



Starbank School

31st March 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian/Carers,

My reflections.

As I reflect on the term that has passed, I have been very impressed with how everyone, pupils, parents and staff alike have adapted to the challenging circumstances since January. We started the year in lockdown and quickly reverted to on line learning. For eight weeks, school was 'closed' and the challenge of remote learning became a reality. Starbank responded exceptionally well and replicated the school timetable with 6 live lessons a day delivered via MS Teams for all our pupils in year 7-11. Overall attendance, on line by the end of lockdown had reached 88%. This was enhanced by 200 laptops being loaned out during the period of lockdown. On line behaviour of pupils was excellent. Support was given to teachers in terms of weekly professional development to introduce new ways of assertive monitoring and delivery of lessons. All pupils were supported with safe and well checks as well as activities on safer internet, the promotion of mental health and well-being through character education. There was an increase in pupils who attended school during lockdown and the website was used to promote well-being resources and signpost support. I was immensely proud of every one of their efforts during this time. Thank you to all parents for your support. It is extremely important that the school, together with its staff and pupils work closely with its community.

As we returned on the 8th March, it was uplifting to hear happy voices and laughter once again as children were reunited with their friends. The continued and improved 'year group bubble' which included reduced transition between lessons has benefited all, pupils and staff alike and has improved the school climate. Expectations were reintroduced as well as the introduction of the new Starbank anthem. It has been great to have everyone back for the four weeks leading up the Easter break.

Keeping our pupils safe, happy and well.

Our Covid-19 preventative measures have proven successful and there have been no incidences of Covid-19 across the school since our return to school. Effective close-contact monitoring and swift responses when called upon will ensure that only a minimal number of students and staff will need to isolate, if result of being in close contact with effected peers and colleagues is reported.

Reporting positive COVID-19 cases including track and trace over the holiday period.

As Principal I am responsible for supporting Public Health England by facilitating contact tracing for 6 days after the final day of teaching. In the event of a positive case being identified between Thursday 1st April – Monday 5th April, school will contact families to inform them and explain they must begin a period of self-isolation for ten days from the point of the call.

This is not the news anyone wants over the holiday; I am asking parents to be extra vigilant as we approach the last couple of days in school. Thank you for your continued support and **please help us to reduce the spread of cases: do not send your child to school if they or any member of your family is showing symptoms.**

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Part of Star

During the Easter break may I ask that parents are aware of the following information from the Department for Education (DFE):

1. If your child develops symptoms over the holiday, you must book a test immediately.
2. If your child receives a positive test result over the holiday, (between 1st April and 5th April), you must inform the school immediately by email: covidresults@starbank.staracademies.org

Pupils should continue, with your consent, to use their self-testing kits twice per week during the holidays.

These tests will have been given out by respective Heads of Year to those students who have already consented. As parents of school-age children, you are entitled to receive free kits too. These can be obtained from your local testing centre or from your employer. Testing is strongly urged so that any instance of Covid-19 can be quickly identified and transmission stalled. Thank you for your cooperation on this matter.

Achieving Academic Excellence.

Year 11 and Easter School:

I want to continue to publicly recognise the continued maturity, hard-work, tenacity, resilience and independence that has been shown by Year 11 pupils over the past term, under circumstances more challenging than anyone could have imagined.

As a group, Year 11 have embraced the return to school whole-heartedly and have been superbly mature with regards their focus in lesson, their attendance and engagement at additional intervention lessons, their conduct and levity through their Pre-Public Examination period and with their conduct around school as role models to our younger pupils. As they begin to look ahead towards Post 16 and complete their applications for their next places elsewhere, it is important that we recognise their continued efforts to date which have been fantastic.

Year 11 are now aware that there will be no final external examinations. All pupils and parents have received communication on how Teacher Assessed Grades will be reached and how they will be submitted. I want to remind parents of all Year 11 pupils that there will be two more assessment periods; one in April and the second in May. To support this final push for Year 11, Easter school will be in place over the two week break. Once again, the information for this has been communicated to all. Year 11 must capitalise on every opportunity to develop and further their potential – the harder they work now, the greater the reward in the summer.

