

20 January 2021

JST/NBA

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

Thank you for your ongoing support this half term. I do hope you and your families are safe and well.

Online learning

Last week you should have received an online learning engagement report. I hope that you have found this useful. It will be repeated this week with an update. The reporting process is new and did flag a couple of issues for students that has meant that they may not be credited for work they are completing at home.

Some students are not submitting their work as assignments on Teams. We are more than happy to support any student who is struggling to do this. Students have also set their settings to 'appear offline'. This means that when teachers run the insights to see student participation they are not being shown as having attended.

- Students should set their settings in teams to 'do not disturb' rather than offline.

To help students rationalise and plan for online learning we have created a document that can be used in conjunction with parents to help manage expectations. This document accompanies this letter. Please **do not** feel that there is any expectation to use the document. It is offered as a support for students and families should they want it or find it useful. Should you want paper copies of the document please contact the UTC we will be more than happy to help.

In order to further support students when working on Microsoft Teams, we will now be enabling individuals to be made a 'presenter' in some Teams meetings. This may be for example where they need to share their screen and their work to assist with finding a timely solution. Students need to be made aware that when this is the case, they need to adhere to the following guidelines;

- Before screen sharing students must close any documents or windows that do not relate to work within school, or are of a personal or sensitive nature.
- Any information that is screen shared with other students and staff should not contain any offensive, inappropriate or controversial subject matters.
- Students need to be aware that if a fellow student, teacher or member of staff sees any such material they are duty bound to report it, and depending on the situation, further action may be taken.
- It should be noted that all Teams lessons are recorded, so that students who miss the lesson can catch up but equally as a safeguarding mechanism should students or staff not follow protocol.

Students should try to follow their timetable where possible and prioritise live lessons. They need to let staff know if they are unable to complete work in the assigned time and should submit any work they have completed.

In addition the Tutor programme, employer skills and opportunities continue. Within the class materials folder in the year group Teams channels, there is now a skills builder folder. There are 8 Essentials Skills workbooks that students can complete in addition to the other work set, should they complete their classwork. Virtual employer events will also be shared in this Teams group.

The following link has guidance for parents/carers on the importance of the 8 Essential skills students are looking to build through the framework.

[Parents & Carers \(skillsbuilder.org\)](https://www.skillsbuilder.org)

Progress Tracker

Next week we will also be supplying students and families with the most recent attainment data through the progress tracker. This should be able to show you the current levels and targets for students and complement the engagement information on the weekly reports.

Ofqual and DfE consultation.

Ofqual and The Department for Education are now consulting on the awarding process for qualifications this year. The links to this consultation are below. It is open to parents, students and teachers to respond.

[Consultation on how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Consultation on alternative arrangements for the award of VTQs and other general qualifications in 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

This is a consultation only so at this moment not a guarantee of how grades will be awarded.

Key points in the documents are:

The A, AS and GCSE consultation sets out 68 questions and the proposals are that:

- students would continue with their education during this academic year
- students would be assessed by their teachers in a period beginning in May into early June
- teachers would submit grades to the exam boards by mid-June
- external quality assurance by the exam boards would be ongoing throughout June
- results would be issued to students once the QA process is complete, most likely in early July
- student appeals could be submitted immediately following the issue of results and would first be considered by schools and colleges

For Vocational qualifications the consultation covers a wide range of VTQ and general qualifications but clarifies that "From April onwards, written exams for Vocational and Technical qualifications that are taken instead of, or alongside, GCSEs, AS and A levels should not take place. Alternative arrangements will be put in place to award these results," meaning the summer exams will be cancelled.

I realise this is a confusing and stressful time for everyone. Please be assured that all at UTC OLP will work tirelessly to ensure that all students have the opportunities to demonstrate their abilities over the upcoming months.

Additional information.

Accompanying this letter is a letter from the local authority and some further information for any parents whose child has special educational needs.

Please remember to follow us on social media. Updates are posted regularly about home learning, competitions and updates. @utcsheffieldolp

If you have any questions or need any support please do not hesitate to get in contact with us.

We have two new learning managers. They will be in touch with all families in their year groups over the coming weeks if they have not already. Adele Johnson has joined us as Learning Manger for Year 9 and tomorrow we will welcome Jordan Howard as Learning Manager for Y10.

Learning manger contact details

Year 9 Ms A Johnson

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Year 10 Mr J Howard

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Year 11 Ms E Senior

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Year 12 and 13 Mr L Moore

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Enquiries

adminolp@utcsheffield.org.uk

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stevenson".

Mrs. Jessica Stevenson
Principal
UTC OLP