



16 March 2020

Dear parents,

### **Announcement**

At the end of last term you received a letter outlining the interim leadership arrangements at school. I am now in a position to confirm the longer term arrangements.

I am delighted to announce that from September 2020, the new Principal of The Valley Leadership Academy will be Mr Andy O'Brien. He currently works for another highly successful multi academy trust and joins us with extensive experience as a Principal and Executive Principal.

We are fortunate that he will be able to spend some time visiting the school before starting in September. In the interim, I will remain as the Interim Executive Principal until the end of the summer term as planned. I will be working closely with him in the planning for next year so that there is continuity in putting in place all the aspects of being a Star school.

### **Star Awards Ceremony**

The first ever Star Awards Ceremony was held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March at The Grand Venue in Blackburn. You can see highlights of that event on the school's Twitter feed. This was Star Academies' celebration for its twenty eight schools where across the Trust pupils and staff were recognised for their shining examples of our STAR values: Service, Teamwork, Ambition and Respect.

This prestigious and high-profile event marked a unique opportunity for pupils, staff, trustees and governors from across Star to come together to celebrate our success in nurturing today's young people and inspiring tomorrow's leaders. The ceremony's guest of honour was Beth Tweddle, a 2012 Olympic medallist and World Champion gymnast.

The Valley sent sixteen representatives to the event – thirteen pupils, two staff and our Chair of Governors. The school received a special recognition award for its growth in numbers last year and for its improved GCSE results. In addition, Emma East won an award for 'Inspirational Learner' and our head girl Lizzie Mawson was honoured with being one of two pupils from across the whole Trust to share the opening and closing speeches as well as being nominated for an award herself.

We also were invited to send pupils who have had a consistently high standard of conduct and are shining examples of our underpinning STAR values of service, teamwork, ambition and respect. I'd like to formally recognise these pupils in this letter for not only their impressive approach to their school careers, but also for their impeccable conduct at the event that was noted by others beyond the school.

So, well done to *Lizzie Mawson, Emma East and Leon Yilmaz* in Year 11, *Amy Evans, Scarlett Clawson and Jack Jones Hassan* in Year 10, *Harry Cameron and Leah Rose Sweeney* in Year 9, *Junior King and Francesca Hoban* in Year 8 and *Meadow Young, Isabela Hefler-Vidal, Tommy Rourke and Lucas Blincoe* in Year 7.

### **The Stellar Award**

A key element of The Valley Leadership Academy culture we are building is to recognise and reward pupils and staff for their contributions and successes. Sometimes, success comes in the form of academic achievement, sometimes in overcoming difficulties and sometimes in the contributions of individuals to make a difference to our school and community. This term I am introducing a new school award to be known



as *The Stellar Award*. This has been made possible by a generous, anonymous donor who has a lifelong belief in the power of education to transform life chances.

This award will be given to one pupil and one staff member. It is to recognise them as being '*the star of all stars*'. It is about one pupil and one staff member whose light shines bright, that however tough a situation their light shines bright in any darkness, that they always give of their best, go above and beyond seeking no recognition or reward for what they do. They may or may not be a high achiever, but whoever they are, they are a role model for others, they rarely if ever drop their standard and if they are knocked they quickly pick themselves up and their normal stellar self is restored. There will be a nomination process in school through each child's form and each staff member will be able to nominate too. The winners will be announced at our end of term assembly on Friday 3 April.

### **Coronavirus**

Attached to this letter is a letter from Star's Chief Executive regarding the recent coronavirus outbreak. Please read this letter carefully. It outlines the approach that all Star schools will be taking at this time.

First and foremost, we are concerned for the health and wellbeing of our pupils, our staff and you as parents. We are in unprecedented times as a country and the national situation is fast moving.

I understand that the situation is of real concern and so we are increasing our focus on enhanced hygiene and wellbeing checks in school. The link to the letter has also been sent out to you via text.

### **Uniform**

Currently, we are having a push on uniform expectations. Our uniform signifies our identity and our pride in ourselves as a school community. Thank you to the vast majority of you who every day ensure your child comes to school well dressed and fully equipped for the day so that their focus can be on their learning. Where there are continuing uniform concerns your child's form tutor will be in direct contact with you in the coming week.

### **Behaviour**

We continue to push on high expectations so that every teacher can teach and every pupil learn in an uninterrupted classroom. You will be aware that the *Binary Behaviour Programme* was introduced last term to make clear and establish an orderly classroom environment for all pupils and teachers. We are continuing with this and will further increase the capacity of our pastoral team in the coming months to embed this approach.

We value the direct communication with you at home to work with us so that we can tell you what is going well as well as work with you when standards have slipped. I am clear that I will not tolerate poor behaviour and you can expect me to take a clear and unequivocal approach in dealing with behaviour that is not in line with our values and expectations.

In conclusion, let me thank you for your ongoing support. We are stronger and most effective when we work together to achieve the very best for your child.

Yours sincerely,



**Kieran Larkin**

Interim Executive Principal.