

18th September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

RE: Curriculum at Watling Academy September/October 2020

Following on from our induction days last week we are now into the full swing of teaching and learning at Watling Academy. Walking around the Academy it is clear that classrooms are alive with activity and students have settled back into a classroom setting well.

I wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with further information about the curriculum that students will be following this half term and other aspects of teaching and learning across the Academy.

At Watling Academy, we are committed to ensuring that our students receive the best possible education. Students follow a rich and broad curriculum that will provide them with the knowledge, skills and wider learning habits to enable them to progress from their individual starting points to achieve their best possible outcomes. In addition to developing students within formal curriculum areas, we are focussed on the development of students as powerful learners. We aim to equip them with the dispositions and habits of mind to develop a community of independent thinkers who are prepared for the challenges that they may face when they leave the school gates. These principles are a key feature of our curriculum design across the Academy.

Project-Based Learning

To induct students into our values and the wider curriculum ethos of Watling Academy, all students will be participating in project-based learning in all subjects across the curriculum this half term. Underpinning these projects are the following key principles:

- **Milton Keynes** (Developing an understanding of past and future development and equipping students with the skills to contribute effectively to this development)
- **STEM** (Developing skills required for STEM related industries and local employers)
- **Sustainability** (Understanding environmental problems and issues of sustainability on different scales, and equipping students with the skills to contribute to these issues successfully)
- **Character** (Developing Respect, Responsibility and Kindness within our students to make them good local and global citizens)

Respect / Responsibility / Kindness

Each project will be linked to one or more of these areas and will enable students to make connections between individual subjects and the wider ethos of the Academy. Each subject area has designed a project that is driven by a key question linked to the above principles. These questions are centred on real world issues relevant to our local community and will provide students with opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills, and teamwork. Student learning will culminate in a final project that addresses the overall key question and this will be presented to their class teachers.

I have given details below of each of the projects that are being undertaken by students across the curriculum.

Subject	Project Title
English	How can I shape my community?
Maths	How can I make a profit running a shop in Centre MK?
Science	Is Milton Keynes a green place to live?
STEM Innovation	Augment ourselves? Can we use engineering and science to enhance how our bodies function?
History	As a new town, Milton Keynes has been insignificant in the development of Britain'. To what extent do we agree with this view?
Geography	What are the environmental issues facing Watling Academy?
Religious Education	How has religion helped to shape our community in Milton Keynes?
Spanish	¿Por qué español? (Why Spanish? What does the Spanish speaking world have to do with me?)
Food Technology	Is 5-a-day killing our planet?
Textiles Technology	
Art	
Wellbeing	Does the 'Watling way' promote the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect.

Homework

Homework is a valuable and integral part of the learning process at Watling Academy. Students will be set 1 piece of homework in each subject per week. Subjects following a 2-week timetable (RE, Wellbeing, Art, Textiles Technology, Music and Drama) will set homework once every 2 weeks.

Students will be expected to spend 1 hour completing homework tasks each evening and individual subject tasks should take between 20 and 30 minutes to complete. Students will have 1 week to complete tasks (2 weeks for subjects following a 2-week timetable) from the date they are set. All homework set should be recorded by students in their planners, with the date set and date due clearly labelled.

Specific details of homework tasks will be uploaded using Microsoft Teams. This is an online learning platform which will display instructions and resources needed to complete homework tasks. Students will also be able to submit their work using this platform. Students have been introduced to Microsoft Teams as part of their Computing lessons over the first few weeks and will have their login details for this. Should students have any issues with using Microsoft Teams we would encourage them to speak to their Form Tutor or Mr Bartlam (Computing Teacher) in the first instance.

Student Progress

Throughout this academic year there will be opportunities for parents to obtain specific information regarding the academic progress of your son/daughter. This half term parents will obtain an Interim Progress Report detailing student engagement in learning, including behaviour and homework. There will also be an opportunity to speak with Form Tutors at our Year 7 Tutor Evening on the 30th September. Details about how this evening will run will be circulated in due course.

I look forward to seeing the progress that each and every student will make during the course of this half term. I am certain students will find the individual projects interesting, motivating, and relevant and I am keen to see the creative outcomes that students will produce.

Yours sincerely,

J. Cassidy

Mr J Cassidy
Assistant Headteacher