



Virtual Aldridge

**Student & Family
Information Booklet
2022-23**



Student & Family Information Booklet 2021-22

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I. Welcome

Congratulations for signing up to Virtual Aldridge and demonstrating your determination to succeed at GCSE!

Virtual Aldridge is an online GCSE tutoring service run by Aldridge Education. The sessions are for GCSE English, GCSE Maths and Triple Science and will be taught by expert tutors, the key aim being to prepare you to achieve the best possible grade in the GCSE examinations. You will receive a weekly one-hour online tutoring session with your allocated tutor and two other students from Aldridge schools. Tutors will be in regular contact with your teachers to adapt the learning to your specific group. The sessions will take place in the evening after school or at weekends. The sessions start in the w/c 26th Sep and will run all the way until your final GCSE exams. Virtual Aldridge is funded by Aldridge Education and the Aldridge Foundation so all sessions are free to students.

You have a place at Virtual Aldridge because we know you are committed to success at school and beyond. Small group tutoring is one of the best ways to support your school-based learning and your full commitment to this programme is essential. With all the disruptions to education over the last two years, it is more important than ever that students work to close any gaps in their knowledge and go on to achieve a strong grade in English and Maths. Achievement in English and Maths not only prepares you for your future learning but is also a vital part of a successful pathway to your chosen Futures destination.

We look forward to working with you and your family on your sustained progress and achievement over the year ahead.

Parents, carers and families, thank you for your continued support in your child's learning journey.

Students, welcome to the programme!

Victoria Cockram, Trust Lead for Enterprise, Aldridge Education





2. Introduction to Virtual Aldridge

The aim of Virtual Aldridge is to provide a high-quality, tailored, virtual tutoring service, enabling historic gaps in learning to be closed at the earliest opportunity, ensuring students are supported to reach their learning goals in English and Maths. The programme prioritises access for the hardest to reach students.

The pilot 2020-21 Year 11 programme was hugely successful. Below is a summary of our impact:

- On average, Virtual Aldridge students made substantially more progress in English and Maths
- Comparing the percentage of students at or above target:
 - English: Just 24% of student were achieving their GCSE English target in December, by the end of the programme this had risen to 76%
 - Maths: Just 15% of student were achieving their GCSE Maths target in December, by the end of the programme this had risen to 70%
- 98% of students, 95% of parents and 100% of tutors would recommend Virtual Aldridge
- 86% of parents say they would not have been able to access tutoring for their child without Virtual Aldridge
- 100% of tutors felt proud to be part of the Virtual Aldridge programme

Students said:

- It's a friendly environment jam packed with tutors who care!
- It's helped me and will most definitely help others. Take a leap of faith and it will take you far!
- It's been real y'all!

Parents said:

- Virtual Aldridge was excellent for my child's education and motivation.
- We feel privileged that our son was offered this wonderful opportunity and I hope more children can benefit from the Virtual Aldridge programme in the future.
- Virtual Aldridge has been brilliant for my daughter, we can't thank her tutors enough for all the help and support we've had from them.

The Virtual Aldridge programme has been expanded for this year. All students in Years 7 to 11 have been able to apply for a place, with places reserved for schools to select disadvantaged students who may not choose to apply for themselves. Congratulations on securing a place.





3. The Virtual Aldridge Programme

This section contains an overview of the Virtual Aldridge Programme including session information, our calendar, and curriculum.

Programme Summary

- Students receive weekly one-hour English or Maths virtual tutoring sessions
- Tutoring begins in w/c 26th September until the GCSE exams in June.
- Sessions take place outside of the school day on weekday evenings at 5pm, 6pm, or 7pm, and on Saturday mornings at 10am, 11am, or 12pm
- Students are given a choice of session slots and we do our best to assign each student their first or second choice
- Microsoft Teams is used to deliver the sessions and to share resources with students
- Groups have the same tutor for the duration of the programme
- Groups contain up to three students of a similar target and attainment level
- Groups may include a mixture of students from different Aldridge schools
- There is no tutoring in designated holiday weeks

Assigning Student Places

This year all Aldridge students in Years 7 to 11 are eligible to book a place on Virtual Aldridge. To ensure that the programme is accessible to all, each school also has places reserved to nominate students who might not book for themselves.

