



STAMFORD

Acceleration Plan

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Introduction from the Principal

March 2021

Dear Parents

We are all tremendously excited about seeing our Stamfordians return from Monday 8th March. You will find together with this letter a pack which details our Acceleration Plan, so that we can quickly and safely move our Stamfordians back to the busy exciting, exhilarating and engaging lives they led and will lead again.

The online programme has been strong, well delivered, well understood and worked on by Stamfordians, and well supported by parents. Although there will undoubtedly be gaps in knowledge, the Stamford staff at every level are real experts at seeking this out and making sure that we help each student to develop in those areas where they need more support. The priority for all our teachers is to ensure that over time Stamfordians are in the very best place possible academically. Online learning has been more tricky with very young year groups. For these pupils, in particular, we are building a programme to nurture and build back over the next term and beyond to make sure that these youngest Stamfordians are advantaged as much as possible. We have always been proud of our expert staff, small class sizes, and excellent support at every level of the Stamford Schools, and all of these strengths are really going to come into their own in the weeks and months ahead: your children will have the support they need as individuals, at whatever level they will require.

There has been some coverage in the media about changes to holiday dates and extra academic classes. At Stamford, we will not be making any changes to our holiday dates. Our Easter break, unlike many independent schools, is only two weeks long anyway. Nor are we putting on extra academic classes during the summer. The consistency of our online provision means that our Stamfordians have worked very hard throughout lockdown, and we do not believe that extra time in school is in their best interests: any gaps in their knowledge will be dealt with organically and smoothly in the periods that they are in school. We have four weeks now and then a further 12 weeks in the summer to help your sons and daughters get used to school and life again. We know it will take them some time to get going again, and we will be making the most of every single minute in school.

In speaking with my colleagues, however, I am less worried about the academic aspects of the return. For our children, what they have been bereft of is social contact, engagement with others, and learning together and indeed, all the benefits of being a student at an independent school. I am worried about how this period might have affected their mental health, but all my experience tells me that children are resilient, and we will help them with this resilience where it is needed. You will find information on this and myriad other aspects of school life in the Acceleration Plan, including strategies that are immediately practical as well as those that will support us all in moving forwards.

Our priority for the next few weeks is for all of us to remember just how happy we are at school, to begin again on what we all enjoy doing, to solve anything we are worried about, and to ensure our Stamfordians are oiled, serviced, running smoothly and in tip top condition to take on the challenges ahead.

Finally, you will see a number of changes and development announcements in the schools over the course of the next year. We have used this time to plan an even better future for your children and when the time comes, I would like to talk with you about this.

Our five aims as the Stamford Schools are that:

- We will equip our students with the skills, characteristics and qualities to lead happy, meaningful and successful lives.
- We will develop in them the ability to analyse, to think for themselves and to interpret the world around them.
- We will teach them to embrace technology and innovation wherever it can support and enhance our lives and our planet.
- We will teach them how to find happiness through their friendships, families and relationships.
- We will ensure they leave us as confident, autonomous young adults, self-sufficient, independent, and ready to take their next steps in the world.

And together, we will go to work on all of these from Monday. It will be brilliant to be back together as a community, and we all look forward to seeing your children and you again.

Yours sincerely
Will Phelan
Principal

Stamford Junior School

It is important that we recognise there has been a wide range of experiences for both children and adults because of the pandemic and therefore we will need to embrace a flexible approach that reflects this.

We have been encouraged and impressed by the commitment that children have demonstrated towards their learning during this latest period of remote schooling and the extraordinary resilience that they have exhibited. These are characteristics which must be praised and built upon.

Pastoral

We understand that children have missed being in the school environment, playing with their friends, playing sport together, undertaking practical work together and the routines of school life: essentially the physical and practical, whilst being together. As a result this should be our prime focus as children return to school.

Teachers will support children in revisiting the routines of school life, the expectations of school, the relationships that they have in school and opening up discussions surrounding the ways in which we must look after each other.

We will focus on relationship building as we encourage the children to adapt back into the routine of our school community.

We do not want to add pressure to any child by making them feel as though they have gaps in their learning and need to 'catch up'. We have time, and we need to take time to do this properly and with integrity.

We have a strong pastoral system of support, and class teachers will be encouraged to directly teach about mental health and building relationships. Where there are concerns, our DHP will work to assess these concerns and we have further pastoral support, drawing and talking interventions available. Further to that where a significant need is identified we have a school Play Therapist and a Counsellor who will put a plan of support together.

Academic

We learnt from our assessments of children across all age groups last year that, after a significant period of time learning online, there was not a huge loss or gap in learning as a result. We are encouraged by this and feel strongly that we will not focus on perceived gaps in learning; rather that we will look for evidence of where children are, what they have learnt and where we need to go with their learning moving forward.

Where there is an identified need, we will look to input additional resources. For example, we recognise that children in the Early Years and KS1 have experienced a significant change to the way in which they would usually learn in a school environment.

As a result, we will put in place an additional teacher to support the learning of children across this age group from March.

