



# Ark St Alban's Academy

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the second week of term. So far this week, I have enjoyed visiting every classroom and seeing the excellent start that pupils in all year groups have made. While there are many challenges associated with managing Covid at the present time, it is a real joy to see pupils working hard and making progress in class.

Below you will find information and updates which I hope will be helpful in the days and weeks ahead, particularly around understanding our approach to the national Covid guidelines.

## **1. Face Coverings**

So far this term, we have given out over 1000 face masks to pupils arriving to school in the mornings. Not only is this incredibly expensive and bad for the environment, but it also slows down the arrival process and means children get to their classes later.

Please do provide your child with a face covering to bring to school each day.

## **2. Responding to Positive Covid Tests**

Please do continue to have your child test at home using an LFD test kit at least twice a week.

Our recommendation is that children test themselves on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. It is incredibly important that you inform the school immediately of a positive test result via phone or email.

Where a positive case is reported for a pupil who has been in school recently, the rest of their class (and other close contacts, such as those they have sat with in GCSE options lessons or a lunchtime) are then asked to complete an LFD test in school every morning for seven consecutive days, during their regular tutor time slot.

The parents of pupils in the affected classes will also receive an email alert.

Positive LFD cases currently require a ten day isolation period. This isolation period can only end before the ten days, if on both the sixth and seventh day of isolation the child tests negative.

Please do not send your child to school if they are supposed to be isolating. It is our aim to remind all relevant families on the sixth and seventh day to complete the tests. If you are ever unsure about whether or not your child should attend the school, please get in touch and ask. Colleagues will be happy to provide advice.

## **3. Remote Learning**

If your child is isolating away from school as a result of Covid, they will be able to access remote learning via Microsoft Teams. Both the child and their parent should receive an email each morning including a reminder and joining instructions.

## **4. Staff Absence**

The pandemic has also resulted in a number of teachers being absent from school in the first two weeks of term.

This high rate of absence reflects a national pattern both in schools, but also in other front-line services such as healthcare and transport.

As a result, pupils will have experienced a lot of lessons being taught by teachers who do not regularly teach them. For example, I have enjoyed teaching 8 Snowden Science throughout the last week.

While this is far from ideal, pupils have responded well and continued to work hard. I am confident that the situation will improve in the weeks ahead and that our pupils are not significantly disadvantaged compared to their peers across the country.

## **5. Risk Assessment**

As I shared with you last week, the school has put in place a number of steps to limit the risk of the virus spreading in school. The covid-testing and mask-wearing outlined above is an important part of this work.

In addition, steps are also being taken to limit the number of occasions where pupils mix with children from outside of their year group. Trips, visits and events have been postponed, unless they can safely take place outdoors. A similar decision has been taken to temporarily close the prayer room, as this small, unventilated space where children of all ages mix appears to be high risk.

All of these measures will be reviewed early next week once we have a clear picture of how rapidly the virus is spreading both in the community and in the school.

## **6. Term Dates**

Away from Covid, a number of parents have asked for information about the summer holidays this year.

The term dates for the current academic year [published here](#) are accurate. The final day with children in school will be Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July. Please book any holidays for Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July or later.

The term dates for the next academic year have not yet been confirmed, but it is unlikely that pupils will return before Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September.

Two additional dates to be aware of are Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> August (Year 13) and Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August (Year 11) which will be A-Level, BTEC and GCSE results days. It is important that children in those year groups are in the country and available to attend school on those dates to collect their results and to confirm their next steps.

## **7. Keeping In Touch**

As ever, if you do have any questions or concerns about anything included above, please do get in touch. You can contact [elaine.kerr@arkstalbens.org](mailto:elaine.kerr@arkstalbens.org) in the first instance to request a call or meeting with me.

Kind regards,

Mr Guy Rimmer  
**Principal**

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