

Dear Parents and Carers

Happy New Year - I hope!

What a Christmas it has been with the rising cases of COVID-19 and the continual government changes for us all to manage. One tragic fact shared by the Prime Minister this week is that the number of cases rose by 70% in the last two weeks of December - from Monday 14th December to the 30th December. I'll say no more except that Monday 14th December was the day I tried to move the school to remote learning to keep us all safe and was instructed by the DfE to re-open fully!

It will not be easy to readjust to a new lockdown and remote learning yet again but I hope you judge that from listening to the news we are way ahead of other schools in our provision.

Firstly, every single child has an iPad or a laptop and if there are issues with the internet we can also support with this. So 724 (100%) All Saints students can engage with remote learning and stay safe.

Secondly, if your child is in Year 7, 8 or 9 the majority of their work will be in the creative curriculum booklets which will have been sent home to you. This means the work the students do remotely is fully planned, follows key learning principles, and is supported by a PowerPoint sent to students and by staff online responding to queries. Most importantly the work is of value because it is in one place and can be returned to the Academy to be put in your child's folder when we re-open fully. Year 10 and Year 11 will have some booklet days too but the majority of their lessons will be taught traditionally following the same format mentioned.

Thirdly, we take our safeguarding responsibility very seriously and all students must engage with every lesson with a follow up call from our support team being made to find out if there are any issues when a student does not engage within the first 20 minutes.

And **finally**, during this lockdown we will be insisting on full engagement in the lessons which means students must submit their work to the teacher who will judge if it is satisfactory. If there is a consistent lack of engagement and completion of work Heads of Year and then the Senior Leadership Team will become involved.

I fully believe we have one of the best remote learning systems in the country. This means that we can all stay safe and staff can work from home, as much as the staffing allocation allows, which keeps them safe too.

It is therefore up to all of us to not abuse the system in place. We have a shared moral responsibility to have our children at home working whenever possible. If we insist on sending them to school when there is a parent at home we are ignoring the government's main message: **Stay at home, wherever possible!** Lockdown is not about having a day at home without the children around. This endangers the staff and other students who have no choice but to come in exposing them to more potential risks. If **both parents are working** and **only one is a key worker** we will have your child in school, but only on days that your own employers have requested you go to work. All lives are equally valuable and I cannot allow my staff to be put at unnecessary risk.

We know this lockdown period will be at least for another five weeks until February half-term. Our hearts go out to Year 11 and Year 13 students who have heard this week that there will be no exams in the summer. Therefore, it is vital they impress their teachers with their work ethic as we will be using centre-assessed grades again when awarding GCSEs. There is still time to influence their grades by showing their teachers how they are improving with every piece of work they complete. I am still hopeful that we may get a second set of mock exams completed sometime between the end of March and May so please encourage them to keep their heads up and keep working hard.

If you have vulnerable relatives. or you yourself are in this category, I hope you keep safe and get called for a vaccine very soon. Please look after yourselves and our wonderful students as we place our faith in God's love for us that we will all come through this period together.

With my best wishes

Liz Furber
Executive Principal

Dear Parents and Carers

I reiterate Liz Furber's best wishes for the New Year, although the start of it feels very much like the previous one. Governors also fully endorse her comments about the practices that have been introduced around remote and face-to-face learning. Hard as it may be, the more we confine ourselves to our homes, the safer we all will be.

On Christmas Day, I picked up a Facebook message from a former pupil of mine who lived in Leighton Buzzard:

'To all my friends on Facebook I would like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas. Enjoy the day the best way you can and hopefully next year will be a lot better.

Bad news for me though. I've just got my results from yesterday's test. I'm now starting to self isolate for the next 10 days as I was diagnosed with a positive test of covid and I feel really, really ill..'

Those were the very last words that he wrote because on New Year's Day, he sadly died, at the age of 50. That's a tragedy for his family, his work colleagues, the youngsters in the local football team that he coached and the concert band that he played in.

I remember once on a tour abroad, he was at the back of a coach directing the driver whilst he was reversing down a challenging road. His words were 'keep going, keep going'. In these very difficult times, I think those are very apt words. We have to keep going: as parents and carers; as friends and family; as a society; and, as an Academy. For our part, we will do all that we can, not only to keep your children safe, along with all our staff, but also to ensure they continue to learn in the best possible way.

With all good wishes.

David Fraser

Chair of Governors

Booklets

We will be posting creative curriculum booklets home to students and, as we may post multiple weeks at the same time, ask that these are kept safe until they are needed. Completed booklets should also be kept safe as they will need to be stored in your child's folder when we return to school.

iPads

If your child's iPad is not working or needs to be repaired, please let us know as we are providing a collection and delivery service to ensure that students can access their remote learning.

If your child has lost their charger or cable, we have supplies of Apple chargers available for purchase which can also be delivered.

Please be aware that iPads that have no charge at all are likely to need an original iPad plug/cable in order to charge up.

Showbie Codes

The codes for all Showbie lessons can be found on the Noticeboard section in Edulink.

If you do not have a login for Edulink, please contact the Academy by emailing parentcontact@asadunstable.org to request your login details.

Contacting the Academy

During the lockdown, the school switchboard will be manned between 8.30am and 3.30pm each day. Please be aware that as staff are on a rota to be in school, we may have to email your query and ask someone to call you back.

You can also email us on
office@asadunstable.org
parentcontact@asadunstable.org