Spring Newsletter
2020

A HAPPY EASTER
Dear Parents/Carers,

This letter is nearly Coronavirus free!

Undoubtedly for myself, staff and pupils, the highlight of the term has been the ducklings. They have provided an air of awe and wonder at Drapers and it has been delightful to see pupils, of all ages, excited by them hatching as well as watching them, the ducklings that is, swimming in the sink! They have also shown an interest in science lessons whilst sitting quietly at the back of the class!

In order to ensure we are maintaining an outstanding provision we held an external review a few weeks ago, which was led by senior leaders from other local education establishments. I am delighted to report that the review found that high standards are being maintained and that we have addressed the areas for development identified by the last Ofsted inspection. I am sure that you will echo my thanks to all of STARS’ staff for continuing to work hard to ensure your child has access to an excellent education.

I have been thrilled to hear about the successful applications of our year 11 pupils to further education establishments or apprenticeships. They had all been working terrifically hard and supporting each other. I would encourage all pupils, including year 11, to continue applying themselves in order to be properly prepared for the new academic year.

The coffee mornings organised by Nadia have now been handed over to Nicola but Nadia will still drop in! It is a really important forum which offers a safe space for parents to meet and not be isolated by anxieties which are often shared by other parents. The mornings also provide opportunities for parents to have their voice heard and contribute to our improvement plans for the school as well as learn about what we provide at the centre for your child. Thank you to everyone who has supported this to become a worthwhile monthly event.

This term we have started a group for girls with ASD to support their social skills development. This group is working on a mural for the cabin and I am looking forward to the end product, albeit later than anticipated.

If there is anything more we can do to support you and your family then please let me know.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a safe and:

Best Wishes,

Beverley Williamson
To all our year 11 pupils,

We know this is a time of uncertainty for you all at the moment and that many of you may feel you have missed a rite of passage. At this point we would like to reassure you that however grades will be awarded the Government has pledged that no child will be disadvantaged as a result of cancelled examinations or partial closures.

Although the Government have, just today, released guidance about the Public Examinations, I will need time to interpret the guidance and work with the Headteachers of all of the school’s in the borough. As a very rough summary of the guidance for you, it looks like this will be done on teacher assessment.

For the time being the work you are completing on line could go toward part of an evidence portfolio to support the grades you have been awarded by your teacher’s assessments and it also continues to develop your independent study. What we can still be sure of is that as you move through the different levels of study and into post 16 the emphasis will be on self-directed learning so rest assured you are developing vital skills at this time.

Finally, we would also like to reassure you that despite not being at school at the moment and possibly missing out on year 11 end of year celebrations, we will arrange a time for you meet up here, sign t-shirts and celebrate the end of you high school once life returns to normal. In the meantime, well done to those of you who have been completing the work set online.

Yours faithfully

Beverley Williamson
Headteacher

Hot off the press: GCSEs, AS and A level awarding: summer 2020

Please see the following link:


I will be liaising with Headteachers across the borough to ensure STARS interprets the guidance consistently with the other schools in the borough. I will advise pupils and parents as soon as this has been agreed.

Public Examinations (GCSE and technical awards)

We have been informed that it is unlikely that Ofqual will release a statement in relation to the Public Examinations and awarding of grades this week. As soon as we receive any information this will of course be shared with you and your son/daughter.

Once we have received the guidance from Ofqual, we hope to be in a position to share with you further information about the grades that are expected to be calculated for Year 11.
Online learning during partial closure

Please continue to ensure that your child engages fully in the educational packages that have been provided. STARS, as with all secondary schools in the borough, are monitoring attendance and engagement during term time.

It is expected that pupils access Google classroom during school hours and are making use of the times that teachers are available for feedback:

- 10.00 – 10.45 Maths
- 11.00 – 11.45 Science
- 12.00 – 12.45 English
- 13.00- 13.45 PSHE on Wednesday only

A 10 question trivia quiz is set at 09.30 as follows:

- Monday – Science
- Wednesday – English
- Friday – Maths

It is very clear from the medical professionals that it is important to establish a routine, including learning, at home. However, if your child does not engage then we will continue to follow this up to identify if there is anything we need to be doing to support you support your child. Routine will also aid a smooth transition when returning to school or transitioning to college.

In carrying out our duty of care to ensure that we are satisfied that your child is safe at home we must, at least, have evidence that pupils are engaging with programmes that have been provided and are communicating with at least one member of staff. If this is not happening, then we will take further action to ensure we fulfil our duty of care. Again we are following the same protocols being adhered in all schools.

