

13th November 2015

**Winter News Letter: Special Edition
Transfer to Our New Academy**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Yes, we have done it!

We have shut down our Bispham site and relocated to our new building on Blackpool Old Road, in between Highfurlong Special School and Blackpool Sixth Form College. We finally received the 'keys to the doors' from the Carillion contractors at 3.30pm on Monday 2nd November. All staff then had 2 days to arrange the furniture and unload the materials and resources in their rooms and spaces before we opened to all students at 8.30am on Thursday 5th November; a most memorable date! What we had not considered was how excited and early our students would be, so we had to open the doors at 7.15am to accommodate many early arrivers. Also the very pleasant autumn weather remained very reasonable until 8.35am when we lined up all of the students on our new 'yard' ready to enter their new school ... and then it rained! It also rained heavily at the same time on Friday morning so we had to change our plans in order to keep our students safe and dry. So flexibility has certainly become our key word for this term.

I must congratulate everybody concerned with this major building project. All of our new school building is ultra modern with considerable specialist accommodation such as Science laboratories, a spacious Drama studio as well as a Dance studio, 4 ICT suites and excellent teaching rooms. All of these rooms have state of the art technology with some looking out to Blackpool Tower at the front and others to the playing fields, Poulton and the Bowland Fells to the rear.

The students reaction to their 'new school' has been beyond expectation. Behaviour has been exemplary with all year groups adapting to their transfer to this new site in a very mature way indeed. For some this will be their third move in three years so it is time for them to settle down and make this their 'home' for their final school years. Navigation within school is easy since it is a square building with 3 levels (A, B and C) and 3 sets of very wide stairs. Toilet facilities throughout are first class with Reception and Student Support Services located at the front of school at ground level for easy access to everyone requiring assistance.

Dining facilities are open aspect and modern with good recreational space at the rear including the Play Football sports pitches, which are open at lunchtime. Students are now familiarising themselves with all aspects of their new school and seem to appreciate the aspirational murals which adorn the majority of corridor walls.

As an additional bonus we share the site with Highfurlong Special School with whom we anticipate building outstanding relationships. We hope our students and staff come to interact and share facilities and resources to the benefit of both communities in the coming years. In order to demonstrate our common bond we are co-ordinating a special **VISITORS DAY on Saturday 21st November** when the schools will be open to all visitors between **11.00am and 2.00pm**. Please come and join us if you have the time.

It is important to remember that we now need to get back to our **CORE BUSINESS** of making excellent progress in all classrooms. We have lost several days because of the relocation in term time so we must work at pace over the next 5 weeks (25 working days) to be ready to start in 2016 in the same place as we originally planned.

So our **PAUSE** mantra will continue to drive forwards our standards and expectations:

Punctuality to school is essential; it is a significant 'life skill'. 1 minute late will result in a 1 hour detention the same night.

95% Attendance to school is non-negotiable. Those who attend regularly do well and there are/will be plenty of rewards for those who do.

Uniform must be correct every day. Black shoes, blazers, ties etc. are essential. Boys with bags are 'cool'.

Safe and Sensible Behaviour must be the norm so every student is safe and secure in every Year Group. **High Expectations & Exam Performance** are the keys to student success.

Please remember Aspire's motto '**Success nothing less**'.

All year groups are important but **Year 11** only have until next Whitsun to complete their coursework and studies in readiness for their final exams. All staff are focussed on delivering excellent lessons in their new classrooms so good progress by all students should be evident. Next **Wednesday 18th November Year 11 Parents/Carers** have the opportunity to discuss their sons/daughters progress in school from **5.30pm** onwards. Please try to attend this critical evening and view our/their new school as well.

The other Year Groups are also settling quickly back into their various subjects in their new rooms and spaces. It is extremely pleasing to report that the response to lessons in all areas has been incredibly positive from both staff and students alike. So it is crucial that we keep this momentum right up until the end of term on Friday 18th December.

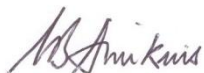
Please note the following important diary dates:

Tuesday 17 th November 2015	Previous Year 11 Awards Evening for those who left summer 2015
Wednesday 18 th November 2015	Year 11 Parents Evening
Thursday 26 th November 2015	Years 8, 9 and 10 Progress Evening
Friday 18 th December 2015	School finishes at 1.20pm for the Christmas Holidays
Wednesday 6 th January 2016	School re-opens for all students at 8.35am
Thursday 14 th January 2016	Year 7 Parents Evening
Week commencing 25 th January 2016	Year 10 internal exams
Week commencing 1 st February 2016	Year 11 internal Pre Public exams

May I remind everybody that car parking for visitors and adults is at the front and side of our school and not in Highfurlong Special School car park.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all Parents/Carers for your considerable patience and understanding during our relocation and settling in period. It obviously caused additional arrangements for child care but I think you will agree that it has all been very worthwhile. Everyone at Aspire is looking forward to working with you and your child/children over the coming years and meeting you at our future events.

Yours sincerely



C B Simkins
Principal

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