

22nd January 2021

Dear Parents,

I was so pleased to be able to speak to some many of you during the Live Event on Wednesday evening. If you were not able to attend, you can view a full recording of the event [here](#).

Below, I have included information and updates around a number of topics, including future Live Events.

1. Live Events – Wednesdays at 5pm

Following the success of the information event on Wednesday, I am planning to run a similar event every Wednesday afternoon at 5pm. There may not always be a huge amount of new information to share and therefore the input from myself and other leaders maybe shorter, but this will allow each week for a longer and more in-depth question and answer session.

I hope that those of you who joined last week, continue to join us and for anyone who hasn't previously joined a Live Event, please do take the time to join in the future if you can.

Click [here](#) to join the Parent and Pupil Information Event next Wednesday at 5pm. This link will be shared again by email and text next Wednesday afternoon.

2. Remote Learning – Next Steps

A reminder that all pupils have lessons and assignments every day. In Years 7, 8 and 9 these lessons are all currently pre-recorded, whereas in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 there is a mixture of live and pre-recorded lessons.

In the weeks ahead we will share plans for live lessons to also take place in Years 7, 8 and 9.

It is important that when working through pre-recorded lessons, that they complete the practice activities in their exercise books, before completing any assignments or quizzes electronically. When school re-opens, it is going to be important that pupils have a record of their learning both in their exercise books and online.

If pupils are struggling to access the pre-recorded lessons, they should contact their form tutor for further guidance or [click here](#).

On Monday, in the daily email you and your child receive from their Head of Year, you will be able to see their timetable for the week.

3. Weekly Report Cards

I am pleased that so many parents found the report cards that were shared last Friday useful. I plan to send out report cards for this week later today.

I have tried to include even more information this week; please do be patient as we develop the technology and the tools to make these as detailed and accurate as possible.

4. Email Addresses

I'm really grateful for the huge number of parents who have been in touch this week to update their email address.

Having accurate email addresses for each family allows the school to communicate increasingly effectively with parents, particularly at this time of remote learning.

If you know of other families with children at the school who are not receiving these weekly emails from myself or the weekly report cards that I have been sharing, please do encourage them to email info@arkstlbans.org to share their email address with the school.

5. Rewards

Pupils continue to impress us all with their remote learning.

I have had the pleasure of visiting several families today to hand out rewards and notes of appreciate to some star learners who have excelled in completing all of their work to high standard and to have done so on time every day.

Throughout next week, many other pupils will be receiving notes and certificates through the post to celebrate their successes in learning remotely.

6. Laptops and Dongles

We continue to manage a waiting list for pupils who are still in need of either a laptop of a data dongle. If you need either and you haven't yet informed the school, please email info@arkstlbans.org to let us know.

More and more of these items are being delivered and distributed this week and I hope to have provided every family with what they need by the end of the week.

7. Onsite Provision

A reminder that a small number of pupils continue to complete their remote learning activities onsite each day.

These are pupils who are the children of key workers or who have been identified as vulnerable, including those who are unable to access remote learning at home.

If you believe your child meets this criteria and you would like to discuss the possibility of them joining our onsite provision, please email info@arkstlbans.org to let us know.

8. Online Safety

As I shared in the information event on Wednesday, we have now activated safeguarding software which allows myself and Ms Darby (our safeguarding lead) to monitor everything that pupils type and view online.

It is incredibly important that pupils remember that the devices and Microsoft Office accounts that they have been provided with belong to the school and that they have been provided for the purposes of learning; they are not to be used for social networking or messaging, or other non-academic endeavours.

9. Mental Health

With so much uncertainty and being isolated from their friends and their daily routine, it is really important that we are mindful of the wellbeing of all pupils.

On our [website](#), we have gathered some initial information and recommended providers that you can refer to if you are worried about your child's mental health and if you would like to discuss any further support your child may need, please do email info@arkstlbans.org and ask for their head of year to get in touch.

10. Exams and Assessment Update

As I said on Wednesday, it is highly likely that there will be some form of assessments which take place for pupils in Year 11 and Year 13 that inform their final grade to some extent.

It is incredibly important that pupils in those year groups working towards exams this year, continue to study hard and prepare for all eventualities.

Some parents asked for more information about the national consultation process the Department for Education has launched around plans for the examinations this year. You can find out more and take part in the consultation by visiting the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

I also spoke on Wednesday afternoon about the need for pupils in Year 10 and Year 12 to work incredibly hard and to be fully aware that it is very likely next year, when they sit their exams, they will have to sit full papers which have no consideration given to the fact that schools have been closed this year due to the pandemic.

11. Planning for GCSEs – Year 9

On Wednesday, several parents also rightly raised the fact that it is normally around this time of the year when we would begin speaking to pupils in Year 9 about their preferred GCSE courses.

I plan to delay that process slightly, to see if it is possible to have those discussions in-person in future months and I will update you all once we know a little more about whether or not pupils will be in school next half-term.

12. Free-school Meals

All families entitled to free-school meals should now have begun receiving vouchers. If you have any questions or concerns around free-school meals, please email info@arkstalbans.org.

13. Keeping In Touch

If you would like to discuss any individual queries with about any of the above, please do email jayne.hooper@arkstalbans.org who will be happy to arrange a time for you and I to speak on the phone next week.

Kind regards



Mr Guy Rimmer
Principal
Ark St Alban's Academy