This reflects the need for children at this age in particular to be learning in a collaborative, hands on, experiential manner. Whilst the online provision we believe has been excellent, we recognise that for some children they will need time now to practice, apply and consolidate the skills-based learning that has taken place.

During the first week back where teachers will support children as they settle, we are undertaking a whole school STEM focus and embracing Science week, with the theme of 'Innovating for the future'. This provides us with an authentic opportunity to connect as a whole school community and for the children in their classes, to work in a curious, collaborative and enjoyable way.

We look forward to embracing all Sporting and Arts opportunities as the children settle, and see these areas of school life as vital for children to recover from the pandemic.

Drama

- Pre-rehearsal material has been sent out to students for the Y6 Spotlight Production 'Pantastic!' Rehearsals will begin upon our return, following school COVID-secure restrictions. It will be filmed after May half term and edited for release on Stream.
- September 2021 – Mrs C Hill, Head of Performance will be working in the Junior School and putting in place a new drama programme.

Sport

- Saturday provision for Saturdays until Easter (13th, 20th, 27th March) – bubbled program for different age groups each Saturday.
- Swimming will resume for Year 1 upwards.
- Students in Years 5 and 6 will be able to opt in to a sports programme for one slot each week during the Easter holidays.

Outdoor Education

- Mr Smith and Mr Nicholson will support additional outdoor provision.
- Students will benefit from a new Wigloo (willow igloo) and bell tent enabling greater use of the outdoor area.

Co-curricular

There will be a full co-curricular programme in place, running along the same guidelines that we were following in the Autumn term. Ensuring the fullest experience possible for the children, whilst ensuring social distancing and limited grouping of children where possible.

A distinguished group of child development experts have recently written to Gavin Williamson and appealed for an emphasis on play, mental health and wellbeing as we emerge from lockdown "There is understandable concern about children's education, but children will not learn effectively if their mental health is poor," the letter says. "Social interaction, play, physical activity and good mental health needs to come first."

† ME SPEDE



Stamford High School and Stamford School

Academic

During both lockdown periods, the full academic curriculum continued with minimal timetable changes, other than the planned Wellbeing afternoons.

The second lockdown has seen 'live' lessons with the teacher as very much the norm. Non-attendance at lessons has been swiftly followed up. Teams had provided a robust solution and enabled easy class engagement, setting of tasks and provision of feedback. Reporting and feedback have continued, adapted when appropriate. Online Parents' Evenings have been a particular success.

The options process has continued as usual, including a Virtual Options Evening. Online submission of choices worked very successfully, and all Year 11 students have had 1-2-1 interviews via Teams to discuss their Sixth Form choices.

Online academic clinics been offered in a range of subjects, and the use of recorded sessions has enabled those working abroad to have equal access to provision.

- Support clinics will resume at lunchtimes, after school and on Saturday mornings
- We will carry out a 'Pupil Attitude to Self and School Survey' to identify and address concerns pupils may have with regard to their own learning
- We will continue to develop our pupil academic mentoring programme to provide support for KS4 and KS5 pupils.
- The internal examination timetable has been adjusted to ensure maximum teaching time for all students once we return to school.

Pastoral

Covid-19 has had a significant effect on everyone's mental health and wellbeing. All of the support measures currently in place, including those introduced during the pandemic, will continue. In addition, we will support students on their immediate return to School through the following:

- We will offer targeted support to those students and families who may struggle with the return to School on Monday 8 March.
- We will offer additional tutor time on the first day back, with a focus on teamwork.
- Additional counselling provision will remain in place to the end of this academic year, including an increase to five sessions per student where required.
- The SES nurses will offer wellbeing appointments.
- Head of Year and student meetings will be relocated to classrooms, so that these can take place face to face whilst maintaining safe social distancing.
- Students will be invited to create supportive documentation for their peers, with a focus on positivity.
- We will be flexible in the PSHE programme so that we can use topics to address the issues most pertinent to students in each year group.
- We will offer mindfulness sessions for students that we think will particularly benefit from them.
- The pastoral and academic teams are working together to ensure that students are sufficiently challenged and stimulated but not over-stretched, during the transition back into normal school life.
- The co-curricular programme will have a specific focus supporting on student wellbeing.
- Additional support will be in place as necessary for any new students, who may have experienced significant disruption to their teaching and learning prior to joining us.
- A student wellbeing committee will be established.

From September, we will:

- Continuing with those measures listed above as required.
- Encourage engagement with Thrive SES (from September, known as the Phoenix Project) focusing on five ways to wellbeing, with the programme delivered by staff and students outside curriculum time.
- Officially welcome the Pastoral Puppy.
- Work with local counselling services to increase the counselling services the School can offer.
- Involve the SES nurses in the delivery of pastoral topics wherever it is beneficial.
- Working jointly with local care homes, as part of outreach and as an element of the Phoenix Project, helping both student and patient wellbeing.
- Strengthen the pastoral elements in induction for new students, with a particular focus on boarders.

Design & Technology

Years 7 to 9

- Students to work on practical projects, regaining the time lost during lockdown, in order to experience a wide range of material areas.
- Y7/8 Engineering club (SS) to take place at lunchtimes.
- Y9 students to focus on skills required to support the transition to GCSE.

