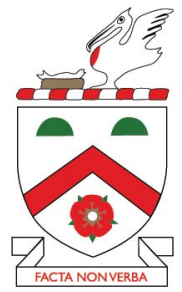


FRED LONGWORTH HIGH SCHOOL



April 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the end of the Spring Term I write to you with some important updates.

Appointment of the new Deputy Headteacher

Following two days of intensive interviews, we have appointed our new Pastoral Deputy to replace Mr Whalley who retires at the end of the Summer Term. The new Deputy will be Mr Taylor who is currently the Associate Vice Principal at Outwood Academy Hindley. Mr Taylor is an experienced pastoral leader who will bring a wealth of expertise to our school. We look forward to him starting with us in September.

We say farewell at the end of this term to Ms Gibbons, Lead Practitioner for Maths, who has been at Freddie's since 2006. Ms Gibbons is re-locating to Yorkshire with her family, and I am sure you will join me in wishing her all the very best for the future.

School Meals costs

It has unfortunately become necessary to increase some of the prices on our catering menu due to increased employment costs from 1st April 2025. Our catering provider, Miquill, and the school have absorbed some of the costs, but it has now become necessary to increase the price of some single items to make the service viable.

The Government directive to increase the National Minimum Wage and employer National Insurance costs, along with the continuing impact of inflation over the past few months has meant that we have also had to look at revising the price of school meals with effect from September 2025. As you will be aware, there have been significant increases in the cost of ingredients, transport and energy and these all have a direct impact on the cost of producing school meals as has the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, and other global challenges.

The current menu with price guides can be found on our website and you will see that students can still benefit from a meal deal of a hot meal, snack and drink for £2.60 and we have items from our saver menu priced at just over £1. Our revised menu from September 2025 will see an increase of 20p for a meal deal to be priced at £2.80, although we will still offer a saver menu at reduced prices.

We have benchmarked our service costs against other local schools and although I know that this will cause considerable concern for some parents, we firmly believe that the prices offer good value for money. Those students who are entitled for Free School Meals will have their daily allowance increased from £2.60 to £2.80 from the first day back after the Summer break to reflect the price increases. Thank you once again for your ongoing support and understanding.

Why attendance matters

Concerns over low rates of school attendance continue to appear in [national headlines](#) and reveal the negative impact that low attendance is having on outcomes for students across the country. We see these patterns here at Freddie's. In short, low attendance places a child at a significant disadvantage compared to their peers. It prevents a child from being successful in school due to gaps in knowledge caused by lost learning or reduced friendships due to time in school being irregular. The information in the following table is based on the [DFE's latest research](#) into this issue (March 2025). It illustrates the correlation between low attendance and chronic underachievement for students in Year 11.

Attendance Band	Likelihood of achieving Grade 5 in English and Maths (compared to the band below)	Key Impact and insights
95-100%	1.9x more likely than 90-95%	Missing 10 days can reduce success rates by 50%.
90-95%	1.6x more likely than 85-90%	Significant gains can be made by moving to 95-100%
85-90%	1.3x more likely than 80-85%	At risk of becoming persistently absent
80-85%	1.3x more likely than 75-80%	Students may start to show signs of disengagement.
75-80%	1.4x more likely than 70-75%	Students start to show signs of disengagement.
65-70%	1.6x more likely than 60-65%	Students show signs of disengagement.
60-65%	1.8x more likely than 55-60%	Students show significant signs of disengagement.
50 to 55% and less	Severely absent category (lowest likelihood of success)	Represents students who are chronically disengaged.

Uniform Updates

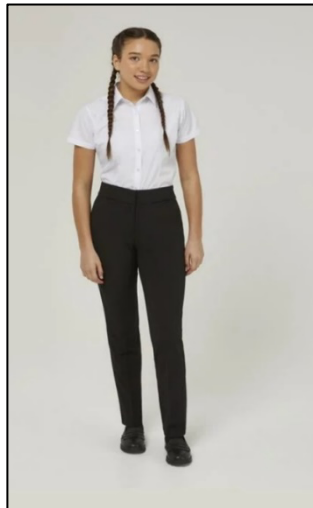
As parents will be aware from numerous communications, we will be making the switch to trousers for all from September 2025. We are delighted to see an increase in the number of girls already wearing appropriate school trousers.

We are very keen to keep uniform costs down. To this end, we are not insisting on a school-branded trouser. Instead, we are recommending suitable styles of trouser. The images below illustrate the styles that will be most appropriate for school, and which are being sourced by our suppliers. I hope you agree, they look very smart. We know from feedback that there are a range of other options available on the market, but which vary in quality and type of materials, including hybrid and blended materials. This does create a potential grey area. To help clarify, **trousers should be plain, black, smart and business-like in either a straight or flared style**. It is equally important to clarify further what styles will not be appropriate:

- Jeans/ denim
- Leggings
- Jogging/ sports style
- Cropped
- Shiny/ leather look/ PVC, satin or leather

- Ribbed
- Belted or large buttons
- Linen
- Corduroy
- Skinny fit (drainpipe style)
- Combat





Our rationale for these uniform changes

I will take this opportunity to re-iterate again the reasons why we have decided to make this change. For too long the issue of rolled up skirts, and subsequently rolled up dresses has become, for too many, a blatant refusal to follow a basic school rule. Many of our students tell us that due to peer pressure, they also feel compelled to follow suit. All this means that as a school we spend far too long policing basic uniform issues instead of focusing on our core purpose of teaching your children. The short length of dresses also poses a modesty problem which in turn can present safeguarding concerns both inside and outside of school.

We have also had to deal with a recent spate of students deliberately ripping their school tights which is proving costly for parents to continually replace them. The introduction of trousers will remove all of these barriers and is inclusive to all.

The trousers set the right tone as part of a smart, professional and business-like uniform which is appropriate for school. In turn this is conducive to a positive environment for learning.

Blazers and Jumpers

As the weather starts to get warmer, and hopefully stays warm, we will take a common-sense approach to the wearing of blazers. Students will be expected to wear their blazers to school and during the school-day; however, if it is a warm day they will be allowed to remove them. Blazers should not be left at home. Jumpers are not a replacement for blazers and should not be worn instead of a blazer.

In terms of summer uniform, we will communicate with you later in the summer term when we deem it appropriate for the full summer uniform to be allowed.

Do you know where your children are in the evenings and at weekend?

Due to recent safeguarding incidents that we have had to deal with in school it is important to raise the following point. We work very hard to keep our school environment safe, calm and orderly; however, sadly, we also have to deal with the fallout from anti-social behaviour that occurs outside of the school and in the local community. I must stress that this behaviour does not reflect the behaviour of the majority of students who attend our school; nonetheless, the actions of a minority do adversely impact on the rest of the community. As parents can I please ask for your support by checking the whereabouts of your children in the evenings and at weekends, and to ensure that they are not involved in any anti-social behaviour and/or potentially criminal activity. If you are concerned about your child or their friendship group, please do not hesitate to contact us. As a community, we all have a responsibility to prevent behaviour of this kind.

Thank-you for your continued support and best wishes to all our community over the Easter Break.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Davies', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr P Davies

Headteacher