

9th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I extend my best wishes to you and hope that you and your families are healthy and safe during this continued period of lockdown. As we reach the end of the first half term, it is important to recognise that, despite the challenges, we have achieved a great deal together.

Remote Learning

We are thrilled with the high levels of engagement of our students. After half-term, our Remote Learning offer will continue, as outlined below.

- Students will attend a live lesson for all of their subjects.
- Lessons will follow normal timetables, five periods a day.
- Each live lesson will last for 50 minutes.
- All lessons will be scheduled to TEAMS calendars by 4:00 p.m. the day before.
- Live lessons will be delivered via Microsoft TEAMS
- Lesson information will also be shared via Class Charts to keep parents well informed.
- Students will attend their Year Group Collective Worship on an allocated morning each week during Form Time.
- On a Monday morning, all students will complete a wellbeing check questionnaire, guided by their Form Tutor. Key messages will also be communicated at this time.

It is imperative that students attend all lessons as they have already missed a significant amount of learning. Therefore, students will be registered at the start of each session. This will also allow us to monitor student well-being and ensure the safeguarding of all students.

We will continue to send you the fortnightly Engagement Reports to keep you informed about your child's engagement with live lessons. Thank you for the feedback we have received so far – working closely with parents has enabled us to further improve the way that we communicate.

We will continue to offer on-site provision for the children of key workers. If your personal circumstances have changed, please liaise with your child's Head of Year about accessing this provision.

Support for Mental Health & Well-Being

We are currently living through extremely challenging times, and now perhaps more than ever looking after our Mental Health and Well-being is of paramount importance to us all. Happy students make for happy learners and happy children often make for happy parents and carers. Our Monday morning Mental Health and Well-being survey has been a great way to capture the thoughts and feelings of our students and offer support and guidance where necessary. We have an in-house counsellor working to support our students and last week we shared a range of different resources as part of *Children's Mental Health and Awareness Week*. In addition, our Heads of Year have been contacting your child to check in on their welfare, celebrate some of the excellent work being produced at home and support them with any concerns with their home learning. Our pastoral team will continue to be available for you and your child should you need to contact us.

Laptops and Digital Support

We continue to offer support to those students having difficulty accessing on-line provision whether that be due to lack of a device or being unable to access the internet. We have issued over 200 laptops to students and a number of internet dongles in addition to supporting parents to access internet provision through mobile phone providers. We will continue to work with families to overcome any barriers to learning. Please contact us if you require any additional support via info@astn.uk The 'how to' video guides are also available on the Academy website https://youtu.be/37_q5paL4pg

We recognise that students are spending more time than ever on their computers. During form time this week we highlighted some top tips that students should consider in order to stay safe whilst online. Yesterday was also Safer Internet Day so I have attached a 'parent toolkit' provided by the team at Prevent if you would like to explore internet safety further.

Equipment for students

Our school mini-bus is out in the community this week. There are six drop-off points across Speke and Garston (please see details on our website) where students can collect pens, pencils and any other stationery they may need. We will continue to provide this throughout the lockdown and welcome any further requests you may have.

Full Re-Opening of Schools / Summer Examinations

With regard to the full re-opening of schools, the Prime Minister announced a few weeks ago that the **earliest** date upon which schools could expect to return to 'normal' operation and opening would be **March 8th** and **not** straight after the half-term holiday as originally proposed. He also made clear that this plan was dependent upon a number of other factors relating to the control of the pandemic and that the full re-opening of schools could be delayed even further. In addition, it is likely that some type of phased or gradual re-opening will be recommended, but we await further details of this. As soon as any updated information is released, we will communicate it to you.

Those of you who have children in Year 11 and Year 13 will know that the government's consultation on the arrangements for GCSE assessment closed a few weeks ago. The DfE and Ofqual will now reflect upon the thousands of responses that have been submitted nationally and draw up the formal guidance that will be issued to schools. Although we do not have an official timescale for this process, it is expected to take several weeks: we will obviously be in touch with students and their families as soon as any further announcements are made. In the meantime, it is crucial that all Year 11 and Year 13 students continue to follow the curriculum delivered by their teachers and remain fully focused on their studies.

Thank you once again for the way in which you are supporting your child's education via our current remote learning arrangements. We fully appreciate the challenges posed by the current lockdown restrictions and we all look forward to a time when we can return to some semblance of normality. As we prepare for the next half-term and seek to improve the quality of our provision, we are asking that you complete a short survey focusing on a few aspects of remote learning. It is essential, if we are to continue to improve, that we work with parents. Please take a few minutes of your time to complete this survey by clicking [here](#). This will close at 12:00 noon on Friday 12th February 2021.

Best wishes,



Mrs J E Sing
Headteacher