Once students have been assigned a place on the programme, they will be sent a link to express their session slot preferences. Students will be grouped into threes based on their target and attainment level and could be with students from other Aldridge schools.

Students will be contacted in the w/c 12th September with their confirmed session slot and tutor details. Students and families will then be sent a link inviting them to a Welcome Evening with their tutor.

Virtual Aldridge Tutors

The Virtual Aldridge tutor team, all either experienced English/Maths teachers or experienced GCSE English/Maths tutors, are dedicated to ensuring their students make the best progress possible. Each year the recruitment process gets more and more challenging as only the very best tutors are accepted.

Virtual Aldridge believes investment in our tutors is vital to the success of the programme:



- All tutors are provided with a touchscreen laptop, an Aldridge email address and an online Aldridge 3CX phone account so they can deliver the best support to students
- Tutors are paid for both delivery of sessions and planning time to ensure they have adequate time to prepare for sessions and contact students/families
- Tutors receive induction training covering academic topics, pastoral topics, safeguarding and equality/diversity
- Tutors receive regular coaching and training to continuously develop their practice

In the rare instance a tutor is absent, they set tasks for their students. Where possible another Virtual Aldridge tutor covers the session.

Programme Curriculum

The Virtual Aldridge curriculum is designed to close gaps in knowledge by tailoring sessions to each group. Tutors plan for their own Year 10 and Year 11 groups which allows for greater personalisation of learning. To do this tutors have access to each schools' scheme of learning and to mock exam results on a detailed question by question basis.

To ensure that each student is making progress, tutors assess learning every session and assign quizzes regularly. Tutors may also set a short piece of homework to assess or consolidate learning. The progress of each student is shared with their school to ensure we are working together to maximise progress. The curriculum plan for each group is updated each half term based on updates from schools and information from the regular quizzes.

The Sessions

Our tutors are the experts! They know exactly what is needed to get you the best grades possible in GCSE English and Maths.

Students can expect the following from their weekly tutoring sessions:

- A topic list each half term so they're going to study
- Clear examples and explanations to help really understand the topics and skills
- Lots of opportunities to ask questions and work together as a group
- Tasks to complete in the lesson to practice what they've learnt
- Quick quizzes to check understanding and help correct any mistakes
- Hints and tips for completing GCSE exam papers and questions
- Mini homework to complete online to help remember what has been learnt
- A copy of any resources used so students can use them for revision too



4. Information For Students

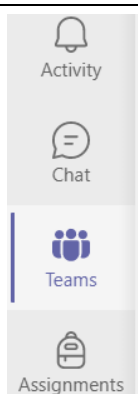
Joining Virtual Aldridge

- Tutors will call you in the week before sessions start
- There will be a virtual Welcome Evening on Monday 19th September for you and your family to meet your tutor 'in person'
- Your sessions will start in the w/c 26th September



Microsoft Teams

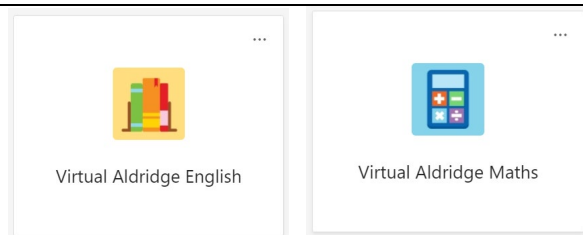
- Microsoft Teams is used to deliver your sessions and to share learning resources
- As each school is slightly different, there is a How To video for accessing Teams for your school in the FAQ section on the Virtual Aldridge website <https://aldridgeeducation.org/VirtualAldridge/>
- If you have any issues logging into Teams, please contact IT Support at your school or using this email ITHelpVA@aldridgeeducation.org



