

8 October 2021

Dear families

Firstly, I want to thank students and families for the positive feedback we have received from you over the last couple of weeks. I know we have much to do and improve and we are all striving to do better every day but hearing from students and families about how much more structured, enjoyable and focused school is as a result of new rules, routines and support mechanisms is really pleasing and means a lot to everyone working at Dixons Fazakerley. Furthermore, we have received significant numbers of students applying to join Dixons Fazakerley in the last few weeks which has been really heartening. I do not underestimate how much we still have to do and that it will take time for us to gain the trust of all families but it is important to celebrate these small changes.

Appreciations

My favourite part of every Friday letter is the section on appreciations as they speak to the very heart of who we are and what we do. We are a school centred on our values of determination, integrity and respect and every student listed below has demonstrated that this week. I am proud of students who have done the right things and of staff who work tirelessly to support students in succeeding in this way. The appreciations are a great recognition of the brilliance of our school community and, as always, this attitude of gratitude extends to our families who are at the root of the successes, courtesy and behaviours described in the link below:

<https://www.dixonsfa.com/about/appreciations>

High Expectations

We are proud to have the highest of expectations for our students and families and our core value of integrity specifically states that we must all do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. We believe every child can go on and succeed by gaining both the qualifications and the personal behaviours required to be successful. We are clear about our expectations, support students and families wherever possible and then challenge students to meet them. Same day corrections support us in allowing students to reflect on how to do better the next day and plan the steps they need to take to improve their behaviour. I realise they may be inconvenient to families and therefore thank you for your support in ensuring your child doesn't receive one in the future. We want our students to leave Dixons Fazakerley as young adults who dress smartly, are punctual, work hard, respect others and are in possession of fantastic grades – incredible things cannot be achieved with low expectations. With school and home enjoying a shared expectation of excellent academic work and impeccable behaviour we are best able to support your child to thrive so I thank you for that support.

Assessments and Year 11 Mocks

Well done to all students who have undertaken assessments this week – it is already clear that students who took a really deliberate and focused approach to their homework are reaping the benefits. Year 11 mocks begin on Monday and we wish every student well with these. It has been heartening to see how hard students have worked in preparation for these assessments and indicates a real drive to succeed and is the embodiment of our key value of determination.



Uniform and Equipment

As you will be aware we have worked really hard to ensure every child is fully equipped and appropriately dressed in the correct uniform. We have spent thousands of pounds on supporting families and students and I wanted to make it clear that following October half term we will now be issuing corrections for incorrect or missing uniform and/or equipment. If students arrive to school with incorrect uniform they will be expected to change into the correct uniform and a correction will also be issued, as everyone has had a full seven weeks to get used to our expectations and to resolve any issues. After the October half term students will only be able to collect individual items from the equipment store before 8.30am. We will no longer be giving out complete equipment packs so please make your child arrives to school in full uniform and with complete equipment.

Homework

I wanted to clarify the purpose of the homework students are undertaking – it is retrieval of information and knowledge they have been taught in the form of Look, Cover, Write, Check. We do not mark the homework as the purpose of homework is to help students develop their long term memory and ultimately that depends on whether they have done the homework or not which we do check. We mark assessments and other pieces of work that reliably show a student's ability to use the knowledge they have to complete an independent task – marking the LCWC homework in the sense of giving it a score would be a poor use of time. Our approach to homework is very much like an individual's approach to exercise – we do it because it makes us better and more likely to succeed in the future not for a rating or ranking every time we complete it. I hope that clarifies things for all families.

Finally, I want to thank staff and students for engaging in the extra-curricular activities that sit at the heart of any thriving school. Rugby, football, gymnastics, basketball, netball table tennis and badminton have all been a part of this week's offering with more to be added in the coming weeks such as chess, art and science experiments. Please do encourage your child to sign up to these clubs and I look forward to seeing our students pursuing their interests in the coming months and years.

Wishing every family a restful weekend.

Yours faithfully

Chris Wilson
Principal
Dixons Fazakerley Academy

