



SIR THOMAS FREMANTLE SCHOOL

A CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS AGED 11-19

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23rd October 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

An absolutely fantastic half term is drawing to an end. The start of the academic year is always quite a challenge and it does take a little while for all of us to settle in to the routines of the year. I am thoroughly delighted with the start that students at STFS have made. Students have been busy establishing new habits for the year ahead and this approach has meant for a very smooth start to the year and students' learning.

I write a little earlier this half term as I am out of school for the final week of the half term for an operation. My recovery is expected to take 10-14 days, so having this in the final week and with half term, my absence at school should be minimised. School will close on Friday 25th October for the half term and return on Monday 4th November.

The early part of the term saw us launch our biggest parent survey ever. We saw a fantastic response and some very sensible suggestions and comments. I genuinely believe that the success of STFS remains rooted in the improved and positive relationship we have with families and those linked with the school. Parent and carer feedback shows that we need to be clearer in our communication regarding how student work is marked and how families can support their child at home. We have made a big shift this year with the changing time of the school day; therefore, an area that needs to improve and develop is homework; some parents saying there is too much homework and others saying there is not enough. As a school, we need to ensure the balance is correct without losing the quality of what is being set. We have created a clear HW timetable which defines by year group the number of minutes expected to be spent on HW. We are constantly reviewing HW and will continue to make improvements throughout the year. The timetables will be shared prior to the half term break.

We will also be rolling out a facility where parents and carers can track their child's attendance, behaviour, HW and reporting. We hope to be able to do this prior to the Christmas break. This would give you real time feedback about your child's progress and help inform what support they need at home. Further information to follow.

At STFS, we continue to recognise the importance of student well-being and mental health. We recently held a mufti day and this time all proceeds have been directed to the well-being room at STFS. We raised over £1000 and are delighted that staff and students recognise the importance of such a facility. We are determined to have this venue in place by the June half term. Many thanks to those who have been able to donate money and or time to support the cause.



A number of school trips have taken place this half term. Year 12 Geography students visited Yorkshire as part of their research, there has been a rewards trip to Willen, Yr 11 students have been off to visit University, and Year 12 and Year 13 spent a humbling four days in Poland where they visited Auschwitz concentration camp. Year 7 have visited Warwick Castle to support their learning in their history lessons. On all trips, our students and your children have been an absolute credit to STFS. Their behaviour and maturity is a testament to their values. You can keep up to date with school news on the school website.

Sports fixtures have continued at a prolific rate. STFS students have represented the school superbly in rugby, cross country and netball. I cannot commend our sports teams enough. They always represent the qualities of competitive sport impeccably. A high level of fairness, equality and maintaining their integrity at all times is always evident, even when they face those who do not value the same ethics of sport.

We continue to work with the Bucks CC regarding the empty field that sits at the Winslow Centre and also county run school transport. We remain hopeful that Bucks see sense and do not continue to charge us for usage of the empty field. With regards to the two Langston and Tasker buses, we finally received an apology from Bucks regarding these two buses. They accept that they failed to inform the bus company of the time change, despite this being done in May. Bucks CC have said this should finally be resolved in November. Whilst I appreciate that this doesn't help those who are on the buses, the apology goes some way in us moving forward, and Bucks accepting their accountability for their mistake. I hope that those affected on the two buses have received an apology too. As I stated to Bucks CC last week, I will not rest until students at STFS are treated equally like their peers across the county.

Finally, we also welcomed over 500 people to our open events at the beginning of the month. Many parents commented on the excellent relationships between staff and students, the positive working environment and the sheer pride of the students and staff in presenting the school. Particular mention should go to the Year 7s who presented to parents in the hall. Vinny, Humna, Leia and Harrison did a fantastic job in sharing their experiences of Year 7 so far.

Thank you for your continued support throughout this half term.

Yours faithfully



Neale Pledger