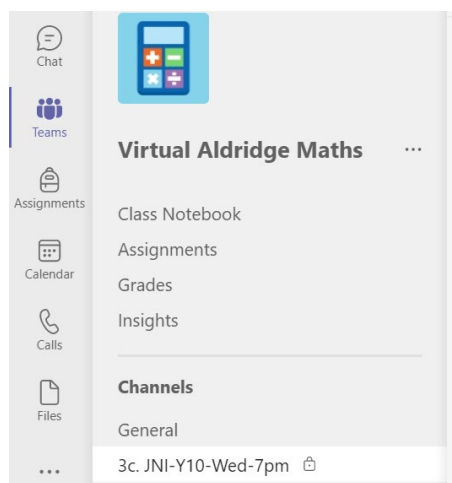
- Once you are logged into Teams...
- You can access your tutor group page via the menu on the left of the screen
- Click on **Teams**

- Click on the **Virtual Aldridge English OR Virtual Aldridge Maths**

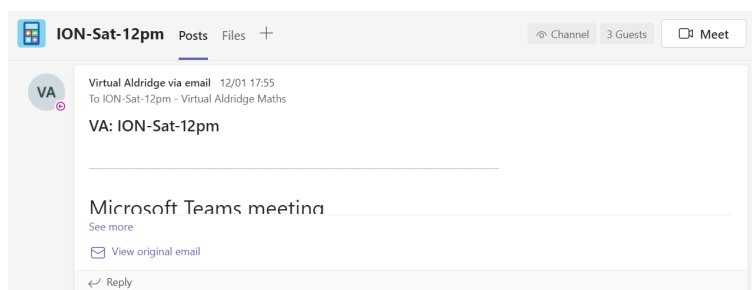
(you should only see one option)



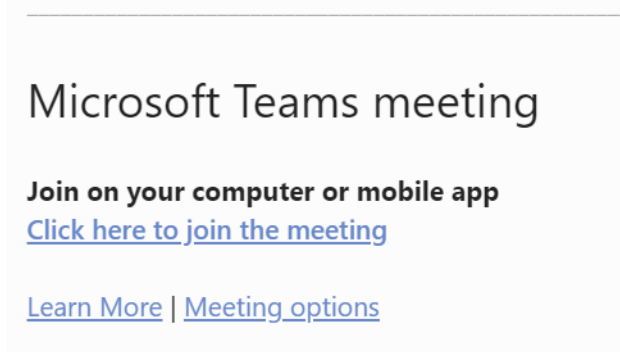
- Your tutor group area will be listed under Channels
- Click on your tutor group



- The first post you see contains the link to your weekly session
- Click **See more** to display the full message



- Click **Click here to join the meeting**
- This is the link you will use every week to join your session



- You can use the posts area to ask your tutor and fellow students questions

New conversation

- All questions and conversations on Teams **MUST** be learning related

100% in Online Learning

Virtual Aldridge is a great opportunity to boost your success and to open up the choices you can make after GCSEs. But, it will only help if you give 100% in the tutoring sessions, every single week. Tutors will explain more in the first session but here is what we expect from Aldridge students:

100% is a student who...

- Attends every week
- Logs into the session on time and stays for the whole session
- Has all their equipment and tutoring book ready
- Has their camera on throughout the session, and participates in any interactive tasks
- Listens in silence when the tutor or others are speaking
- Completes all the tasks set to the best of their ability
- Answers questions, and importantly asks questions when stuck!
- Is polite and respectful at all times, to the tutor and to other students

If you give 100%, you'll get back even more!

Anyone who is not able to follow these guidelines will not be allowed to participate in the sessions and could be removed from the programme.

