

16th March 2024


Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the new term and I hope you had a brilliant Easter holiday. I think aside from the summer it's probably my favourite break – a chance to spend some time with family, enjoy the improving weather and with winter firmly behind us it feels like a really positive time in school. It's also a big term ahead for many students, with year 11 and year 13 soon beginning examinations. Hopefully all the hard work that has gone into the last few months in terms of revision means they are ready to attack the last few weeks of school with gusto before exams commence (having just finished the wonderful book "The boys in the boat" I'm definitely of the view that the hard work in preparation almost always pays off when it counts! I strongly recommend the book, fantastic read!).

I wanted to write therefore and welcome you back, but also to explain a focus for the term. I want to launch a renewed focus on respect within our school community. Respect is the foundation upon which all life's meaningful relationships are built, and it is our collective responsibility to foster an environment where every individual feels valued and heard.

Before the Easter break, I outlined the plan to staff, and shared with all colleagues this morning some key principles we are asking of all staff and students in order to make our school a more respectful community. I am sure you may have seen the recent news stories about concerning behaviour of young people in schools and wider society. Schools are often in my view microcosms of the society we serve. I want this school to be different – for all to feel part of the community that makes us Farlingaye. To be proud to be part of that community, to feel engaged within it and focused on showing care for all. And this all comes back to respect. This week I will have seen all year groups to welcome them back, but to also explain our respect agenda and the five key principles that encapsulate our commitment to respect:

1. **We thank and ask with kindness:** In all our interactions, we recognise the power of gratitude and the importance of asking with empathy and understanding.
2. **We welcome all:** We believe in the simple yet profound gesture of holding doors open and offering assistance to those in need. Small acts of kindness go a long way in creating a welcoming atmosphere for everyone.
3. **We use appropriate language:** Respectful communication is fundamental to maintaining a positive and inclusive environment. We ensure that our words uplift and encourage one another, refraining from the use of offensive language or swearing.
4. **We follow direct instruction:** Sometimes, we may not understand the reasoning behind certain instructions immediately. However, we trust in the guidance of our teachers and staff and follow instructions respectfully, even when the 'why' isn't immediately apparent.
5. **We value what is ours:** Each member of our school community plays a vital role in upholding the integrity of our shared spaces and resources. We take pride in our school and demonstrate our respect by caring for and respecting what belongs to us all, ensuring that valuable funds can be spent where they are needed and not in repairing and replacing due to damage.



By embracing these principles, we can create a culture of respect that permeates every aspect of school life, from the classroom, the corridors and fields beyond. Together, we can ensure that Farlingaye remains a place where everyone feels valued, supported, and respected. As partners in your child's education, I want you to know where the focus is for the term, but also to ask for your support and invite you to join us in this endeavour. Your support and cooperation are invaluable as we work together to cultivate a community built on mutual respect and understanding.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Smith
Headteacher