welcoming your child back into school in order for us to start the new academic year and support them with their learning and development.

Yours Sincerely



Mr A. Williams
Headteacher Foundation Academy



Health & Safety Information for Academy Re-Opening

All students will return to school on Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th September 2020

All students are expected to return to school after the summer holidays. We understand that this may cause some anxiety for some parents and students, so we would like to reassure you that we are taking every precaution to ensure that students and staff are kept safe. We are following national guidelines and putting the following measures in place to do all we can to prevent infection by coronavirus:

Arrival at and Departure from School: Start times have been staggered to avoid congestion at bus stops and school gates, these times are in place during the COVID pandemic only and will revert to the planned school day as soon as possible

School day start time

Year 7 – 9.20am Year 8 – 9.35am Year 9 – 9.55am

School day finish time – Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri

Year 7 – 3.10pm Year 8 – 3.20pm Year 9 – 3.30pm

School day finish time – Wednesday

Year 7 – 1.30pm Year 8 – 1.40pm Year 9 – 1.50pm

We have a rigorous cleaning programme in place throughout the day and when school closes

Learning:

- Single year group bubbles are in place to avoid cross-infection
- Students will use a limited number of rooms, with lessons broken down into 3 double sessions rather than 6 single
- Classrooms cleaned thoroughly at the end of every day following Public Health guidelines
- Sanitiser and tissues available in all rooms for staff and student use
- No shared equipment and resources

Social Time:

- Single year group bubbles will be maintained so each year group will have single use of own facilities
- Separate breaks and lunchtimes for each year group to maintain year group bubbles
- Monitored use of toilet and handwashing facilities, regularly cleaned
- Hand sanitiser readily available around school

What Parents can do to help:

- Ensure your child knows the importance of following instructions in school and acting in a safe way
- Be clear that we will take serious action against any child who disobeys safety instructions and puts others at risk
- Provide your child with hand sanitiser if you have some (there is lots in school so don't worry if you can't get any)
- Where possible, avoid public transport to ease congestion – we have a new off-road drop-off area you can use at the front of school on Aldridge Road
- Ensure your child has their own equipment (pen, pencil, ruler, pencil sharpener, rubber)

Other Information:

- There will be food available for purchase at break/lunchtime, please note that this will be a more limited menu
- The health and safety of our students/staff comes first: we will not tolerate any behaviour which puts others at risk
- Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns, we are here to help you so your child has a positive and happy return to school