For those that have attended lessons and submitted work of an appropriate standard we have set up a reward scheme. There are several pupils that have achieved the required number of points for a certificate and reward already and they will hear soon about this. Well Done!
Year 10. This term, Year 10 have been following the EDEXCEL GCSE course, covering both Foundation and Higher expectations. This means we can keep our options open for as long as possible, as to which course individual pupils will follow. Currently, we are working through all things to do with pure number – indices, reciprocals, irrational numbers and standard form – but always with an eye to developing our problem solving strategies, and having fun.

Year 11. Both Foundation and Higher groups have been working very hard, consolidating their understanding, and preparing for the GCSE. We are nearing the end of the course, with just a few topics to cover. All pupils have been given revision books, guides and texts. Please remind them to use them – and also to log on to Seneca.  

KS3. This term, the two KS3 groups have been concentrating on developing their skills in proportional reasoning, logic and extending their skills on all things to do with angles. This involves lots of strategic thinking and problem solving, and without exception, all pupils have risen to the challenge!

The maths department continues in its quest to make maths fun, interesting and relevant, and as a result remains a very popular subject. We predict great things for our current Year 11 s in their maths GCSE.
Ducklings

For British Science Week, we had five very special guests! The Science department was buzzing with excited pupils and staff, as we observed five ducklings hatching, and grow within a short period.

Names were nominated by pupils and staff, and assigned to each duckling. They were Chandler Bong, Princess Lequfa, Adam, Aurora and Erik. Although staff proposed the name Bev (named after our wonderful Headteacher) for one of the ducklings, this was over-ruled by the pupils.

Thank you to all who volunteered to look after the ducklings overnight. I’m sure they felt extremely pampered! We will sorely miss them.
Zoolab

As part of Science enrichment this term, the Science department had booked workshop sessions delivered by the animal handling company, Zoolab.

The ‘Build a Dinosaur’ workshop was delivered to our KS3 pupils. This fascinating workshop provided some hands-on evolutionary clues as pupils got hands-on with evolutionary changes and adaptations first hand. Pupils investigated how animal senses and characteristics have developed and adapted over evolutionary time. This workshop combined scientific working and imagination to uncover the big ideas of science and stimulate keen interest in young minds.

The Year 10s participated in the ‘Predators, Prey and Food Chains’ workshop. In this workshop, pupils looked at feeding connections (what-eats-what) in an ecological community. Using the ZooLab animals, they discussed herbivores, carnivores and omnivores, and learnt how to classify non-living and living things. Pupils discovered where energy comes from and how the consumer resource system can cause the disruption of a food web.

The Year 11 pupils were taken on an exciting journey through the rainforest, and had the opportunity to get hands-on with real rainforest animals. They learnt all about the different rainforest layers that these animals live in, who and what they eat and how they’re coming under threat.

All three Zoolab workshop sessions were well received by our pupils.
English

World Book Day
This term saw the celebration of World Book Day at STARS. Both pupils and staff took part in the celebration of all things literary! Staff were asked about books that changed their lives and shared these with pupils as part our reading fiesta. Thank you to everyone who dressed up or shared their favourite book with us.

Macbeth RSC Live!
STARS were fortunate enough to be able to enjoy a live screening of Shakespeare's Macbeth performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company on Thursday 5th March. Years 8, 9, 10 and 11 were invited to join the screening of the play about Macbeth the 'dead butcher and his fiend like queen'. It was a great opportunity for KS4 to embrace the beauty of Shakespeare's language in preparation for their GCSE; and for KS3 to engage with the text that we studied at the start of the year.

Premises News

Accessible Toilet
Thanks to a generous grant from the Screwfix Foundation we have been able to refurbish our Accessible Toilet. This has included widening the door so that all wheelchairs can now use the toilet along with ensuring the door allows access if a person falls behind it. We have also installed an alarm system.

Outside Gym
Thanks to a very generous grant from St James Palace Foundation we have been able to install a gym as seen in many parks. There are 6 pieces of equipment there to encourage pupil's physical activity. Pupils now have access to a MUGA, gym, table tennis and other activities during their breaks.

Greening STARS
We now have motion sensors in our toilets which means that both the lights and fans are on for shorter times reducing the amount of electricity we use and also maintenance costs.

We are now recycling crisp packets, so please send empty packs in as this enables us to raise money.

During the Easter holidays all the remaining non LED lighting in the school is being replaced. This is due to a very generous grant from the Wolfson Foundation. There will be more on this in the summer newsletter.

We are also investigating ways to control our heating system so that we do not waste energy and hence reduce our bills.

