

Tuesday 18th July 2017

Dear Parents/Careers

As the year draws to a close I want to update you on a number of key issues. Firstly, it is important to say it has been an excellent year in many ways:-

- our students have gained more well deserved merits than ever before, 60,000 (though we want more).
- 133 students have received no de-merits and 272 less than 10 throughout the whole year.
- We have had a year of trips that both enhance the curriculum and extend our students view of the world and I want to say a particular thanks to our staff who give up their own time to take on the responsibility of leading these trips. A special thank you to History and the Year 8 team who led our first Year 8 residential to the Isle of Wight (we have planned another one for next year).
- We had our first **literacy festival** to add to the list of special focus weeks
- Our non uniform days and special discos have also supported fundraising and along with charity week have supplemented special appeals. We are particularly proud of the amount we have raised recently for the Red Cross/Grenfell Appeal fund (£2,187) massively supported by our **International Day** last week.
- On Wednesday last week our **International Day and Creative Quaters evening** was a joy and a testament to the creativity of our students and dedication of our staff. The quality of Art and DT work on display was wonderful and the range of performances from dance and drama to violin solos from students aged 5 to 18 showcased us beautifully as an all through school.
- The weather has smiled upon us for both our fabulous **Sports Day** and International Day with a wonderful down pour in between.
- Our sixth form students have really stepped up and supported discos, Sports Day and International Day to great effect. They have also been excellent ambassadors for our school on numerous occasions. Additionally and in supporting the whole school and their life goals, our sixth formers have mentored our Year 11 students, supported our weekly reading programme in Year 7, lead introductory IT sessions for the new Year 7, supported reading in primary and have supported lunch and other duties with senior staff (not always easy but certainly a life skill!)
- Our Civitas magazine is a homage to our learners, staff and students but we are particularly pleased/thrilled with the completion of our first absolute full year of Ark Academy, with our founder students completing Year 13. As you know they have received many fantastic offers. We have to wait and see **August 17th will be a very important day in the life of Ark Academy.**
- As part of Ark Schools we also thrilled that several of our Year 13's have received fantastic **bursaries** from **The Ark Schools Trust** in total these seven awards (the largest amount in the network) amount to £64,500 towards their university fees. Well done to them and our new Year 13's have everything to play for now.
- Our **fabulous key stage 2 SATs results** has also provided a great end to the year and are the result of really hard work by staff and students in Year 6. Our primary goes from strength to strength and we look forward to the transitioning of our third cohort of Ark Primary students into Year 7 in September.
- We are very pleased overall with **Year 7** and now they have worked through their **Lexia Programme**. 24 students have graduated with another 38 close to doing so. I am sure many

more of Year 7 will put in the time over the summer holidays to finish the course. We will be extending the programme for those who haven't finished into **Year 8**.

Reading at Ark Academy

Reading is the cornerstone of literacy development and is key to accessing the school curriculum.

Functional Literacy (9 years, 7 months) just allows a child to access the secondary curriculum.

However, to read and interpret the GCSE papers in Year 10 and 11 the level of literacy required is 15 years and 7 months. This is known as **academic literacy**. All students have had their reading ages re-assessed this term and their **reading ages are recorded on their end of year report**. Thanks to the Lexia Programme and the reading habits of many Year 7, we now have 88% of the year group reading equal to or higher than 9 years and 7 months. In Year 8 93% are on or above this age, in Year 9 it is 98%. However, as stated above 9 years 7 months is the minimum requirement to function effectively in KS3 and not enough for GCSEs. We have intervention strategies in place to support our pupils who struggle with reading but so much more is needed than our interventions. **Students need to read regularly at home in order to improve their vocabulary, comprehension and all round literacy**. Without a commitment to finding books (fiction or non fiction) that engages their interest I am afraid their reading standards will not improve and in many cases, decrease. With that in mind we have included some reading lists appropriate for Years 7 to 10. I do hope you will encourage and support your child to read for pleasure this summer. They may not realise it now, but this will affect their future.

We now turn to September 2017

Firstly, can I remind all secondary parents of key dates **when students must return** to Ark Academy:

- **Year 7 – Wednesday 6th September**
- **Year 12 – Wednesday 6th September**
- **Year 10 – Thursday 7th September**
- **Year 11 Work Experience – Monday 4th – Friday 8th September**
- **Year 13 – Friday 8th September**
- **Year 8, 9 and 11 – Monday 11th September**

Please make a careful note of these as no holidays will be authorised for a late start to the school year. Please see the full attendance policy on the website for more.

Our website is also a mine of information. If you have lost the term dates for next year (they were sent home previously, you can find them on the website for 2017/2018. Additionally, the Parent Calendar for Autumn Term is also there but I will also issue this in September.

Some further reminders:

Punctuality

Students are expected to attend school **no later than 8.20am**. This ensures they have enough time to place valuables in lockers and can attend lesson or line up on time. School gates will close at 8.25am and any student arriving after this will receive a 45 minute sanction for lateness. Please ensure your child, leaves early and plans journeys in advance to take account of daily traffic or bus issues.

Uniform Dos and Don'ts:

You may find the full uniform list in our **Behaviour & Ethos Policy** on the website. Please bear in mind the following reminders:

- Uniform should be purchased from Pullens to ensure it complies with school policy
- No trainers are allowed to be worn with school uniform
- School shoes should be leather with no adornments or Velcro straps

- Grey or black plain Hijab for girls
- No jewellery or make-up to be worn by any student, except for a watch
- Hair must be worn in an appropriate style with no extreme styling or designs of hair or eyebrows; e.g. lines/intricate patterns/Mohicans
- No shaved eyebrows
- Hair should be no shorter than a grade 2
- No coloured hair extensions/braids or other types of extravagant hair. Only natural hair colour is allowed
- No false nails or coloured nail varnish is allowed
- Outdoor coats must be black and have no logos, patterns or markings of any kind and they must be long enough to cover the blazer
- Hooded sweatshirts and cardigans are not allowed
- Boys should wear black belts only with no large buckles
- Boys must never wear shorts or tracksuit bottoms under their trousers
- During winter months a plain black woollen hat and scarf, with no markings or logos may be worn
- Students who breach the uniform code may be sent home or removed from lessons.

