



Astrea Academy Trust
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St Ivo Academy Timetable changes for January 2026



Background

- Four teaching staff are leaving at the end of term.
- Some of the resignations were received very close to the sector-wide deadline of 31 October.
- Maintaining our current structure would require substantial non-specialist teaching or cover/ supply teachers.
- Past feedback from students, parents/ carers and our own staff has been that this should be avoided wherever possible.

Teaching groups

- In years 7 and 9, we will remove one teaching group per year. This means that class sizes will increase to 31-32.
- The same process occurred for current year 8 last summer.
- We will aim to provide targeted support to those with additional needs.
- Classes will continue to be organised by ability, using English and maths data.
- Year 7 will have 7 groups, higher ability (“M” code on the timetable), middle ability (“N”) and lower ability (“S”).
- Year 9 will continue to be in north and south populations. North will have sets 1 to 5, south sets 1 to 4.
- Year 7 and 9 students should be aware that it is likely their set will change.

Impact on D&T and Food

- These subjects are taught on rotation in smaller groups for health and safety.
- Students normally have one rotation of food per year, with the rest of the time spent in D&T.
- New teaching classes in years 7 and 9 mean that a minority of students will repeat food this year, or will repeat a D&T project.
- We recognise this isn't ideal, but are prioritising students being in the best ability group for them in the majority of subjects, including the core.

Tutor groups

- We will also remove one tutor group in year 7 and one in year 9.
- The tutor groups being disbanded are 7EYP and 9AFS.
- Heads of year have begun the process of reassigning students. This includes gathering student voice.
- New tutor groups will be confirmed to students by Friday 5 December, with moves starting in January, at the same time as other changes.

Subject time allocations

- To ensure specialist teaching wherever possible, the time allocated to subjects will be adjusted in years 7 and 8.
- Music will decrease to 1 lesson per fortnight, and dance increase to 2 lessons – keeping to curriculum time within performing arts at 5 lessons per fortnight.
- Maths will increase to 8 lessons per fortnight, and science decrease to 6.
- No subjects are being removed from the curriculum – this follows feedback from parents/ carers last academic year.
- No changes for year 9 in the run up to students choosing key stage 4 subjects.

When will my child know their new timetable and set?

- New timetables will be visible on MCAS and the Bromcom student portal from Friday 5 December.
- Students and parents will need to click forward in the timetable view to January.
- Students will be issued with new paper timetables on their return in January.

KS3 Assessments

- Mid year assessments are taking place in December and January.
- Assessments for English, maths, science, history, geography, French, RE and PD will be in the hall or gym.
- Other subjects will be assessed during lesson time.
- Students should use knowledge organisers and revision homeworks to prepare.
- <https://www.astreastivo.org/curriculum/ks3-revision/>
- Letter sent yesterday has more information.

Your questions

- How have you decided which tutor groups to disband?
- Can my child request to be with friends?
- Are you rearranging sets across the entire year? My child has anxiety issues.
- When will year 9 families have more information about the subject choices process for key stage 4?
- Will changes affect my child's learning in the long run?
- Why have you decreased the number of classes for years 7 and 9, and not year 8?
- My year 9 child wishes to take GCSE food, I am worried about them not now having any food lessons this year.
- Will the times of the school day change?

Your questions

- Will changes be reversed once you have recruited?
- When will year 9 families have more information about the subject choices process for key stage 4?
- My child doesn't enjoy dance. Why has the extra lesson gone to this subject? Can they opt out?
- What data will be used to inform year 7 ability sets?
- Will all year 7 students receive some food lessons over the year?
- Won't larger class sizes have a detrimental impact on behaviour and learning?

Your questions

- Why has the school chosen to prioritise performing arts over STEM subjects? Why aren't opportunities in D&T, food or computing being increased?
- Is the school overstaffed in some subjects?
- How many students are legally allowed to take part in practical subjects? How will this be managed with increased class sizes?
- How is the music curriculum going to be fulfilled with half as many lessons?
- How is the school going to cover content in science in reduced time?
- How is the school suddenly able to increase the number of lessons in some subjects?
- Why has the school not even attempted to recruit to vacancies?
- How is the school ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum?

