

Tuesday, 22nd May 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing with news of exciting plans about some proposed changes at Folkestone Academy, which reflect both things you have been asking us and, our mission to improve your children's education. The main proposed changes under consideration include:

- The creation of new teacher posts;
- More staff supporting your child: instead of the two named staff who presently work with your child, we hope to double this to four;
- Support for your child to be led by Year based staff, rather than through the House system to ensure that learning and pastoral needs are integrated;
- New curriculum/courses that better pave the way for GCSE success and university/employment, and;
- The creation of specialist teams to support learning for pupils with special and additional educational needs, the vulnerable, and disabled, and their families.

We want to stress that there will be no teacher redundancies in any of these proposed changes.

In addition, we are working to meet your request of the school day finishing at the same time every day next academic year.

The Local Authority-commissioned Stagecoach bus service continues to change (without our being informed), but as soon as we know what it will be in September, we will tell you.

As you may already be aware, Mr Carroll has recently been promoted to the post of Head of School, reporting to Mr Boxall our Interim Principal. This is by mutual consent following the illness and prolonged absence of Mr Milliken, who wishes the Academy pupils, staff and families well.

From half term we will be hosting information evenings where we will be sharing with you the latest developments and information on your child's education for the coming year. Hopefully this will be the first step in major improvements in communication so you can hear news first from us, rather than the internet, which is not always reliable.

We will be in touch after the break to confirm dates for these sessions, but in the meantime, we are attaching a Frequently Asked Questions document which we hope you find useful. For those of you with children undertaking GCSE examinations at present, we'd like to take this opportunity to tell you that they have shown exemplary conduct to date in the examination halls.

We'd like to wish you and your family an enjoyable half-term holiday for the end of this week.

Yours sincerely,



Jo Saxton
Chief Executive



Colin Boxall
Interim Principal



Wesley Carroll
Head of School



Val Reddecliffe
Vice Principal

Frequently Asked Questions

What impact has Turner Schools had since arriving in Folkestone?

Turner Schools first started in Folkestone in 2017. Although it is still early days, there have been some major successes in the three schools we are responsible for: Folkestone Academy, Martello Primary and Morehall Primary. Significant successes during this time include:

- Near doubling the number of children able to read at national expectations;
- Providing 100s of library books to a school that had almost none;
- Bringing in world-leading experts on reading into school to run training sessions with teachers;
- Putting in place heating in a school that was cold;
- More free breakfasts;
- Paying for staff to have union support during the working day; and
- Creating new jobs.

Through the new Turner Free School, we are also providing more school places for the town to increase parental choice, and in each of the schools we have included in education many at risk of exclusion. In line with what Kent County Council thought about the need for more secondary places in Folkestone, the new Free School has been oversubscribed for the first year of operation with 250 applications for the 120 places. Places have been allocated to those in need first (Children in Care, with Education and Health Care plans and those with military families), and all other places awarded by proximity alone – coming down to centimetres on the admissions map!

What does it mean for a school to be part of Turner Schools?

We are schools with HEART. While we believe in tough love to help young people succeed, we expect all those on our staff team to believe in the power of education to transform lives, to like children and to love their subject and teaching.

We believe that for too long, too many schools in Folkestone have not offered a strong enough education for Folkestone children. We want to change that, so that students leave us with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in any chosen field.

Are you making staff redundant?

We are currently carrying out a confidential consultation that will see some changes in our staffing structure. Overall, there will be no teaching staff redundancies – in fact, we are creating more teaching posts. There are likely to be some changes to support staff roles, and as soon as the consultation has concluded we will be able to share the details of this.

We do not take bringing change to the school and people's jobs lightly. Every change we are proposing is because the children of Folkestone deserve the best possible education, in recent years they have not achieved as well as they could and we are determined to change this.

Will pupil numbers at Folkestone Academy change because of the new Free School you are opening?

No. Even with the new Free School opening, all the public data shows that there are still not enough places in Folkestone for secondary aged children.

It is true, however, that there has been a reduction in the number of young people aged 16 – 19 in the local area, and as a result fewer pupils are enrolling for the sixth form than in previous years. This has meant we needed to revisit the Post 16 provision and consider what courses we were best positioned to offer.

Does Turner Schools make a profit from Folkestone Schools?

No. Turner Schools is a charitable organisation, and like all academy trusts is not permitted by law to make profit. Everything we do is driven by our belief in success without selection in the state education sector, and our governors all give many hours of their time in support of raising educational standards.