

Principal: Delia Smith OBE

Friday 1st January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,



Plans for school opening January 2021

I do hope you and your family are well and have enjoyed the break over Christmas despite the restrictions.

Following the Government announcement on schools on Wednesday afternoon, I am writing to confirm arrangements for the first two weeks of the Spring Term.

As you are probably aware, the rising rates of coronavirus infection have led the Government to delay the return to face-to-face teaching in secondary schools. A staggered return is therefore required, with priority given to the year-groups facing public examinations in the summer (Years 11 and 13) alongside vulnerable students and the children of critical workers. Key arrangements for the next two weeks are as follows:

- **Year 11 and Year 13** will have remote on-line lessons for the first week of term, **starting on Tuesday 5th January**. Students will follow their usual timetable of lessons via Microsoft Teams. They will return to the schools for face-to-face lessons **on Monday 11 January**.
- Year 10 and the Year 12 will also have lessons on line from **Tuesday 5th January**. Students will again follow their usual timetable of lessons via Microsoft Teams.
- Year 7-9 will have online lessons from **Wednesday 6th January**. They will follow a timetable that will be sent out on Tuesday 5th.
- Years 7-10 & 12 will return to school for face-to-face teaching **on Monday 18th January**.
- We will continue to provide face to face education on site from **Wednesday 6th January** for vulnerable students and the children of critical workers. We will contact these families early next week to notify them of arrangements.
- Some Y12 and Y13 students are due to sit **BTEC exams** next week. These will take place as planned in school and we will be in touch with these students early next week to confirm arrangements.

The staggered start supports the government's plan to roll out mass testing for the coronavirus for staff and students in secondary schools across England to stop the virus spreading. This will be a powerful support for the continuity of your child's education over the coming months. Without testing schools will see more 'bubbles bursting' and children sent home for potentially significant periods of time. Therefore, testing is strongly encouraged.



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The roll-out of testing will need careful planning to ensure its success. I will contact you again by Tuesday 6th to explain how testing will operate in Ark Academy.

Please remember that if your child displays any of the Covid-19 symptoms, you must not send them to school. You must arrange for them to have a test. This is vitally important as it ensures that are staff and students can stay as safe as they can be.

The rising rate of infection is naturally of concern to us, and we will be keeping the safety of our community at the heart of all our planning.

With every good wish to you all for 2021.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Delia Smith', written in a light grey or blue ink.

Delia Smith
Principal