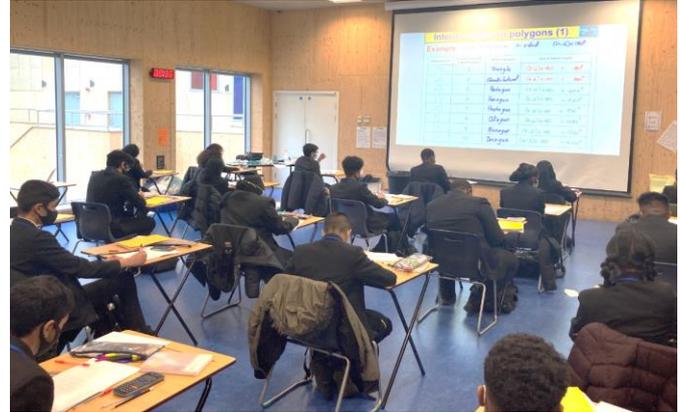


Dear Parents,

Pupils have made an excellent start to school life having returned to in-school learning last week. It has been a real joy to see pupils participating in lessons with huge enthusiasm and determined hard work.



1. Key Dates

I have included below a snapshot of the school calendar for the weeks and months ahead. Specifically, please note the following key dates:

- Friday 26th March (Next Friday) is an Ark Teacher Training day and the school will be closed to pupils
- The Easter holidays will begin on Thursday 1st April, with school finishing early that day at 12.15pm
- The next half-term will begin on the morning of Wednesday 21st April

Calendar	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
HT3 WK4	15th March	16th March	17th March	18th March	19th March
HT3 WK5	22nd March	23rd March	24th March	25th March	26th March Ark Schools Training Day
HT3 WK6	29th March	30th March	31st March	1st April	2nd April Bank Holiday
Easter Holiday	5th April Easter Holiday	6th April Easter Holiday	7th April Easter Holiday	8th April Easter Holiday	9th April Easter Holiday
Easter Holiday	12th April Easter Holiday	13th April Easter Holiday	14th April Easter Holiday	15th April Easter Holiday	16th April Easter Holiday
HT5 WK1	19th April School Training Day	20th April School Training Day	21st April	22nd April	23rd April

2. Covid Update

Covid tests have been completed at least once in each year group and will continue to take place this week.

On Friday, one pupil in a Year 7 class tested positive. As a result, that class will now be isolating at home until the morning of Tuesday 23rd March.

Those pupils will be provided with remote learning provision, similar to that which was provided during the period of time when the school was closed.

3. Homework

Pupils made a great start to homework last week. A reminder that all pupils in Years 7-11 will have English or Maths homework to complete online each evening and that it will be checked by their teachers the following day.

Any instances of homework being incomplete will result in parents receiving a text message that morning informing them that their child will be required to remain in school at the end of the day for thirty-minutes to complete the homework that was due.

From Friday onwards this week, the weekly report cards will resume, with parents getting an update about homework completion, as well as attendance and behaviour information.

4. Meal Payments

Many parents have been in touch in recent weeks to ask about plans for school meals.

Between now and the Easter holidays, school meals will continue to be provided free of charge to all families. The school will continue to provide packed lunches during this time as this type of lunch allows pupils to eat outside which is safer.

In the future, the intention is to re-open the canteen and to offer hot meals as before.

As I have previously shared with you, the plan is to become a cashless school. Therefore, all parents will need to sign-up to an online payment system. More information will follow later this week.

5. Live Event

I will continue to host a pupil and parent information event on Wednesday afternoons at 5pm each week.

This week, I will share more information about plans for school meals as well as more detailed updates about each of the items below.

Please [click here](#) shortly before 5pm on Wednesday to join the event.

6. Uniform

Further to my update from last week, a reminder of the need for pupils to have a warm and water-proof coat for days when the weather is cold and wet. Pupils must not wear hooded tops to school.

A reminder that pupils must also have a face-covering with them at all times.

7. Centre-assessed Grades

A reminder that in the week before the Easter holidays, pupils and parents will receive detailed guidance around plans for assessment in the summer term.

8. GCSEs for Year 9 Pupils

Also in the week before the Easter holidays, pupils and parents in Year 9 will receive information about GCSE subjects with decisions to be made in the weeks following the Easter holidays.

9. Timetable Changes

Many pupils will have been taught by different teachers in some of their subjects since we all returned to school.

While normally every effort would be made to avoid such changes in the middle of a school year, because of staff absences as a result of Covid, some alterations have been necessary.

Similarly, some classes may begin to have more lessons in certain subjects, and less lessons in other subjects. Again, this is a result of adapting to the impact of the pandemic and either managing teacher absence or finding more time in school for subjects pupils struggled the most with when learning remotely.

Welcoming New Pupils

I'm very excited to be welcoming a new cohort of Year 7 pupils to the school next year.

As ever, our school was heavily over-subscribed with over 500 applications for just 120 places. In the weeks ahead, I will be writing to welcome new pupils and parents to the school and arranging to meet as many of them as possible in the summer term.

10. Keeping In Touch

If you have any urgent questions or concerns, you can always email your child's Head of Year or my PA, Ms Hooper (jayne.hooper@arkstalbans.org) to arrange a time to talk.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Guy Rimmer', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Guy Rimmer
Principal