



Alameda Middle School

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29th May 2020

Weekly Update

Dear parents and carers,

You are very likely to be aware that yesterday, the Prime Minister confirmed that schools should start wider re-opening to pupils from 1st June. Preparing for this has been a priority for us this week and we have sent a more detailed letter on this subject to parents and carers of pupils in year 6. Throughout the COVID-19, the leadership team and the board of governors at Alameda have worked closely together. You will see that today's letter is sent jointly from us as head and chair of governors.

Activities to support home learning

While I explained that our teachers would be in school teaching year 6 from next week and asked that you bear with us as they have less time to devote to years 5, 7 and 8, your feedback about this, as well as our own views on the importance of all pupils has led us to make sure we are still providing some time and organising our work to accommodate this. It will, obviously, be quite a challenge, but I would like to reassure you that we are doing our absolute best. I am sure you would like to join with me in thanking the teaching team for their efforts with this.

I would like to thank all of you who have provided positive feedback on your child's experience with **Google Classroom**. The user guide and letter to pupils introducing Google Classroom was included with last week's letter and also sent to the pupils via Edulink. For your reference they are saved on our website:

<http://www.alamedamiddleschool.org.uk/page/default.asp?pid=216>.

We will continue to develop our use of Google Classroom and, as I advised before, will be stopping the use of the weekly overviews. These now contain less than before and will be stopping. Please contact us if accessing Google Classroom is a problem for you. Support can be gained by contacting us at ithelp@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk.

For this week, the weekly overviews can be found here:

Year 5 <https://www.alamedamiddleschool.org.uk/page/?title=Year+5&pid=99>

Year 6 <https://www.alamedamiddleschool.org.uk/page/?title=Year+6&pid=100>

Year 7 <https://www.alamedamiddleschool.org.uk/page/?title=Year+7&pid=102>

Year 8 <https://www.alamedamiddleschool.org.uk/page/?title=Year+8&pid=103>

Paper copies of activities can also be collected from school.

Update from Learning Support

Our team of Teaching Assistants would normally be working hard to support our pupils at Alameda by helping them in class, running intervention groups and providing a wide range of activities at break and lunch times. Unfortunately, these things cannot happen at the moment so the team have been busy preparing resources to support pupils when they return and have been contacting a number of families to “check in” and offer support. The feedback from the families receiving these calls has been very positive and in some cases the pupils have wanted to speak to staff as well which is lovely. There have been lots of comments from families describing examples of activities completed at home including gardening and learning new skills such as identifying birds by their songs – it is great to hear such positives at what has been a challenging time for a lot of people. To the families who have provided constructive feedback on the accessibility of resources on Google Classroom, thank you. Again, the TAs and I will be looking at ways in which we can help improve things for the pupils. Please remember you can always email me with SEN concerns (ccannon@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk) and there are a number of useful resources available from Autism Bedfordshire, Kooth, YoungMinds, and SENDIASS. We look forward to welcoming you all back to school soon and in the meantime, take care.

Miss Cannon (SENCO)

<https://www.autismbedfordshire.net/support-for-children/autism-bedfordshire-covid-19-support-services/>
<https://www.kooth.com/>
<https://youngminds.org.uk/>
https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/15/special_educational_needs_and_disability_-_local_offer/141/central_bedfordshire_special_educational_needs_and_disability_information_advice_and_support_service

Planned Wider Reopening – From 3rd June for Year 6

A separate letter has been sent to parents and carers of pupils in year 6. We thought it important, however, to let everyone know that following the production of a detailed risk assessment which has been approved by our Health and Safety advisor and the board of governors, Alameda will be opening to pupils in year 6 from Wednesday 3rd June.

We will be continuing to provide Key Worker places for essential front line workers, as the government has requested. This will continue to be Monday to Friday, all day. If you feel you now require a key worker place, please contact the school office as soon as possible on office@alamedamiddleschool.org.uk.

Message from the Chair of Governors

The Board of Governors have been closely monitoring both the Government Guidelines and the actions within the School to ensure that we all act as responsibly and safely as possible. Many of the Governors are also parents and so we share many of the concerns and worries, not only of parents, but of the children. We have seen many of the very positive comments that have been shared by parents, as well as the concerns you have shared with the School. As a School, we are charting our way through a journey none of us has navigated before and relying on information and guidance that

does change rapidly. Some guidance has been confusing, some we don't all agree with and much of it changes constantly but we will make this work if we all work together and, whether or not we agree with the guidance, we follow it to the best of our ability.

As a Year 8 parent I fully appreciate the frustration that our transition year seems to have been ignored by the Government. We have challenged this at all levels from the Secretary of State down to Local Authority but have been unsuccessful in overturning the decision as it stands. As an Academy, we could exercise a right to ignore the guidance but our feeling as a Governing Board and a School was that we are better placed from a safety perspective following the guidelines provided as these have been created by the scientific experts.

Having worked very closely with the staff throughout these past few weeks and also been in contact with a number of parents I would just like to say, on behalf of the Board, that we are immensely proud of our staff, our parents and especially our children for how they have all responded to the situation. We are about to embark on the next stage of this journey and it is a little frightening after all this time but, as a School, we genuinely believe we have done everything possible to create a safe learning environment for our children.

Our School leaders and staff have been incredible during these times and I am sure they will continue to inspire, educate and keep our children safe in the coming weeks with that unique blend of knowledge, passion and caring that they have shown throughout. Thank you as parents and pupils for your support over the past weeks and please continue to provide the positivity and support to the School to help us through the coming weeks.

Simon Ratcliffe
Chair of Governors

And finally

While this week has been dominated by plans for our wider re-opening, it has been good to have some conversations about what might be some of the positives from recent months that we should aim to keep hold of once the pandemic is over. While there is no doubt that this has been a very difficult time for many people, I have enjoyed hearing some of our pupils sharing some of the changes they have made, such as helping more at home, spending more time walking the dog and focussing on being kind. I know that many adults have thought about some of the positive changes too and where time has been made to prioritise some other, often forgotten things.

Thank you as always for your continued support

Yours sincerely



Maxine Warner
Headteacher



Simon Ratcliffe
Chair of Governors