



ASTLEY COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

One of the Seaton Valley Federation of Schools

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Executive Headteacher: John Barnes

Head of School: Graham Scott

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Dear Parent/Carer,

I trust that you are all well and managing to maintain some form of normality in your family life despite the ongoing situation. Hopefully, there is light at the end of the tunnel and we will be able to resume our “real lives” soon!

Once again, I would like to thank everyone for your fantastic efforts in supporting your child and the school during this difficult time. I know it is not easy, but we really appreciate your efforts and please continue to let us know if we can help you further.

I will continue to update parents/carers at frequent intervals, just to keep everyone in the loop, so here we go:

In-School Provision

We currently have an in-school provision at Astley which continues to work extremely well. The last time I wrote to you on 14 January, we were catering for approximately 20 students each day. Our population has now expanded to 48 students and we are now working from 3 ICT rooms as of Monday 1 February.

A reminder to all parents and carers that this provision is open to all the children of “Key Workers” and those children who are classed as “vulnerable”. Should you wish to apply for a place in this provision, please contact school and/or complete the Google form which has been sent out to everyone. We still have the capacity to support more students and we are very keen to ensure that all those who are entitled to be in school take up the opportunity. The current students in school are doing very well indeed.

Remote Learning

Although we continue to have some minor issues, generally speaking, the system is working well and students are doing their best to complete the work set by staff. Hopefully, more lessons are now being delivered with some form of direct teacher contact (live lessons or pre-recorded) and the variety of resources and tasks is growing.

A couple of issues I would like to address are:

1. Staff are reporting that some students are plagiarising work, which means that they are gaining an electronic copy of someone else's work and then sending it to the teacher as if it were their own - please reinforce with your child that this is not acceptable.
2. Can parents/carers also please ensure that their child correctly submits their work. We believe that many students have completed work, but have forgotten to submit it or have sent a blank copy to staff.

Behind the scenes, Ms Power has been working very hard to inform parents/carers of how their child is doing with their home learning. We are currently recording information on every student in a spreadsheet which is graded RED, AMBER & GREEN depending on how well the student is doing. We have completed two rounds so far on 12 & 26 January, with feedback to parents/carers coming in the days after. The next data capture will be Tuesday 9 February, with follow-up before the end of that week.

In addition, Mr Gilhooley has been responding individually to any issues raised via the parent/carer and student surveys which we sent out recently. Many thanks to all of you who completed the survey, it really helps us to improve our provision. Some really good points were raised and we have adjusted several areas as a result of your comments.

Laptop Loan Scheme

We have now loaned out 70 laptops across the federation and we are looking to source more machines in due course, as we have a waiting list which is growing daily. Hopefully, I will have a more positive update in my next letter to you.

FSM Voucher Scheme

This system now appears to be running very smoothly. We have had very few issues with the FSM voucher scheme in recent weeks, but if you do have any problems please contact the Finance Office via School Gateway and we will see what we can do to help.

Covid Testing

On Monday 25 January, we started our COVID testing with staff and students who are currently in school and tested again today.

Monday 25 Jan - 20 students & 17 staff tested - all negative
Thursday 28 Jan - 21 students & 21 staff tested - all negative

A reminder to parents/carers that if your child is in school and you wish them to be tested, then you must complete the required consent form which has been sent out to all those attending school by Mr Donald.

Examinations Consultation 2021

This morning, I completed a consultation document and submitted it to the DFE on behalf of ACHS staff, representing our views in respect of the organisation of this year's examinations/centre

assessed grades in the absence of “final examinations”. Suffice to say that we will do everything in our power to ensure that your child is awarded the grade they deserve and they are not disadvantaged. The message to our students continues to be “work hard and complete your work to the best of your ability”.

More information will be shared when we get the results on the consultation and a plan has been formulated.

Return to School?

The Prime Minister made an announcement on Wednesday that the government is working to the date of Monday 8 March to start the return to school for students in England. We are not sure what this looks like yet, but this is now the date which is in the forefront of our minds. We will provide more information to parents/carers when we receive it, but we will be ready to go, whenever the date is confirmed.

As always, if you are unsure about anything or have any questions/queries please contact school. Each day we have a member of reception staff and a Senior Leader on duty from 8.30am to 3.30pm. I am also in school all day, every day should you wish to speak to me.

Thanks again for everything you are doing and for your very kind messages of support, which are much appreciated. I am very proud of our school and I am convinced that if we all continue to work together, our young people will emerge from this period of time stronger and more determined than ever.

My very best wishes to all of you and remember, if you need anything, you know where we are, please just ask and we will see what we can do.

Kind regards

Graham Scott
Head of School