

07 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

January 2021 Parent/Carer update letter

I hope you are keeping safe and well in these difficult times. In light of the recent lockdown and guidance from the DfE, I am writing to update you on a number of things that have changed already since the beginning of term.

Remote Learning

During this period of national lockdown, we are providing remote education for our young people whilst remaining open for vulnerable children and those of critical workers.

As an Academy we are delivering a blended timetable of live lessons and resource based learning. All Remote Learning will be delivered over Microsoft Teams.

Students are expected to be logged into their Teams account **by 9.00am every morning** to join a live Tutor time. After this they have a timetable to follow that lasts for the whole school day, resulting in 4 hours 10 minutes of learning time. DfE guidance is that schools should provide between 3 and 5 hours of learning daily. Timetables for each year group can be found on the school website here <https://www.merrillacademy.derby.sch.uk/learning-support/off-site-learning> and have been sent to you by post along with a guide on how to use Teams.

During the period of lockdown these timetables may change. You will be informed of any changes and they will also be updated on the school website.

In **LIVE** lessons students will be able to see and hear their teacher. To access a LIVE lessons students will need to open Microsoft TEAMS and enter the **calendar** and click on the lesson scheduled by their teacher. In **RESOURCE** lessons teachers will have set students work that they need to complete. To access the Resource lessons students will need to access the Microsoft Teams group for that subject and open the **FILES** to find what you need to do for the lesson.

Here is a link to a video tutorial of how students can access their school Microsoft Teams account.

<https://www.loom.com/share/9edb8318e1dd4c2cbbf6619a7e55623f>

Microsoft Teams can be accessed through a number of different platforms; PC, laptop, phone, tablet, smart TV, Xbox or PlayStation. Further information of how to access this can be found on our academy twitter account.

We are also supporting families by overcoming barriers to digital access through the distribution of school owned laptops to those in most need alongside working with mobile phone network providers to provide free data access to educational sites. We are well into the logistical process of rolling this out to families in need as these are supplied by the Department for Education.

If you feel that you are in a position where your child is encountering barriers to access learning materials, please get in touch with the school office or alternatively email schoolclosure@merrillacademy.derby.sch.uk.

Key Worker School

The Haven, Hub and Hive are all running as usual. If you require any information as to whether your child is eligible for Key Worker School, please contact us through the following email: schoolclosures@merrillacademy.derby.sch.uk and one administration team will get back to you.

The Key Worker School follows the same timetable as students who are remote learning. This will ensure that every student receives the same provision.

Tutor time has been moved from the middle of the day to 9:00am. It is imperative that your child arrives on time in the morning. The timings of the school day for each year group remain as before this period of lockdown and students will enter and leave via the same entrances and exits as before.

There is an expectation that full uniform is worn and equipment is brought in by your child. Students should also bring a face mask which they will be expected to wear in all communal inside areas of the academy, including in lesson times and classrooms. We will inform your child when they have a PE lesson, so appropriate clothing can be worn on these days.

The Academy will still follow the same behaviour policy and will use the appropriate sanctions.

Careers guidance

Year 11 students will continue to be supported with careers guidance, this will take place remotely, Zoe Hendricks from Luminate Careers & Coaching will be interviewing students by telephone on Tuesdays.

Year 11 will also continue to be supported by Bernadette Dooley from the Derbyshire Educational Business Partnership, she will be making telephone calls on Thursdays.

General careers information can be found on the Merrill Academy website.

Students who would like to book a careers guidance interview or have any other careers questions, should email Mr Leach at careersadvice@merrillacademy.derby.sch.uk

Further information about careers guidance, exams and GCSE grades will be sent to Year 11 students next week when we have received more information.

Could I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and patience. My staff are working very hard in these ever changing times to provide the best education for our students at Merrill. Government guidance is changing all the time and we are responding accordingly and as efficiently as we can. Both staff and students are on a steep learning curve together.

Yours faithfully



Ms J Harlow
Headteacher