



# Ashton Community Science College

*'a school to be proud of'*

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Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope that you and your family are keeping safe and well. We know that home learning presents many different challenges for parents and students and we have been delighted with the engagement and the response of the students so far towards their online learning. We thank you for your support and encouragement in motivating your child to continue with their studies at home. The work they are completing is of the utmost importance to their learning.

We are continuing to make our regular welfare calls to families, not to check up on you, but to support you. Even though schools are closed to most students, we still want to offer whatever support we can, and we have appreciated the ongoing feedback you have given to us during these calls. You have been understanding and patient with us, recognising that we, like every other school in the country, are finding our way through uncharted waters, made sometimes stormy by ever changing government guidance. Your encouragement and appreciation of what we are doing well has meant a lot to us and so has your honesty in terms of what we can do better. Only by telling us can we act on your suggestions, so thank you.

Over the previous couple of weeks, we have received many queries and questions related to the online learning programme and many relate to Microsoft Teams. As a result, we would like to share some of the most frequently asked questions along with the answers, which may support you and your child.

## **How will I know when my child has lessons?**

Students will need to follow their normal timetable. Lessons start at 9am each day and finish at 2.45pm. Break and lunchtime are at the same time as they would be if we were in school. One day each week, your child will have assembly. This will be on the day they have assembly in school and will be at 8.45am. For example, year 7 assembly is each Friday, year 8 is each Thursday etc. We expect all students to attend all lessons and their weekly assembly.

## **Will all lessons be delivered live through Teams?**

They will be set tasks to complete and hand in via Teams. **Most** lessons will be delivered live through Teams and they will appear on the Teams calendar. There may be occasions when they are not live and students will be directed to work through a pre-recorded lesson, Oak Academy lessons or complete a piece of independent work (eg an assessment). The DFE and Ofsted have offered guidance about remote learning which you can read here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whats-working-well-in-remote-education/whats-working-well-in-remote-education>



You will be reassured to see that our offer is very much in line with this guidance.

### **How will I know if it's a live lesson or not?**

All timetabled lessons will appear on the Teams Calendar. Teachers will communicate with students through the chat function of Teams and inform them if the lesson is not live and direct them to the learning that needs to occur. It is imperative that students check their messages continually throughout the day. The best way to do this is to have notifications on. We have noticed that some students are turning off their notifications and are therefore missing important messages. If a lesson is no longer appearing on the calendar, please make sure you check for a message from the teachers. There will always be something set.

### **Why are some lessons showing as cancelled? Does this mean there is no lesson?**

The infrastructure of Teams is still catching up with the demands of education and sometimes, if you wish to make changes to a recurring appointment, which is how we have scheduled lessons, you have to cancel them and reschedule. This may be why you get the confusing message that a lesson is cancelled and then straight away a new invitation to the same lesson. You can click onto the cancelled lesson in calendar and delete that notification if you wish, which will just leave the active lesson.

### **Why don't teachers just set work at the start of the week, then parents and children know what is coming?**

Most lessons are live, and many are sequenced and planned depending on the point that students reached in earlier lessons. Teachers also upload resources that are pertinent to the teaching at the time. To simply upload material and tasks without the explanation and discussion that accompanies them in a lesson would be confusing for some students.

### **I want to take my child out for exercise when they have a free lesson. Can I do this?**

Clearly as parents you know what is best for your child. However, please remember that lessons are following the normal school timetable and so there are no "free lessons" when there is nothing set. If you see that a lesson has been pre-recorded and resources uploaded, and so not live, you might decide to use that opportunity to take your exercise, because the lesson can be caught up on at any time later. An attendance register is always taken for live lessons and engagement with tasks set for all lessons is monitored.

### **If my child is struggling with the work set, what do I do?**

Students can contact their teacher through the chat function. Please note if that if they send a message outside of their own timetabled slot this may not be answered straight away as teachers will be delivering lessons to their other classes. You can also contact your child's progress leader or class teacher via email.

### **Why are there so many apps and different platforms for learning?**

Each subject will use different platforms to enhance learning. You may have heard your child talking about a number of sites such as: accelerated reader, Bedrock and Hegarty Maths. Please be assured that these are being used by staff to support your child and been carefully selected. Your child will be familiar with these and will have used them in class. If they have any issues with logging in, please contact ICT on the form mentioned below.

### **Is there any information available regarding how to use Teams?**

We have put together a number of user guides to support you and your child with accessing Teams. These can be found on the school website under the home learning banner or by clicking on the

following link. <https://www.ashtoncsc.lancs.sch.uk/home-learning>. If you are using the user guides, please make sure that you are clicking on the one that is relevant to the device that your child is using. The layout is very different on a tablet or iPad compared to a laptop. In this area you will also find a video guide.

You will also find an array of information in this home learning section which should support you. At the bottom of the page you can submit any queries to our ICT support.

### **How does my child submit work?**

There are a number of ways that work will be submitted. Teachers may ask for a screen shot of a task. For an extended piece of work, they will use the functions within Teams such as 'assignments'. These allow us to give your child feedback on the work that they completed.

### **How will you check whether my child is engaging with their work and how will I be informed if there are any concerns?**

The live lessons are very helpful to check on student engagement. Students are asked for contributions; either verbal if possible or in the typed chat function, feedback and questions about the work. Active involvement is encouraged, such as 'fastest finger first' activities, quizzes, and survey-style responses, allowing teachers to evaluate engagement and offer immediate feedback.

Class teachers will use PARS, meeting registers, Teams 'Insights', assignments, channel/chat contributions and other items to monitor levels of pupil attendance and engagement in lessons. Teachers will inform pastoral teams about issues connected with engagement and absence and a telephone call home will be made.

### **How will you assess my child's work and progress?**

Feedback can take many forms and not always mean extensive written comments for individual children. For example, whole-class feedback of quizzes marked automatically via digital platforms are also valid and effective methods, amongst many others.

Students are assessed in live lessons through interactions, questioning and feedback. Form quizzes are used for immediate feedback. Assessments are set and responses uploaded from home enable teachers to mark work and give individualised feedback. Other learning platforms are also used to evaluate work.

### **We cannot stress enough that your child must engage in learning. We are closely monitoring attendance to live lessons.**

Our contingency plan is dependent on each child having their own device and internet access to use Teams. We appreciate that this will place pressure on some families where, alongside parents working from home, there may be multiple children needing to access online learning at the same time and device availability may be limited.

Please contact school if you have any concerns regarding this and we will do our best to help to find a way for your child to access the learning resources. Can you please ensure your child is aware of the information above to support in them maximising their engagement?

### **Where can I find advice on how to support my child become digitally literate?**

With the increased need for your child to access the online world, some parents have been requesting advice on how to support their child in coping in the digital world. We have placed [A guide to help your family live a better digital life](#) by Vodafone on our website and you can refer to it at your leisure.

Thank you to those that have contacted us to ask questions regarding MS Teams and please do not hesitate to contact the school with any questions or issues you may face. We will be happy to help.

Keep Safe,

*Mrs Pilkington*

Mrs M Pilkington  
(Assistant Head teacher)