Celebration of Students

It is important to recognise and celebrate those of you who consistently give 100%:

- Each half term tutors nominate their Star Students
- Star Students are those students who demonstrate excellent learning or progress in sessions
- Students, families and schools are informed of the nominations so they can also celebrate these students
- A handful of Star Students are then randomly selected to win prize vouchers
- Virtual Aldridge also celebrate students with 100% attendance each half term

Learning Questions

You can ask your tutor learning questions outside of your session time by typing them the posts of your tutor group area on Teams. Your tutor will not reply to individual questions but will address these during your next tutor session.



Please Note: Although the audio and video from each session will not be recorded, the text in the chat function will be saved for the duration of the programme. This will be continuously monitored by the Smoothwall software and regularly monitored by staff to ensure that all content is learning focussed and appropriate.

5. Student Attendance

Virtual Aldridge students are expected to attend their tutor session every week.



Excellent attendance leads to excellent academic progress and increased chances of future success. Results from 2020-21 (date change) demonstrate that those students who had excellent attendance to Virtual Aldridge made much better progress than those who did not.

Tutors take a register every session which is shared with your school. If you are unable to attend a session, you must email VirtualAldridge@aldridgeeducation.org or your tutor in advance of the session.

If you miss more than one session without permission, you will lose your place on the programme. Virtual Aldridge is oversubscribed again this year so there is a long waiting list of students ready to take the place.

6. Safeguarding & E-Safety

Safeguarding, and especially e-safety, is a priority for Virtual Aldridge to keep both students and tutor safe.

Some of the measure taken to safeguard students and tutors are:

- Safer recruitment process for all tutors including DBS checks
- Annual safeguarding training is compulsory for all tutors
- Cameras and microphones should be on at all times in sessions (but no video or audio is recorded)
- All written conversations and sessions chats are recorded and monitored with Smoothwall safeguarding software



- A register is taken every session and tutors contact home if a student is absent
- A senior member of staff from Aldridge Education is always available to support during the out of hours tutor sessions
- Virtual Aldridge has a clear process for dealing with any concerns raised by students, families, tutors or schools, which includes immediate reporting of any safeguarding concerns
- There is a dedicated Virtual Aldridge email and phone number

The Trust Safeguarding Policy has been updated to reflect the unique environment of virtual learning. Please visit the Aldridge website to read the updates.

Student Virtual Learning Agreement Form

Introduction

Below we explain some of the expectations that all students using the school virtual learning environment and Microsoft Teams will need to follow so that we can have a safe and purposeful virtual learning.

You will be asked to confirm you have read and agree to these expectations.

Expectations:

- You should be in an area of your home where you will be comfortable and are less likely to be interrupted by members of your household.
- You need to ensure that you have a laptop or tablet you will be able to use for the duration of the session.
- You should be in your smart casual clothes, the sort of thing you might wear on a non-uniform day (not pyjamas, vests, or similar).
- When taking part in the sessions, if your camera is turned on, you will need to try and have a neutral or blurred background, preferably with no photos or personal items behind you.
- Use the kind of language that would be expected of you when talking to staff at school or college – be respectful, considerate, and kind to everyone in the sessions. Failure to do so could result in you being removed from the session and/or programme.
- Do not share the session invite log in details with anybody who is not part of your tutor group, choosing to do so can result in you being removed from the programme.
- Do not take, use, share, publish or distribute images or audio of staff or other students on the programme without their permission; this includes taking screen shots.
- You have read and understood the Remote Learning for Children guidance.

10 TOP TIPS

REMOTE LEARNING FOR CHILDREN

Remote learning can be a great way to continue learning outside the classroom, particularly in difficult circumstances. For students, it's the perfect way to ensure they still get the education they need, despite not being at school. However it also requires a level of discipline and careful planning. That's why we've created this guide to help pupils understand different aspects of remote learning and to support them in ensuring their experience is as safe and secure as it can be.

