



30th June 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Following confirmation of a further positive COVID-19 test result affecting our Year 8 community, we have taken the decision to transition to remote learning for all students in Year 8 from **Thursday 1st July 2021**. This adjustment will last for the remaining 2 days of this school week only. Year 8 students will be able to return to school on **Monday 5th July 2021**.

Over recent days we have had to ask a significant number of students in the Year group to self-isolate as a precautionary measure. Whilst there is no suggestion of a common link between all the reported cases that have led to these requests, the cumulative impact on the number of children working from home at this time is a concern.

In addition to student absence we continue to experience pressures on staff availability. There are several reasons which include:

- Staff self-isolating as a result of contact with a positive case / testing positive themselves
- Staff notified to self-isolate by the NHS Track and Trace App
- Staff self-isolating because a member of their family is either positive or has symptoms
- Staff absent from work in order to care for children who are self-isolating from other schools

Given the combined effect of the current circumstances for this cohort, it has become clear that our best option in securing a consistent learning experience for Year 8 students is through our remote platform. This will allow more specialist staff to be available for their classes as colleagues can deliver remotely from home where required, as well as ensure all students can access teacher-led learning.

All lessons will be taught live to students through Microsoft Teams. Live lessons will take place from period 1 (9.15am) on Thursday 1st July. There will be no remote tutor time on Thursday or Friday which will allow the necessary invitation to lessons to be distributed to student calendars at the start of the day and for students to re-familiarise themselves with our expectations for remote learning (attached) and to get prepared.

Students have experienced training on the use of Microsoft Teams but can follow the instructions attached if they have any challenges in getting started. If there is any reason why your child might struggle to access our remote offer, then please get in touch with the Year 8 Office at the earliest opportunity so that we can support you in addressing specific barriers.

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CEO
Mr G Fitzpatrick

Head of School
Mrs M Stead



I would like to thank you in anticipation for your continued support as we work to respond to the unprecedented circumstances in which we find ourselves. I fully appreciate how frustrating and no doubt worrying this situation will be for many of you. However, the bubble closure should be for these coming 2 days only. As always, children remain at the centre of all we are and do.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Stead". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped capital 'M' and a capital 'S' at the end.

Mrs M Stead - **Head of School**



ST MARY'S COLLEGE

Live learning through Microsoft Teams: Student Expectations

In the event of a partial or full school closure, lessons will be delivered through Microsoft Teams. To ensure that you get the most out of each lesson please can you make sure that you carefully read and follow this guidance:

Before the lesson:

1. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately and that you are in an appropriate location to learn without any distractions.
2. Registers of attendance will be taken, if you are unable to attend the lesson email your teacher and Year team in advance explaining why.
3. You will need to be ready to start your lesson at least 5 minutes before the scheduled time. If you arrive to the lesson after 5 minutes you will be given a late mark on the register and it will be logged.
4. Have any materials for the lesson with you, e.g. your exercise book, pen, pencil, ruler, rubber.
5. Have Teams open on your computer. Go to the calendar and you will see the lessons for each day populated. Click on the appropriate lesson and select 'join'.
6. Wherever possible, use a device with a larger screen. Smartphones are fine but the smaller screen size will make reading/seeing lesson content more challenging.

During the lesson:

1. Be aware that your teacher will be recording your lesson through MS Teams. This recording will not be shared publicly but is being taken to ensure the safety of all concerned.
2. Follow instructions from your teacher in the same way that you would do normally for example the Classroom Code.
3. During the lesson please mute your microphone if you are not speaking and ensure your camera remains switched off.
4. If you need to ask a question, then please indicate by using the 'hand up icon', your teacher will see and acknowledge this.
5. Always speak slowly and clearly, use appropriate language as you would be expected to do in a lesson.
6. Remember that your teacher has a timetable to follow too – lessons will last 55 minutes to allow for both you and your teacher to transition between lessons comfortably.
7. If you do not follow the classroom code we will be operating our normal behaviour system and ultimately you will be ejected from the session. All such events will be logged as they are when you are on-site.

