



Ark Greenwich Free School

1st January 2021

Re: Updated arrangements for returning to school in January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to start by wishing you a happy new year. I hope you and your family have enjoyed the Christmas break despite the restrictions.

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

As you are probably aware, the rising infection rates of coronavirus have led the Government to further 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 (Year 11) alongside vulnerable students and the children of critical workers.

Arrangements for the next two weeks are now as follows:

Mon 4 – Wed 6 Jan	Staff only Inset and Planning Days
Thu 7 Jan	Years 7-11 remote learning (Yr.7 Parents Evening 14:00-18:00)
Fri 8 Jan	Years 7-11 remote learning
Mon 11 – Fri 15 Jan	Year 11 return to school for face-to-face teaching Years 7-10 remote learning
Mon 18 Jan	Year 7-10 return to school for face-to-face teaching

COVID-19 testing in schools

The government has asked secondary schools across England to roll out COVID-19 testing to students and staff as the new term begins. The process seems relatively straight forward and staff and volunteers will receive training in advance. Students will be issued with a 'lateral flow' test, which they will use to swab themselves with results available within 30 minutes. Our aim will be to get as many students and staff tested as possible before they return to face-to-face teaching, helping us to identify the virus early and reduce transmission rates. Thereafter, students will only need a test if they develop symptoms or are identified as a 'close contact'.

Whilst this will be logistically challenging, access to a regular school-based testing programme will add a further layer of security for members of our community, on top of the existing safety and hygiene measures that are already in place across our school. We welcome this initiative and will do all we can to make it work alongside the day to day provision of a high-quality education. Testing of students is optional, but strongly encouraged. Further information on testing, including consent forms, will be sent to parents early next week with staff and students in Year 11 prioritised in the first week. In the meantime, we would be pleased to hear from you if you are interested in volunteering to support this project, please email: vhemmings@arkgreenwich.org.



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Vulnerable or critical worker children

If your child is classified as vulnerable or you are a critical worker, they are expected to attend school from Thursday 7 January for supervised study in one of our computing rooms. Parents of eligible students will already have been in contact with Ms Gainey (Assistant Headteacher SEND/Safeguarding) throughout the Coronavirus period. **Importantly, if your child does not have access to a device or the internet they too are classified as vulnerable and must attend school.** Please confirm your child's attendance by emailing Ms Gainey: vgainey@arkgreenwich.org as soon as possible. For further information on the definition of vulnerable children and critical workers please click [here](#). Existing arrangements for those students in receipt of free school meals will remain in place throughout the remote learning period.

Arrangements for online learning

Detailed arrangements for online learning will be shared with parents and students via SMHW, parent text and email by Wednesday 6 January. It is envisaged that this will follow a broadly similar format to the recent remote learning trial day. Lessons will take place live via Microsoft Teams (MST) but may also utilise pre-recorded messages from teachers, online learning platforms and independent study tasks completed via google classrooms. From Thursday 7 January, students will follow the timings of the school day as set out in the table below:

Time	Activity
08:20	Tutor time (in place of reading)
08:50	Lesson 1
09:50	Lesson 2
10:50	Lesson 3
11:50	Lesson 4a (lunch break for Yr. 7, 8 & 9)
12:50	Lesson 4b (lunch break for Yr. 10)
13:50	Lesson 5
14:50	Lesson 6 (Monday-Wednesday only) 10-minute tutor time (Thursday & Friday only)
15:50	Tutor time (Monday-Wednesday)

Further information on the expectations for remote learning and how you can support your child from home can be found [here](#). Support will also be available throughout the online learning period by emailing info@arkgreenwich.org or by calling the main school reception: 0208 319 3692. Students experiencing persistent technical difficulties will be classified as vulnerable and expected to attend school accordingly.

Independent Learning

Students must check their 'Show My Homework' portal to ensure they know what independent learning needs to be completed in advance of remote lessons commencing on Thursday 7 January. Students must use Quizlet to learn the 'winter golden nuggets' and complete the associated prerequisite tests three times and achieve 80% or above on each. Students have responded superbly to the expectations to be



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independent this term and they are fast developing the skills they will need to compete in an increasingly competitive world. Please take the time to check your child has completed all the necessary work they need to do so they are set up for their return to lessons.

New Parent App MCAS

I'd like to remind you about the parent app that comes into effect when we return to school after Christmas. We have listened to your feedback and feel confident that this new parent app will provide you with all the information you need. The Xpressions app has been discontinued and will be replaced with MCAS. MCAS allows parents to access their child's attendance, behaviour information, reports, school messages, and more both from a free mobile application as well as online via your desktop computer.

All AGFS families will receive an invitation to the MCAS app shortly. Please review the step-by-step instructions [here](#) to download and register with MCAS. It is important that all parents download the new app as this will soon become our central method for all communications with you.

In Summary

A further delay to face-to-face teaching was certainly not the news we were hoping for and we cannot guarantee there won't be further uncertainty in the weeks ahead. However, following extensive planning, including our recent whole school remote learning trial day, I am confident that with your support, AGFS is well placed to be able to overcome this latest challenge. Moreover, I remain of the view that, through this experience, we will become stronger as a community when its all over.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Spiers
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'Ambition, Growth, Fellowship, Scholarship'