

5 January 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

Happy New Year!

It has been lovely to welcome students back to school after the Christmas break, although I think for a few it was a shock to the system getting up so early for school!

The first two lessons students spent with their tutors adjusting back to school after the holidays and they were given time to copy their timetables into their academy handbooks. We also spent some time revisiting and discussing the reasons for our high expectations of them both in and outside of lessons, and explored and discussed our aims at Longsands, to:

- ensure that all students reach their full potential;
- develop good relationships, based on mutual respect;
- support all students in taking responsibility for their behaviour in school and when in the wider community.
- allow teachers to teach in a disruption free learning environment because students are behaving appropriately; and
- provide an inclusive, positive, and predictable environment for all.

Students then spent time with their tutors exploring how they embody the Longsands values of scholarship, tenacity, curiosity, respect, and responsibility and capturing what they hope to achieve this half term and for the rest of the academic year. We talked about the importance of aiming high as exemplified in this quote from Michelangelo, 'The great danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark.'

As we start the new term, I am delighted that we are welcoming a number of new staff to Longsands: Mrs Bennett, Vice Principal for Curriculum & Sixth Form, Ms Lovegrove as our new Head of Year 8 (who will join us on 15th January), Mr Trinca, who will be teaching English & Media Studies, Ms O'Hara, also teaching English, and Miss Dabson, Mr Ellingham and Mr Long who are all PE Teaching Fellows.

Students were given their new timetables on Friday and for some there has been more change than for others. This is a very normal feature of school life that the timetable needs to be adjusted at the start of a new term, but I recognise that this term there have been some significant changes to both groups and teachers.

The principal driver behind this has been to ensure that students have the best teachers teaching them. I want to reassure you that our Heads of Year, Heads of Department and SEND learning support all worked together to make sure that students have been grouped in the most appropriate way. On Friday we had an extended tutor period to give plenty of opportunity to talk through the changes and to answer any questions or address any worries that students might have.

Although it is a short half-term it is very busy, and I would like to make parents/carers aware of some key dates, including some opportunities for parents and carers to join workshops on areas that we hope you find useful:

- Thursday 11th January - Parents-Carers Forms (via Teams) 6.00pm – 6.45pm. To attend the Q&A live event, please click the link [here](#). If you would like to submit further questions, please complete the form [here](#). Please note there is no need to resubmit questions.
- Monday 15th January – Year 7-9 Mid-Year Assessment Week
- Thursday 18th January – Year 10 Parent/Carer Consultation
- Thursday 18th January – Live Teams Event: *Supporting my child with their exams* aimed primarily at Year 11 and 13 parent/carers, but everyone is welcome.
- Thursday 25th January - Year 12 Parent/Carer Consultation
- Thursday 1st February – Parent Carer Information Evening - *Mental Health and Student Well-Being* Library 6.00 – 7.00pm
- Monday 5th – 28th February – Year 11 Mocks Examinations 2
- Thursday 15th February – Year 9 Parent-Carer Consultation
- Friday 16th February – INSET Day (no students in school)

Best wishes.



Dr C Cusick
Principal