



17th March 2026

Dear Students, Parents and Carers and Staff

I would like to start this letter by saying how incredibly proud I am of AHS, the students, staff and parents, and of what we have achieved over the last 12 months. Of how we have stood together as a community. AHS continues to deliver its Vision and Mission, and our community is flourishing. Thank you to all of you, who have all played a part in making this happen.

This time last year I wrote to inform you of some necessary changes to our curriculum provision, changes that were made after careful consideration by the Governing Board. Sadly, the education sector is, yet again, facing a challenging financial landscape. The Institute of Fiscal Studies Annual Report, published last month, states that:

- Public spending on education has fallen as a share of national income, from 5.6% in 2010-2011 to 4.1% in 2024-25.
- The total public spend in education across the UK in 2024-25 was £122 billion, a 10% fall since 2010-2011.
- Per-pupil funding in England fell by 10% in real terms between 2010-11 and 2019-20; recent increases have reversed these cuts back to 2010-11.

What this means for us, in practice, is that a number of our grants are being amalgamated into the main grant, with the result, again, of hidden cuts to our bottom line, particularly as a grammar school. Our funding allocation is virtually level with last year, and yet we have to fund a 2% pay rise for staff from 'efficiencies' and find approximately 4% for inflationary uplifts. We have also been told to plan for a total 6.5% unfunded pay rise for staff over the next 3 years.

All told, it is a bleak picture, and one that we have to respond to.

We will continue to manage our School carefully, transparently and collaboratively, and we welcome parent and student contact should you have any questions about the changes that we will need to make from September 2026, changes which represent our strategic commitment to securing the School's long-term future:

1. Next year, we will timetable Year 12s for 9 periods per fortnight, 8 of which will be timetabled with teaching staff. The 9th period will be used to support students in developing independent study skills, helping prepare them for their next steps. This change is in line with the majority of grammar schools in Bucks. It also allows us to deploy our teaching staff more efficiently and ensures that every lesson continues to be taught by a subject specialist.
2. We will have 6 Groups at Key Stage 4, rather than 7, meaning that the larger classes will go through to the end of Year 11. Every class will have a qualified specialist teacher and

our teachers will adapt their planning to ensure that the quality of feedback and support remains high, regardless of group size.

This change has been chosen because it is easy to reverse if the funding situation changes.

3. We will offer Graphic Design GCSE rather than Engineering GCSE, and will continue to offer Product Design as an A Level to our students through our brother school, AGS. AHS offers more A Levels and GCSE courses than other Buckinghamshire schools, and will continue to do so, but unfortunately Product Design is the most expensive subject per student period and has low uptake at A Level and GCSE.
4. We will again offer Dance GCSE from September 2026, now that our commitment to completing the Dance A Level course has been achieved.
5. All Key Stage 3 students will continue to have swimming lessons.

**To enable the planning required to ensure the delivery of curriculum is of the exceptional standard that we all rightly expect, the Governing Board have agreed that AHS will close to students at 1530 on Tuesday 14 July, rather than 1300 on Friday 17 July. As staff will be on-site for those days, we will support any families who would like their daughters to attend. We will reach out to all families in the summer term to gauge interest. We hope that families and students will welcome this slightly longer summer break, and thank families in advance for their support.**

We understand these changes may cause concern, but please be assured that we have explored every alternative. Our priority remains delivering high standards of academic and personal development for our students.

We are deeply grateful for your continued support and the generous donations received over the past year. These contributions are vital to enhancing our school environment and navigating our ongoing financial challenges; every gift makes a significant difference.

As always, we are committed to open communication. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact my Executive Assistant, Mrs. Sophie Winter, at [secretary@ahs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:secretary@ahs.bucks.sch.uk) to arrange a meeting or a call.

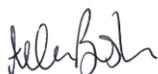
Thank you for your continued partnership. Your support helps ensure a bright future for our students, even in the face of difficult news.

With very best wishes



Dr Kate Weir

Chair of Governors



Helen Bush

Chair of Governors



Marieke Forster

Headmistress