



8 December 2015

Dear Parents and Carers

## Re: Curriculum Changes for 2016

During 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, find ways that we can help students to develop their independent learning skills and 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.

To support this work, from January 2016 both Ark William Parker and Ark Helenswood will be moving to a slightly different looking school day. The beginning and end of the school day 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 length of break and lunch times will remain the same.

The new school day will look like this:

	<b>Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>
<b>Tutor</b>	0845-0900	No tutor time
<b>Period 1</b>	0900-1015	0845-0955
<b>Period 2</b>	1015-1130	0955-1105
<b>Break</b>	1130-1200	1105-1135
<b>Period 3</b>	1200-1315	1135-1240
<b>Lunch</b>	1315-1405	1240-1325
<b>Period 4</b>	1405-1520	1325-1430

In making this change we will be able to offer students an improved learning experience, because we will have more time in each lesson to develop skills and knowledge. It will be particularly useful for subjects with a practical element such as the Performing Arts, Creative Arts, 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.



**PRINCIPAL:** Lucy Monk  
**REGIONAL DIRECTOR:** Mark Phillips

The change to the timetable will allow for a significant reduction in travel between the three sites of the academy for teachers. Currently staff move between the Lower School, Upper School and William Parker sites, and whilst this will continue we have been able to make use of 'block timetabling' in order to restrict teacher travel to break and lunch times. The allocation of class teachers to classes has remained the same as present, wherever possible. We anticipate that the reduction in the number of times that teachers have to travel between sites will impact positively on lessons in all year groups.

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 [info@arkhelenswood.org](mailto:info@arkhelenswood.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 faithfully



Mrs L Monk  
Principal