



15 July 2025

Dear Parents / Carers

As the school year draws to a close, we have been reviewing some of our policies and would like to share these with you to aid you in your planning for the new school year.

Plans for reading - Years 7-11

Following a successful trial earlier this term, we're thrilled to announce the full rollout of dedicated reading time for all students in Years 7-10 from September. This initiative directly addresses the national decline in reading for pleasure among teenagers, a trend we are determined to reverse at our School. We know that reading plays a crucial role in academic progress across all subjects, significantly improves concentration, and contributes positively to overall wellbeing, as well as having numerous other benefits.

There will be designated reading times integrated into lessons and form time throughout the week. It will be a standard requirement for year 7-11 students to have a physical reading book with them every day (Year 11 students will not have set form and lesson reading times, but might be asked by a class teacher to read, e.g. if they finish a test early). Unlike previous years, we will not be assigning a set text; instead, students are encouraged to choose an appropriate book of their own interest. Please note that e-readers and accessing e-books on personal devices are not permitted for this dedicated reading time - the focus is on a physical book. We strongly encourage students to utilise the excellent resources available at both our school library and local public libraries. We also hope to see students challenging themselves to explore a wide range of texts. Your support at home in encouraging your child to read and explore age-appropriate recommended reading lists will be invaluable in making this new initiative a success. Please follow the links below to access diverse reading lists offering a selection of contemporary and classic books to suit all tastes.

[Year 7](#)

[Year 8](#)

[Year 9](#)

[Year 10](#)[Year 11](#)

Changes to tutor time - All students

To facilitate the above plans, we'll be increasing morning form time by five minutes (it will now run from 0845 - 0910). So that this can start promptly at 0845, we will require students to be in their seats, with their equipment and/or reading books at 0840. The Turnfurlong gate will now close at 0840. Registers will be taken promptly at 0845 and students will be marked late if they are not present. We know that there is a lot of traffic in the mornings in Aylesbury, but we are encouraging students to factor in time for the traffic rather than using it as an excuse for being late!

Our Uniform Policy - All students

Please do take a moment over the holidays to check uniform for September to ensure that all students come to school smartly dressed and proud to be part of our AHS community. The full policy is on our Key Information and Policies [page](#).

Our Attendance Policy - All students

Although 90% is a fantastic achievement in a test, 90% is a real concern in attendance terms. It is in fact the equivalent of missing 19 school days over a year and is proven to have a significant impact on a student's academic achievement, wellbeing and wider life chances. Less than 90% attendance is classed as 'persistent absence' and if a student is at risk of persistent absence, we will send a letter home to parents to warn them of this and to ask if there is anything we can do to help improve their child's attendance. Once attendance falls below 90%, we will take further measures such as setting up an attendance contract.

Since last August, schools have been encouraged by the DfE to issue penalty notices for **holiday taken in term time** so it is our policy to invite parents into school to discuss this. All students are expected to be in school on the first day of term. If students do not return to school on the first day after a holiday, school will contact home to discuss the reason why and parents will be invited into school for a meeting.

Our Behaviour Policy - All students

We have also updated our [Behaviour Policy](#), which includes a slightly updated behaviour matrix. We try our hardest to put an emphasis on rewards at AHS, as we have been doing this week with our end of year celebration assemblies, but we do need to uphold sanctions too. We thank you for your support with this and remind you of the [Home School Agreement](#) that we are all committed to.

We continue to follow the DfE's [mobile phone guidance](#), which recommends that students should not be using **mobile phones** throughout the school day, so phones must be turned off and out of sight from the time that students enter school in the morning until 1530.

To support this message, we will be increasing the **sanction** for phone usage in school. While phone use currently gets a B2 behaviour mark and confiscation until the end of the day, we will now give a B3 after school detention if phones are seen in school, as well as continuing with confiscation.

We would also like to remind you that **smart watches** are not permitted in school. While mobile phones are out of sight in lessons, smart watches are much more distracting and can be a constant series of interruptions which makes concentrating and learning nearly impossible. There is an exception for diabetic students who use a smart watch for their blood sugar monitoring. If students have a smart watch instead of a phone and need it for their journey to and from school, it can be placed in their locker during the school day, but cannot be used.

Our incoming Year 7 parents have agreed to set a **watershed of 20:00** in the evening, after which time Year 7 students will not be allowed to go on their phones. We really hope that this will reduce pressure on these students to 'keep up' with group chats and allow them some much needed rest and downtime before bed. We would welcome existing parents joining in with this initiative!

We would very much appreciate your support in reducing mobile phone use in school. Please use the School Office to get a message to students instead of contacting them on mobile phones and please do not ask your daughter to contact you using her mobile phone during school hours - we can ring home for her if it is urgent.

Wishing you and your family a relaxing summer break and many thanks for all your support.

Kind regards



Marieke Forster
Headmistress