



The Return to School – Monday 8th March

Dear Parents and Carers,

I do hope you had a lovely weekend – the sun was out, spring is on its way and children are back to school on March 8th – there is lots to be optimistic about. We have a real opportunity to ensure the Ark Swift community emerges even stronger from the Covid crisis. Rather than thinking about ‘lost learning’ and ‘catch up’ that seems to be the media rhetoric, let us focus our collective efforts on the remarkable potential we are tasked with realising once all children are back in our classrooms again.



Further to my letter last week, I am writing with details of school reopening on Monday 8th March. As mentioned in my previous letter, many of the COVID restrictions remain in place so please read the following information closely so you are aware of how everything will work.

We cannot wait to welcome back all our pupils, but I appreciate that there may be some nervousness for us all as we approach this. I want to assure you that, as ever, the safety and wellbeing of your children and our staff remains our priority.

If your child/children have any medical conditions that make them vulnerable when returning to school, please contact the office immediately so that we can carry out a risk assessment and put measures in place to ensure they are safe. Please also inform the school office if you have received a letter asking your child to shield during this period.

Attendance

On 22nd February 2021, the Department for Education published their guidelines for the full reopening of schools. The section on attendance states:

School attendance will be mandatory for all pupils from 8 March.

The usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school (where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age)
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

We share the government's determination for all children to return to school on 8th March following significant disruption this term. A risk assessment has been undertaken and a range of measures have been put in place to ensure the safety of all staff and children.

Bubbles and Timings of the School Day

	Start	Finish
EYFS	8:55	15:25
Year 1 and Year 2	8:50	15:20
Year 3 and Year 4	8:45	15:15
Year 5	8:40	15:10
Year 6	8:40	15:10

Both school gates will be in operation: Australia Road and Dorando Close.

When arriving at school to drop-off or pick-up your child, please form an orderly, socially distanced queue on either side of the school gates. Please do not congregate immediately in front of the gate and use the pavement markers to ensure spacing.

EYFS and KS1 children will be dropped-off and picked-up from their classroom doors using the socially distanced playground markers.

KS2 children will make their own way to class in the morning, via the main office doors. In the afternoon, they will be picked-up from their class lines in the playground

All parents and visitors MUST wear a face covering to enter the site and observe social distancing.



Arrangements for Hygiene, Social Distancing, Keeping Bubbles Separate

Arrangements we have in place:

- One-way corridors
- Timetable for toilet usage, only one child in the toilet area at any one time
- Stories and games to promote social distancing and good hygiene
- Bubbles kept apart from other bubbles during the school day
- Large gatherings avoided – no assemblies, whole school events etc.
- Enhanced cleaning throughout the school day
- Anti-bacterial soap & hand sanitiser available in all rooms
- All children provided with individual stationery packs and hand sanitiser
- Staff sign a declaration on arrival each day conforming they have no COVID symptoms
- Staff wear face coverings in communal areas
- Staff are tested for COVID twice weekly

Face Coverings for Children

The schools coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance provides information on the use of face coverings and asymptomatic testing in primary schools from Monday 8 March. **The guidance is clear that face coverings are only necessary for pupils in year 7 and above.**

A Department for Education spokesperson has said:

“Children in primary schools should not be asked to wear face coverings when they return to school from 8 March.”

If parents strongly feel their children should wear face coverings this will be allowed. However, staff will not be able to assist with the correct usage of the face covering.

First Aid arrangements

First aid will be administered by staff wearing PPE (gloves, mask, and apron). Only one child will be allowed in the First Aid Room at any one time.

Policy on parents/visitors entering school building

Parents will not be permitted to enter the building at this time other than for planned meetings/events. If you wish to speak to your child's teacher or another member of staff, this can be done via a phone call or a pre-booked meeting. We ask parents to help us by adhering to social distancing guidelines.

Visitors to site will only be permitted for essential works and services.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast club will reopen from Monday 8th March from 8:00am. Pre-booking is essential as we are only able to offer limited places. Please call the school office to book a place for your child.

After School Clubs

We hope to resume after school clubs following the Easter break but will assess the situation and updated guidance before making this decision.

School Uniform

Children will be expected to return to school wearing full school uniform. The most up to date copy of our uniform policy, along with prices for Ark Swift branded items can be found on our website.

Community Classroom & Remote Learning – Friday 5th March

We have already written to our regular Community Classroom attendees to inform that this provision will be closed this Friday.

The reason for closing our Community Classroom is to allow a deep clean to take place and classrooms to be reset. Teachers and support staff will be busy planning and preparing for normal lessons to begin on the Monday.

