



# Newsletter for Parents and Carers

Week beginning: 19/09/16 Wk 1

## Contents:

[Message from Mrs Helen Glass](#)

[Mobile Phone Policy Update – Ms Judge](#)

[Early Closure Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September: Open Afternoon](#)

[Year 10 Option Changes](#)

[Advance Warning: late start Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October](#)

[Absence Texts](#)

[PMX ParentMail App](#)

[PE Extra-Curricular Timetable](#)

[6<sup>th</sup> Form Karate](#)

[KS3 Art Club](#)

[Auditions for “The Shard”](#)

[New Views Playwriting Scheme](#)

[Bank of England Film Competition](#)

[Chess Club](#)

[Music Notes](#)

[From the Library](#)

[FSA News](#)

## Message from Mrs Helen Glass, Headteacher

It is fitting that one of my first tasks of the academic year is to welcome prospective parents/carers to the school. It was lovely to meet so many parents/carers who are considering Fortismere for their child at the Open Evening on Wednesday. When preparing my presentation, I was struck by just how much Fortismere adds to young lives, including sporting achievements, involvement in the creative arts, cultural diversity, and a sense of social responsibility. There is so much on offer to our students and I do hope that all of them engage in something 'extra' to complement their learning. You can view my presentation on the [website](#).

It was also great to meet so many of our new Year 7 parents/carers at the Information Evening on Tuesday. The transition to secondary school is a big change and we endeavor to make it as smooth as possible (for students and parents/carers!). I do hope we have provided all the information you need, but if you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact the relevant member of staff (all contact details can be found on our [website](#)).

This week, Year 7s had a special assembly about personal safety. For many of them, attending secondary school can present the first taste of independence – travelling to school on their own, being responsible for their own belongings etc. Very occasionally, such things can bring concerns and we will work with you to try and prepare students for those situations. Throughout their time at Fortismere, students will receive age-appropriate information about the dangers of social media, drugs, sexual health and other issues, to help keep them safe and prepare them for adulthood. We will keep you updated.

On a lighter note, we also celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Roald Dahl's birth, with a wonderful party in the library for Year 7s. Thanks to all the staff who made this such an enjoyable event. You can read more about it in the Library section below. I am looking forward to seeing the BFG Me photos!

Have a good weekend everyone!

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

We are delighted with the support we have received for our new mobile phone policy. We would like to thank all parents and carers for their support of the policy, particularly those who have taken the time to call or email with positive feedback. Students have responded brilliantly to this initiative and seem to be seeing the benefits of having this distraction removed from them while they are in school. We would like to extend our thanks to staff, parents and students who have embraced this cultural shift.

We are keen that the management of this policy is effective as possible so certainly during the course of this term we will communicate regularly on how its implementation is going. This week we would like to set out a couple of points for clarification:

1. If a mobile phone is confiscated it may be collected on **the next school day** between the times of **3.30pm and 4.30pm** from the relevant school office. This information is stated clearly in the ParentMail that is sent home to parents and carers of students who have had their phones confiscated. A previous message which mentioned 24 hours later as the point at which phones can be picked up has caused some confusion so please observe this clarification above.
2. We have had some concerns raised about safety of students if they are leaving school having had their phones confiscated. We would like to add that the school cannot be held responsible for the safety of students as they travel to and from school. Some concerns have been expressed about

safe travel to and from school. We would hold the position that students should always use safe and known routes if they are travelling independently home from school. We also know that mobile phones do not necessarily provide safety – in fact visibly using a mobile in public can, at times, make a young person more vulnerable to theft. If you believe that your son or daughter needs a phone in their bag because they have to travel somewhere after school we would ask that you make it clear to them that it must not be seen on school premises. It is their responsibility to ensure that they do not contravene the policy. We would like to clarify that the school will not release confiscated phones before the following day at the designated times following any complaint made about travel issues.

**Review** – Finally, we would like to clarify that the official policy review is recorded as **December 2016**. However, in order to engage in as much dialogue as possible with our community about the impact of the ban on mobile phones we will be inviting initial comments from staff, students and parents at the end of September. Thank you to those who have already written and expressed their views by email. We have collated these and they are being used to inform ongoing discussion about how we can ensure this initiative has a positive and lasting impact.

### **Early Closure Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September: Open Afternoon – Mr Ward, Assistant Head**

A reminder that the school will close at 12:25pm on Wednesday and students will be dismissed home at that time. This is to allow Prospective Parents and Carers to attend our Open Afternoon. Please note that the Canteens will not be serving food at lunchtime. Students receiving free school meals can collect their lunches during break time.

Year 8 students will be acting as guides for the visitors that afternoon. They should report to North Wing Hall at 1pm.