1) Treat remote learning the same as classroom learning

Despite being at home, it's important to remember the same rules apply as being in the classroom, particularly in respect of behavior and conduct. Focus on learning and don't get distracted by your surroundings.



2) Use classroom language

If you are encouraged to communicate through emails and online messages, don't use shorthand text speak and write as though you would speak in class. Remember to be respectful and polite and avoid posting negative comments or spamming the chat.



3) Take regular screen breaks

Whilst remote learning might be an exciting experience to begin with, having prolonged periods of time in front of a screen isn't always healthy. Remember to have regular screen breaks where possible and in your spare time, try to get some fresh air and enjoy other activities away from electronic devices.



4) Always conduct video learning in an open space at home

To get the best experience from remote learning, it's important to create the right environment around you. Try to set up a mock 'classroom desk' at home in an open space so parents can supervise if necessary. Avoid bedrooms as this could be considered inappropriate.



5) Only communicate through approved school portals and platforms

It's important that you send messages and any pictures or images required for class through approved school channels, such as internal learning portals or approved platforms. This will help to keep your personal information safe and secure.



6) Stick to teacher rules and guidelines around online learning

Your school should issue you with guidance around remote learning and the rules to follow. Always maintain classroom behaviour and try to remember that you are in a learning environment and not a social setting.



7) Dress in school uniform

As part of your learning environment, try to maintain school uniform/dress. This will help as part of replicating classroom learning in the home. Try to avoid wearing anything too casual as this could be deemed inappropriate for school.



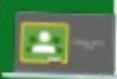
8) Don't share passwords or other sensitive information

In order to begin your online lessons or to gain access to learning materials, you may be provided with login details and passwords. In the same way you keep your personal details private, always keep these safe and never share them with others.



9) Don't use school platforms to discuss personal matters

It's important to keep your school communication channels separate from your own personal communication with friends and family. Don't be tempted to engage in casual discussions or send images, videos or links via official school apps or platforms that aren't associated with your learning.



10) Look after your mental health and wellbeing

Remote learning ultimately means working alone and missing out on daily social interaction with your friends. If you ever feel frustrated, low or sad, it's important to discuss how you feel with your parents or your teacher. Keeping in touch with friends over the phone or on social media can also help to keep your spirits up.





Virtual Learning Parent/Guardian Consent Form

What is virtual learning?

During the school year, students may have the opportunity to join virtual learning classes or tutorials via our approved virtual learning technologies including Microsoft Teams. Interactive lessons enable students and teachers/tutors to collaborate through video, audio, screen and file sharing. These technologies are a great way to continue learning outside the traditional classroom environment.

We make sure that we have considered and planned appropriately for virtual learning, so Aldridge staff have the knowledge and tools to provide a safe virtual learning environment to the students.

General information about our use of video conferencing and virtual learning technologies:

- All our approved platforms are fully end-to-end encrypted
- The client software is generally available to be installed and used in most personal devices
- The use of these virtual technologies will require access to the internet on student devices
- Lessons are scheduled and prepared well in advance by tutors
- Staff and students must comply with all Aldridge Education policies while using these technologies in the same way they do in a normal classroom
- We will make sure students understand the rules and expectations while using these technologies well in advance

Consent points:


- I understand that as a parent/guardian, I am responsible for:
 - Supervising the suitability of my child's online access, communication, and the 'home' environment (wherever distance learning is taking place outside of school)
 - Ensuring my child has a quiet, safe space, in an appropriate room, from which to join these activities
 - Ensuring my child is wearing appropriate clothing for learning
 - Ensuring there are no age-inappropriate or background noises, visuals or moving images.
- I understand that only my child will join the meeting, and that adults and other children will not be permitted to participate without prior agreement by all parties. Parents are encouraged to supervise in certain circumstances due to student age or other agreed reasons (but not appear on screen). Each meeting will end at the tutor's discretion.
- I understand that tutors will approach virtual classrooms as being an extension of the school learning environment. As such, classroom expectations, procedures, policies, and rules will be adhered to as normal - by staff and students alike. Tutors will facilitate and lead all virtual classrooms and will follow Aldridge Education policies and classroom rules.



