



PARENTS HANDBOOK



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FROM THE SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Dear parents,

I am delighted to welcome your child to The Ark Christian School. He or she will, of course, have many new aspects of school life to become accustomed to so I do hope the information presented here will be of help to you both. Please familiarise yourself with the important school routines and procedures that are outlined here and encourage your son or daughter to do the same.

Above all please be assured that if you have any queries or concerns, at any stage of your child's time at The Ark Christian School, we are only too pleased to help. Details of the appropriate staff to contact can be found later in the handbook.

Adrienne Megeary

School Director

The school Mission and Aims

Our aim is to help boys and girls to become men and women of purpose and promise.

To teach them to respect themselves and others and to have passion and compassion

To help give young people direction, knowledge, education and the tools they need to live a meaningful and fulfilling life.

To assist each child in achieving his or her full potential, by helping and encouraging their individual gifts and talents.

To encourage each child to believe in themselves, and to have a positive attitude to life.

To grow up people who believe that they can make a difference.

We aim to achieve this by:

- Encouraging the growth of curiosity, creativity and independent learning whilst also preparing each pupil for the best possible examination results, through a broad based, coherent and balanced curriculum.
- Providing inspirational and dedicated staff, committed to continual professional development, who have high expectations of all pupils, who enjoy teaching and learning, and who enable pupils to fulfil their academic potential.
- Providing outstanding pastoral care and ensuring that relationships within the school are based on mutual respect within a highly supportive environment.
- Encouraging the development in each pupil of self-discipline, responsibility, physical and emotional wellbeing, moral and spiritual values, and consequently the highest possible standards of behaviour, confidence in themselves and consideration for others.
- Working in close and effective partnership with parents and encouraging them to be actively involved in their child's education.

School Routine

The school is open from 08:50. **All pupils must be in school by 09:00 at the latest.**

The school day runs from 09:00 to 15:00 for primary – Pre-reception to year 6 – incorporating registration, devotion, lesson time, morning break and lunch.

If you wish your child to remain on school premises between 15:00 and 16:00 they are able to participate in after school activities each day. Please note this service has an additional daily/ monthly charge; please speak to your child's form tutor or the school administrator for more information regarding this matter.

The school day runs from 09:00 to 16:00 for secondary – years 7 to 11 - incorporating registration, devotion, lesson time, morning break and lunch.

Registration

All pupils must report to their tutor at 09:00 each day. Pupils arriving late for registration must go straight to their form room. If your son / daughter arrives at school after 09:20, they should sign in at the reception desk as soon as they arrive in school.

Absence

If your son or daughter is going to be absent from school on account of illness, please email admin@thearkchristianschool.com or phone 952588255 by 09:00 every day he or she will be away.

If your son / daughter needs to leave during the school day to attend, for example, a medical appointment, please send a request to their form tutor, in writing or by email, at least 24 hours before the scheduled appointment. The request for absence should include the following:

1. Reason your son / daughter needs to leave school
2. Date of appointment
3. Time your son / daughter needs to leave school
4. Time your son / daughter will return to school or confirmation that he / she will not be returning.

Pupils must sign out at the reception desk and sign in again on their return of arriving late / leaving early. This means that, in the event of an emergency evacuation, there is an accurate record of pupils on site available for the emergency services.

A request for absence of one day or more should be made to the school director by downloading the absence request form from the school website – thearkchristianschool.org

All parents are asked to sign in at reception when entering the school building between 09:00 and 16:00. If you are attending a pre-arranged meeting with a member of staff, please do not walk into school unescorted – even after you have signed in – but rather wait at reception until you are met by

the member of staff. These measures are designed to ensure that the school remains a safe and secure environment for your child and we are grateful for your support in achieving this goal.

Uniform and appearance

We have made every effort to make clothing your children for school as inexpensive as possible. When our pupils appear properly in their school uniform, they represent our school well in public and to visitors within the school walls. When uniform is not maintained, it reflects poorly on our school.

