

Dear Parent / Carer

Re: Welcome to a new academic year at JFAN

It is once again a pleasure and privilege to be able to write to you at the start of a new academic year at Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport. I hope you have had a positive and fulfilling summer, and created some wonderful memories with your family.

The purpose of my first communication to you of the new academic year is threefold: we sign-off 2023/24 with a summary of our key stage 4 and 5 outcomes; we set out the priorities for the forthcoming year; and we provide you with some key updates and changes that you will need to be aware of before your child/ren return.

Understandably, there may be some nerves and a sense of anticipation in your household currently about the return to school. I hope this letter goes some way to alleviating some of those anxious feelings that might be occurring and helps to remind our pupils of the great experiences that they have at school, whether that's reuniting with friends, the feeling you get when you learn something new or achieving a new skill that you thought was out of your comfort zone. Although school can present difficulties at times, the great memories often outweigh the not so good and I'm sure that this academic year will be no different. We are, as always, very much looking forward to welcoming our pupils back to JFAN.

At Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport, everything we do is underpinned by our core values, purpose and vision. In terms of our **values**, we believe that every pupil should leave our Academy with an understanding of what it means to be independent, imaginative, insightful and inquisitive. It is these four qualities, and the traits that come with these qualities, which will make our young people stand out in a highly competitive and technically motivated world. Our core **purpose** is to enable our pupils to strive to make the world a better place and be happy to come school, to fulfil their enormous potential and flourish in whatever they choose to do. We want our staff to feel empowered and confident to tackle challenges, use evidence to target improvement and show passionate enthusiasm for their role and our pupils. And finally, our **vision** is to establish excellence in everything we do. Founded with the vision of the 'love I bear learning', we recognise Joyce Frankland's original purpose, that our community should be a place where all of us take pleasure in learning both now and in the future. Last year, we undertook substantial work developing a four-year strategic plan for the Academy, revising our values, purpose and vision and using this, as well as the evidence from our monitoring procedures, to devise four, challenging strategic priorities which we have recently published on our website and can be viewed [here](#).

2024 outcomes summary

Our Academy was delighted to mark the excellent achievements of our pupils in this year's GCSE and post-16 qualifications. The results, across both cohorts, reflected the hard work, dedication, and resilience of our pupils, staff, and the broader Academy community. Our pupils excelled across a wide range of subjects, demonstrating not only academic prowess but also the determination to succeed in challenging circumstances, especially throughout key stage 3, where their experience of school was significantly disrupted by the pandemic. These pupils taking examinations in 2024 did not have any additional support or reduction of exam content and the grade boundaries returned to pre-pandemic levels, meaning that their achievements were significant. For more information individual success stories, you can view our press release GCSE [here](#) and our post-16 press release [here](#).

It is important to stress though that there were several young people who overcame significant barriers over the past five or seven years, in both year 11 and year 13 cohorts, that have also made fantastic progress who we value greatly. Our holistic ethos to education ensures that our pupils not only excel in exams but also develop into well-rounded individuals ready to take on future challenges who will flourish in whatever path they travel. I wish the class of 2024 all the very best; there is no ceiling to what they can achieve.

There were also some pleasing overall figures at GCSE which included:

- Our average attainment score across 8 GCSEs has increased compared with 2023 to 48.81
- It has been a teaching and learning focus this year to challenge pupils to reach the highest levels. Therefore we were delighted to see that the amount of 7-9 grades that pupils achieved increased from 279 to 370

- Additionally, 38% 7-9 grades in biology, 41% 7-9 grades in chemistry and 37% 7-9 grades in physics
- An 84% standard pass rate in English and 77% standard pass rate in maths (which is beyond both national averages)
- Strong results in options subjects such as drama, PE and history

These results will provide pupils with the foundations they need to grow further and progress in their chosen fields of work. However, as I know you are aware, we are not an Academy that puts exam results at the front and centre of why we function. They are undoubtedly important as they will provide our pupils with better chances in life. But, also of vital importance, is the character development that we harness. The young people who have completed key stage 4 and 5 this year have flourished and this is what makes us most proud as they begin the new chapters in their exciting futures.

Strategic priorities for 2024/25

Our strategic priorities for this academic year and the following two years, will be as follows:

- To embed a high-quality curriculum, which is effectively sequenced, and accessible for all.
- To provide responsive and engaging teaching for all.
- To establish a secure and inspiring learning environment.
- To refine systems and processes which are always followed, and enable a distributed leadership model.

These priorities have been developed through thorough analysis of academic and pastoral data, surveys of stakeholders and external monitoring reports. It was a pleasure to discuss these with a parent working group last half-term and I would like to thank them again for their input and refinement of these priorities. The actions we undertake will be directly linked to at least of one these priorities. With a laser focus on these four areas of school improvement, we strongly believe that we will achieve our vision of being excellent today, and even better tomorrow.

Policy changes 2024/25

As is ever the case with a new academic year, there always needs to be some changes to our core policies to reflect national, regional and local legislation. In this letter, I would like to draw your attention to three main policy developments which are as follows:

- Attendance policy:** This was shared with parents and carers last term, however, I am re-sharing this with you, now that it has come into practice. There is a significant government focus on school attendance this year which has resulted in national legislation and new benchmark measures. I would strongly recommend that you read our new policy which can be accessed [here](#).
- Behaviour for learning policy:** As part of our bi-annual review of our behaviour for learning policy, there will be some small changes implemented. These changes predominantly focus upon an updated pupil code of conduct agreement which will be informing pupils about in September and an updated schematic which supports pupils to develop their positive learning habits. We would like to thank the parent working group who we met at the end of last term for their input on these proposed changes. We will share this policy with parents and carers later this week. However, we would greatly appreciate it if you could inform your child/ren that changes will be shared with them during the first week back.

