



Thursday 3rd September 2020

Dear Parents,

I am excited to be writing to you as the new Principal at Ark St Alban's Academy and I am very much looking forward to getting to know you and your children this term. Below you will find important information about the start of the school year and about how we are making sure that our school is Covid-safe.

1. Start Dates

Pupils in different year groups will be returning to school on different days next week. Please read the table below carefully to check which day your child(ren) should be returning on and which entrance each year group should use when they arrive to school.

Start Dates Year Groups

Start Dates	Year Groups
Monday 7th September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Year 7 arrive by 8.15am (Conybere Street) ▪ Year 12 arrive by 8.45am (Conybere Street)
Tuesday 8th September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Year 7 start time 8.15am (Conybere Street) ▪ Year 11 start time 8.25am (Angelina Street) ▪ Year 12 start time 8.45am (Conybere Street) ▪ Year 13 start time 8.45am (Conybere Street)
Wednesday 9th September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Year 7 start time 8.15am (Conybere Street) ▪ Year 8 start time 8.25am (Conybere Street) ▪ Year 9 start time 8.25am (Angelina Street) ▪ Year 10 start time 8.25am (Stanhope Street) ▪ Year 11 start time 8.25am (Angelina Street) ▪ Year 12 start time 8.45am (Conybere Street) ▪ Year 13 start time 8.45am (Conybere Street)

2. Term Dates

You can find the term dates for the whole-school year, including the dates of school holidays on our website.

3. Staying Safe

My priority for the term ahead is to make sure that all pupils can return to school safely. To do this, senior leaders have completed a detailed risk assessment and taken advice from Ark Schools, Birmingham City Council and the Department for Education.

Many changes have been made to how the school will work in order to make it safe:

- Pupils will spend their time in school as part of year group bubbles, mixing with as few other pupils as possible
- Pupils will use different entrances and exits to the school building to keep different bubbles apart
- All pupils will be able to wash or sanitise their hands at the start of the day and after break and lunch time
- Each bubble will have a different zone for break and lunch time and the canteen will be closed
- All parts of the school will be cleaned regularly during the day and in-between being used by different bubbles
- Visitors (including parents) will not be allowed onsite, unless they have a pre-booked appointment

4. Home-School Communication

It is very important that parents do not visit the school site. It is not possible for the staff at reception to take any belongings from parents such as forgotten school equipment.

If you plan to collect your child from school, please do not come to the doors of the building. Instead, please stand on the pavement along Conybere Street, remembering to keep 2 metres of distance away from other families and making sure not to block the pavement for other members of the public walking passed.

Please do also remind your child of the importance of going straight home at the end of the school day and not congregating in large groups in the local area. Our expectations around going straight home are the same as previously.

If you would like to make an appointment to meet with a member of staff, please call 0121 446 1300 or email info@arkstalbans.org

During the term, if a pupil in your child's year-group bubble tests positive for coronavirus, I will write to you to inform you of this and provide advice and guidance as to appropriate next steps.

5. Managing Symptoms

We must all be aware of the symptoms of coronavirus:

- A new, persistent cough
- A high temperature
- A loss of taste or smell



If your child has any of these symptoms, you should not send them to school, and you should report them absent by calling the school on 0121 446 1300. You should report the absence to Aliya Begg – the attendance officer. If Aliya Begg is unavailable, then please leave a message for her. The school will then provide you with advice about what to do, including arranging a test.

Similarly, if someone in your household has a coronavirus test and the result is positive, then you should keep your child home and report them absent.

6. Face-coverings

National and local guidance around face-coverings in school has continued to change in recent weeks. Based on a careful reading of the latest advice, pupils will not be asked to wear face-coverings in school.

Pupils will be in year-group bubbles which do not mix. As such the value of wearing a face covering is minimal and there are additional risks caused by incorrect or improper use of face coverings.

Some staff will be wearing face-coverings, especially if they are frequently moving between bubbles within a short period of time, or if they are performing specific tasks around the school.

Pupils are reminded that if they are travelling to school using public transport, then they must wear a face-covering on their journey and then they should take it off and store it safely in their bag once they arrive at school.

7. What to do if you are worried?

If you are worried about your child returning to school, would like more information about how we are organising the school to keep everyone safe, or if you would like to talk to someone about your specific concerns, you can arrange a time to have a discussion with a senior member of staff by calling 0121 440 1311 or emailing jayne.hooper@arkstalbens.org

8. Lunch

In order to provide food for all pupils without having different bubbles mix in the canteen, pupils will be provided with packed lunches by the school catering team which they can pick-up and eat at lunch time in the area provided for their year group. Pupils will be able to choose their preferred sandwich filling at the start of term and update it each week.

These packed lunches will be provided free of charge for all pupils for the first two weeks of term.



9. Uniform and Equipment

Pupils will be expected to wear full school uniform when they return to school. In addition to a St Alban's Academy tie, jumper, blazer and schoolbag, pupils must also wear plain-black, smart school-shoes and trousers (or skirt).

To avoid the need to use the changing rooms, pupils should wear their full academy PE Kit on the days when they have PE lessons (this will be shown on the timetable they will receive on their first day of term).

Pupils will be spending a large amount of time outside, particularly at the start of the day and at break time and at lunchtime, so it is recommended that all pupils have a waterproof coat with a hood. In our final letter to you before the summer holidays, we recommended two cost effective options here and here.

10. Looking Ahead

Life at school will look very different at the start of term. Normally, I would be organising events to meet as many parents as possible in the first few weeks of the school year. Even though that isn't possible at the moment, I will be looking to arrange more virtual events like the one scheduled to take place this Thursday evening.

I am very determined to meet you as soon as possible and I look forward to working closely with the parent community throughout the school year.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Guy Rimmer'.

Mr Guy Rimmer
Principal