Your questions

- How have you decided which tutor groups to disband?
 - We are disbanding those tutor groups where the form tutor is leaving at the end of term.
- Can my child request to be with friends?
 - Student voice forms part of the process for deciding new tutor groups. Teaching sets will continue to be determined by ability.
- Are you rearranging sets across the entire year? My child has anxiety issues.
 - The changes will impact all students in the year. They may change group, their peers may change or the class teacher may change. The pastoral team will be available to support students where needed, and we hope that publishing changes two weeks before the end of term will give a period of adjustment.

Your questions

- Will changes be reversed once you have recruited?
 - The timetable is subject to regular review, however, we cannot offer any guarantees that changes will be reversed.
- When will year 9 families have more information about the subject choices process for key stage 4?
 - The preferences booklet should be published next half term, prior to the curriculum evening in February. We do not anticipate these changes having any direct impact on the subject choices process.
- Will changes affect my child's learning in the long run?
 - We are very much seeking to avoid any negative impact from the changes.

Your questions

- Why have you decreased the number of classes for years 7 and 9, and not year 8?
 - The number of classes has already been amended from 9 classes to 8 in year 8. This happened last summer.
- My year 9 child wishes to take GCSE food, I am worried about them not now having any food lessons this year.
 - There is no requirement to take food in year 9 before commencing GCSE studies. However, if you have a particular individual concern here then please get in touch so that the new rotation for your child can be checked.
- Will the times of the school day change?
 - No, there will be no changes to the school day times.
- How is the music curriculum going to be fulfilled with half as many lessons?
 - The curriculum will be adjusted, in 2023 the music curriculum was 1 hour per fortnight across KS3.

Your questions

- My child doesn't enjoy dance. Why has the extra lesson gone to this subject? Can they opt out?
 - We wanted to keep the lesson from music within performing arts. There is also a practical aspect that we have more flexibility within PE and dance staff time. Students are not able to opt out.
- What data will be used to inform year 7 ability sets?
 - Ability sets will be formulated using English and maths data including SATs and autumn term assessment data.
- Will all year 7 students receive some food lessons over the year?
 - A small minority of students will have D&T only. If you would like this checked for your child, please get in touch with the school.

Your questions

- Won't larger class sizes have a detrimental impact on behaviour and learning?
 - Our experience, and national research, is that there isn't a detrimental impact from small increases in class size. Quality First teaching is more important.
- Why has the school chosen to prioritise performing arts over STEM subjects? Why aren't opportunities in D&T, food or computing being increased?
 - The time given within performing arts and within STEM isn't changing. We do have to work within areas where we have the staffing flexibility to do so.
- Is the school overstaffed in some subjects?
 - We are not overstaffed, but we do have some areas with more flexibility where staff can deliver two or three different subjects.
- How is the school suddenly able to increase the number of lessons in some subjects?
 - As above, we do have some areas with more flexibility of staff.

Your questions

- How many students are legally allowed to take part in practical subjects? How will this be managed with increased class sizes?
 - There is no absolute legal limit. In D&T and food, the limit has been set at 23 for a number of years in consultation with staff and we are continuing with that limit.
- How is the school going to cover content in science in reduced time?
 - The movement of an lesson per fortnight from science to maths is happening in consultation with those heads of department. We are confident that the science curriculum can still be delivered in 6 lessons.
- Why has the school not even attempted to recruit to vacancies?
 - We have recruited a part time science teacher to help fill the gap in that area. Other resignations were received very close to the national resignation deadline, making recruitment for January difficult.
- How is the school ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum?
 - The curriculum overall hasn't changed, we haven't removed any subjects and where the time per subject is changing this is to similar subjects e.g. within performing arts.

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