



UNSWORTH ACADEMY



Friday 8th January 2021

Dear Year 11 Learners and Parents and Carers

Further to the government's announcement that year 11 exams will not now go ahead as planned, I am writing to you to:

- make clear that the situation the current year 11's now find themselves in this January 2021, is quite different from the situation last year's year 11 were in at the end of March 2020.
- keep you fully informed as to how we will continue to support our year 11's learning and study for their GCSEs, between now and February half term, when all learners, including those in year 11, are currently expected to return to full time on school site learning.

With regard to the first point, it is clear from feedback from some of our teachers and pastoral team, that for many year 11's, (now that they have got over the shock of the government's announcement on Monday) it is very much "Business as Usual". They are fully engaging in their on - line learning, because they know how important it is to keep studying and prepare for a full return to face to face schooling in the second half of the Spring term, as well as prepare for post 16 college courses. This is a fantastic response and exactly the one all of our year 11's must now make.

However, it is apparent that some year 11's now seems to think it is "Game Over", and they no longer need to do any school work or engage in any further GCSE study, be that on site, or via on-line schooling. This is simply not the case. Face to face on site learning has simply been switched to online learning for this half term only. We still have lots of content to teach and we must all be mindful that year 11's will need to complete more ongoing teacher assessments. These assessments will enable us to ensure that we have as much accurate data as possible to evidence that our year 11's final GCSE grades are awarded as accurately as possible this Summer. Put simply, the final GCSE examinations may have been cancelled, but ongoing learning and formative assessment certainly haven't. **So, all year 11's must engage fully with their on-line learning and work hard to complete the syllabuses.**

As soon as we have any details about how the final grades will be awarded, we will explain this procedure to you. On 6th January the Department for Education issued the latest information in their press release:

With GCSEs and A Levels not going ahead as planned, the exams regulator Ofqual will launch a consultation – alongside the department – on the options for alternatives to the exams to ensure every young person gets a fair grade for their work, with the expectation that teacher assessment will be used.

On Monday 11th January we will formally launch our online school. Attendance will be compulsory, just as it would be if year 11's were all studying on site.

Attendance to our online school will be robustly monitored by Mrs Chamberlain and Mrs Costello. Mr. Devonport, year 11 Head of Progress, and Miss Steele, year 11 Pastoral Manager will be monitoring engagement and progress, which will be overseen by Mr.

Mrs S Armstrong **Academy Principal**
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Orrell, our exams and assessment lead. It is now a DFE requirement that all schools have an SLT lead for Remote Learning, and Mr. Fair takes up that post for Unsworth Academy.

All year 11 parents/carers must contact us immediately, each morning, if:

- their child is ill and therefore unable to attend on-line school that day.
- their child is struggling to access their online schooling from home that day.

30 minutes of each lesson will be a live lesson as per my previous letter. The only exception is that PSHCE lessons (which we have re-instated to ensure some key year 11 topics, which would have

been covered in form time, are now covered) will be set via Microsoft teams assignments.

Remote Learning Lessons via Microsoft Teams

Please be reminded, Microsoft Teams lessons will follow the regular school timetable but will only be live for 30 minutes of the lesson. **Please note the change of time to the period 5 live part of the lesson. This is to support our staff and enable them to pick up their own children from school.**

Live lessons will be as follows:

Period 1 – 9.20-9.50am

Period 2 – 10.20-10.50am

Period 3 – 11.40am-12.10pm

Period 4 – 12.40-1.10pm

Period 5 – 2.05 – 2.35pm

Your teachers will set extra work to be finished after their sessions. If your teacher is ill then the lesson will of course not be interactive, but resources and tasks will be uploaded via Microsoft teams.

If you encounter any difficulties using Microsoft Teams, please visit the 'For Learners' section of the school website where you will find help sheets and videos. You can also e-mail remotelearning@unsworth.shaw-education.org.uk.

To ensure focused teaching and learning can take place can I remind learners, parents and carers of some guidelines around using Microsoft Teams:

- the chat facility is to help teaching and learning and must be used to discuss learning only
- learners must attend meetings (lessons) set up by their teacher only
- contacting school via e mail must only be done via information@unsworth.shaw-education.org.uk for general enquires or remotelearning@unsworth.shaw-education.org.uk for specific remote learning enquires

We have a limited number of computer devices available for loan to support remote learning. Priority for these devices will be given to those eligible for free school meals and those with multiple Unsworth Academy learners in the household. These devices will need to be collected at reception by parents and a loan agreement form completed. If your child requires a device and meets the criteria, please e-mail remotelearning@unsworth.shaw-education.org.uk to enable us

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to allocate devices as fairly as possible. You will be contacted by school to arrange collection if you are allocated a device. Exercise books are available to pick up from reception should your child need them.

Vulnerable learners and the children of key workers are entitled to onsite provision. Please refer to my previous letter to see if your child is eligible and you wish to take up a place.

Many thanks for your continued support. Working together we will secure the best possible outcomes for all our year 11's.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'S. Armstrong'.

**Mrs S Armstrong
Academy Principal**

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