



# SIR THOMAS FREMANTLE SCHOOL

A CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS AGED 11-19

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Dear Parents and Carers

At the end of a very busy and successful half term, I would like to thank the students for their achievements and positive start to the year. I would also like to thank the staff for their dedication and hard work, as well as parents and carers for your continued support of STFS and our students.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first half term as Headteacher, leading STFS through the next phase of its development. As I said in my Welcome Letter in September, I want to increase the active involvement our parents have in the school community. Let me take this opportunity again to encourage you to contact the school with any observations, comments, improvements or praise by emailing [neale.pledger@sirthomasfremantle.org](mailto:neale.pledger@sirthomasfremantle.org). I am particularly keen to seek your opinions on our Enrichment programme and whether it is still fit for purpose. Whilst I cannot promise to enact all suggestions, I am certainly interested in gaining a clearer picture of what our parents think of the school and listening to any suggestions you may have.

There have been many improvements in the way we work this half term. We continue to refine our behaviour systems to eradicate any low-level disruption in classrooms, as learning simply cannot be disturbed. We have also recently begun using Class Charts. This system allows us to monitor behaviour more effectively and reward students for excellent work, kindness and perseverance, amongst other positive behaviours. The system is simple: students will accumulate points for demonstrating positive behaviours and have points deducted for their misdemeanours. All students start on zero and their behaviour is tracked by the number of negative or positive points they earn from their teachers. It is fantastic to see that 97.4% of the students at STFS are engaging with their learning, understanding the time and effort their teachers spend preparing lessons, and demonstrating positive relationships with their teachers throughout the day. This does leave 2.6% of students who need further clarification about our expectations; I will be personally meeting their parents over the next couple of weeks to make our expectations clearer.

Once again, we welcomed huge numbers of Year 6 students and their families to our Open Evening at the beginning of October. As always, I was immensely proud of our environment, our teachers and most importantly our current students. I listened to Year 8 students speak about why they love coming to school and I was in awe of their confidence in speaking to over 500 people. It is times like these that remind us that schools are so much more than just exam factories. Thank you to all students who stayed and supported our evening and who demonstrated the ethos and values of our school so positively.



We have also continued our excellent work with charities. Mr Lloyd organised Foodbank collections, and we could not have asked for a greater response from our own school family. 21 crates of food were collected. I write this paragraph with some personal trepidation. Our sixth form are currently organising their RAG week and I vaguely remember volunteering to have my legs waxed. Fortunately, due to STFS being a mobile free zone, there will be no pictures of my smooth legs. The keenness of our students to support a range of charities is testament to the levels of compassion they have.

We are also pleased to announce that students in Year 11 and Year 10 will have access to technology from half term. We have managed to salvage 100 iPads for Year 10s and Year 11 will have access to Chromebooks to support their studies. We have also identified how Year 7-9 will be able to access technology. We are working with a company call Freedom Technology, who organise and distribute Chromebooks directly to families. This new system will allow families to own the Chromebook at the end of the agreement. The cost to families will be equivalent to 30p per day, including insurance and warranties. The Chromebook and its functionality will enhance the learning and use feedback more effectively. In hindsight, the iPads' continual need for updating and the breakage rates meant that they were not a sustainable source of technology. Whilst we accept that this does incur a cost for families, we do feel this is the most practical and sustainable method of technology for the students. There will be an information evening regarding the system in the new year.

Our school library finally opened this half term. A huge amount of work has taken place to get all books logged on to the system and ready for the year ahead. In particular, I would like to thank Sophie Nelson, Sian Edgell and Jo Featonby for their phenomenal contribution in getting the library up and running. Classes and individuals are already using the facilities and I am really looking forward to the impact it will have on all learners at STFS.

In terms of staffing, I am also pleased to announce that we have been able to recruit two teachers of Science. Mr Matthews and Miss Clark will be joining the department in January. I am delighted to have such high quality additions to the current team. Unfortunately, we are still to recruit in Maths, due to a recent appointment leaving. We recognise that this has an impact on the quality of Maths lessons but be assured we are doing all that is necessary to resolve this situation. In Humanities we have also appointed Mr Day who has a wealth of experience in secondary education; we look forward to Mr Day joining us in January.

A number of school trips have taken place this half term. Year 12 Geography students visited Yorkshire as part of their research; our young carers spent the day at Willen, where they experienced archery and various water sports; some of our Year 11 and Year 13 students attended the careers fair in Aylesbury; and students in Year 13 History students visited the Black Country Museum.

## **Year 11 Information**

**Year 11- Study/revision support evening for parents – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018**

**Mocks start- 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

Year 11s have returned to school this half term with a very positive outlook. The quality of lessons has been excellent and the work ethic from the students has been commendable. However, next half term and the Mock exams are an opportunity for us to see who continues to work hard outside of school. At this stage, students should have a clear revision programme in place. To support Year 11s in their learning and revision we have decided to allocate them their own tutor groups. They started



the year in vertical tutor groups with Year 12 and 13 students. From half term, Year 11 students will be placed in Year 11 only tutor groups, where we can establish effective interventions to support all learners.

Finally, apologies for the length of this letter! I do feel that it is important to share with you some of our successes so far this academic year. There have been a number of other delights such as our work with Primary Schools and PE through Miss Coll, some excellent sporting results particularly in girls' football, the brilliant peer mentoring system for Year 7 students, and the revival of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. I could go on and on!

I would like to thank all of those involved with the school for the positive contribution they have made to a successful first half term. Please have a restful break and we look forward to seeing the students again on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October.

Yours faithfully



Neale Pledger