Our expectations for pupils' uniforms are that each pupil needs to wear a clean school logo polo shirt, solid black trousers (or skirt option for girls) and closed toe black shoes (no sandals) each day to school. Black trousers are required for daily school wear; sport bottoms, sweats, leggings and other stretchy active wear is not appropriate for classroom uniform. Trousers need to be neat, clean and tidy and free of rips or tears. Torn open knees in trousers are not acceptable. If the weather is cool, students need to wear their school logo jumper as well to class. When the weather turns warm in summer term, students are welcome to wear solid black shorts (or capri length trousers for girls) with their polo. Shorts should be appropriate in length (no shorter than a hands width above the knee). Each student should purchase sufficient amounts of each uniform piece so that when one piece is being laundered they still have enough to wear to school.

Girls with long hair need to wear hair up during school hours, and jewellery is to be kept to a minimum: necklaces worn inside clothes and earrings should be small. No fingernail polish or heavy makeup is permitted.

Students should wear their PE school t-shirt, solid black sport bottoms/shorts and trainers to school the morning of their PE class. After PE, secondary students need to bring **normal school uniform to change into after their shower**. They are not allowed to wear their PE kit in classroom. They need to bring a fresh polo and trousers/skirt and black shoes to change into after PE lessons. Again, we are attempting to raise the standard of uniform in the school, and students in PE kit are not a neat, professional look.

Uniform is available to purchase from the school at the following times:

Tuesday between 09:00 and 10:00 or

Thursday between 15:00 and 16:15

Food

Pupils are encouraged to bring a healthy snack and packed lunch to school each day. Food and drink is not to be consumed during lessons, with the exception of water during the hot summer months.

If your son / daughter forgets their snack or lunch we will contact you as soon as we have been made aware so that you may either bring a replacement or we can arrange for food to be purchased on your behalf. Any purchases of food will be invoiced and expected to be paid for the following school day.

Emergency numbers

In the event of your son / daughter feeling seriously unwell or having an accident, we may need to contact you as a matter of urgency. Please ensure that we have accurate telephone numbers, both at home and at work, of at least two responsible adults we can contact in an emergency. We also ask that you provide a current email address at which you can be contacted.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

The school and its Governing Body are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff to share this commitment. It is our collective desire to create an open environment where staff and students feel able to raise concerns, and where concerns will be listened to with a readiness to involve support services and other agencies as necessary.

The school recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in our care. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive affective support, protection and justice. All staff members are aware of their responsibility to act, in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, on any suspicion, concern or disclosure that may suggest a child is in need of support services or is at risk of significant harm.

The school is wholly committed to:

- Ensuring that the welfare of children is given paramount consideration when developing and delivering all school activities.
- Providing an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties.
- Raising the awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- Providing a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm.
- Providing a structured procedure which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- Ensuring that key concepts of Child Protection are integrated within the curriculum via PSHE

Zero tolerance to bullying

It is a fundamental principle at The Ark Christian School that all members of the community – teachers, support staff, students and parents – are expected to treat one another with courtesy and respect. Everyone has the right to be safe and secure, whether at school or elsewhere, and to be protected when vulnerable, so that they may flourish without fear of unfair treatment or harassment.

Failure by any member of the school community to treat others with courtesy and respect undermines the ethos and wellbeing of the whole school, and will always be regarded as a serious

matter. The school's approach to bullying is clear; it is always unacceptable. It damages children and the school will, therefore, do all it can to prevent it.

Definition of bullying

Any behaviour which makes another person feel uncomfortable or threatened may be construed as bullying – whether intended or not. Bullying may be of a racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise personal nature such as commenting on a person's culture, religious background, or holding up members of a person's family to ridicule on the basis of their race, gender, sexuality, religious belief, disability or appearance.

