



8 December 2015

Dear Parents and Carers

**RE: CURRICULUM CHANGES FOR 2016**

Over the past term we have been looking closely at how we can improve the overall learning experience for our students. We are particularly keen to look at new and innovative ways to be able to develop deep learning and find ways that we can help students to develop their independent learning skills. Also to structure effective ways to improve critical skills needed for success, such as ability to make extended quality written responses, literacy, numeracy and improved reading ages, all in order to support maximum progress and achievement across all year groups.

From January 2016 both Ark William Parker and Ark Helenswood will be moving to a slightly different looking school day. The start and end times will remain the same but we will have 4 lessons all of 1 hour and 15 minutes as opposed to the current structure of 5 x 1 hour lessons. The amount of learning time in subjects will remain broadly the same, although given the extended lessons the actual number of lessons each week will be different.

The new school day will look like this:

	<b>Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>
<b>Tutor Time</b>	0845-0905	No tutor time
<b>Period 1</b>	0905-1020	0845-0955
<b>Period 2</b>	1020-1135	0955-1105
<b>Break</b>	1135-1205	1105-1135
<b>Period 3</b>	1205-1320	1135-1245
<b>Lunch</b>	1320-1400	1245-1320
<b>Period 4</b>	1400-1515	1320-1430
<b>School Finishes</b>	1515	1430

In making this change we will be able to offer students an improved learning experience because we will have more time in lessons to develop skills and knowledge. It will be particularly useful for subjects with a practical element such as PE, Science and Technology where there will be more time available for the development of learning.

We will also be making better use of the times of the day we know our students learn best with, over half the day's learning taking place before lunch.

In addition, even greater alignment with Ark Helenswood Academy will mean our Sixth Form lessons will benefit from increased efficiency. Timetabling will allow for staff to be 'block timetabled' meaning less travel between the two academies, which will again impact on increasing an even better teaching and learning experience.

At Ark William Parker this arrangement will have a significant impact on the quality of our Maths and English curriculum. We will be able to re allocate staffing so that lessons are run by our existing highly qualified staff, including the appointments we have made for January, helping us to negate gaps in the staffing of these areas. As you know, recruitment in English and Maths is a national problem felt even more strongly in regional areas, such as ours.

This is an important change and one we are clear we need to get right. In order to ensure we help our staff develop the planning and pedagogical skills required to make the intended impact of the extra time in lessons we will need time to do it. To facilitate this we will be adding a training day on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January when the Ark central training team will be working with teachers in both academies. This means the academy will be closed to students on this day and they will now return from the holiday on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January at 8.45am.

I hope you will see clearly why we are making this change. I understand that the later return to the academy in January may pose certain inconveniences to you. The decision has not been made lightly but it is extremely important we ensure that this move serves to improve the educational experience for students.

If there is anything you would like to discuss or if you have any questions please get in touch by email at [principal@arkwilliamparker.org](mailto:principal@arkwilliamparker.org).

I would like to take this chance to thank you for your support while we work towards achieving even better outcomes for our students.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Hatley  
**PRINCIPAL**