- Please refer to the Safeguarding and E-Safety Policies on our website for more detailed information about our safeguarding measures, practices, and security around these technologies.

During the Welcome Calls, you will be asked to confirm that you have read and agree to the information and expectations in this booklet.

It is at the discretion of Aldridge staff to end a student's placement if they do not meet these expectations.



NOS National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday


10 TOP TIPS

REMOTE LEARNING FOR PARENTS

Remote learning can be a great way to continue learning outside the classroom, particularly in difficult circumstances. For parents and carers, the idea of remote learning isn't always straightforward and there can be a number of factors they need to consider, especially around ensuring their children feel comfortable and are familiar with the whole concept. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers support their child in getting the most out of their remote learning experience.


1) Take an active interest in your child's learning

As a parent or carer, remote learning will be a new concept for your child and there are bound to be a few teething problems to start with. Take an active interest in their learning and help support them whenever they need a helping hand.




2) Monitor your child's communication and online activity

It's important to remind your child that despite being at home, the same level of behaviour and conduct exists as if they were at school. Encourage them to remain polite, remember their manners and not to post or send any negative comments just because they are behind a computer.




3) Establish a daily schedule and routine

Working from home and trying to learn in a more casual setting that children might associate more with play and a degree of freedom might take a bit of getting used to. Try to stick to a daily routine and use the timetable/schedule that schools have sent home to help children keep on top of their daily learning.




4) Encourage screen breaks away from devices

Remote learning will inevitably require more interaction with computers, laptops and tablets. Teacher's will invariably advise on screen breaks however it doesn't hurt to keep a check on their time online or encourage them to get some fresh air/exercise.




5) Ensure your learning device is in a public space in the home

It's important to consider where your PC or laptop is placed if live video is being used. Try to keep the background neutral with no personal information visible and move learning devices out of the bedroom as this could be deemed inappropriate.



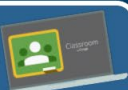
6) Implement safety controls and privacy restrictions on apps and software

Dependant on how your school implements remote learning, your child may be required to download certain software or apps. Whilst these are likely to be relatively safe to use, like any other new app or platform, parents should still implement safety controls as a precaution.




7) Ensure your child only uses official school communication channels

It's important that all communication with teachers and school staff is directed through approved school channels, whether that be through the school's online portal or the relevant secure messaging site.




8) Familiarise yourself with relevant school policies

Schools should have a policy on remote learning and direction that they can share with parents. Familiarise yourself with this and ensure you know what is expected of teachers and your child during lessons, both online and offline.




9) Maintain feedback with teachers

Engage in communication with teachers where possible and try to feed back progress and development as well as any helpful suggestions around the learning process. Be transparent but remain professional and only use official channels to communicate.



10) Monitor your child's wellbeing and mental health

Remote learning will likely mean that your child won't get the same level of social interaction and might not see their friends for a while. Keep a check on their wellbeing and try to encourage them to get out as much as you can. Whilst learning from home might seem fun and exciting to start with, missing out on seeing their friends everyday might take its toll.





7. FAQs



How do I book my weekly session slot?

Use the link emailed to you to choose your preferred tutor session slots. Whilst we will do our best to assign you to your first or second choice, this will not always be possible.

Is my tutor slot the same each week and when will I know what it is?

Yes, your tutor session will be at the same time each week. Your tutor session slot will be communicated to you the week before your sessions start.

Can I change my tutor group or time slot?

Once the tutor programme has begun, you will not be able to move tutor groups as the learning is tailored specifically to the three students in each group. If there are exceptional circumstances e.g. an after school club changes days, we will do our best to move you to another group.

Will I be with other students from my school?

It is very likely that you will be with students from across the Aldridge schools.