Mobil Phones

A reminder that these **must be stored in lockers** as soon as students arrive to school and only collected at the end of the day (or after detention/study support/enrichment). **Any phone seen or heard on the school site may be confiscated** and will be returned on the last day of the half term. Phones cannot be looked after by reception. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure they have their locker key each day. Can I once again remind parents that if you lend your phone to your son/daughter and it is then confiscated that will be treated in the same way. We also do spot checks throughout the year and confiscate any banned items that we find.

ParentPay

Finally please read the letter about **ParentPay** closely. This is really important as your son/daughter will not be able to pay cash into the machines from September – thank you.

This year has been a really key one for the school and I truly feel that we have pushed forward on our **key mission**

“Our goal is that all students should be able to access higher education and participate fully in our democratic society.”

We await our very first batch of university students this autumn and our first **Ark Alumni**. We also wish all our Year 11 students (so many who hope to join our sixth form) the grades they need to gain the post 16 place that they are hoping for.

As **our Year 10 transition into Year 11** they need to think very seriously about their goal post 16 so that they use every moment of Year 11 positively to achieve that end. Year 11 parents will I know really push the amount of work they need to do from the beginning of September.

I look forward to writing to you in September. Meanwhile, I wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer break.

With my best wishes

Delia Smith
Principal

Suggested Reading Lists

Years 7/8 Easier

- Weight of water- Sarah Crossnan
- Millions – Frank Cottrell Boyce
- Skellig – David Almond
- Goggle-Eyes – Anne Fine
- The girl of ink and stars – Kiran Millwood Hargrave
- Tom’s Midnight Garden – Philippa Pearce
- Carrie’s War – Nina Bawden
- Noughts and crosses series – Malorie Blackman
- Georgia Nicholson series – Louise Rennison
- The recruit series – Robert Muchamore
- Young Bond series – Ian Fleming
- The jungle book – Rudyard Kipling
- Artemis Fowl – Eoin Colfer
- Harry Potter series – JK Rowling
- Liar & Spy – Rebecca Stead
- When Hitler stole pink rabbit – Judith Kerr
- The silver sword – Ian Serraillier
- Cirque du freak series – Darren Shan
- Coram boy – Jamila Gavin
- Refugee boy – Benjamin Zephaniah
- Keeper – Mal Peet

Years 9/10 Easier

- Wonder – RJ Palacio
- Unwind series – Neal Shusterman
- Slated series – Teri Terry
- Looking for JJ – Anne Cassidy
- Killing honour - Bali Rai
- Divergent series – Veronica Roth
- Dear nobody – Berlie Doherty
- Code name verity – Elizabeth Wein
- A monster calls – Patrick Ness
- Da Vinci code – Dan Brown
- The declaration series – Gemma Malley
- The giver series – Lois Lowry
- Girl, Missing series – Sophie McKenzie
- I capture the castle – Dodie Smith
- The bride’s farewell - Meg Rosoff
- Ender’s Game series – Orson Scott Card
- Boys don’t cry – Malorie Blackman
- Bend it like Beckham – Narinder Dharmi
- Frankenstein – Mary Shelley
- The fault in our stars – John Green
- You against me – Jenny Downham
- Hush hush series – Becca Fitzpatrick
- Numbers trilogy – Rachel Ward
- 13 reasons why – Jay Asher

Years 7/8 reading up (harder)

- The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time – Mark Haddon
- His dark materials trilogy – Philip Pullman
- The enemy series – Charlie Higson
- One – Sarah Crossnan
- Auslander – Paul Dowswell
- Watership down – Richard Adams
- Hitchhiker’s guide to the galaxy – Douglas Adams
- Monsters of men series – Patrick Ness
- Orangeboy – Patrice Lawrence
- War of the worlds – H G Wells
- Spud series – John Van de Ruit
- Maggot Moon – Sally Gardner
- A Christmas carol – Charles Dickens
- The Diary of Anne Frank
- Crongton nights- Alex Wheatle
- Alice’s adventures in wonderland – Lewis Carroll
- Treasure island – Robert Lewis Stevenson
- Robinson Crusoe – Daniel Defoe
- The colour of magic – Terry Pratchett
- Alice’s adventures in wonderland – Lewis Carroll
- Animal farm – George Orwell
- I am number four series – Pittacus Lore

Year 9/10 reading up (harder)

- Rebecca – Daphne Du Maurier
- The bunker diaries – Kevin Brooks
- Junk – Melvin Burgess
- Life of Pi – Yann Martel
- When I was Joe series - Keren David
- The book thief – Markus Zusak
- Great expectations – Charles Dickens
- Atonement – Ian McEwan
- Birdsong – Sebastian Faulks
- Wuthering Heights – Emily Bronte
- Daniel Daronda – George Eliot
- Pride and Prejudice – Jane Austen
- The perks of being a wallflower – Stephen Chomsky
- We were liars – E.E Lockhart
- Catcher in the rye – JD Salinger
- Fahrenheit 451 – Ray Bradbury
- Flip – Martyn Bedford
- The kite runner – Khalid Hosseini
- Flowers in the attic – Virginia Andrews
- One day – David Nicholls
- The help – Kathryn Stockett