

Communication to Parents on Uniform, Behaviour and Attendance July 2024

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. You can find all of these on our [Key Information and Policies page](#), but please see updates below.

Our Sixth Form Dress Code

The Sixth Form Dress Code can be found [here](#). We very much appreciate your support in ensuring that students adhere to this dress code.

Please note [additional clarification on Headphones](#) which are not allowed to be used around school. Some students are allowed to use ear defenders, with agreement. Sixth Form students are allowed to use headphones at all times in the Study Centre, and during study periods in the Dining Hall or Library.

Our Behaviour Policy

We have also updated our Behaviour Policy, which includes a slightly updated behaviour matrix [here](#).

Following the publication in February of the DfE's [non-statutory mobile phone guidance](#), which recommends that students should not be using mobile phones throughout the school day, we have conducted a thorough review into mobile phone use in school.

We agree with the DfE's points that:

- Every school has a duty to create an environment that is calm, safe and free from distraction so all pupils, whatever their background, can learn and thrive.
- Mobile phones risk unnecessary distraction, disruption and diversion.
- We owe it to our children to do what we can to remove distractions and enable them to be fully present and engaged in the classroom.
- There can be peer pressure and possible stigma associated with owning what are often expensive devices.
- By restricting mobile phones, young people can spend more time staying active and socialising face to face with their peers, activities which have a positive impact on wellbeing.

We have made the following recommendations in consultation with students, parents and staff:

1. While we previously allowed phone use before school, from September we will insist that **phones are turned off and put away as soon as students are on the school site in the morning and they must remain out of sight until 3.30 pm**. The only exception to this is if a teacher has asked them to use it in a lesson, to take a photo of work, for example. We really hope that this will help give students more

time in their day away from their phones where they can be doing more mindful activities such as socialising or reading instead. Sixth Form students can use their phones in the Study Centre, and **during study periods** in the Dining Hall. **They must not be visible or in use at any other times.**

2. 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 for a second occurrence and if this happens for a third time, parents will be invited in.
3. We are also not going to allow **smart watches** in school from September. While mobile phones are out of sight in lessons, smart watches are much more distracting and can be a constant interruption, making concentrating and learning nearly impossible. There is an exception for students with diabetes who use a smart watch for their blood sugar monitoring. If students have a smart watch and wish to use it on their journey to and from school, it can be placed in their locker during the school day, but cannot be used.

Our Attendance Policy

Please see our updated policy [here](#). 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 we have reviewed our approach to this in our updated Attendance Policy, which again you can find on our Key Information and Policies page.

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.

For the Sixth Form, our expectation is that students are on site all day, every day. Parents are asked to request permission in advance for students to be excused from school to attend essential appointments or other events. Students can earn Home Study privilege for Period 5 only - this is only available after Christmas of Year 12. This privilege can be withdrawn by the Head of Year if necessary.

Many thanks for all of your support in helping us create a positive environment at AHS where our community works together to develop independent, strong and confident young adults.

We wish you a restful and enjoyable summer.

Kind regards

Andrew Skinner
Assistant Head and Director of Sixth Form