All children will learn remotely on Friday and work will be set as usual on Seesaw but please note there will be no Teams calls, 1:1 sessions or responding to marking.

Returning Disruption Devices

Where applicable, we will update you on the process for returning disruption devices in due course.

And finally...

We all hope that we are nearing the end of this challenging period and whilst we are hoping for a quick return to something more normal, it is essential that we all work hard to ensure the smooth running of the school as we return. I recognise that you may have questions regarding how things will work this term. As always, please speak to me or any other school leader. Alternatively, please contact the office if you would like to schedule a phone call.

Best wishes,



Daniel Upfield
Principal

Other Newsletter Items

Secondary School Offers

If you applied for your child's secondary school place using the online e-admissions system, you should receive your offer via email from 5pm today. If you applied using a paper form, you should receive a letter in the post on Tuesday.

If you need any assistance once you've received your child's offer, please speak to Mr Upfield or Shineade or Katie in the Pastoral Support Team.

Useful information here: <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/schools-and-colleges/school-admissions/secondary-school-offers>

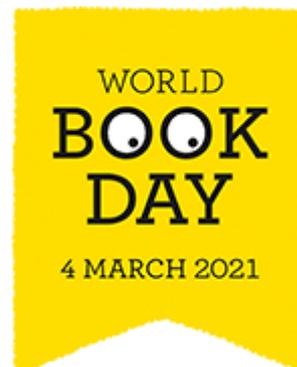


On Tuesday, there will be a Teams meeting for all Year 6 children at 10am in place of the daily class check-ins. A link to this meeting will be sent via Seesaw.

World Book Day

Thursday 4th March 2021 is World Book Day, a day where people all over the country celebrate their favourite books and the joys of reading.

It is important that we celebrate reading because of the joy it can bring and the success it brings when the children are older. For example, reading for pleasure and joy is more important for your child's brain development than nearly every other factor that could affect their lives and improves job prospects when they're older. It has been proven that children who read books often at primary school age and beyond gain higher results in maths, vocabulary and spelling tests at 16 than those who read less.



To help us come together and celebrate, all year groups are taking part in an Extreme Reading challenge! We would like the children to get a photo of themselves reading in an unusual and out-of-the-ordinary place! An example could be up a climbing frame or on a trampoline (children should be mindful of being safe and to check with an adult first). The more creative – the better! We would love for families to get involved as well so please feel free to join in.

The other teachers in school and myself will also be making videos talking about our favourite books and why we love them. If you would like to send us a video explaining what your favourite book is and why, we would love to see it!

Your child will already have received details via Seesaw, regarding a virtual author visit from Diana Muendo and her illustrator Abby Hobbs on World Book Day at 11am. There will be a live reading plus a Q & A. This session is for EYFS & KS1 plus several of our KS2 pupils nominated by their teachers that are passionate about writing, illustrating and black author representation.



If you're interested in advance, Diana's book can be found here:

[Big Hair Parade: Amazon.co.uk: Muendo, Diana, Hobbs, Abby: Books](#)

There is more fun and news to follow, including free books and book tokens, but for now, start thinking about somewhere interesting you could be found reading...

Mr Knight,
English Lead

Justice Week

This week is 'Justice Week'. It is essential for young people to understand the importance of the justice system, value the rule of law and see them as fundamental to our lives and freedoms. Young people have a right to know about the law and how it can be used. Understanding the law is an essential element of being an active, engaged citizen.



On Tuesday, assemblies will be available via Seesaw for EYFS/KS1 and KS2. I hope your children will enjoy listening to the assemblies and that you will be able to discuss the content and themes raised at home.