There are plans in the pipeline for a change to the exterior of the school over the summer holidays and the creation of a sensory room at Easter.
For our offsite sports sessions this term, we have been going to Sutton Sports Village to take part in a rotation of sports. The sports we are covering this term are football, rounders, basketball, netball, tennis as well as other general skill-based activities and games. Each session begins with a warm up to prepare the pupils for the session which focuses on communication, motor skills, and team work. After that, we typically move on to small sport-related games which help to develop skills needed for the main sport of the session. These can focus on things such as passing, shooting, defending, or movement. The sessions then finish with a larger match based activity to encourage a bit of friendly competition, a chance to show of skills that have been learnt, and to improve self-confidence in that particular sport.
**Well Being**

You may wish to look at the following websites which do not require signing up for:

The Big Life journal: [https://biglifejournal.com/](https://biglifejournal.com/)
This site has lots of weekly printable growth mindset activities. They also run a podcast.

FREE guided meditations can be found on [https://chopra.com/articles/guided-meditations](https://chopra.com/articles/guided-meditations)

**Online Warning:**
As more people start to go online to look for things to do - they will find plenty of freebies but may have to sign up using their email address. Some companies may use this as a marketing tool with sales and limited time offers to buy etc. If you do want to sign up for something it may be worth setting up a different email address to receive freebies.

**A new Mental Health Emergency Service has opened at Springfield Hospital, Tooting**

The ‘Orchid’ Mental Health Emergency Service has opened at Springfield Hospital and cares for patients with mental health problems who would otherwise have had to go to A&E. Patients of all ages are accepted, including children.

During the current crisis, it’s vital that people with mental health difficulties get the care they need. This ward will free up staff in the busy A&E departments and enable people to be treated in a calm, supportive environment.

The ward will help people presenting in crisis who have a wide range of mental health problems, ranging from serious mental illness to psychological difficulties in the context of physical illness. They will also be able to treat any minor injuries such as cuts. Patients cannot just turn up at the facility or self-refer. Patients and their friends and family should first contact their community provider, if it is outside their working hours and the young people is in a mental health crisis they should then they can call the Trusts screening line.

**0800 028 8000** which is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week
People presenting at A&E with primary mental health issues and no serious medical conditions will also be directed to call the number.
Free School Meal Vouchers

Those of you entitled to Free School Meals, will continue to receive vouchers from STARS via email to cover the next two weeks of the Easter break. If you have any problems receiving the voucher please contact the school via email at tuition@starservice.org.uk

After Easter the Government will be running a Free School Meal voucher scheme and for pupils who are still dual registered with their mainstream school, this will be arranged through that school, as we are unable to access the scheme for dual registered pupil. Your child’s school should be in touch to let you know the process, but please let us know if you do not receive anything by Friday 24th April. Most pupils who are on roll at STARS are dual registered but a few, usually year 11s are single registered. For any single registered pupils we will still continue to supply vouchers on a fortnightly basis.

Need support or advice?

If you are feeling low or unsafe, it is important that you let someone know. Sometimes it can be difficult to talk to friends and family so here are some other places you can contact for advice or to talk:

Childline – 0800 1111
Samaritans – 116 123
Hopeline – 0800 068 4141
School nurse duty line - 020 8770 5409
NSPCC – 0808 800 5000 and www.nspcc.org.uk
CAMHS – 0203 513 3800
Off The Record: www.talkofftherecordonline.org
Kooth: www.kooth.com
Selfharm UK: www.selfharmuk.org
Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
Papyrus: www.papyrus.org

Keeping up to date

Everyone is keen to keep up-to date with what is happening in the world at the moment – and it is easy to get worried about stories that you see. It’s even more important to make sure that you are getting your news from a reliable source (such as the BBC, who check the facts in their news stories) and not just from social media. Make sure that you read any news stories in full – and not just the headlines. There are some useful tips about spotting fake news on the link below:

https://www.childnet.com/blog/fake-news-4-quick-checks
We have had a very busy start to the year exploring our new ‘Journeys’ topic and hosting a wonderful Chinese New Year party. In the second half of the Spring Term we have celebrated Sport Relief, World Book Day, Pancake Day and enjoyed many lessons linked to our ‘Pioneers and Trailblazers’ topic.

We were lucky enough to have a visit from the brilliant author Andy Cope who shared his amazing Spy Dog stories with our pupils.

Once again we have entered a number of our pupils into the Royal College of Art Competition and we are looking forward to seeing their work in the exhibition.

We had a lovely visit from The Wallace Collection who organised a wonderful art workshop for all our pupils to enjoy.

Our Chinese New Year party was celebrated by all pupils, parents and staff on the ward! There was lots of food, crafts, games and a visit from our local MP Paul Scully. It was an enormous success!

During one of our cooking sessions the pupils made shortbread biscuits to celebrate Burns Night.

Zoolab continues to be one of our most popular sessions!