



Ark St Alban's Academy

Wednesday 8th December

Dear Parents,

Please forgive me for not writing to you last week – we have had an extremely busy couple of weeks with an Ofsted visit, a VIP visitor and newly emerging Covid concerns. I hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well despite the cold weather and the rise in Covid cases. Below you will find information and updates to guide you through the next few weeks.

1. Covid

You will have seen from the [Covid Update](#) that I shared with you last week that we have taken some initial steps to address the rising number of Covid cases locally and the emergency of the Omicron variant.

The only significant change so far has been the request that pupils and colleagues wear face coverings when in the corridors around the building. We have also reminded everyone of the importance of completing LFD tests twice a week and reporting the results. Pupils in all year groups have been issued with a new stock of test kits and if you ever need more test kits for children to use at home, please do visit reception and ask for more.

Fortunately, we didn't have any new cases of pupils or colleagues testing positive for Covid on a PCR test last week, but we must continue to be cautious. As a result, we will be limiting the number of events taking place in school between now and the Christmas holidays and postponing the Progress Day planned for January (more information further below under the heading of Key Dates).

2. Ofsted

Thank you for supporting the Ofsted visit by completing the Parent View survey. The inspection team was with us for two days visiting lessons and speaking to pupils and colleagues. We're expecting their report to be published before Christmas and I will share it with you when it is available and I will arrange some parent events to answer any questions that you may have about it.

3. Troy Deeney visits Ark St Alban's Academy

We were really excited to welcome Birmingham City Football Club's star striker Troy Deeney to visit the school late last month. Mr Deeney met with pupils alongside his long-time friend Fidel Thompson and they both shared their story of growing up and making the most of the opportunities life had presented them with.

You can read more about their visit in this short news item on our [website](#).

4. Key Dates

Please see the table below for a summary of the upcoming key dates to make a note of in your diaries:

Date	Activity
Thursday 16 th December	The final day of term for pupils with the school day ending at 1200 (midday)
Friday 17 th December	Teacher Training Day
Tuesday 4 th January	Teacher Training Day
Wednesday 5 th January	Onsite Covid Testing for All Year Groups
Thursday 6 th January	First Day of the Spring Term

In addition, there are two key dates which have been postponed:

Firstly, in the week commencing Monday 13th December, it had been planned that all pupils would visit the church for a Christmas-themed assembly. This will now not take place.

Secondly, Wednesday 5th January was due to be a Progress Day (a day for individual meetings between parents and teachers). Due to Covid, this has been postponed and will now take place on Friday 18th February.

5. Non-uniform Day

To mark the end of term, Thursday 16th December will be a non-uniform day. There will also be a voluntary contribution requested for donations to the [food bank](#) organised by the local mosque.

6. Onsite Covid Testing

On Wednesday 5th January, pupils in all year groups will attend school for around one hour, in order for the following to take place:

- Receive and review their School Report (including assessment results from the Autumn term)
- Take an LFD Covid Test under the supervision of our onsite testing team
- Have an assembly which will share plans and priorities for the term ahead

I will share a schedule with you and with pupils early next week confirming the start and finish times for each year group for Wednesday 5th January.

7. KS3 Maths homework

We are excited to be able to build on the great work started on Hegarty maths in half term one. Pupils in KS3 will now all be completing their maths homework on Sparx. This will replace the use of Eedi and Hegarty for weekly homework, but pupils can still access both of these platforms at any time.

- Sparx Maths creates an hour's worth of tailored practice homework for each pupil
- The practice is both challenging and achievable
- Practice uses spaced repetition and interleaving to support a change in pupils' long term memories.

Sparx also sends parents a weekly email to help you keep track of your child's homework completion and celebrate when they are doing well!

We will also be hosting a live event on Thursday that you can join online to find out more about how Sparx works and how you can support your child. Just [click here](#) to join on Thursday at 4.00.

8. Parent Governor

Thank you to those of you who encouraged others to apply or who have applied yourself. The Governance Team will review applications and will be in touch with all applicants to outline next steps in the selection process.

9. Keeping In Touch

As we get closer to the Christmas holidays, I know that many parents will have questions or matters to discuss in relation to the term just gone or the one coming up.

I will write to you again next week as we move into the final week of the term and I will also write to you separately around the publishing of the Ofsted report. School will then be closed for the Christmas Holidays between Friday 17th December and Monday 3rd January, but I will of course be back in touch at the start of the Spring term.

Ms Hooper continues to be away from school, so please do contact elaine.kerr@arkstalbans.org if you would like to arrange the opportunity to speak with me.

Kind regards,

Mr Guy Rimmer
Principal