There are many definitions of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour
- It is repeated over a period of time
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

Bullying can take many forms but the main types are:

1. Physical – this may include fighting, hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings, setting up someone else to get the blame for breach of school rules; initiation ceremonies.
2. Emotional or psychological – this may include excluding someone from a group, activity or place; spreading rumours, being deliberately unfriendly; unpleasant digital communication or telephone calls or unpleasant material placed on websites.
3. Verbal – this may include aggressive name calling, teasing, mockery, insults, use of homophobic, racist, sexist, and other types of discriminatory language. Any or all of the listed forms of bullying may, by some, be considered to be harmless 'banter' but will still be considered as bullying behaviour by the school.
4. Sexual harassment – this may include making inappropriate comments about appearance and attractiveness, uninvited propositions, uninvited touching and using innuendo or inappropriate imagery. The school also considers the showing of sexual and or pornographic material which could be upsetting to those who view it as a form of sexual harassment.
5. Cyberbullying – this is the use of information and communication technology particularly mobile phones, email, social websites, text messages, cameras and internet, deliberately to upset someone else. It may occur in or outside school and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially large audience and or more accessories, since others are able to 'forward on' bullying content at a click.

The school, at all times, seeks to promote a culture of courtesy and mutual respect amongst all members of the school community. Positive values of mutual respect and consideration will be promoted within the school in a wide range of contexts from assembly and devotionals to informal discussion. The topic of bullying is also directly addressed as part of our PSHE curriculum.

Tutors will remind students at the start of each academic year of their responsibility to ensure that bullying does not occur and to talk to a member of staff if they witness, suspect or suffer any form of bullying.

Staff will receive anti-bullying training as part of their continual professional development.

Medical matters

Parents are asked to inform the school if their son / daughter has any medical condition which may impact in any way their schooling. This includes epilepsy, asthma, diabetes, and previous major surgery and hearing or vision difficulties. Any major operations or accidents should also be reported. If your son/ daughter contracts any notifiable illness, such as chickenpox, please report this as soon as possible. Please note the exclusion periods relating to common illnesses:

Illness	Exclusion Period
Diarrhoea and vomiting	48 hours from the last bout of illness
Cough and colds with a temperature	24 hours after the temperature has settled
Chickenpox	5-7 days from the onset of spots, not until all of the spots have scabbed over.
Impetigo	Preferably 24 hours after starting treatment
Conjunctivitis	Preferably 24 hours after starting treatment
Head Lice	Once the child has been treated with the appropriate shampoo / lotion
Measles	4 days after the onset of the rash
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after starting antibiotics

Asthma inhalers, epipens and insulin must be made available to the school by any student requiring their use, these items should be labelled clearly with name and dosage. All other medication, whether needed on a permanent or temporary basis, must be handed in to the form tutor in its original container together with written instructions for its use.

The school should also be informed if your son / daughter have had any kind of assessment for ADHD, Autism or Dyslexia. Any report should be presented to the school so that we can work within the guidelines of the educational professional you have consulted.

Pastoral support

All students will receive pastoral support as needed from either their form tutor or the dedicated pastoral care support member of staff.

Information students provide is held confidentially, in compliance with our Child Protection policy. Confidentiality may be broken if the member of staff and the child protection team has a student's consent to do so, or if the staff members believe there is a significant risk of harm to them or someone else.

Expressing comments or concerns

The school welcomes comments, whether positive, negative or purely observational. | Concerns will be treated as an expression of genuine dissatisfaction which requires a response. That response should always be given in reasonable time, be courteous and be helpful in progressing matters towards a positive outcome.

Parents are always welcome to contact the School Director (missadi@thearkchristianschool.com) or her deputy (mrgore@thearkchristianschool.com) in order to express concerns or comments, but please see below for suggestions about whom else you might contact first who could be well placed to help you.

Primary

Concern or complaint regarding behaviour

Class teacher → Deputy Director → Director → Board of Governors

Concern or complaint regarding curriculum

Class teacher → Primary Coordinator → Director → Board of Governors

Concern or complaint regarding staff conduct

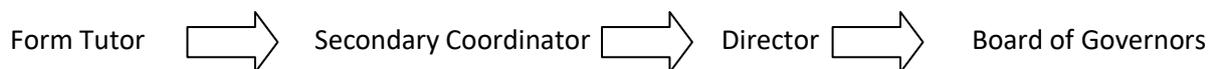
Director

Secondary

Concern or complaint regarding behaviour



Concern or complaint regarding curriculum



Concern or complaint regarding staff conduct

Director

Sometimes parents are not sure whether a matter is 'important' enough to raise with us. The best advice here is that a matter which is important to parents will also be important to the school. Comments and concerns help the school to reflect on, evaluate and continually improve the education it offers.

