



SIR THOMAS FREMANTLE SCHOOL

A CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS AGED 11-19

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23rd May 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re enrichment

We are writing to share with you a significant change to the school day from September 2019. As the school has developed, it has become painfully obvious that some aspects need to change as it evolves. Over the last two years we have seen decline in the effectiveness of the Enrichment hour at the end of the school day. As a result of this, the format of the Enrichment programme will be changing, and our day will finish at the earlier time of 3.30pm from September 2019.

Enrichment, of course, still has a significant part to play at STFS, and we want to be clear that Enrichment as a philosophy and ethos will stay a fundamental part of STFS life. We are simply changing how we do it and when we do it. The impact of the longer school day is having a detrimental effect on teaching and learning, and subsequently student outcomes. As it currently stands, the longer school day restricts our time and ability to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a school, we are keen to make our curriculum something special. Unfortunately, with the day finishing at 4.30pm, we remove a significant amount of time from teachers and staff to improve the quality of what we deliver. We want this to be the best school in the area, but to do this we need time to make the improvements.

Across the course of the week, the students are currently in school for an additional 6.5 hours. Across the course of the year, that is an additional 190 hours. By the time GCSEs come round, students are thoroughly exhausted and we have noticed over the last two years that more and more students are requesting to go home early, use Enrichment for revision or catch up with homework. We feel that the current Enrichment time can be better spent and therefore help all students improve their outcomes. Finishing at 3.30pm will mean that staff can run more rigorous, targeted after-school revision sessions for exam classes, our PE department can take part in a greater number of fixtures against local schools, and we can run clubs which allow students to participate with others of a similar mind set. An earlier finish will also allow dedicated time for teacher training and professional development. Fundamentally, it will improve the quality of what staff offer to our students.

Furthermore, we recognise the need to improve the quality and consistency of homework. We have always felt that, with a longer school day, students should not have arduous amounts of homework. However, it is evident that this is having a detrimental impact on student outcomes and the quality of their independent learning. By moving enrichment from the end of the day, all parents and carers will see a significant improvement in the quality and quantity of homework which will benefit the overall quality of learning.



Looking forward to September, we are already planning advanced Enrichment days and Enrichment themed weeks, alongside regular school clubs and fixtures. The concept of Enrichment remains a key part of what we do, and you will see throughout the coming academic year, a much more "enriching" Enrichment programme. Once the programme is finalised, we will of course share this with parents and carers. We want to assure parents and carers that an earlier finish of 3.30pm will not affect the curriculum or any teaching time. Students will still access 100 minutes of additional learning time across the week compared to other local schools.

One area of obvious concern is school transport. We have discussed the amended school day with bus providers and have assurances from them that the new finish time is something that can be accommodated. We will give you further details regarding the buses after the half term break.

We see this as a positive development for the long term future of Enrichment and the quality of teaching and learning at STFS. We will be working closely with the students over the coming weeks to ensure that we have an Enrichment programme that is fit for purpose and meets the needs of all. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or require further clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Neale Pledger
Headteacher

Paul Brown
Chair of Governors

