

5<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Dear Parents/Carers

It's been wonderful to see the school come alive again this week! All seem to have settled well to new classes and timetables and a new school year. We've welcomed 189 new Year 7 students and can celebrate too another successful summer results season.

Nothing terribly exciting in this letter I'm afraid - just some polite reminders as we start the new year that will help us all along. Your support is very much appreciated.

Parents of new Year 7 students please see the notice too about the SimsApp at the end of this letter

### **Attendance**

This is beginning to get back to normal, but we are not quite there yet; still not quite where it was pre-pandemic. Student attendance figures were typically around the 96% figure before covid and were down to 90% in 23/24. 92% or so this past year so an improvement for sure – but still a work in progress! That's as true for FSG as it is for all schools. We all now need to try to get back to normality! Time not spent in school has an obvious impact on outcomes - academic and otherwise - therefore it's important that we all try to come to school as often as is possible!

Whilst 90% in a test or exam would be a real achievement for most of us; a result that we'd happily shout from the rooftops, 90% attendance is not so positive. It equates to 1 day off a fortnight or almost 4 weeks - a whole month - over the academic year. Employers would not accept that and as part of our role, as a school and as parents, is to prepare our young people for their working adult lives, attendance is something we must all work together on to improve. So, whilst of course we all get sick from time to time, we also need to just be that little bit more resilient and struggle on in when we are a little under the weather.

This coming year then I ask us all to continue to try to get back to normal. Whilst we all get sick from time to time and 100% attendance is perhaps a lot to ask, the 'if in doubt, stay out' days are thankfully past us so a bit of a cold or headache shouldn't stop us from attending school.

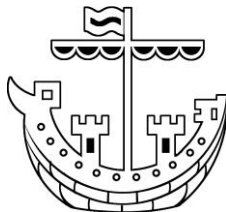
### **School uniform**

**Please label school uniform with your child's name.** Each day kilts, jumpers, PE kits get lost and clearly, they all look the same! We want to be able to return items to students and to thus save you all money! Manufacturers tend to include a label for that very reason so please label your child's belongings.

**A timely reminder, too, that extreme hairstyles and facial piercings, worn at parent/student discretion over the summer, must now be removed/remedied.**

### **Mobile Phones**

We have a **never used, seen or heard** approach to phones in school. Phones are allowed in school (many parents provide these for security on journeys to/from school) but are to be switched off and stored in bags or blazer pockets throughout the school day to be **never used, seen or heard**.



### School Canteen

We are all aware of the hike in food prices and the increased costs we all face at the checkout. Our school canteen is no different and so have also had to put prices up. The cost of a **main meal** is now £2.90, and I'd like us all to encourage more and more students to avail themselves of that option; it's our best value option **and** is better for the environment. **£2.90 will get you a main meal and a pudding** - so for example on a Wednesday a full roast dinner (with all the trimmings) and then say, syrup sponge with custard. This is served in plates/bowls and not takeaway and must be eaten in the school canteen. All our takeaway packaging is made from biodegradable, recycled and recyclable and/or compostable material, but it is expensive and is still bad for the environment. Reduce, reuse, recycle is the mantra, so we can reduce our waste by re-using our plates and thus save the need for any recycling! Therefore, please, for the planet and for your wallets, encourage your daughters towards the main meal sit down option!

### Fobs

ID cards have been issued to Year 7 students on their first day in school. For all other years, it should have been stored somewhere safe over the summer! These are an essential part of school equipment; they provide access to the canteen cashless payment system (More on that below), access to photocopying and printing, act as ID for public examinations and most importantly provide secure access to the school site and its buildings. They help keep us all safe! If lost, please tell us so we can de-activate the old card and issue a new one for £2.50.

