



# Ark John Keats Academy

7<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you and your family are well. I am writing to share some key updates on AJK.

It is now 7 weeks since we closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our staff and pupils have been working hard to ensure learning can continue, and that we remain as connected as possible even though we cannot come together as a school community. We have been really pleased with the engagement of our pupils in remote learning, and teachers have shared so many examples of excellent learning across both phases. It is testament to the pupils' tenacity and determination that many have continued to work so independently. Our staff are currently making adaptations to the curriculum moving forward to ensure pupils in all year groups can catch up as quickly as possible when they do return to school. It is also worth noting that, whilst SATs, GCSE and A-Level examinations were cancelled this year, these examinations will still go ahead for current Y5, Y10 and Y12 next academic year.

We recognise that this is a difficult time for parents, with many managing work commitments, as well as caring for younger children or other relatives. In such an unprecedented situation we also recognise the need to focus on your family's wellbeing and to spend relaxed time together alongside supporting your child in their learning. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support.

You will have read in the media that schools may return in some form after the May half term. We have not received anything definitive on this but will update you with further information as soon as the government makes a decision. I would like to reassure you that the safety of our pupils and staff are paramount in our planning for re-opening, and we will share precautions we are taking when the time comes.

Looking ahead to next year, we received over 1000 applications to Y7, and the highest number of Reception applications we have had to date. We are hugely excited that our founding primary pupils will be amongst the 180 Y7s to join AJK secondary phase in September. We are currently organising transition arrangements for our new Reception and Y7 cohorts. This will, of course look slightly different this year due to the challenges presented by the lockdown. However, we will be ensuring that these children are well prepared to start in September. We will update you on Sixth Form applications and the building over the next few weeks.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Mr Mackintosh, who has secured a Principal role in another school for September. This is a significant achievement and I wish him every success in this new role. He has been at the school for 6 years and has played an important part in the development of AJK. Throughout this time he has worked tirelessly to secure the very best for pupils. He leaves with our profound gratitude for the work he has done here. Our school is full in every year group for the first time next academic year. I will remain as Executive Principal, with Amy Baird

**Executive Principal:** Jane Witheford  
**Secondary Headteacher:** William Mackintosh  
**Primary Headteacher:** Amy Baird

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continuing to lead Primary and Mr Collins will continue to oversee the school as Regional Director. With Mr Mackintosh and Ms Henderson's departure, we are taking the opportunity to reflect on the shape and structure of the leadership of the school moving forward now that we are a full school. We will update you this next half term.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Witheford  
Executive Principal

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