

Monday 1st March 2021

Dear Year 9 Parents,

I am writing to you today to provide you with information about our plans for the safe re-opening of the school.

The government has announced that all pupils across the country will be returning to school next week. I am incredibly pleased to be able to welcome all pupils back to school for in-person teaching and to begin the work of making rapid progress through the curriculum.

In re-opening the school, at all times I will be prioritising the safety of both staff and pupils.

Ensuring the safety of everyone will be a team effort, with pupils, parents and staff all having to take responsibility for keeping one another safe.

Further below I have included the key details of our re-opening plan, including the dates and times each individual class will be returning. You can also see details of the re-opening plan for all year groups on our website, where I have also included a short video explanation of what to expect.

On Wednesday afternoon at 5pm, I will lead a further [Live Event](#) to discuss these plans in more detail and to answer your questions.

1. Covid Testing

A critical component of our plans to re-open the school safely is our ability to test all pupils and all staff regularly for the virus.

The national re-opening plan requires schools to test pupils three times within the first fifteen days of their return and to then provide test kits for pupils to use at home in the following weeks.

In order for the school to test your child, we must have your consent.

There are three methods available for you to use to provide consent:

- [Clicking here](#) and completing this online form
- You will receive a paper version of the consent form in the post which you can complete and return to the school
- You can email info@arkstalbans.org to request a phone call where you can provide consent on the phone

I understand that some pupils may feel nervous or uncomfortable about the testing process. I want to reassure both you and them that it is safe and painless. Many pupils and staff who have been working onsite this term have been tested multiple times without any problems or concerns.

If your child does have specific concerns or questions which need to be answered to make them more comfortable with the testing process, please email info@arkstalbans.org and the most appropriate colleague will get in touch.

Any pupil taking part in Covid testing puts the rest of the community at risk. Crucially, not taking part in testing makes it much more likely that whole-classes or year groups may need to isolate away from school in the future. It is vital that all pupils take part.

2. Returning to School

Pupils will be expected to attend school for ninety minutes on the day before their year group fully returns to school.

During this ninety-minutes at school, three things will happen: pupils will be tested for Covid, they will have a practice lesson with one of their teachers to help them prepare for lessons in the rest of the week and they will hear from senior members of staff about plans for the first few days back at school.

During this ninety-minute visit, pupils will be expected to maintain social distancing (two metres) and to wear a face-covering at all times.

Year 9 pupils will attend school for their ninety-minute testing, practice and information session on Wednesday 10th March 2021. Please see below for the exact timings of your child's tutor group.

It is incredibly important that pupils arrive on time for the session scheduled for their tutor group.

Staff will be ready and available to welcome pupils arriving up to fifteen minutes before the scheduled arrival time and I would encourage pupils to arrive early. Late arrival could result in your child missing the session completely and needing to return again a separate time in the future.

Pupils should attend in full school uniform, including their school bag. The only equipment that they will need to bring with them is their pencil case.

On Wednesday 10th March 2021, Year 9 pupils need to arrive at the front entrance to the school (not the Porta Cabin entrance they would normally use). They need to queue down the reception side of the building.

Wednesday 10 th March 2021		
Year 9	Arrive	Depart
9 Boulton 1	0830	1000
9 Boulton 2	0930	1100
9 Murdoch 3	1030	1200
9 Murdoch 4	1130	1300
9 Watt 5	1230	1400

I recognise that for some families who have siblings who must travel together, having sessions at separate times and on separate days of the week will be challenging.

It may be possible to arrange for them to spend additional time in school or to attend on multiple days. Please email info@arkstalbans.org to find out more information.

Year 9 pupils will then fully return to school on Thursday 11th March.

On this day, Year 9 pupils should arrive to school at 08:20 at the Porta Cabin entrance, like on a normal school day.

3. Staying Safe

School life will then largely return to working in the same way that it did in the Autumn term, with pupils continuing to follow the same timetable and learning with the same teachers as before.

However, the following will be in place to minimise the risk of the virus spreading within the school:

- Anyone experiencing symptoms of the virus will be reminded to stay away from school
- Face coverings will be required at all times, including in lessons
- Classes will remain in bubbles and in year groups in zones

4. Keeping in Touch

I recognise that pupils and parents will have a number of questions and concerns around re-opening. I have attempted to include here just the most immediate information. Please do join the Live Event on Wednesday to find out more information, or if your question is urgent, please email info@arkstalbans.org and the most appropriate colleague will get back in touch as soon as possible.

Kind regards,



Guy Rimmer
Principal