



# Harris Church of England Academy

Harris Church of England Academy is a coeducational secondary school with academy status in Rugby, Warwickshire. The school has used 4 AV1s over the past year and a half to support pupils, for reasons ranging from Cancer to Periodic Paralysis. Their first two AV1s were loaned through Warwickshire County Council and Great Ormond Street Hospital. The school has since gone on to rent and purchase AV1s from No Isolation directly.

In this interview Lizette Hummel, SENCO, talks more about the school's experience.

**Q How did you come to start using an AV1?**

**A** We first started using an AV1 with a student who had to self isolate right across the lockdowns. During an annual review, at the start of 2021, it was recommended that we consider using one of the local authority's AV1s.

**Q Were there any concerns coming from staff?**

**A** We had some initial concerns about the privacy aspect of the device, but after some deliberation and a review of the information provided by No Isolation it was agreed that we would give it a go.

We set up a training session for the staff to show them how AV1 works. Some of the staff were amazed that the child could actually access lessons in this way. We shared all the agreements for the student and family to sign and staff

were informed that the student could not record or screenshot via the app.

We had one situation where a student accidentally took a screenshot and they were immediately blocked. This acted as on the spot training for teachers and I can now use this example to alleviate any staff fears that things will be recorded.





**Q How have your AV1s been used at school?**

**A** How the AV1s are being used depends on the student and their level of engagement. The first student to use the AV1 felt integrated into the classroom as if they were never out of it. When they did practicals in science they contributed to their group, by reading the method out. We recommended that the student's friends took the AV1 to break and lunchtime and it was brilliant to see them taking it down to the year group's communal space in the morning as well. It was amazing to see the peers engage with this pupil through the AV1 and vice versa.

**Q How did the AV1 support in the reintegration process for this student?**

**A** The student struggled whilst they were away especially since, initially,

they had to be isolated even from their family during lockdown. They used the AV1 for six months and one of the biggest benefits to them was the interaction with their peer group during social times so they didn't feel left out. It was an easy transition back into school because they were not behind on their work and were able to engage in lessons and speak with friends.

**Q How have the AV1s supported the pupils socially?**

**A** We used an AV1 to support a student that had significant health issues causing them to be immunocompromised. The student is now at the point where they can come into school but still needs to be in a separate room. The AV1 goes to class and they are able to log on and take part fully in class. Their friends have





really wanted to come and see them since they've been engaging with them through the AV1. For the student, it's helped build those social relationships which they didn't have when they started in September.

Another student using an AV1 found it a bit more difficult as there was a breakdown in the friendship group. This made it harder for them to engage with their peers outside of the classroom.

**Q How have the AV1s supported the pupils academically?**

**A** One student made particularly great progress. Their Maths standardised assessment jumped 20 points from the previous year. The student had other interventions in place but if it wasn't for the AV1 I'm not sure we would have seen that big a jump.

One of our GCSE students has been the most recent pupil to start using an AV1. They have been able to attend revision sessions, leading up to their final exams, through the AV1. For them the value is being in the classroom and being part of the discussions as they are hoping to get some good grades. We have also had emails from the parents saying how amazing it is to see them smile when they are interacting with their friends through the AV1 at lunchtime.

**Q How have the AV1s been managed day to day?**

**A** I think it is all about choosing the right students to look after the AV1; someone responsible but also someone that might engage with the student as if they were chatting with a friend walking down the corridor. For one student, their friends would pick up the AV1 in

the morning, take it to their tutor group, to their lessons and back to the office in the afternoon.

For another student using the AV1, the form tutor was really helpful in selecting somebody who is mainly in their classes to take the AV1 from lesson to lesson. I think it was important to give the tutors time to chat with the student using the AV1 about how they hoped to interact, as well as selecting people who they might want to build friendships with.

It's better to rely on the students to look after the AV1 because the teachers and TAs are always busy in between lessons. It's also far better for social interaction within the peer group.

We took the time to train staff on exactly where to put the AV1 in the classroom, what the different features mean as well as training the students using the AV1s on how they can manipulate their view to see worksheets or what's on the board. It was interesting to see how well AV1 was used in a group setting whether that be in an English classroom or in the Science lab.

#### **Q What sets AV1 apart from other video conferencing software?**

**A** Logging on with the AV1 is almost like being in the classroom and the student is not relying on the teacher to open up a teams or zoom meeting.

I think teachers become more aware of the fact that the AV1 is there vs. an online meeting set up on a laptop. They know what they should look out for; the flashing head, the blue head, the expressions on the face. The children will also make the teacher aware of what's happening with the AV1.

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