

10 July 2020

Dear parents, carers and students

### Introduction

It is my privilege and a special moment for me to be writing to you for the first time as Campus Principal and I sincerely hope that this letter finds you, your family and friends safe and well. My career thus far has taken me through London, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Wolverhampton, across several schools. Growing up in London, I was the eldest son of Spanish immigrants and spoke little English in my early years. Despite this, I managed to do well at school and in my early 20's found my calling to be a teacher, despite a number of previous jobs.

And now, I couldn't be more excited to be joining you or more humbled by the responsibility and opportunity entrusted to me to serve the people of this community and help its young people receive a first-class education. To be able to aspire to great things, believe in one's self and succeed in life is something I want for all children at our academy.

### A time in history

I know that this has been a challenging time unlike no other - we have indeed been living through a time that will live forever in the history books. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the health of friends and family, the jobs many people rely on, the economy and the way we have had to live our daily lives.

The cost to some students, in terms of lost opportunities to socialise, to learn, to grow and to develop, will have been significant. What this period of lockdown and closure has demonstrated, if nothing else, is just how important schooling is for young people but what it has also shown me is how dedicated and caring our staff have been in supporting families and students who have found life difficult as a result. This is something I want to harness and build on.

We are determined to do everything possible for the academy to open its doors to every student in September, when the new academic year starts. Rest assured also, that in September there will be a clear plan for how students will recover both pastorally and academically from the recent school closures. Mr Williams will write to you next week with the details.

### A bright future

Continuing with September in mind, I would like to bring you news of an exciting development. Before that, I trust that you welcome the changes that have been communicated to you and that September will bring. This includes the creation of a Foundation Academy and a Senior Academy and a number of new posts, roles and responsibilities that we have invested in. Indeed, it is this mission, this vision and these plans to improve and enrich children's lives that inspired me to join this academy.

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I am also thrilled to announce that from September our academy will be known as *Fortis Academy*.



The corporate world is full of examples of companies changing their fortunes by rebranding their business or a product through a new name and logo. A hollow re-brand alone will not be enough, however. The key to real change is having an exciting vision and passionate people fully behind what it really means.

***“The secret to happiness is freedom...And the secret to freedom... courage”.***

This saying, first heard over 2000 years ago, is inspirational to many people, me included. When people who have been successful in life hear or read this for the first time, they tend to be struck by its sense of truth and wisdom. An examination of successful people’s biographies and autobiographies or a study of classic stories in myth or fiction, even every Disney film, all seem to say the same thing: courage is the key to a better future. It is on this idea that I want to build a vision for a new future for our academy.

If there is one value, one quality, one characteristic I would want for my own children, it would be courage and the need to be brave in life. No one can be brave on their own, young people especially. It is not about being a conqueror or hero without concern for others. It is about becoming who you want to be. With care, support and the inspiration of great teachers and support staff courage is what I want for our students, too.

I want our students to be brave enough to do the right thing; brave enough to stand for what is right; brave enough to be themselves, to not follow the crowd and strike their own path if necessary; brave enough to be creative and try new things; brave enough to pick themselves up after setbacks, to try, try and try again; brave enough to admit if they are wrong; brave enough to ask for help; brave enough to be understanding and kind; brave enough to dream and succeed. People with this mind-set discover a sense of freedom and happiness that makes life a fulfilling experience. This is what I want for our students.

*Fortis* means brave, valiant, courageous. To be able to take this concept and turn it into an overarching message of hope and optimism for our students provides us with an opportunity to inspire them to face the future with heads held high. Every day they step through our doors, they will be taught, supported and surrounded by adults that have bought into the very idea of calling the academy “Fortis”. This is a school name that every day will summon them to enjoy themselves, develop character and be resilient.

Every day, we will tell our students one simple message: “Fortis favours the brave”.

There will be no other school like *Fortis Academy*

I very much look forward to communicating with you all again soon and to work closely with you to give to the community the school it deserves.

Continue to stay safe and take care.

*A Otero*

**Alberto Otero,  
Campus Principal**