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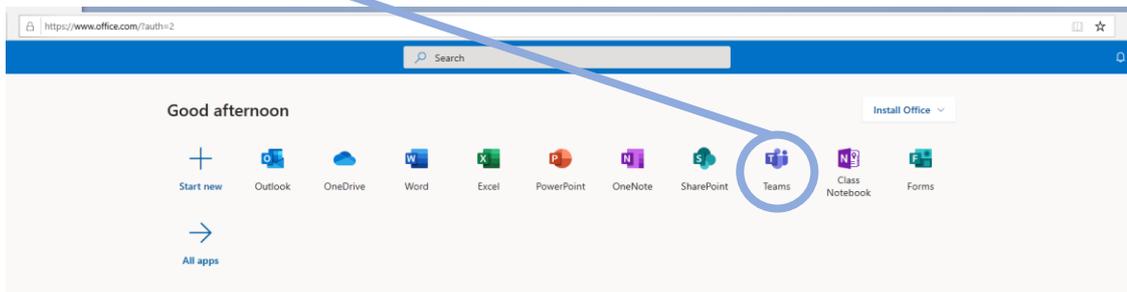


St Mary's College

Guidance for accessing 'live lessons' through Teams

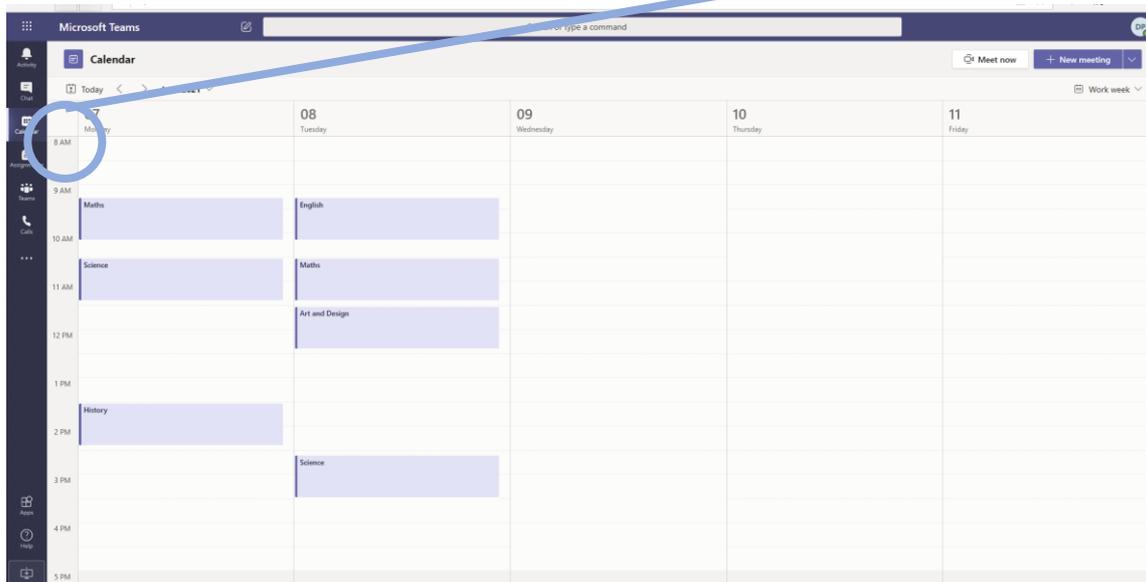
1. There are **two options** for accessing Microsoft Teams.

A. You can click on the Teams icon when logged in to you Microsoft 365 account at office.com (in the same way as you have clicked on to the SharePoint icon for the SMC study page previously).



