



# Newsletter for Parents and Carers

Week beginning: 12/09/16 Wk 2

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## Message from Mrs Helen Glass, Headteacher

Welcome back to a new academic year at Fortismere! I hope you all had a good Summer. We are still celebrating the wonderful achievements of students who took exams last term: our best ever set of results! At GCSE, 90% of students got grades of A\*-C (86% including English and Maths), and at A-Level, 92% got grades of C and above. This is really outstanding and I salute the students, their families and the Fortismere staff for doing so well.

It has been lovely to welcome our new students this year and it has been far busier with youngsters joining us not only in years 7 and 12 but in every other year group, particularly 8 and 9. I hope all of the newest members of the Fortismere community will settle in well and enjoy their time with us.

The launch of our new mobile phone policy (see below for more details) has gone exceptionally well and I want to thank you and your sons, daughters for your support. We have all noticed the difference it has made already and I have been delighted to hear the lively conversations going on around the site because students are once again talking to each other rather than being glued to their phones! We will be looking to provide more clubs and activities for students because time away from phones means more time to engage with one another in more constructive ways.

I look forward to meeting many of you at the various events that are part of the Autumn term. In the meantime, wishing you all a great weekend, and to our Muslim families, happy Eid Al Adha next week.

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## New Mobile Phone Policy – Ms Judge, Deputy Head

From September 2016 students in Years 7 – 11 are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school. We are convinced that mobile phones are a distraction and have serious concerns about the impact of their inappropriate use. We do know their use is reducing our students' ability to connect with one another socially on a day-to-day basis. We also believe that removing the distraction of mobile phones at school will impact favourably on our students' approaches to their studies and ultimately outcomes for all. Please do read the articles from the BBC website [\[click here\]](#) and The Guardian [\[click here\]](#) that support the line we are taking.

The policy is in immediate effect from the start of term in September 2016. Any student in Years 7-11 seen in possession of a phone at school will have the device confiscated. We will also confiscate phones from students when it becomes evident that they have been using them to communicate during the school day. Any phone that is confiscated will be kept in a secure location in either North or South Wing office. Parents will be notified as soon as a phone has been confiscated. They will be invited to collect the phone from the relevant school office after a period of 24 hours has lapsed. We will not return phones directly to students. Please also note that the same rules will apply to tablets that are bought on the premises.

Please also be aware that our staff will rigorously and consistently enforce this policy from the start of term but that we do not intend to carry out routine bag searches on students. We understand that some parents will expect their sons and daughters to have phones accessible to them on their school journey but once the student is on site they will no longer be able to use the phone.

Parents and carers should be reassured that they will still be able to communicate with students during the course of the school day through our established communication pathways. Please contact the school switchboard and a member of our admin team will be able to pass on any urgent messages to students. Sixth Form students will be permitted to carry phones on site but should keep them away in their bags during lessons.

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In order to support this cultural shift at Fortismere we have set an early review date for our Mobile Phone Acceptable use Policy. Its first review will be in September 2016. As part of this review we will be consulting parents, students and staff and ensuring that we consider a range of views in order to develop and refine the policy as appropriate. We do hope that members of our community will be able to consider its impact at that point and take the time to share their views then.

To view the policy in full please visit the [Policies](#) section of our website.

Based on our considerable experience of the distraction phones cause and the serious impact of their inappropriate use, we hope that you will see this as an opportunity to support your child in sensible and safe use of technology.

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### **Year 7 Handbook – Mr Ward, Assistant Head**

Each year, we update the Handbook for parents/carers of new students. All parents/carers may find it useful to read the Handbook, however, as it contains key information about life at Fortismere. A copy is attached and it can also be found on the website, within [Parents/Carers](#).

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### **Student Logins (Go4Schools) – Ms Karp, Assistant Head**

Students are being given logins by their teachers. The very complicated instructions from last term no longer apply. If a student cannot log in to Go4Schools to see their homework, please ask them to see their tutor during VT.

### **Parent Logins (Go4Schools)**

The email address used for Go4Schools must be the one on the school database. Please open the website [www.go4schools.com](http://www.go4schools.com) Click on the icon 'Parents' at the top.

Go to 'first time user' and enter your email address. Go4Schools will then send you a password to this email address.

If it does not work, it will either be because the school does not have an email address for you on its database or we have a different email address.

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### **Latin Lessons at Fortismere – Mr Strathdene, Teacher of English and Head of Colosseum College**

A reminder that Latin lessons are moving to an after-school slot, 3.30pm on Thursdays, starting next week on 15<sup>th</sup> September. If your child is interested in starting or continuing to learn Latin, they should come to Room S12 then. We have a team of volunteers from the UCL Classics Department led by Parent-Governor Pat Dugdale and should be able to cater for all levels from beginners to GCSE. We teach students of all ages, who relish the challenge and find it valuable support in their English and modern foreign language work. It is also popular with 6th formers, particularly classical civilisation students, and enhances their university applications. This summer, we entered 14 students for Latin exams, seven for GCSE or GCSE equivalent level 2 exams and 7 for intermediate level 1 exams. The results were excellent, with all students

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doing well and the majority achieving A\* grades, a major achievement by students, some as young as year 9, who had had only one Latin lesson a fortnight as part of Fortismere's enrichment programme. We are delighted that we can now offer Latin lessons weekly in the new after-school slot on Thursdays.