### Fobs and the canteen

Breaktimes and lunchtimes are busy. We have some 1200 students and 150 members of staff making their way through the canteen (or Catering pod). Payment is fast if and only if students have their ID card. One swipe and it's done - and we can serve the next student! Students showing up without their ID card/FOB slows down the entire queue. Staff have to type in names, search for the right student etc.. Consequently, students without an ID Card will be turned away from the front of the canteen queue and be served last – they hold up everybody and there's no reason for that. **Please ensure your daughter has her Fob with her at all times**

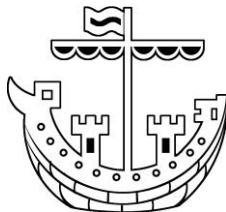
### Road safety

I write this same message a lot – and nothing ever changes. This new year that is still the case. Parents ignore our signs, road markings and indeed staff! Sadly, it seems it will take an accident before behaviours will be changed.

We have almost 1200 girls and around 150 members of staff arriving on site every morning from 7am to 8.30am, with the vast majority of girls arriving in the latter half of this period. There is a similar exodus, for girls at least, every afternoon at 3.30pm. We also have Sandgate Primary School following a fairly similar pattern, 2 nurseries nearby and of course our other neighbours on Coolinge Lane departing for work etc.

The road therefore is an exceptionally busy one. Compounding the volume of traffic, our main entrance also lies on a sharp bend and on a hill. There is no pavement on the schools/nurseries side of the road. We are increasingly concerned that students are able to cross the road safely and remind parents to **not drop off or pick up students from the school gates. The nursery schools and primary children understandably need to be dropped off. Secondary age students not so much and a short walk will do them no harm whatsoever!**

So, again, I ask for caution please around our school, our girls and Coolinge Lane in general. Cars parking/ stopping here pose a serious threat to other road users and there are double yellow lines all around the area for this very reason. Yet parents continue to stop here. Despite our concerns, our appeals and staff presence we are extremely concerned that young lives are being put at risk. I don't want there to be an accident before we all finally take heed! I appreciate that parents of new Year 7 students are anxious to smooth the transition to 'big school' and are therefore



perhaps planning to pick up/drop off for the first few weeks, but please can I ask us all to do that some distance away from the gates when/where it is safe and to be mindful of other road users at these crunch times.

These are our girls, but they are your daughters, and your actions are putting them and others at risk. Please drop girls off for school away from the school gates. The short walk won't kill them but the traffic outside that parents are causing just might!?

### **Sims App**

As the parent of a new student, you'll soon have access to the ParentApp.

As I explained on the Year 6 induction evening, secondary schools are much bigger organisations than primaries and there is just not quite the same 'at the school gate' opportunity to discuss any matters arising. Parents evenings still happen of course – but you'll be seeing a range of teachers; not just one and that's reflective of the fact that there will be many adults – probably 10 or 12 involved directly with your child over any given week – rather than just the one. You'll still have school reports, we still have school plays and concerts and the like to see the school in action - but undoubtedly, it's an adjustment for parents as much as it is for the girls.

The ParentApp is not an attempt to keep you at arm's length! You can always call the school; you can always email; you can always book an appointment to come see us face-to-face ( Ms Stokes, SDL for Year 7 would be your first port of call [jstokes@folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk](mailto:jstokes@folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk) most usually) but the app allows you to keep in daily contact with your child's journey at FSG – just as a snapshot.

It provides access to;

- School reports
- Attendance Information
- Behaviour Information
- Timetables
- Homework information
- Data Collection Sheets
- Relevant Calendar Events

We know you've already been a little bombarded with wisepay etc – but attached is a presentation which includes a short video to help you understand what the App is about, what it looks like and what it shows and joining instructions – which I'd urge you to read before attempting to join!

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ejoe3\\_ED1jJmQltqawHoON0G9uWl6fPhWvM-aiVpgtM/edit?usp=drive\\_link](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ejoe3_ED1jJmQltqawHoON0G9uWl6fPhWvM-aiVpgtM/edit?usp=drive_link)

Login details are being shared with parents towards the next week!

We don't expect parents/carers to check this fanatically every day, but it can certainly help you to check on homework, when PE kits are needed etc.