Thursday 31st December 2020

Dear parents/carers,

I hope you and your family are well and have enjoyed the holiday so far.

As you will no doubt be aware, yesterday afternoon the Education Secretary announced additional changes to the re-opening of schools next term, delaying the planned start date for the majority of secondary school students while testing processes are put in place.

I wanted to provide some re-assurance and much needed clarity in regard to the new year - as such, the arrangements at Ernulf are as follows:

* **Vulnerable children and children of key workers** will be welcomed back in school as planned on **Wednesday 6th January.** These students will be working within small year group bubbles and will be able to access their online learning as well as the work provided by their teachers on-site.

* **Students in years 11** will be able to access **remote learning from Wednesday 6th January**, this will be via Microsoft Teams and students will follow their school timetable, logging into lessons which in the majority will be delivered live online. **All students in year 11 will be expected to attend school from Monday 11th January.**

* **Students in years 7 to 10** will be able to access **remote learning from Wednesday 6th January**, lessons will follow their respective school timetables and all students will be expected to log-on and engage in their online lessons. **All students in years 7 to 10 will be expected to attend school on Monday 18th January, learning remotely from home until then.**

I want to reassure you that we will strive to ensure that your child’s online education will be as close as possible to any normal day in school with the majority of lessons live-streamed using Microsoft Teams and for practical subjects such as PE, DT and Drama project work will be set for students on Microsoft Teams to follow and complete. Our Heads of Year will be monitoring attendance and engagement in live streamed lessons and will contact parents if we are concerned that a student is not working effectively.

Astrea Academy Trust is committed to ensuring every student has access to a laptop, and I know we have been working hard to ensure those who need are able to borrow a device for this period, should one be required. If you still need assistance, please contact Mr J Murphy (james.murphy@astreaacademy.org).

**Testing**

As we have done since September, we will do everything we can to help keep staff and students safe. Following the guidance, my team and I have already begun to develop plans for testing and will be using the early days of term to fine-tune them. I will be able to share more details in the coming days. Students have responded very well to the COVID arrangements we have introduced this year - I am confident they will react maturely to this latest measure.

**What to do if your child has COVID symptoms**

If your child has any of the COVID symptoms (a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; loss of taste or smell) they must not come into school and you should arrange for them to be tested. Please contact our Attendance Manager, Mrs Silverthorne, to advise of this in the first instance.

**Free School Meals**

In order to provide all students who are eligible for Free School Meals, it is our intention to make meal hampers available and ready for collection on Wednesday 6th January 2021. An additional hamper will be available on Monday 11th January 2021 for those students, who will not be returning to school. An electronic form has already been sent to eligible families and carers and we would encourage anyone who has not returned the form to complete it from the academy website as soon as possible.

**What to do if your child cannot access online learning**

If your child cannot access work set online because your household does not have access to a suitable device or to the internet, your child may be advised to attend as ‘educationally vulnerable’ alongside children of key workers – please contact us so that we can confirm this before sending your child into school.  Once a suitable device or internet access is provided, your child will be expected remain at home until the wider year group is re-admitted to school.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and co-operation during these challenging times, and to wish you and your family a safe and happy New Year.

Yours sincerely

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Mr A Bissoo

Principal