

6<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

There's something about this time of year in school. I think the resumption of term after the February break marks a change in gear for lots of reasons. We are now over halfway in the academic year, and we're entering what in sporting terms may be called the "business end to the season". Whether it's year 11 and year 13 preparing for vital exams, year 9 choosing their option subjects, or year 12 starting to make those important decisions over what to do beyond Farlingaye, it's a crucial time for all. I thought it was therefore useful to write with a few bits of information to ensure you all feel informed on developments here with Farlingaye.

### **World Book Day – 7<sup>th</sup> March**

Tomorrow marks World Book Day, a chance to celebrate and promote the absolute wonder of reading. Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success – more than family circumstances, parents' education or household income and therefore an absolutely crucial part of what we are trying to do here at Farlingaye. The theme for this year's World Book Day is: "read your way", calling on our young people to let go of pressure and expectations and have fun with reading. The brilliant Miss Thraves and extraordinary Mrs Mason will be in touch with a few more details, but any conversations you could have at home about your favourite books growing up, reading choices now or most inspirational characters would really support what we are trying to do. We'll be having assemblies, events, discussions, book swaps and it seems a few staff will even be bravely dressing up as a character to celebrate a story, character or historical figure. I'm off to find my outfit.

### **Ramadan**

Every year the school wishes to support students and their families who are observing Ramadan. This year, Ramadan is predicted to start around 10/11th March with the last day of fasting around 9/10th April during our school holidays. We are aware that students may have reduced energy levels and feel tired. We will be asking friends, students and staff to watch out for each other and be sympathetic. This applies particularly to students who are taking part in PE or preparing for examinations. As Ramadan takes place during British Summer Time, the daytime prayer of Zuhar can take place during the lunch hour. The afternoon prayer of Asr will be after school and students can go home to pray. We are highly conscious that students would wish to pray at lunchtime in a food and drink free environment. Consequently, we will be making H7 available for students should they wish to use a quiet space for prayer or reflection. Further details can be sought from either myself or Miss Elmer, our Head of Philosophy, Religion and Ethics.

### **RAAC**

As I'm sure you are aware it was a challenging start to the academic year when we were informed of the need to close off a significant amount of the school site due to the presence of potentially dangerous concrete in certain areas, with 19 classrooms, toilets, changing rooms and offices all taken out of action. We have been incredibly proactive in addressing these issues, bringing temporary spaces onto site, but also working to put in mitigations to ensure we could return some spaces to use. We were delighted to officially reopen the music and drama spaces including our newly refurbished main drama studio just before half term, and we welcomed former student and star of stage and screen Milo Parker to Farlingaye to cut the ribbon to mark this positive development. Frustratingly for the

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school though, the other affected areas have remained untouched whilst we have waited for the Department for Education to provide clarity on how things were to be addressed. That picture is a little clearer now and so I thought it was worth updating you all. As you may have seen in the press, affected schools have now been notified as to whether they will be given funds to remove the RAAC or be placed on the “school rebuilding programme”. We have been told Farlingaye qualifies for the rebuild programme, but after several forthright discussions with the DfE they have also accepted that not addressing the RAAC was unacceptable and therefore we can schedule mitigating works for this academic year. We have therefore begun the process of this, and are hopeful that works will start after Easter. I said that we would look to deliver all RAAC spaces back into use as part of 24 for 2024 and that is still my stated aim. In terms of what the school rebuild aspect looks like, we are unsure and await further details. Whilst this does sound exciting, there are currently 513 schools on the list, some of which have been there since 2021, so we are viewing it as a more long-term part of the school’s future. I will obviously keep you informed.

### **Active Travel plan for Woodbridge**

Whilst not a Farlingaye initiative, I thought it was also worth making families aware of the Active Travel plan for Woodbridge which proposes some major changes to the road network around Farlingaye High School. The proposal is a part of a Suffolk County Council measure to attempt to improve the local infrastructure and make significant changes to driving and access to the road network in Woodbridge, including those around Farlingaye High School. This includes blocking vehicle access from the A12 into Hasketon Road, meaning all traffic to and from the school must come via Grundisburgh Road junction. There are also several other proposals that may well affect transport to and from the school. The link for the consultation is below, and the feedback on the proposals can be submitted by 9/4/24.

[Active Travel Woodbridge – The Way To Go Suffolk](#)

### **Things to look out for this term**

Finally, I think it’s important to highlight different ways to get involved this term at Farlingaye:

- Year 10 parents evening (online) – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March
- FHSF Quiz night – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March
- Year 8 parents evening (online) – Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March
- School production – 25-27<sup>th</sup> March. Tickets now on sale for the eagerly anticipated upper school production of **“My Little Mermaid”** and details can be found via the letter sent home last week.

I hope to see many of you at some of the upcoming events in school. As always if there’s anything you want to discuss or I can potentially help with, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

Very best wishes,

**Mr P Smith**  
Headteacher