

12 February 2021

Dear Parents / Carers

February half-term newsletter

I wanted to start by again thanking parents and carers for their support for the academy during this most trying of periods. We are still unclear as to when normal school routines will resume, but we are at least encouraged that the Government has committed to giving schools, parents and students two weeks' notice of any change to the date on which students can return to the site. As soon as we are notified of arrangements, we will contact you to let you know, alongside any other key information around measures we have in place to ensure this happens safely.

As a reminder, the start date will NOT be before 8th March, which means at least two further weeks of the current arrangements following the half-term break. It may be that some year groups will continue to work from home for longer than this.

Around a week ago, I issued to all students and parents/carers an online survey to gain your views on the remote learning we are providing at Netherwood. Thank you to those who have been able to respond to this survey - please, if you have been unable to do this but wish to do so, it is still accessible and we would encourage as many parents and students as possible to submit a response. The feedback we have received thus far has been very helpful in terms of our next steps.

The link to the parent questionnaire is here and should take less than 5 minutes to complete:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=gGfPFvBL70-q-gtugufqCg47qAuj179EsxvOckZQ8_FUN1FCWktOTDhISjZMWkE3NIFPOVFVRzNQSy4u

Exams - Summer 2021

As you will be aware, these are no longer taking place as scheduled, and will be replaced by a series of in-school tests and assessments, full details of which have yet to be confirmed by the government. A national consultation on the government's plans ended at the end of January, and so we would expect clarity on precisely what is expected of schools and students fairly soon, and hopefully by early in the next half-term. Of course, we will let the parents and carers of Year 11 students know as soon as arrangements have been finalised.

Covid Testing in school

Once students come back to school it is likely that we will still be asked to carry out weekly Covid testing. Before we do this, we need your consent. Once we know return dates we will send a text message giving you instructions on how to give consent for your child. Thank you to parents who have already done this. For any queries on Covid testing please email Mrs Hubbert: kirsty.hubbert@astreanetherwood.org

Parents' Forum

Parents' Forum is gathering momentum again, even if we have to have remote meetings to start with. If you would like to be involved in Parents' Forum, please email Mrs Hubbert as above.

Parents' Evenings

We have now successfully held 2 on-line parents evenings for Year 11 and 9 over the past fortnight. These have been well-attended overall, but we would like to step up engagement with this format.

There will be a Year 8 Virtual Parents' Evening coming up on Thursday 18th March, during which parents and carers will be able to discuss progress with subject teachers. Access to the appointments system will open on Thursday 4th March.

If parents are unsure where they can access the system, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Kershaw, Mr Batchelor or Mrs Priest on the emails below.

rebecca.kershaw@astreanetherwood.org

sarah.priest@astreanetherwood.org

james.batchelor@astreanetherwood.org

And finally

It is been a long and daunting half-term for many; we have been so impressed with students' attitudes towards home learning, and we are supremely grateful for the support of parents and carers, especially when you are trying to juggle a whole host of other responsibilities during the lockdown period.

Whilst keeping up with remote learning during term-time is vital to ensure students keep pace with the curriculum and their education, the half-term holiday is precisely that - an opportunity for your children to "down tools" for the week. I will be strongly encouraging my staff to do precisely the same.

Remote learning starts up again on Monday 22nd February.

I wish you and your families a safe and restful break.

Best wishes



Mr J Mitchell
Principal