

8th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Microsoft Teams Update

Our current remote learning offer through Microsoft Teams was created before the announcement from Boris Johnson regarding national lockdown. Responding to this announcement and realizing that students may be learning through Microsoft Teams for a longer amount of time, we have made some changes to the Microsoft Teams set up. Our aim for remote learning is as follows:

- All students can access their learning through Microsoft Teams
- That teaching is live as much as circumstances allow.
- That students in school and out of school are all studying the curriculum they should be studying and that students in school are not disadvantaged by missing out on the remote learning.

As a result, when your child logs into Teams from Saturday, the page where they view all their Teams will look different. They will have one group per subject but the lesson will be delivered from that Team. They will not have to input the Merge codes that they have been using this week to join other teams. We are hoping that this will make things simpler and less complicated for your child to manage. Their timetable on the app will also update with their new lessons. Thankyou in advance for your support with this, it is a new system for the school, but we are hoping that it will become an improvement on our system in the previous lockdown. Student group timetables will also be published on the Academy website.

Exams Update for Y11, 12 and 13

Also, following this week's announcement from the government regarding the change to exam arrangements for this year, it is important that we clarify some details around what this means for students who are due to complete Y11, 12 and 13 exams at the end of the year.

During the announcement, the Prime Minister stated that it "would not be possible or fair for all exams to go ahead this summer as normal" and that Ofqual and the DfE were working on "alternative arrangements". We are currently awaiting further information as to what these alternative arrangements will be, but we felt that it was important to communicate with you the importance of students continuing to engage with the live streamed lessons via Microsoft Teams and the work set by their class teacher. We do know that the grades will be based on centre assessments and that much of this information will come from the work they have produced previously and will produce over the rest of this year. We will await further guidance from DfE and will update you as soon as we are able to.

Vocational exams that are scheduled to take place this month will still go ahead as planned. We will be contacting all students who are taking these exams to clarify the arrangements that they will need, but they should already have their exam timetables. There will be a member of staff on site to greet students and tell them where they need to go. Students will be socially



distanced from one another in exam areas and invigilators will wear face masks where appropriate.

Once we have further guidance on how assessment will take place in all subjects this year we will communicate this to you at the earliest opportunity. For now, it is imperative that students continue to access their online learning in order to be as well prepared as possible for how they will be assessed. Our teachers are working hard to provide high quality online teaching and we will be continuing to monitor the attendance of students for their online session carefully. If you are having technical issues, then please contact Homelearning@astreawoodfields.org. Your query will come to the same place as FrogHelp.

We appreciate that this is extremely unsettling for students, please rest assured that we will support them in any way possible and understand the anxiety that this uncertainty may cause.

Kind regards,

Alistair Hartley



Associate Vice Principal