### **Year 10 Option Changes – Ms Allaway, Assistant Head**

I shall be working with Ms Ogilby next week on the options changes that some Year 10s have requested. Please be aware these changes will take place from the following week. There will be just a small window of opportunity for students to make changes and of course the decisions will rely on a number of factors; it is not as easy as just agreeing for students to move carte blanche, as I am sure you will acknowledge.

Factors taken into account are:

- if the move is possible – a change may involve moving more than one class
- numbers of students in other classes
- teacher / student ratio
- whether the student had originally placed the option down in their six preferences as these will then take priority
- reasons for changing.

All changes will require parental permission and must be sent to myself either via email ([kallaway@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:kallaway@fortismere.org.uk)) or letter

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### **Advance Warning: late start Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October – Mr Ward**

There will be a late start to school on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October to allow time for the Year 8 Deep Learning Conversations. School will start at Period 2 (10:20am). We ask that students do not arrive at school before 10:00am.

Parents and Carers with children in Year 8 will receive their appointment time next week.

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### **Absence Texts – Ms Greenwood, Administrator with responsibility for ParentMail**

From Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September we will be sending out texts if your Year 7 child has not registered for school that day. (These texts have already begun for Years 8 – 11). This will be sent by PMX ParentMail between 10:45 – 11:15am. Please call the School Attendance Line on 020 8365 4429 after you receive the text to let us know why your child is not in school. Thank you.

To avoid receiving a text in error, please inform the school (either by phoning the Attendance Line or emailing [attendance@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:attendance@fortismere.org.uk)) in advance, if your child will be absent.

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### **PMX ParentMail App – Ms Greenwood**

If you would like to download the free ParentMail App please do the following:

- 1) Go to either the Apple App Store or the Google PlayStore
  - 2) Type ParentMail and download your free app
  - 3) Log in using your email address and password, then click OK
  - 4) You will be able to save cards there.
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### **PE Extra-Curricular Timetable – Mr Cox, Head of PE**

The PE Extra-Curricular timetable is attached to this newsletter. To join any of the clubs students need simply turn up to the correct location at the correct time. After school clubs usually run until about 4.40pm, but students may leave earlier if necessary.

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### **6<sup>th</sup> Form Karate – Mr Kelsey, Teacher of Geography**

I'm pleased to be able to offer a leadership opportunity for 6<sup>th</sup> form students supporting a karate extra-curricular activity that is going to run on Thursdays as of 29<sup>th</sup> September, 3.30-4.30pm.

The role will involve supporting a visiting instructor to deliver an initial sequence of 10 sessions. The instructor is Mr I. Berisha (7<sup>th</sup> Dan) from the Muswell Hill Karate Academy.

The requirement for interested students is that they are of at least intermediate level of experience – brown belt or above. The style of karate is Shotokan, but students can come from any karate background. If anyone is interested, you can direct them to me for more information.

[Contact the school](#)

020 8365 4400 [office@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:office@fortismere.org.uk)

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### **KS3 Art Club – Ms Powell, Head of Art**

Art Club begins on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September, 3.30pm-4.30pm. Last year we covered print-making, painting and created large sculptural pieces for a Creative Arts exhibition at the end of the year. This year we will begin by creating work inspired by the Mexican Day of the Dead.

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### **Auditions for “The Shard” – Ms Turner, Teacher of Drama**

Auditions for “The Shard”, an adaptation of Macbeth, will take place on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September and Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September at 3.30pm in North Wing hall. Students will be given a short scene in pairs to read and perform. Once seen they will be able to leave. The performances will be in November on the 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> and rehearsals will be on a Thursday or Friday after school. All year groups are welcome. Please see Ms Turner for details.

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### **New Views Playwriting Scheme – Ms Turner**

Year 12 and 13 students are invited to audition to be part of New Views playwriting scheme run by the National Theatre. The first meeting is on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September at 3.30pm in Drama Studio 2. You do not have to be a Drama A-level student to apply. The project will last all year and consist of 8 sessions, one working with a playwright and will also include a visit to see a show at the National. The students will be asked to write a half-hour play on an issue they are interested in and, if chosen, the play will be performed at the national Theatre in July. Ten students may take part in the project and these plays will be written individually and not as a group. Please see Ms Turner for details.

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### **Bank of England Film Competition – Mr Renner, Head of Business Studies & Economics**

The Bank of England has launched a film competition, ‘Bank, Camera, Action’ and have invited students to get involved by making a short film about ‘A day in the life of the New Fiver’, to coincide with the launch of their new £5 polymer note. The closing date for entry forms is 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016. More information can be found here:

<http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education/Pages/competitions/bankcameraaction.aspx>

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### **Chess Club – Mr Renner**

The Chess Club will meet on Thursday/Friday lunchtimes in 13T1. Blitz Play (5 minutes per person to complete the game) is available. Weather permitting, Speed Chess may take place outside South Wing canteen.

Fortismere Chess Club is looking for team players to compete in the annual national competition. If you have played for your primary school or in competitions, please let me know. A team of six is needed.