- c. **Uniform policy:** As communicated throughout last academic year, there are changes to our uniform from September and we have amended our policy to reflect this. We have worked hard to modernise some of the aspects of our previous uniform policy and make it less complicated. We will be sharing these changes with pupils during the first week back in September. It will also be an appendix in our new Behaviour for Learning policy. A reminder that the only compulsory aspect of our new uniform is the new skirt for pupils in years 7-10. If a pupil has been unable to order a skirt this summer, we have ordered a bulk of skirts which the Academy owns. A pupil will be able to borrow a skirt until their new item arrives, on a weekly basis. Pupils in year 11 are allowed to wear the kilt however they also have permission to wear our new skirt or trousers, if they would prefer. All other new uniform will be phased in throughout this academic year. All new items will be compulsory from September 2025. For more information, here is a link to my letter that I sent to all parents last academic year. If you have any queries about our uniform changes, we have set up a dedicated email address for you to contact which is uniformchanges@joycefrankland.org Please don't hesitate to contact this address if you have any queries which need answering.

Staffing and responsibilities 2024/25

As you are aware, one of the biggest barriers to achieving our priorities in recent times has been the difficulties faced with recruitment. The national recruitment crisis remains a serious concern with a lack of secondary teachers and an inadequate number enrolling on teacher training courses and early career teaching programmes. Throughout last term, I provided you with regular updates about our staffing situation for this coming academic year and I am now in a position to provide you with further details.

The Academy has been successful in recruiting high quality new teachers to join our school and retain many excellent practitioners. All our faculty leaders and subject leaders remain part of our team which is excellent, however, there is a temporary change in English, where Mr Langley will be leading this faculty alongside Mrs Ramdenee, for this academic year.

There are unfortunately still some teaching gaps in our curriculum, mainly in computing, which continues to be an exceptionally hard subject to recruit for. However, there are significantly fewer gaps than the previous two years. We have had to make some difficult decisions with our curriculum offer, removing subjects like business studies at key stage 4 for a second consecutive year. However, we have also increased our arts and technology offer, providing subjects such as textiles which have proven popular. Where there is a need for cover teachers, we have recruited a group of professionals who are employed by JFAN and Anglian Learning Trust, who will be trained in our policies and procedures, thus reducing the need for external daily cover which often causes increased disruption to lessons. We cannot predict any long-term sickness of staff and therefore there may need to be external cover at some point during the year to manage a situation if it arises. Finally, the Academy has promoted two colleagues onto our Academy Leadership Team to support the delivery of our strategic direction.

A full summary of roles and responsibilities can be found on our website, here. However, for clarification of our year group teams, they are as follows:

Year group	Teams
Year 7	Mrs Page, Mrs Mellis, Mrs Wheeler

Year 8	Mrs Jenner
Year 9	Miss Reynolds, Ms Porter
Year 10	Mrs Shelmerdine, Mrs Church
Year 11	Miss Davis, Mrs Phipps, Ms White

Please can I remind you that if you have a query, issue or concern your first port of call is your child's/ren's form tutor.

Start of term arrangements

Today, the Academy has been open for all staff as we completed our first inset day of the academic year which was very successful. Tomorrow, **Tuesday 2nd September**, the Academy is open for years 7, 10 and 12 as published on our website [here](#). This acts as a 'transition' day for those pupils who are moving into a new key stage. Pupils must arrive on site by 8:35. Year 7 pupils must meet outside the Sports Hall in the same way that they did for transition day. Year 10 pupils must go to the Main Hall and year 12 students must go to the Sixth Form Common Room in the Sixth Form Building.

From **Wednesday 3rd September**, all pupils will return to school and must immediately go to their form rooms for tutor time at 8:35. For pupils in years 8, 9 and 11, there will be posters around school which will inform them of the location of their tutor group. Alternatively, these pupils can view the location of their tutor group now on the Sims Student App or Parent App. All pupils will then follow their normal timetable from period 1 onwards.

This concludes the key information that you need to know before term starts. I apologise it is so long! Often the first newsletter of the year is denser as there are several sections which need to be covered. Of course, if you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact your child's/ren's form tutor. There will be more updates in my first newsletter of the year such as a summary of our co-curricular offer this half-term, our forthcoming Open Evening and parent tours and information about some of the fantastic improvements we have made to our estate this summer. My newsletter will be published fortnightly this academic year rather than weekly with the first edition on 13th September.

Finally, it has been an eventful six weeks for the UK with contradictory representations of the country. On the one hand, we experienced troubling riots across many of our cities which demonstrated the worst of our society. However, the amount of people who then came out to clean up the streets after the night before, demonstrated the very best of society. Furthermore, we witnessed some exceptional stories in the Olympics where countries came together to compete to celebrate their inspiring achievements. The Paralympics has also started brilliantly last week and represents the inclusive ethos that is central to our core vision and purpose. I will be exploring these events further, in my assemblies next week.

In the powerful words of the late parliamentarian, Jo Cox, "we are far more united and have far more in common with each other than things that divide us."

Kind regards,
Duncan Roberts

Principal