



# Ark Charter Academy

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January

Dear parents and carers,

Firstly, I hope you and your family are safe and well during these very challenging times. During lockdown, our dedicated staff continue to work full time, sometimes from home, able to support your child and families in lots of different ways. If you need us, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We know it is a big challenge, it is for us too, but we are here to help and succeed together!

I wanted to write to parents to give my thoughts on the situation we find ourselves in. We believe deeply in the value of education and school life in shaping children's development and opportunities in life. As such, we were devastated by the huge amount of lost learning and social interaction in 2020 and worked hard in the Autumn Term to make up for lost time. Again, on 4<sup>th</sup> January, we entered another school lockdown.

This time, however, schools were given specific instruction on the expectations for 'remote attendance' and 'remote learning':

"Schools must continue to complete the attendance register for pupils who are receiving remote education... Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupils' and students' engagement with remote education, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register."  
'Statutory obligations and expectations' Department for Education – gov.uk

We remain responsible for accounting for every child's learning, attendance, and welfare, even while we are in lockdown. Therefore, we are developing ways to communicate, teach and monitor every child and support them through this period.

We have been phoning parents/carers if we have not received any contact from your child. By this we mean that your child has not attended any live lessons or completed work on Satchel One or Hegarty Maths that day.

From next week you will receive a weekly report with your child's attendance to live lessons. You will also receive a report for Hegarty Maths so you can see how many tasks your child has completed compared to the number of tasks set that week by the teacher. Your child's teacher will also continue to log charter points for participation in lessons, work completed and submitted.

Teachers will also contact home, via text or email, when a live lesson is not taking place as planned. Where possible, your child will have their lesson taught by another teacher who will send them an invitation to their lesson. If not, your child will have work set on Satchel One which will usually be supported with a recorded lesson. The message will make it clear what the alternative arrangements are so you can explain them to your child.



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Thanks to significant planning and work during the Autumn Term, we were ready, with only a few hours of warning on 4th January, to continue to deliver high quality education for your child and provide meaningful teaching and learning, as well as pastoral care where necessary.

The pastoral team will be exploring strategies to support with wellbeing and staying safe online during tutor time and PSHE lessons. The school will also be offering a dedicated off-timetable day focused on wellbeing on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February. We will be encouraging students to get away from their screens as much as possible and engage in some creative and active learning. Their class teachers will not be setting work on this day, but students will be encouraged to think outside the box and take part in their own mini projects or activities. Further details will be shared with parents/carers next week.

I am a huge believer in the children's resilience – they never cease to amaze me – and I am confident that our school community will come out of this pandemic stronger in many ways. However, I also know the curriculum and the skills the children will need into college and beyond, and I believe we now need to put every effort into a period of effective remote learning (at home and in some cases in school), using the time wisely and working together for the good of every child.

Having spoken to lots of you, I completely understand the many different challenges you may be facing: lack of technology, lack of confidence with technology, juggling working commitments with home schooling, managing personal issues within the family – the list goes on. **Despite this, I am delighted to see the participation in home learning increasing as the weeks have gone by so far and amazed by what the children (with support from parents) have achieved.** The skills being developed across the curriculum, but also in communication and the use of technology will benefit us all for many years to come.

**Thank you for the tremendous effort from children, parents, and school staff to achieve this. We can, and will, come through this difficult time together.**

Warm regards,

**Fiona Chapman**  
Executive Principal



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