Years 10 & 11

- Y10 students to continue to work on Specialist Technical Knowledge, focusing on practical skills missed during lockdown.
- Y11 students to focus on NEA until deadline with lunchtime support sessions and after school workshop sessions for students to complete practical outcomes.

Years 12 & 13

- Y12 students to continue to work on theory with a practical emphasis.
- Y13 students to focus on NEA until deadline with lunchtime support sessions and after school workshop sessions for students to complete practical outcomes.

Additional planned activities

- Interhouse STEM challenge
- External speakers
- External design competitions

Art

Years 7 to 9

- Schemes of Work have been continued across both schools and adapted over lockdown to allow flexibility of outcome across multiple media. On their return pupils will have an opportunity to focus on their media experimentation across clay/print/traditional media.
- A year group lunch club will be offered, although with limited numbers for safety reasons

Years 10 to 13

- Pupils will continue the development of their coursework final piece.
- 1:1 support tutorials will continue for all pupils championing individual portfolio development.
- Essay and written work will continue to be supported via Teams assignments.
- Written feedback and guidance will continue via Teams assignments allowing for quick turnaround, as well as more involved feedback sheets that detail specific areas for individuals to focus on.
- Gallery space and sixth form Art rooms have been transformed into a socially distanced workspace for Y13 to prioritise development of A-level final pieces.
- Pupils have been supported in developing both a physical and digital portfolio to mitigate the impact of Ofqual requirements for submission and COVID restrictions on physical work.

Clubs

- The department has been zoned into club spaces for Y10-13 allowing for the continuation of after school support in bubbles, x3 evenings per week 16.00-17.30. Media and materials have been separated and allocated to groups.
- Saturday sessions 09.30-12.30 allow pupils much needed contact time with specialist staff and equipment (presses/clay tools etc.).
- Studio access at lunch for Y10-13 x3 per week will allow pupils to reclaim practical time with specialist equipment.

Scholars

- SS Y9 and aspiring scholars are currently working on their digital portfolio. 20 mixed media challenges have been set. Teams meetings/conversations continue to support this work.
- SHS Scholars workshops will resume after school to extend the Art scholars in years 9-13.

Music

- IMT lessons have continued in full over the lockdown and will continue as normal when we return from Monday 8 March, with minor amendments as required to accommodate return-to-school arrangements.
- In line with ongoing safety arrangements, we will continue to work in the co-curricular groups that we established last term.
- We will continue to offer online concerts, as we did last term. We will record these on Thursdays for release on Fridays.
- We will continue to utilise the Trinity and ABRSM online exams where necessary, but will return to live exams hosted at school as soon as it is possible to do so.
- Chapel will start to record again to support Rev Goodman's excellent Chapel services.

Drama

- Online rehearsals will continue for the Y7-13 Dance Showcase.
 - Dances will be filmed solo, in pairs, or small groups upon our return, following school COVID-secure restrictions. The Showcase will be edited for release on Stream.
- Online rehearsals will continue this half term for the Y7-9 SS & SHS Play (Saturn Base Nova).
 - This project is being devised, rehearsed and filmed entirely remotely. It will be edited for release on Stream.
- Online rehearsals will continue this half term and next, for the Y10-11 Plays (SS Murder on the Orient Express, SHS The Marvellous Mellow Melodrama).
 - We hope to film both of these projects in school after Easter, following COVID-secure restrictions. It will be edited for release on Stream.
- The Y9-13 Drama Scholars are continuing work on their remote performance/design challenges. This term's project focuses on them changing the genre of famous works.

Sport

Guidance is still awaited on a number of key points, and further updates will follow as additional information is released.

Games and co-curricular sport will run close to normal. Short-term limitations include:

- Basketball and badminton are limited while the SS Sports Hall floor is replaced
- Swimming will operate under a staged return over the first two weeks
- Contact sport (ie rugby) will not resume until after Easter
- External paid clubs (ie fencing) will not resume until after Easter

Note: the small Gyms at SS and SHS are currently being utilised for the testing programme

Saturday provision for Saturdays until Easter (13th, 20th, 27th March)

- SS – bubbled program for all age groups
- SHS – bubbled program for all age groups

Fixtures and events

- Students at SS and SHS will be able to opt in to a sports programme for one slot each week during the Easter holidays.
- We anticipate normal Saturday fixtures for summer sports.
- We hope to run a small number of fixtures for some winter sports for Sixth Form students
- Sports days are planned for the last three Saturdays of the Summer term
- We hope to run the Burghley Run – date TBC

Combined Cadet Force

- CCF will recommence on Friday 12th March for SS cadets, alternating weekly thereafter between SS and SHS cadets.
- Weekend and Easter weapon training courses will be running, and further information will follow in due course.

Outdoor Education

- An after school Bushcraft club will run as a taster for Years 7, 8 and 9 (varying nights) until Easter.
- Outdoor space at Chabonell Spinney, Burghley, has been secured to enable the senior schools to access outdoor sessions.
- We are working with Langdyke Trust Nature Reserves to create additional local opportunities.



STAMFORD

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