



SIR THOMAS FREMANTLE SCHOOL

A CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS AGED 11-19

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14th February 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

The shortest month of the year and yet one that brings us some of the most pleasant celebrations: Chinese New Year, Valentine's Day and, for those gardeners amongst you, snowdrops starting to emerge, signalling that Spring is around the corner. February is a transitional month and gives us an opportunity to reflect on how we intend to rejuvenate, renew and regrow as we head in to Spring. The same can be said of life in a school. It is an opportunity for all students and teachers to reflect on being just over half way through the academic year; identifying through honest reflection how they can approach their studies and learning. For Year 11 and Year 13, it is a time to fine tune their revision programmes and intensify their level of study to ensure that they achieve their potential. You may find that the level of teenage angst also spikes this month as the certainty of exams and the end of school life becomes a distinct reality. If you need any advice on supporting your child through their exams, please contact their form tutor or subject teacher. Remembering that the success of your child is a partnership in which we all play a role and working together will increase the opportunity of success.

The success of the PE department has continued this half term. There have been some fantastic results in girl's indoor cricket: our Under 13 and Under 15 teams both made the County finals after winning their respective group matches. We have also hosted 5 sports festivals for our primary schools, which created a fantastic opportunity for our own Sports Leaders to organise, umpire, score and coach students from Key Stage 1 and 2. The girls have had some notable successes in netball this half term beating Swanbourne, Waddesdon and The Royal Latin. Our boys have also been successful on the sports field winning football and rugby fixtures. The efforts of the PE team and the students, who have represented the school impeccably, are greatly appreciated. A special mention must go to two young rugby players who have represented Bucks Under 15s this half term, Beth Tebbutt and Aimee Mortimer-Bush. We are very proud of your successes and determination.

School plays a significant role in the emotional development of young people. Students today face a number of unprecedented pressures. In many respects young people are growing up too quickly and do not always have the emotional capacity to manage the issues they face. To encourage an open debate and ensure that mental health is not a taboo subject, STFS is taking part in the Children and Young People Trailblazer project. The project is working with a group of schools, who successfully applied to be part of the programme, to help bridge the gap that exists between schools and specialist services. It will allow us to intervene earlier and signpost students to more effective support, allowing students to build the necessary resilience that every young person needs. We continue to run a number of events across the school which will continue to build the profile of



mental health awareness in school. Julie Smith has made a fantastic contribution and she continues to lead a number of events that promote healthy minds:

- Student Support Service for Years 7 & 8 is up and running and is having some positive feedback from users of the service.
- Mind 'Coffee Morning' as STFS on 26th March - parents will be invited in to share a cuppa and talk with professionals from Mind, myself and representatives from the Student Support Service. Find out more about how they can support their child's well-being and mental health as well as what we can offer in school.
- On-going mindfulness enrichment/lunch time yoga sessions
- Focus on well-being and mental health through form time activities/discussions and assemblies

As mentioned in previous letters, the Duke of Edinburgh Award is now up and running. We have appointed Miss Carter as our School DofE link. Miss Carter is working closely with the Regional co-ordinator to complete student enrolment. We are thrilled with the uptake and look forward to the award becoming a significant part of our school life.

We have been working hard throughout the year to build links with the local community. Over the last couple of months we have met with the Headteacher at The Buckingham School and explored ways of developing a more positive working partnership. I have also arranged to meet the Headteacher at Winslow Church of England Combined school, to look at building a partnership that enables a smooth transition between primary and secondary school. We would also like to thank the Rotary Club of Winslow for taking the time to listen and offer some support with our in school projects. I will be sharing the specifics of this project during my next letter. We are delighted to be part of such a supportive community and we look forward to being able to play a role in its future.

In the penultimate week of the Christmas term we were visited by Ofsted. I am sure you will have all seen the letter of their findings. I could not have been more pleased with the outcome at this stage of the school transition. I am proud that STFS “ **is a welcoming and caring school in which pupils enjoy their learning and feel valued. Pupils benefit from learning within a calm and productive classroom environment**”. Whilst we are thoroughly delighted with the inspection, we want to make our school even better; not for Ofsted but for the young people who attend. We continue to make changes in how the school is run and I appreciate that it may be unsettling. However, any change the school make will always focus on what is right for the students and staff.

The 26th January saw a team of year 12s take part in the Magistrates' Association Family Court Mock Trial Competition. The participants were: Morgan Gunn, Max Pearson, Lilly Jewell, Roy Chizana and Edward Clark. They took on roles as advocates, legal advisers and magistrates in a real court, in front of real judges. Feedback included '*Better than many professional advocates I've seen...*' and '*I'd give him a job!*' We finished as 'Runners Up'. The students represented the school perfectly and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Thank you to Mrs. Franklin, who steered the ship superbly and said, "I have never been so proud of a team of young people".

I have been approached by some parents in the hope that we can relaunch the PTA. A Parent and Teacher Association is a great way to bring together parents, teachers and the local community to raise funds and to support the school. If this is something you would be interested in, please email



me to let me know of your interest. If there is sufficient support, we would be more than happy to establish the PTA.

The science department are proud to present 'Molecules and Murder', a talk by Professor John Nicholson on Tuesday 12th March 5.30pm, during British Science Week. We would love for you come along! Refreshments will be served from 5pm. As a result, we will be re-scheduling **Year 7 Parents' Evening for Tuesday 26th March.**

To celebrate British Science Week, Sir Thomas Fremantle School are proud to present:

 *Molecules and Murder* 

A talk by Professor John Nicholson, Queen Mary University of London.

Tuesday 12th March 2019
5.30 – 6.30pm
Sir Thomas Fremantle School, Winslow, MK18 3GH
Entry is free of charge

Refreshments will be served from 5pm

For tickets or queries, please email alice.rosier@sirthomasfremantle.org

 

What is a poison and why are some things toxic? What sort of substances have criminals used, and how have poisoners been caught? Professor John Nicholson will answer these and other questions in the course of this lecture. His talk will include some chemistry, but not too much.

And the event comes with its own health warning: Be sure not to try any of this at home!

Finally, I would like to make a request and ask for your support. Over the half term break, can I ask that all students purchase a reusable water bottle. The environmental impact of the plastic bottle is significant and we can all do our bit to protect our beautiful Earth. If all students contribute by drinking from a re-usable bottle, then we can honestly say we are playing our part, albeit in a very small way. As a school, we are investigating alternatives to plastic bottles in school and I would hope that as a school community we join together to support our environment.

Yours sincerely,



Neale Pledger
Headmaster