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## Music Notes – Ms Ogilby, Head of Music

Please find attached the extra-curricular music timetable. The groups will begin the week after next – beginning 26<sup>th</sup> September. If there are any changes we will update you. Please encourage your child to join as we are preparing for the big Christmas Concert!

Instrumental and Vocal lesson begin next week for Years 7-13. Please see the music noticeboard from Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September to check the times/dates of your lessons for the first half-term. New names will be added from half-term if you are on the waiting list and payment is received in time. Any queries please email [ljohnson@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:ljohnson@fortismere.org.uk)

If parents/carers/friends are interested in joining Fortismere Music Centre for lessons or our fantastic Community Choir or Community Orchestra, please email Leo Fordham, [fordhamleo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:fordhamleo@yahoo.co.uk)

Piano Concert: 5<sup>th</sup> October, 6.30pm, Concert Hall, North Wing. We welcome any year group, solo or duet, any style of piece or level. Please let your music teacher know if you are interested, or you can email me directly [sogilby@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:sogilby@fortismere.org.uk)

## From the Library

On Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September our Year 7 students had a splendiferous time at the Roald Dahl Centenary party held in the library. They enjoyed (well, most enjoyed) frobscottle, they pinned the tail on Fantastic Mr Fox, they hunted for bugs in Mr Twit's spaghetti, they worked out what their Roald Dahl names would be and did crosswords and quizzes and crafty things. Huge thanks to the great team of Ms Ackerley, Ms Boswell, Ms Bhambra, Mr Dean and Ms Tibble, and a huge sorry to all those students who were on the waiting list – don't worry, we have lots of other things you'll be able to join in with over the next few years! The party-going beans can come and collect their BFG Me photos as a memento of the party which will be available from Thursday.



Next Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September the Library and Well Being are holding their annual Mammoth Cake Sale to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Trust. We would like all Year 7 and Year 8 students bring cakes, homemade or otherwise, to the library before school on that morning (we will open at 7.45am to accept offerings!) The first sale will take place during break for the students, and we will continue into the Open Afternoon (remember that school is closed...!) to energise our prospective parents and students. It would be great if all students could bring some money to buy a tasty treat at break from outside the library, and if any student from other year groups would like to contribute to the collection of deliciousness we will be very grateful. Last year we raised £879.72 and would love to equal/beat that this year.

[Contact the school](#)

020 8365 4400 [office@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:office@fortismere.org.uk)

## Recommended Read of the Week

Set in Alaska in the '70s, *The Smell of Other People's Houses* by Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock could possibly be my Book of the Summer Holidays! Vivid descriptions, great characters whose lives intertwine and huge themes dealt with sensitively. Loved it. All Recommended Reads are available to borrow from the school library.

## FSA News

We had a great time on Tuesday, meeting the new Year 7 parents at the welcome evening, and we hope you enjoyed it too! If you couldn't make the evening and would like to be added to the class list for your child's class and to the FSA database (which is completely separate from the school database), please contact Kirsty at [marks.kirsty@gmail.com](mailto:marks.kirsty@gmail.com) and she'll make sure you get included on the communications.

## Up and Coming Events:

### Fireworks Planning Meeting next Wednesday 21st September, 7pm

Please join us at our next meeting to discuss the Fireworks event and any other ideas about events for this coming year. Starts at 7pm, South Wing Conference room (Tetherdown), which is on the first floor of the main building, a side door will be open on the left of the building when you are looking at reception - just come up to the first floor and meet us there. Plenty of parking available as well.

### AGM on Wednesday 28th September, 7pm

Please join us at our AGM to hear from Mrs Glass (who is also FSA President) about plans for the school, from our Chair about how we did last year, from our Treasurer about how we all did with our fundraising and to hear about plans for this year's events. Same venue as above, all welcome.

### Seeking a new Vice Chair(s)

We are currently looking for new Vice Chair(s) 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 [mirriec Clark@gmail.com](mailto:mirriec Clark@gmail.com) to find out more about the role. We attach the Role Description for you to have a look at and see if you think it might be something you would enjoy. 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 role(s) will be elected at our AGM on 28th September, please come along on 21st (see above) if you would like to meet us first to talk about it.

### Changing the FSA Constitution

We will be making some small changes and updates to the FSA Constitution, in particular around the number of members and the committee; the changes will be presented for approval at the AGM.

So, meet us at the bids meetings (dates tbc) or come along to our next event - Fireworks on Thursday 3rd November, gates at 6pm.

Please also think about helping the FSA with a regular (or one off) donation. Even £10 each month really helps. Just fill in the easy online form at: <http://www.justgiving.com/fortismereschool>

We hope you have a wonderful weekend and look forward to seeing you next Wednesday at our first meeting of this year!

[Contact the school](#)

020 8365 4400 [office@fortismere.org.uk](mailto:office@fortismere.org.uk)