We maintain exceedingly high expectations for Year 11 because we know that they will meet our expectations but more importantly they understand their reward in August.

Virtual Parents' Evening:

During lockdown, we gave every parent the opportunity to meet with their child's form tutor to discuss the most recent report which was sent through the post to all parents. We now want to share with you some additional dates where you will get the opportunity to meet via MS Teams the teachers for each subject. More detail will follow in due course but the following are dates for your diary:

Year Group	Date	Time
Year 10	Thursday 29 th April	3.30pm-5.45pm
Year 8	Tuesday 11 th May	3.30pm-5.45pm
Year 9	Wednesday 16 th June	3.30pm-5.45pm
Year 7	Wednesday 7 th July	3.30pm-5.45pm

Expectations on returning to school on Monday 19th April 2021.

Expectations on punctuality to school:

All pupils are due back in school on Monday 19th April. They should arrive and attend line-up as normal, according to the usual schedule. A prompt arrival and effective line-up allows pupils to enter the building on time. Expected arrival and entry times are:

- Year 10 and Year 11: **arrive 08:15, enter school 08:20**
- Year 9 and Year 8: **arrive 08:20, enter school 08:25**
- Year 7: **arrive 08:25, enter school 08:30**

Expectations on attitude, conduct and behaviour:

It is important that pupils arrive at school with the correct attitude and maturity. School is here to help pupils progress from children into young adults, and that includes developing individual maturity, independence and enough self-respect to make their progress their primary focus.

We expect all pupils to:

- Arrive punctually to lesson.
- Ensure they are prepared to learn – that they are responsible for their own equipment and books,
- Maintain focus and engage well with all tasks set, to best support their own progress.
- Treat all stakeholders, staff and pupils alike, with the same respect they wish for themselves.

By maintaining these behaviours as detailed above, pupils will develop the habits of successful people and will ensure their best chances of success. **It is important pupils accept that they are responsible for their own behaviour and conduct within school.**

Expectations on school uniform:

I would like to thank parents and pupils who make every effort to keep to our uniform regulations. Please see below for guidance on our school uniform. Pupils currently not in the correct PE kit **must wear plain black top and jogging bottoms. Retail opens on the 12th April and it is an expectation that pupils are in the correct kit even if at this stage it is with a plain black top and black jogging bottoms.**



A continued reminder that for pupils who are still wearing the previous Starbank uniform, that the school still has available stock for purchase at reduced prices.

Summer Term 2021 – Key dates:

- Monday 19th April – Return after the Easter Break
- Monday 3rd May – May day, Bank Holiday
- Monday 31st May-Friday 4th June -Whitsun half term break
- Friday 16th July - closure after school for the end of the academic year.

‘Eid ul Fitr 1442 * Thursday 13th May and Friday 14th May 2021 *

* Please note that Eid dates may be revised slightly depending upon sighting of the moon. The school will communicate with all parents in due course regarding religious observation days.

Farewell.

It is always sad when we wave goodbye to colleagues. This term Ms Donohoe (Deputy Head Teacher) will be moving on, she has secured a new role with the University of Birmingham. Mr Inman (Head of History) has secured a Director of Humanities role in a West Midlands school. Whilst we are truly saddened to see them go, we know that they are both excited by the fresh challenges of a new role and we wish them every success in their new positions. We also say goodbye to Mr Ayub (ICT technician). We thank them all for their commitment and dedication to Starbank during their time with us.

A final word from the Principal.

I am looking forward to the summer term as we continue on our school improvement journey. Work will continue on teaching and learning, which is improving rapidly. This will assure that academic standards and with increased intervention, will enable pupils to make up lost ground. I am confident that the latest assessments will reflect the significant gains pupils have made since returning in March. I will update you further with our plans for the future which I am confident will have a positive impact on the academic success and personal development of your child.

I wish you all a happy, safe and restful Easter break. May I also take this opportunity to wish our Muslim community at Starbank, who will be observing Ramadan with their families, a Blessed Ramadan.

I look forward to seeing all pupils on Monday 19th April.

Yours sincerely,

Gaetano Ferrante