



STANGROUND ACADEMY

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Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Improvement Priorities at Stanground Academy

I would like to take this opportunity to share my first impressions of Stanground Academy and our proposed improvement priorities.

Like you, I am a parent who recognises the wonder and challenge of helping young people to achieve their full potential. I understand that we are embarking on a period of change and for some that may be difficult. Equally, I want to assure you all that we are all working hard to do the right thing for the students in our Academy. Many of us have experienced this journey before and know what and how to deliver a positive impact for the students. I ask you to trust and support our improvement initiatives because as a team we are determined to make Stanground Academy an even better place where your children can excel.

Our core purpose is to provide a world-class education to enable all students to achieve their true potential in a safe and supported environment. All the improvement priorities will be implemented to make the Academy a high performing place of learning for your children. I recognise that much work has already been achieved and I am grateful for individual commitment, however, my overall impression is that there are still opportunities to make further improvement.

We are delighted to announce the recruitment of two new Deputy Principals: Ms L Heighton who will lead teaching and learning and Mrs A Joannou who will lead behaviour and safeguarding. Both are in post and supporting the Academy to implement rapid improvement.

Teachers are at the heart of our Academy and it is our priority to recruit a full team of specialist, qualified and caring teachers. Despite the current recruitment challenges, we have been successful in appointing 29 new teachers (almost 30% of the workforce) who will join us in September. This will help to eliminate the requirement for temporary “cover” staff in future and raise the overall quality of education.

Students have told us about the desire to look professional and smart in their uniform. We will not make any changes to the uniform policy in the next academic year, but we do want to ensure universal standards are adopted from September 2022. These include:

- knee length tailored skirts (no Lycra)
- tailored trousers (no legging types)
- black unbranded polishable shoes (no trainer types)
- tie to the waistband
- white shirt
- black jumper (optional) and blazer.

We do not want any parents to purchase additional items of uniform at this point in the year, but we will be working with students to raise their current standards.

As a parent, I understand the importance of rewarding exceptional effort. We have appointed a Senior Leader to liaise with the students and write a collaborative reward policy. We will retain the existing Class Chart system and you will be able to monitor the reward points that have been allocated to your child. Students will convert their points for prizes and we also intend to celebrate their success across a variety of social media channels.

You will be aware that the consultation regarding mobile phones is ongoing. We appreciate your responses and the overwhelming desire to make our Academy free of mobile phones. I have personally seen the disruption caused by mobile phones and the resulting disputes which impact on the House Teams. This often prevents them from having the time to answer many of your questions about learning and wellbeing. This must stop. We will continue to read your responses and communicate our decisions prior to any changes.

I have seen the impact of low-level disruption in some of our classes and how that impacts on student progress. Together we must eliminate this low-level disruption so students can learn, and we will be able to retain and attract the best teachers. This academic year over 15,000 “warnings” have been issued, I am sure you agree that this situation cannot continue.

Our core purpose is to prepare students for a future life of success, our philosophy will be centered on reward and recognition. In an ideal world we would be a consequence free Academy, but in reality, we all know that will not work. Our new approach to correcting behaviour will create a culture where students prefer to be rewarded for excellent performance rather than receiving a correction for underperformance. We want our students to be proud of their school and be filled with ambition for the future.

We have examined best practice and Government recommendations and from September, we will reduce the current warning system from three to one. If a student does not engage with their learning a 45-minute correction will be allocated on the same day. Parents will be informed of this through the Class Chart application. If a student receives multiple corrections, then a further 90-minute correction **may** be allocated and, in most cases, this will be accompanied by a parent review meeting held with either the teacher or House Team. If the situation does not improve, and **in exceptional cases**, a further 180-minute correction may be awarded. Parents will be informed of this situation by a member of staff and may not happen on the same day.

To have an alternative for suspensions/ exclusions we will introduce a Saturday morning 120-minute correction which will be managed by the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team. We do not anticipate that there will be a regular need for this correction, but the sanction will be available if required.

Corrections will be a time for personal reflection and may involve Academy community service, completing academic work or simply sitting in silence. Academy community service is a positive mechanism to give back to the Academy and could include activities like working in the library, supporting the site team to collect litter or supporting the sport team to prepare equipment. All these activities will take place within the confines of the Academy perimeter. To clarify, during correction students will not “stand and face the wall” as has been suggested. I understand that there is some concern about our new approach but I can assure you this is absolutely the norm in other academies, in similar contexts, where improvements in attitude to learning have resulted in much improved GCSE grades. Please support us in our drive to improve

academic outcomes for all students. If we work together as one team, our positive impact will be significant.

We recognise that challenging behaviour can often be the result of an unmet learning need. To support our students, we are building capacity in our SEND team, two new members have joined already and a further three are in the process of being recruited.

I hope you share my excitement and optimism about the potential to make Stanground Academy a world class center of learning. There are many opportunities that will follow if we are able to raise our basic standards, together. For example, we have been approached by Microsoft to become a showcase secondary technical Academy, this could be the first in Peterborough.

This is a summary of our current improvement priorities, the policies will follow in due course, please acknowledge we are very busy raising standards for your children. We will keep you updated as we make progress and move onto the next phase of our improvement priorities.

The whole leadership team are keen to speak to as many parents as possible, to take your voice. We will announce a series of parent discussion meetings which will take place before the end of this term.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Van Lier', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr M Van Lier
Principal