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### **Sports Fixtures, Autumn Term – Mr Hawkes, Teacher of PE**

The list of Sports Fixtures for this term is now available on our website, within [Parents/Carers](#).

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### **Extra-Curricular Sports Timetable – Mr Hawkes**

The Autumn timetable is now available on our website, within [Learning](#).

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### **Karate Classes – Mr Cox, Head of PE**

Starting in September 2016, Sensei I. Berisha, 7<sup>th</sup> Dan I.T.K.F (who has over 40 years of karate experience), will be running classes on Thursdays after school. Please contact me to indicate your interest: [scox@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:scox@fortismere.org.uk)

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### **Lost Property – Admin Team**

A light purple wristband was brought to SW Reception this week. It was found near the toilets and belongs to a Year 7 pupil. It is a bangle with USB stick and has 'Muswell Hill Primary School' on it. If this belongs to your child, they can collect the item from SW Reception.

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### **From the Library**

CoverUp, our wonderful parent/staff reading group, has its first meeting of the school year next Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September, 7pm in the library. The book we'll be talking about is Nicci French's *Blue Monday*, but don't worry if you haven't read it yet as we talk about lots of other things as well! We are a friendly, sociable bunch, refreshments are provided and we welcome new members with open arms...

The library will not be open after school on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September as we are holding a splatch-winkling Roald Dahl Centenary Celebration for our Year 7 students. If you are not sure if you are on the list, please email [gward@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:gward@fortismere.org.uk).

A reminder that all stationery requirements for students are available from the library at cost price, although we have sold out of book covers. We even sell filled pencil cases for a mere £3!

We reported on a fabulous day with our Patron of Reading, S F Said, in a Newsletter at the end of last term. Here is a link to SF's blog with his own take on what we did <http://bit.ly/2apo0sU>

Readers from Fortismere were once again asked to contribute to the TES Breaking Views feature <http://bit.ly/2ao9uOG> – this was published in the holidays.

Here's a link to the prestigious Guardian Young Critics' Competition 2016 <http://bit.ly/29VDIwE> You need to read one or more of the books on the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize longlist, then write and submit a review. Simple! Great prizes, and the deadline is mid-October, so you have plenty of time.

And another competition for 14-18 year olds! <http://bit.ly/2c2Hrpf> This time you need to submit a short video clip about your favourite book.

### Recommended Read of the Week:

*The Square Root of Summer* by Harriet Reuter Hapgood is *The Time Traveller's Wife* for teens! And if you like your comic book heroes, read *Wonderboy* by Nicole Burstein – great fun. All Recommended Reads are available to borrow – free – from the school library.

### FSA News

Welcome back to all Fortismere parents and carers! The Fortismere School Association (FSA) exists to support the school through fundraising activities. You can find more information about what we do at the FSA website [here](#).

The school benefits greatly from donations to the FSA. A small monthly donation can help the science department to run its Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Club for Years 7, 8 and 9; fund poet and author visits to the library; buy books for the English department; subscriptions for the Modern Languages department and Macs for the Music, Art and DT departments. The easiest way to give and help us is to set up a monthly donation of £10 or to make a single gift at our [Justgiving page](#). Alternatively we always need volunteers on the committee or at events, just contact Miriam at [mirrieclark@gmail.com](mailto:mirrieclark@gmail.com) if you feel you can help us in that way.

### Available FSA Committee Roles 2016-17

We are currently looking for new Vice Chair(s) and an Assistant Secretary to help us on the small and friendly FSA team. If you feel you might like to get involved with the school in this time when funds have never been so stretched, please contact Miriam at [mirrieclark@gmail.com](mailto:mirrieclark@gmail.com) to find out more about the roles and what they entail. The Vice Chair role can be split by two people if you have a friend you'd like to work with, and the roles are only for two years at a time. It's an immensely rewarding and enjoyable way to connect with other parents at the school and do your bit for the benefit of your child(ren) and the other children at Fortismere. The roles will be elected at our AGM on 28th September.

You can also find the FSA on:

- Twitter: @FSA\_LondonN10 or on
- Facebook: groups/FortismereSchoolAssociation/

### Up and Coming Events:

Parents/carers, new and old, you can meet us at the following events:

- the Year 7 Information Evening on Tuesday 13th September

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- our Fireworks Planning meeting Wednesday 21st September
  - our AGM on Wednesday 28th September
  - the bids meetings
  - our next event – Fireworks Night on Thursday 3rd November

Or at any of our Committee or Planning meetings, details of which are given in the FSA Newsletters attached to your Parentmail messages.

Let's hope 2016-2017 is the very best year yet for all of our fundraising efforts so that we can help the school and help our kids.

### **FSA Team**

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