

6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you further to the Prime Minister's announcement of a new national lockdown. This letter contains information which has been updated and is intended to outline our priorities, provide information and, importantly, offer reassurance. Whilst it is quite lengthy I would encourage you to read it and hope the information contained is helpful.

Regarding Remote Learning, let me reassure you:

- You are not creating a school;
- You may not be a qualified, professional teacher;
- You are looking after your child(ren) at home.

Therefore, please don't feel pressured by us. We understand that you are doing your very best and we will provide the tools for your child to learn and support as best we can remotely. Please be kind to yourself during these strange times and ensure your child knows they can only do their best and that they should also be kind to themselves too.

There are two immediate priorities for our school community this week: ensuring the well-being of every child alongside their access to high-quality remote learning and providing those students who are due to take crucial examinations this summer with the information and support they will need.

#### **Exams**

Students and families in Year 11 and Year 13 will be concerned about the arrangements for the summer exams. As I wrote to these students yesterday, I am truly sorry not to be able to provide you with the certainty and answers that you will want today. The government have not yet released details of what adjustments they intend to make to the summer exams – but I am confident this will follow soon. It is important that every student understands that **we will continue to deliver the curriculum and prepare you for whatever type of assessment that will be used to award your qualifications. Your school year has not ended, and your lessons will continue.** As soon as we know more about the months ahead, we will update you. Whatever happens, students must continue to engage in their learning, try to remain positive and remember that all they have learned, and the skills they have developed, are still very important and will be needed.

#### **Mid-Year Assessments**

Whilst students are not at school, plans for the Mid-Year Assessments for students in Years 7-9 are necessarily postponed. As a principle, when they return to school students can expect an assessment preparation week of face-to-face lessons with the Mid-Year Assessments taking place the week after this. Precise dates for these rearrangements will be published at a point when it can be confirmed with certainty when students in these years will return to face-to-face lessons. Some remote learning work will be set to prepare students for the Mid-Year Assessments as well as remote learning work continuing with new curriculum content.

#### **Critical workers and vulnerable children**

As we had always planned, we are open to supervise the children of critical workers and vulnerable children. The criteria for eligibility for this provision [can be found here](#). We will invite you to book a place for your child(ren) on a weekly basis as we are aware that family situations can change and it is imperative that our registers are accurate. If you haven't already done so and would like to book a place for your child(ren) for the week beginning Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January, please email [clare.greaney@astrea-longsands.org](mailto:clare.greaney@astrea-longsands.org) by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January at 9am in order for us to plan staffing and rooms ready for Monday. Unfortunately, we will not be able to accept students beyond this time.

The Local Authority have asked us to remind parents and carers that this is a national lockdown and the government have made it clear that people should stay at home. This provision is offered to the children of parents and carers who are critical workers or meet another critical criterion who are unable to work from home and/or unable to make other arrangements for their children so have no alternative but to attend school.

It is important to point out that students attending school will be supervised by staff in following the remote learning offer while in school - they will not receive face to face lessons from teachers. Students attending this provision will have access to school catering, but this will be of a limited, reduced nature and orders will be taken

each morning. We expect school transport to continue to run, but this may be more limited, please do check by contacting Cambridgeshire Education Transport on 0345 0455208.

### **Remote Learning**

As mentioned in previous correspondence, I want to reassure you that your child's online education will be as close as possible to any normal day in school. Going forward, our remote learning offer will be a combination of pre-recorded lessons, independent work and live lessons with the timetabled teacher delivering lesson content or instructions to students. For live lessons, session may not necessarily be 'live' for the full hour, and students may well be asked to continue work independently and off-line once instructions have been given. Information to support how students can access live lessons is attached to this letter. For practical based subjects such as PE, Design and Technology, Music and Drama, independent work will be set for students on Doodle to follow and complete. Please ensure students log on to Doodle for instructions for each lesson. Students may find that their work on Doodle has been set by a teacher who is different to their normal teacher. The reason for this is that departments are working collaboratively in order to ensure high quality lessons are delivered and this will also include scenarios where a staff member is absent due to illness.

The remote work set is intended to last for a full period (1 hour), however we are well aware that students learn and work at different paces. In order to maintain a sense of wellbeing we are keen for students to spend only the time period of their lesson completing the tasks set. Students will not receive sanctions as a result of incomplete work and we ask that you reassure them in this respect. As such we fully appreciate that not all students will complete all tasks in their entirety but ask that they make best efforts. Engagement in their learning and attendance of live lessons will be monitored and reviewed, and where we have concerns that a student is not participating in their learning we will be in contact with parents and carers.

### **Wellbeing**

We also want to ensure that your child's welfare and well-being is protected. Since March 2020, we have monitored an open email address – [safeguarding@astrea-longsands.org](mailto:safeguarding@astrea-longsands.org) for students, and parents and carers to contact us if they are anxious or worried during lockdown. We have a range of resources and advice to [help support your well-being on our website](#), and our student support team remain ready and available to support you with your learning and your general progress. You are not alone – the Academy is open, albeit in a virtual sense and we are here to continue our support of students, their families and each other. Teachers, teaching assistants, tutors and support staff will be making regular contact with you via lessons, tutor time and phone calls.

### **Equipment**

We remain committed to ensuring every student has access to an electronic device so that they can continue to receive a high quality of education. Yesterday we were able to distribute over 50 laptops to families. We are acutely aware that remote learning places significant pressures on family access to IT, particularly where there are two or more siblings in the household. We do have a limited number of laptops available to loan to students to enable remote learning where this would otherwise be impossible. Please contact [enquiries@astrea-longsands.org](mailto:enquiries@astrea-longsands.org) to discuss your child(ren)'s situation further.

Thank you again for your ongoing support. As a parent myself I realise how challenging this time is. We encourage students to do their best during this time and above all be kind to themselves and others as we navigate these strange and uncertain times. Above all, I hope that you and are your family are able to stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely



Mr N D Owen  
**Principal**

**Longsands Academy**  
Longsands Road, St Neots  
Cambridgeshire, PE19 1LQ  
**Principal:** Neil Owen

01480 353535  
[enquiries@astrea-longsands.org](mailto:enquiries@astrea-longsands.org)  
[www.astrea-longsands.org](http://www.astrea-longsands.org)

