

16th March 2021

HEAD OF SCHOOL: Mr I Bacon

Dear Parents/Carers.

It has been fantastic to welcome our students back to Watling Academy last week and to see the Academy alive with activity. They have been busy reconnecting with their peers and familiarising themselves with the routines of the school day. Students have been engaging well in the exciting and varied learning activities on offer, and the overall feedback from them about their return to school has been positive. I would like to take this opportunity to update you on a variety of areas surrounding teaching and learning across the academy to support students with readjusting to learning within school.

Groupings

Mr Bacon wrote to you before the Christmas holidays to inform you of changes to student groupings and timetables in the Spring Term. To support students with the transition back into school we have made the decision that students will continue to be taught in their tutor groups for all their subjects until the end of the Spring Term. This will give students a level of familiarity with their teachers and peers within lessons. Planned changes to student groups and timetables will now take place in the Summer Term after the Easter holidays.

Remote Learning

To support students who may be required to self-isolate we will continue to provide a remote learning provision using Microsoft Teams. This provision will continue to run in the same way as the Autumn Term. Subject teachers will upload lesson resources to class folders on Microsoft Teams to support students with accessing the curriculum whilst at home. These resources, whilst not always being identical to those used within the classroom, are designed to enable those students self-isolating to reach the same educational outcomes as their peers in school. Full details of how to access our remote learning provision, alongside our expectations, can be found on the Academy website.

Respect / Responsibility / Kindness

Homework

Subject teachers will now continue to set homework routinely in line with Academy guidelines. These tasks will be used to support students and staff in identifying any gaps in learning that may have emerged because of lockdown. Tasks will enable students to review previous learning and refine their knowledge, understanding and skills developed over the course of this term. In response to parental and student feedback, I would like to remind you that we amended our expectations regarding the frequency of homework set to support students with managing their time and workload. Students will receive homework routinely in all subjects (with the exception of RE, Drama, Music and Wellbeing) on a fortnightly basis. Students will be given at least one week to complete homework tasks from when they are set. These tasks will be uploaded as assignments on Microsoft Teams and should be recorded by students in their Student Planners.

I would like to end by thanking students for all their hard work and efforts with remote learning completed over the last term. This has been a very challenging period for both students and families and a lot has been expected of our students in terms of motivation, perseverance, and independence in completing learning tasks. Despite these challenges, our students have risen to the challenge and used their wider skills as learners to complete a range of outstanding work. This includes some fantastic art projects focussed on Zentangle designs and a design challenge where students were tasked with creating energy efficient smart houses within STEM lessons. Through these projects students were able to develop their own personal wellbeing and skills in creative thinking and the use of technology to aid design. I would encourage all students to reflect on their achievements over the past few months and capitalise on their experiences to support them on their journey to becoming successful independent learners.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Cassidy', written in a cursive style.

Mr J Cassidy
Assistant Headteacher