



Our Ref: AJC/MS

8 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carers

**Re: Microsoft Teams – Remote Learning for Pilgrim Academy Pupils**

I hope that you and the children are all well and staying safe. It is an extremely challenging time for us all and I appreciate how difficult it must be for you all at the moment.

As you will be aware, during the previous lockdown and since we returned in September, we have been using Frog to share work and communicate with children and parents. Although this has provided us with a platform for children to access work, the feedback you provided showed that some of you found it difficult to motivate your children to complete the work that had been set and children did not always engage with how the work had been presented. Many of you also found that Frog worked well if it was being used on a PC or laptop, but was extremely frustrating to use on mobile devices.

**What remote learning system are we moving towards?**

With all of this in mind, we have made the decision to move to Microsoft Teams and were in the process of doing so before school closures were announced on 4 January 2021. The staff have worked incredibly hard over the last few days to get fully up and running and we are now in a position where we can start to make the transition from Frog to Teams, which will be a much-improved service for you.

**What are the benefits of using Microsoft Teams?**

- Microsoft Teams is a secure, personal space where children will be able to access and complete tasks that have been set.
- Children will be able to see and communicate directly with their teacher on different occasions, throughout the week.
- Microsoft Teams can be easily accessed on many devices including the X-Box and Play Station.
- It is much easier to use on a mobile device than Frog.
- Documents can be provided in Word format and children will be able to type directly onto the document and send back to their teacher, even if you do not have Microsoft Office installed on your device.
- Teachers will be able to record small videos of themselves teaching, which they can upload for the children to use to help their learning.



- There is a facility for teachers to book meetings with their classes, to go through certain aspects of the children's work.
- We hope to start an element of live teaching, where the teacher will be able to talk to the pupils and explain elements of their learning, whilst at the same time talking them through the resources for some lessons.

We hope that this will give the children more ownership over their learning, providing greater motivation and importantly, reduce some of the pressure on parents and carers.

We do appreciate that, as with any remote learning, this is more challenging for younger children. Teachers will ensure that work is uploaded with clear instructions and will make time available to speak to the children at different points throughout the week.

### **How will the teachers support the children?**

Please be aware that all teachers are also in school, far more than they were during the previous lockdown, as we have more children now in attendance. Therefore, on some days they will be teaching in school all day to groups of children and will not necessarily have an opportunity to also interact 'live' with the children on each day of the week.

Whilst our teachers are very creative and resourceful, they may not precisely replicate the classroom experience that would exist at school. Tasks and activities may not be in the same format as they would be at school but have been designed to ensure they can be accessed at home. Teachers will endeavour to give regular feedback on home learning, but please be aware that they may also be delivering face to face learning in the Academy for vulnerable children and those children of critical workers.

### **How much work will children be expected to do?**

We will be sticking closely to our normal curriculum. However, we do appreciate that it is very difficult for children at home to follow the normal pattern of the day. The government expectations are as follows, which will be adhering to:

- KS1: 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children
- KS2: 4 hours a day

### **How and when will you receive your usernames and passwords?**

On Monday or Tuesday of next week, you will be contacted by text message to be given your child's user name and password in order to access Microsoft Teams. Please note, the first part will be the username, the second part will be the password. Your username and password must never be shared with any other person or be shared or publicised on social media.



Those children who are currently attending will receive a hard copy of their username and password in an envelope on either Monday or Tuesday of next week.

### **What information will we provide to support you and the children?**

On Monday or Tuesday of next week, we will be setting up a new section on the website for Microsoft teams. Within this section, you will be provided with guides to help you use the new facility. Mr Gibbon is also preparing a series of short videos which I would like both children and parents to watch as they will be extremely useful in helping you understand our new remote learning package.

### **What are the expectations of the children when using Teams?**

It is really important that your child's Microsoft Teams account is used for home learning only. Any other queries should be shared using the usual channels of communication. To safeguard everyone, children must adhere to our strict guidelines for live lessons as will be outlined in our guide, which you will also be able to find on the Academy website.

To clarify the process, these are the important dates for you to be aware of:

### **When will usernames and passwords be sent to parents?**

These will be sent to parents on Monday 11 January and Tuesday 12 January 2021, as stated above.

### **When will the guides and videos be available to view on the main Academy website?**

Our aim is to upload these on Monday 11 January 2021, if not, Tuesday 12 January 2021.

### **When will we move from Frog to Teams?**

We will move from Frog to Teams on Wednesday 13 January 2021.

### **When will staff start uploading work and recorded videos for pupils to use to help them with their learning?**

The expectation is that staff will upload work and will have started to upload a small number of recorded videos from Wednesday 13 January 2021.



**When will staff be introducing an element of live teaching and/or live meetings with the children?**

Our aim is to start this process on Thursday 21 and Friday 22 January 2021.

As I am sure you can understand, this is a steep learning curve for us all and we want to make sure we are ready for each step of the process. On-going training is regularly taking place for staff. I will ensure that I keep you updated over the next few weeks with each step of the process.

If you have any questions at all, please contact [enquiries@pilgrimacademy.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pilgrimacademy.co.uk) stating the name of your child, the teacher you wish to contact and a brief outline of your query. I would urge everyone to visit the new section on our website first, once up and running, where hopefully, your questions will be answered.

Thank you, as always, for all of your efforts with home learning. We are aware that this is an unsettling time for all but hopefully this will help to provide more routine, structure and improved communication until we reach the time when we can safely welcome all of our children back into the Academy.

Yours faithfully



Mr A J Clark  
Principal