B. You can download the Microsoft Teams App on any device for free and log in using your school e-mail and password.

2. Once you have opened Teams you will need to go to the calendar section by selecting the icon:

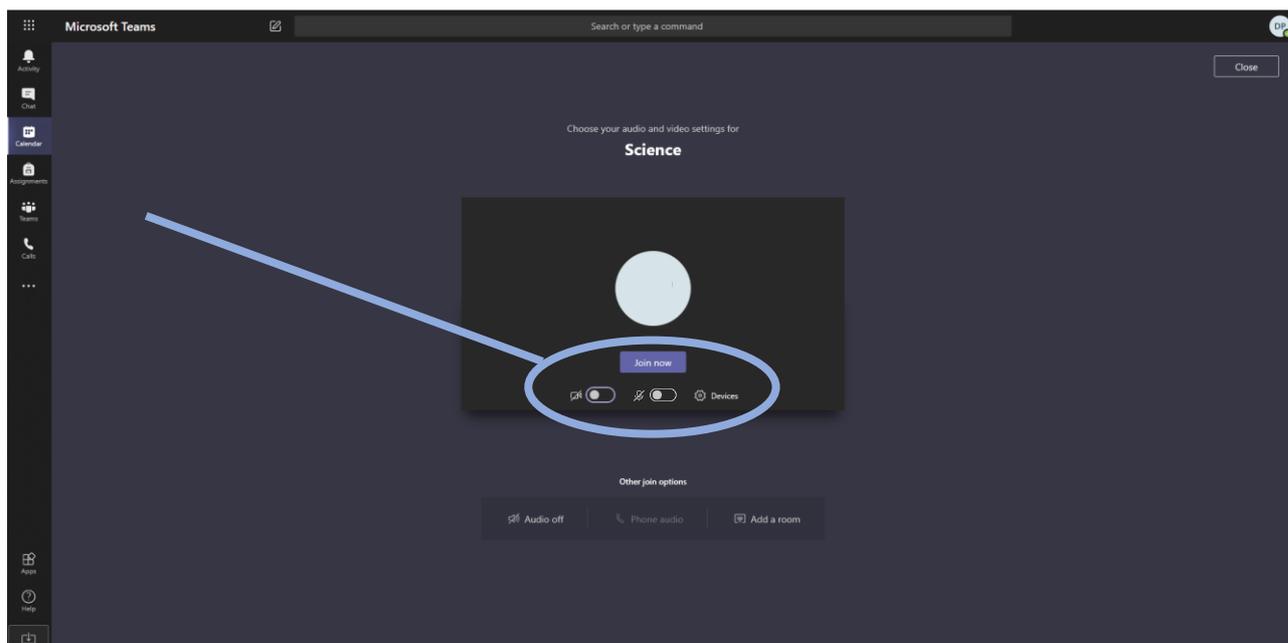


Teachers will have invited you to all lessons and your calendar will automatically be populated when they do. Simply select the lesson you need to join by clicking on it. The word 'Join' will appear in a blue box, when once the lesson is ready to access and you can simply click to join.



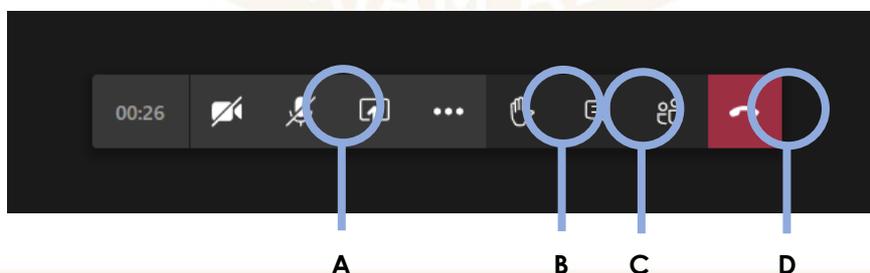


3. Once you have selected to 'Join' a lesson you will see the screen below. Make sure that the camera is off and the microphone is muted. When you are happy that you are ready then select 'Join now' by clicking the blue rectangle.



4. You will now have joined the lesson. At the start of every lesson you will see a reminder of the student protocol which your teacher will discuss with you. It is important that you follow the rules and any failure to do so will result in the usual behaviour policy being applied. A yellow card will result in you being ejected from the lesson. Please read the student protocol on the next page carefully before we begin lessons on Monday 8th June.

5. When you are in a lesson you will see the tool bar below in the middle of your screen:



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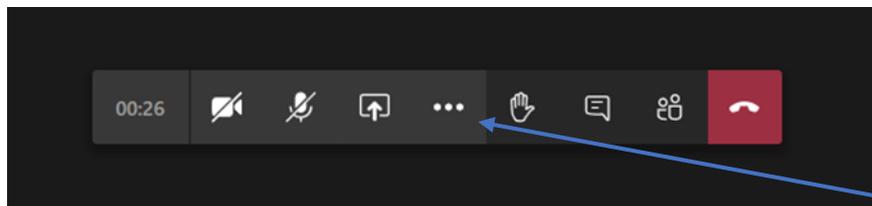
Head of School
Mrs M Stead



The key tools for you to be aware of are:

- A** – Microphone mute/unmute. This will be required if you are invited to speak in the lesson.
- B** – Hand up. This is the button to press if you have a question or would like to contribute.
- C** – Chat. This will enable you to write a response or a question to your teacher/the class.
- D** – Hang up. At the end of the lesson use this button to leave. You can then join another lesson.

6. How blur you background



To blur your background during a video meeting in Teams, during a call click the three dots in the bottom toolbar. Depending on whether your camera is already on there should be a "blur background" or "start camera with blurred background" option. Click this and your background will be blurred.

Further advice and guidance

Go to SMC Study for a how-to video on accessing and using Teams:

<https://smc23.sharepoint.com/sites/SMCStudy/SitePages/Support,-Advice-and-Guidance.aspx>

If you have any technical issues with using Teams please log them with the helpdesk using your school email helpdesk@smchull.org