



24th October 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

I write to thank you for your support as always during our first half term of 2018-19. I am very proud of the students for the start they have made and the way they have engaged with our new form time activities which I have enjoyed writing for them. In particular, they took part in our positive messaging day beautifully, including posting lots of thank you notes on social media, appreciation notes for staff and students and being respectful of each other and us. Most importantly they were wholly respectful of our rules in returning to the “no mobile phones” expectation this week!

Class of 2018:

Our results this summer show a huge improvement with students last year gaining more top grades than predicted and excelling across the board. We have seen our position in the local and national league tables rise as a result of this, and I am so proud of the staff and students for working to make GAA a place of excellence. Results do matter as they provide the base from which students begin their careers and study routes – the better the grades, the wider the options they have – but last year’s year 11 are deserving of our pride because they did so much to support me and the staff in implementing the first phase of our changes for the better here at GAA. Results are only ever part of the story; the person as a whole is what is valuable. Certificate Evening is in November and it will be great to see them on the night to celebrate their success and find out how they are getting on.

2018-19:

As ever, we like to keep improving our practice. We are half way through our Ofsted monitoring period, with the third inspection visit taking place in September. The letter (on our website and Ofsted’s website) reflects our progress again; I am pleased with the recognition of our improvements and in agreement with the next steps for our trajectory. We should be visited once or twice more before we are fully re-inspected, and of course you are able to see Ofsted’s view of us every time they visit. However, I have always held the view that we serve you, the students and our local community first and foremost and we will keep that in mind at all times. It is important to me that this community has a school to be proud of – that means I do have to keep increasing my expectations of the students’ behaviour and progress and we must hold them to account when they let themselves down. Fortunately, the overwhelming majority are lovely young people with great manners, optimism and ambition and it is a joy to work with them every day.

If you have a child in KS4 you will receive a progress report this half term detailing their current grades (those in KS3 receive termly updates) – if you have any questions about this, please get in touch, we want to work with you to get the best from your child.

Community:

Can I remind everyone that I remain concerned about the risks to our young people in the local community, especially in parks and in any unsupervised environment and particularly as we approach Halloween and Bonfire Night. There are several older groups that buy fireworks and sell them on to children, with the aim of causing disruption and taking money from young people – please make sure your son or daughter is not caught up in this. They should not be at any unsupervised firework displays or bonfires – and if I may say so, they should be trick or treating unsupervised either. If they are old enough to go out unsupervised then they should not be trick or treating at all in my view, save it for the little ones...

Finally, we return to school at the normal time on 5th November, with full uniform as always. Lockers will be assigned by 9th November for use for coats/PE kit only, students are expected to have all equipment with them at all times.

Have a lovely half term holiday

Best wishes

Mrs Langley
Principal