

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the second half-term of the school year. With news this weekend about a new national lockdown to begin on Thursday morning, I know many of you will have questions about plans for the school in the weeks ahead.

Below, I have shared a summary of where things stand in relation to Covid, as well as further information around online learning, examinations and assessments, changes to teaching groups, sixth form applications and key dates.

## 1. Covid Update

Schools nationally remain open and the government has been clear that it intends for schools to stay open during the planned lockdown.

School life will continue to operate very similarly to last half-term. Pupils will remain in zones and in their home rooms, meaning that they will move around the school as little as possible. When they do move around the school, they will continue to be asked to wear face coverings. Pupils in different year groups will also continue to have separate break and lunch times to make sure that the year group bubbles do not mix.

To support us in keeping the school community safe and well, please do the following:

- Keep your child away from school if they are experiencing any symptoms of the virus
- Outside of school hours, make sure that pupils are following the rules around not mixing between households
- When they do come to school, make sure that they have the following:
  - A face covering
  - A pack of tissues
  - A warm, water-proof coat

In addition to working hard to make sure that school life is as safe as possible, plans are also being made to make sure that online learning is ready and available in the event of full or partial school closures and to support any classes or year groups that may have to isolate in the future.

Before the holiday it was a great pleasure to be able to provide all Year 11 pupils with a laptop and as I explained then, I am hoping to be able to do the same for pupils in other year groups in the months ahead.

## 2. Year 8 Arrival

Since September, we have had different year groups arriving at different entrances and at different start times in order to limit congestion and mixing.

From Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November (next week), the start time for Year 8 will be slightly earlier, with pupils needing to arrive before 8.20am.

## 3. Examinations and Assessments

Year 11 and Year 13 pupils will sit mock examinations next week (and the week after). These exams are critically important in demonstrating what pupils have learned so far and what needs to be focussed upon moving forwards.

These exams may also take on greater importance in the future if there are school closures and the possibility of real exams not taking place.

The whole school community will be wishing pupils in Year 11 and Year 13 the best of luck and it is important that they are supported to do as well as they possibly can.

Pupils in Year 13 will only be expected to attend school next week during the times in which they have examinations, however pupils in Year 13 can choose to attend school as normal to study in preparation for their exams.

Pupils in all year groups will sit assessments between now and the Christmas holidays, with parent reports being published in December to provide an update as to how your child is progressing in school.

#### 4. New Teaching Groups

The changes shared with the pupils before the holidays have gone into effect today, with some pupils learning in different groups this half-term compared to last half-term.

These changes were made a result of careful consideration between curriculum leaders and senior staff and are aimed at making sure that every child is following the curriculum that will most ensure that they make rapid progress in their learning.

#### 5. Sixth Form Applications

Pupils in Year 11 across the country will start this month planning for their future studies. All pupils will need to be in full time education or training from next September pursuing either apprenticeship, BTEC or A-Level qualifications.

I hope that as many Year 11 pupils at Ark St Alban's Academy as possible will choose to study at our sixth form next year. All pupils will all be provided with time and with support to complete their applications in school.

If you have friends or relatives with children in Year 11 at other schools who may be interested in joining us for Sixth Form, please do direct them towards our website.

#### 6. Key Dates

Below is a table of key dates for the weeks and months ahead, including the start and end of the Christmas holidays.

Date	Event
<b>Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Start of Mock Exams for Examined Cohorts (Y11 and Y13)
<b>Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Training Day (school closed to pupils)
<b>Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Training Day (school closed to pupils)
<b>Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Final Day of the Autumn Term
<b>Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Start of the Spring Term

If you have any questions about the term ahead or about any other matters, please do let me know.

Kind regards,



**Mr Guy Rimmer**  
Principal  
Ark St Alban's Academy