

January 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

I wanted to write at the start of the year to wish all families a Happy New Year and best wishes for the year ahead. The end of term here at Farlingaye was utterly magical – there's nothing like Christmas here with the fantastic performances in the range of concerts, our wonderfully creative hampers that I know brought so much joy to those who received them and brilliant assemblies on the final day to showcase some of the talent and achievements in the school. I thought it might be useful for parents to know a few things going on this term and ways for you to be potentially involved in what we do here.

24 for 2024

The theme of my welcome back assemblies on the first two days of the term was to make the case that the New Year marks a chance for a bit of reflection and a chance of a fresh start. A chance to take stock of where things are, and to commit to making positive changes to get the very best out of 2024. Like many others, I have always been one to make a New Year's resolution, to set myself a positive challenge for the year ahead. However after reading an article over the festive break, it seems I'm not alone in that sense of despair when these fail very quickly into the New Year! However good my intentions I fall back into the old routines and ways. What the article suggested was a slightly broader approach, and instead of saying I'll eat no biscuits or drink more water, I should instead set myself 24 things to achieve this year. They could be experiences, jobs that need doing at home, or whatever! I liked the idea as it seemed ambitious, and in line with an approach of being restless as a school in wanting to improve. So I've been thinking – what 24 things should we be saying we will achieve this year as a school? What should be on our list of things we want to do that we don't do already? On the PD day I shared a few ideas with staff, and my brilliant colleagues have added to it. I've also added some student suggestions but if anyone has any other ideas please do get in touch. Once I have got the list to 24 I'll share with all involved. See below for a few of the initial suggestions!

1. *A set of GCSE outcomes that are an improvement on summer 2023*
2. *A mini bus service for students from Debenham for the sixth form for September 2024*
3. *Another amazing school production to showcase the talents here*
4. *Reopened and refurbished RAAC spaces*
5. *Further investment in the school site to improve facilities for all*
6. *Make our school more eco-friendly and raise the profile of one planet week*
7. *Better sporting facilities – an outdoor space that is useable in (nearly) all weathers*
8. *A restorative justice programme for peer-on-peer abuse.*
9. *Better use of outside space – more benches for students and more covered areas for students to use*
10. *To offer greater opportunities in student leadership*

Year 11 and the beginning of the final push!

The key message for year 11 on their return to school this term was that the time for consistent work towards their GCSEs starts now. Whilst the summer may feel very far away (it's trying to snow outside the window as I write this!) there were only actually 73 school days left when students started back before the first written GCSE paper of the year and far less days before language orals and PE practical's begin. The message is not one to cause panic – I think year 11 all have the potential to do superbly well and I'm absolutely determined they will. We're organising so much as a school to

support them – whether through materials, special in-school revision days in mid-February or on a faculty and subject level through the revision sessions already on offer. However what students now need to be doing is all they can to benefit from them. Through consistent attendance, effort in lessons, and making the most of all on offer from the brilliant staff here. We will be in touch later this term with a more detailed outline of the support on offer, but every lesson and day counts and the time to find that extra gear for all is now.

FHSF AGM

The School Foundation will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Thursday, 18th January. The AGM offers an opportunity to meet with staff and other parents over a glass of wine and some nibbles to find out how the Foundation supports the school and how you can help. There are also a number of workshops, which have proved very popular in previous years that cover a range of topics. These include; how the teenage brain works, supporting students in maths and English, preparation for GCSEs and a chance to ask any questions of the headteacher. Drinks will be available from 6.45 with the meeting starting at 7pm. You will have a chance to join 2 workshops. Your support will be very much appreciated.

Sixth form Open Evening and applications

Our brilliant Sixth Form Open Evening is on Thursday 11th January, from 6.15pm till 8.30pm. We have designed it to give students detailed knowledge of the subjects they might want to study to help them make the best choices they can, but also give those insights into sixth form life and why what we do here really works. The evening begins with an opening presentation by senior staff on Sixth Form, parents/carers and students are then able to attend up to five subject specific presentations of their choice, allowing the opportunity to speak to our staff and current students. As with all busy school events parking can be something of a challenge, can I encourage anyone who lives locally to walk if at all possible. There will also be some parking at Woodbridge School available and staff will be on hand to help.

The application form for Sixth Form is now available on the website and a paper copy is available on the evening and at the main school reception. The deadline for applications to be received is 12th February 2024.

Other events this half term:

As well as those mentioned above we have several other events taking place. Further details will follow but I thought it useful just to give a reminder of dates.

- Year 9 parents evening: Wednesday 24th January at 4.30pm
- Year 9 options evening: Thursday 1st February at 5.30pm
- Year 11 parents evening (in person): Thursday 8th February at 4.30pm
- Open Mornings on 19th January and 16th February

Wishing you all a lovely start to the year, and 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