The tutoring is really helping me, can my friend attend the sessions with me?

Unfortunately not. The sessions are planned to be successful with just the three students in each group.

Can I access the lesson resources outside of the tutor sessions?

Yes, your tutor will upload all resources to Teams.

Can I contact my tutor outside of the tutor sessions?

You can add learning questions to the chat for your tutor group which your tutor will address in the next session. Your tutor is very busy helping lots of students across the country and so you should not contact them directly with learning questions outside of your sessions.

If you are going to be absent from a session due to school commitments or illness, you can contact your tutor via their Aldridge email address.

What if I am struggling with some of the learning?

Do not wait until after the session. Use the chat function or virtually raise your hand to ask questions during the session and let your tutor know that you find the topic tricky.



What do I do if I have internet connection issues and miss all/part of a session?

Please email VirtualAldridge@aldridgeeducation.org and your tutor to let us know. You can access all the resources online after the session.

What do I do if I have to miss a session due to a school commitment e.g. a parents evening?

Please email VirtualAldridge@aldridgeeducation.org and your tutor in advance with the details of the session you are missing and why.

What will happen if my tutor is absent?

We will do our best to find another tutor or Aldridge teacher to cover the session. If we cannot, we will let you know via the chat for your tutor group.



8. Appendices

Appendix i: Impact Report 2020-21 Executive Summary

Virtual Aldridge Aim & Programme Details

The aim of Virtual Aldridge is to provide a high-quality, tailored, virtual tutoring service, enabling historic gaps in learning to be closed at the earliest opportunity, ensuring students are supported to reach their learning goals in English and Maths. The programme prioritises access for the hardest to reach students. In this, the pilot year of Virtual Aldridge, the programme was funded entirely by the Aldridge Foundation and Year 11 students were targeted to receive tutoring. This allowed Virtual Aldridge the opportunity to learn and build a scalable programme.

Students received one hour of English and/or Maths virtual tutoring per week for 19 weeks. Sessions were delivered to groups of up to three students and the learning was personalised based on question level data from school mocks and assessments. Of the 250 unique students that joined Virtual Aldridge in 2020-21, 65% were pupil premium students, and 77% met at least one criterion for disadvantage.

Impact On Progress Data – Virtual Aldridge students made substantially more progress than students who were not on the programme.

GCSE English Grades:

- Students who attended Virtual Aldridge English sessions made 1.63 grades of progress from November mocks to June exams, 0.44 grades more than students who did not attend VA
- For students with a Virtual Aldridge attendance of 50%+, this figure increases to 1.75 grades of progress (+0.56 compared to non-VA students)

GCSE Maths Grades:

- Students who attended Virtual Aldridge Maths sessions made 1.84 grades of progress from November mocks to June exams, 0.40 grades more than students who did not attend VA
- For students with a Virtual Aldridge attendance of 50%+, the progress increases to 1.92 (+0.48 compared to non-VA students)
- For an attendance of 75%+, the progress increases again to 2.05 (+0.61 compared to non-VA students)

Feedback – The survey feedback about Virtual Aldridge was overwhelmingly positive.

- 98% of students, 95% of parents and 100% of tutors would recommend Virtual Aldridge
- Over 90% of students, over 85% of parents, and 100% of tutors agreed that:
 - Students enjoyed the sessions
 - Students made good learning progress in the sessions
 - Attending the sessions will have a positive impact on the students' GCSE results
- 86% of parents say they would not have been able to access tutoring for their child without Virtual Aldridge
- 100% of tutors felt proud to be part of the Virtual Aldridge programme

Enhancing & Expanding Virtual Aldridge

The Virtual Aldridge programme will be expanded in 2021-22. All students in Years 7 to 11 will be able to apply for a place, with places reserved for schools to select disadvantaged students who may not choose to apply for themselves. Barriers encountered during the 2020-21 programme were responded to throughout the year. These and other learnings will factor into planning for the expanded 2021-22 programme.