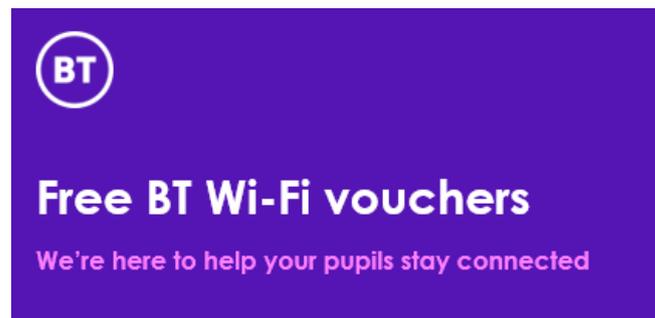


Free BT Wi-Fi Vouchers

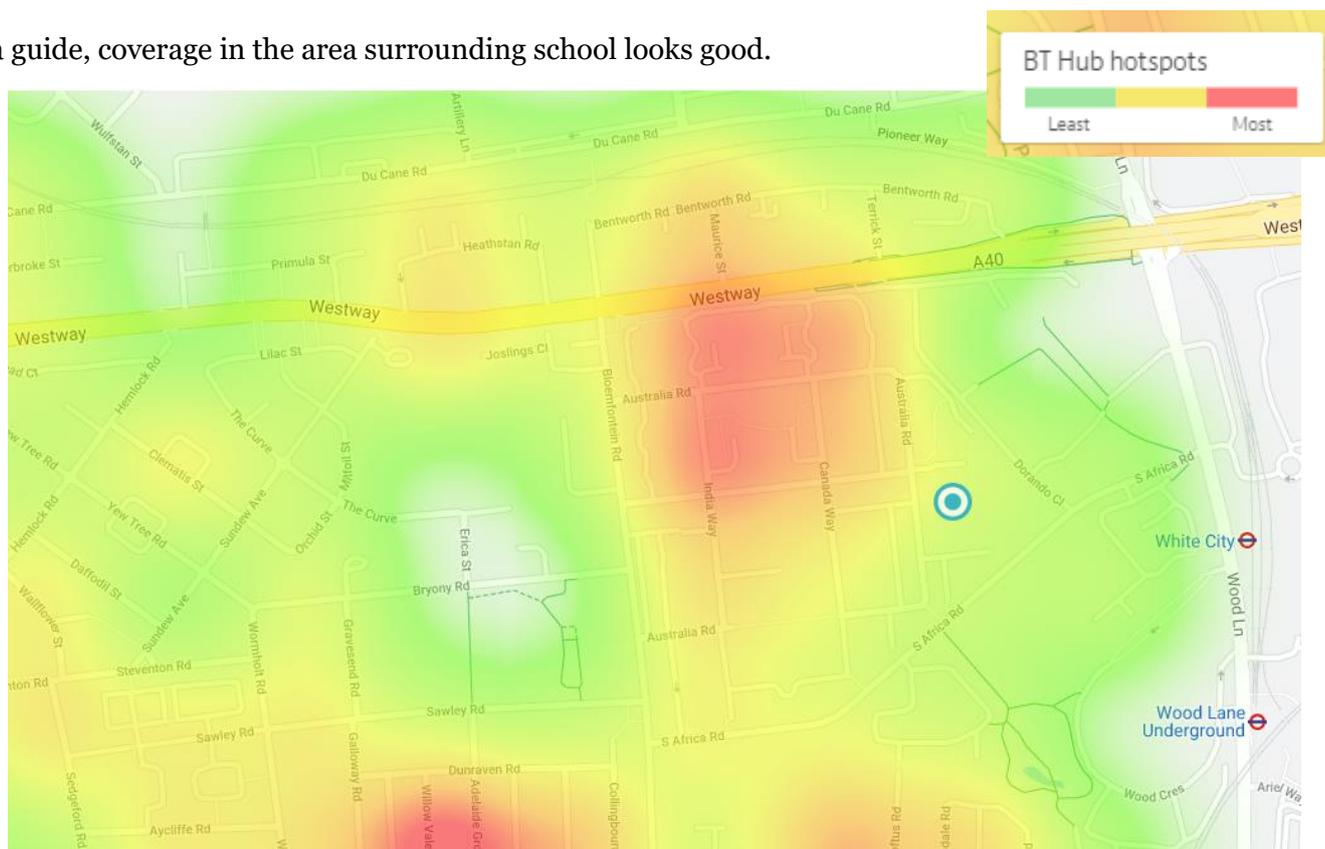
We have managed to secure 60 free BT Wi-Fi vouchers. These are valid until the end of July 2021 and could be useful keeping your family connected for the next few months.

Before requesting a voucher, access the **Wi-Fi hotspot checker** using your postcode.

If the postcode checker indicates a good connection, please fill in this **form** and we'll send you an access code and user guide.



As a guide, coverage in the area surrounding school looks good.



Mrs Kilyan

On Friday, we said farewell to our Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Kilyan as she begins her maternity leave. I am sure you will join me in wishing Mrs Kilyan all the best for the safe arrival of her baby and I will share the good news with you soon. Mrs Kilyan is aiming to be back at Ark Swift just before the summer break and looks forward to seeing you all then.

Miss Mowbray is returning from maternity leave at the end of March and will be Acting Deputy Headteacher during Mrs Kilyan's absence. Miss Mowbray is looking forward to being back at school and working with the Swift community. In addition, Miss Joannou will also be taking on some of Mrs Kilyan's duties. I will clarify in more detail later this term how these roles will work. Miss Mowbray and Miss Joannou will do a fantastic job of continuing to develop our school over the coming months and I know they will appreciate your support.