In many circumstances, the person to whom a concern is expressed will need to investigate the matter and consult with colleagues before responding in detail; a detailed response may be expected as soon as it is reasonably possible in the circumstances. The Ark Christian School staff aim to respond to your email or Class Dojo messages within 48 hours of receipt unless it is received after the school day ends on a Friday, or during a school holiday period.

Whatever form the concern is expressed in, the school will respond as soon as possible after a proper investigation has taken place. In responding to complaints, the school recognises the importance of confidentiality and fairness, as well as the need to ensure that concerns raised by parents will not produce adverse consequences for their child.

The complaint policy and procedure can be found on the school website – thearkchristianschool.org

Homework

The Ark Christian School has the aim of creating an environment in which learning is valued to such an extent that consolidation of class work is seen as a natural and important part of the learning process. In providing homework, teachers are therefore supporting students' learning beyond the classroom, as opposed to imposing upon their leisure time. This also gives parents an opportunity to engage with their child's learning by supporting and encouraging them with their homework tasks.

Homework can serve a range of purposes:

- Allowing practice and consolidation of work done in class
- Allowing preparation for future class work
- Developing skills in using libraries and other learning resources
- Providing opportunities for individualised work
- Allowing assessment of students' progress and mastery of a task
- Providing evidence for evaluation purposes
- Developing good habits and self-discipline
- Encouraging ownership and responsibility for learning
- Providing information for parents
- Providing opportunities for parental co-operation and support

Here is a rough guide to the homework that can be expected as your child progresses through the school:

Primary

From reception onwards children are expected to read for at least 10 minutes every night. We would encourage you to not only listen to your child read but to also read regularly to your child. Studies show that reading regularly to children improves their desire and ability to read.

In years 1 – 4 the emphasis is on regular reading, spellings and times-tables practice, with the occasional topic-based assignment. Students may also be sent home with work they have not finished in class for completion at home.

In year 5-6 students will on average receive 1 piece of homework per night, this should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. In addition to this students will continue with reading and spelling practice.

Secondary

From year 7 students will receive regular homework set nightly. There is a homework timetable in place to ensure that your son / daughter should not be receiving more than two pieces of homework per night. Initially homework should take approximately 20 minutes per subject but please note that this will increase to 30 to 40 minutes per subject in year 9. Although years 10 and 11 will have considerably more homework in preparation for their IGCSE examinations we would not expect pupils to be studying all evening and weekends. It is important that pupils lead a balanced life and have some recreational time.

All pupils are provided with a homework diary each year either in September or when they start attending the school. This is a key means of communication between school and home with all homework tasks recorded within it.

Rewards and sanctions

The school's ethos is such that rewards should outweigh sanctions – our emphasis is always on the positive. The school sets very high standards of conduct for all its members and any unwillingness to follow the school's rules and expectations will always be met with a firm considered response. It is accepted by all staff that pupils will make mistakes as they grow up. Where those mistakes have

negative consequences for others, or where pupils prove unwilling to learn from their mistakes, there is a disciplinary system in place to ensure firm but fair treatment.

More details regarding rewards and sanctions can be found in our Behaviour Management policy which can be requested from the school office.

Reports

Reports are issued twice yearly – December and June – following internal examinations.

If your child receives a poor set of grades or report, or if you have concerns about your child's progress, it may be helpful for you to come into school and discuss the matter with your child's form tutor. The emphasis of this meeting will be to look at ways in which we can work with your son / daughter to improve his / her performance.

School policies

All school policies are available on request and many policies directly relevant to parents can be found on our website – thearkchristianschool.org.

If you require a paper copy of a policy, please ask at reception.

Health education

The aims of the school's health education programme are:

- To help pupils acquire the knowledge and attitudes that will enable them to manage their health in a responsible manner.
- To make pupils more aware of the health risks associated with certain forms of behaviour including consideration of the following areas:
 1. Smoking, alcohol and illegal drugs
 2. Sexual development and sexual health
 3. Personal safety