



06 September 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back to a new school year from all of us at Ashlyns. I hope that you had a good summer and that your children are excited about the opportunities of the year ahead. I would particularly like to extend a warm welcome to our new Year 7 students and those joining us in the Sixth Form for the first time; we wish them a very happy and successful time as part of our school community and look forward to getting to know them all.

This summer was particularly busy for Ashlyns. We had a World Challenge trip to Ecuador, Summer School for over 100 new Year 7 students and of course the return to more conventional A level and GCSE results days. In addition, our site staff have been working hard to find ways to make our beautiful buildings more energy efficient as well as refreshing key areas to keep the school looking its best. Please find below an update on each of these as well some key reminders for both parents/carer and students.

Examination Results

This year marked the return to the first formal A level and GCSE examinations since the pandemic began and it was a pleasure to celebrate the fantastic achievements of our young people this summer. For example, over three quarters of all grades at A level were awarded at A* to B. Both Year 13 and Year 11 students had experienced significant, educational disruption throughout their examination courses but their determination, resilience and hard work helped them steer a course through the challenges and they achieved some fantastic results. We are so pleased that they can now move onto their chosen next steps in education or employment, whether this is our Sixth Form, university or other destinations. We wish them all well and hope they will keep in touch to let us know of their achievements. Thank you once again to all those parents, staff and governors who worked so hard to help our students do so well. We hope the accomplishments and tenacity of these two year groups provide inspiration and encouragement to all our current students, and especially those in Years 11 and 13.

Summer School

Team building experiences closer to home were the order of the day when we welcomed over 100 new Year 7 students to our summer school; this was a fantastic opportunity for some of our newest students to meet their peers, take part in team-building activities and support their learning in key areas. We know from their feedback what a great time they had. My thanks go to all staff involved in the planning and running of this - and particularly Miss Kershaw for coordinating the week's activities - as well as a number of our older students who were exceptional 'buddies'.

World Challenge

The World Challenge Trip to Ecuador provided an opportunity for some of our older students to demonstrate their leadership and teamwork skills, whilst building their understanding and appreciation of different cultures and communities. The highlights have been captured in a video posted on the school's PE Twitter account. Head over to [@AshlynsPE](#) to see the amazing sights and activities. Thanks go to Miss Holmes for providing such a memorable and worthwhile experience for these students.

School Values

Parents and carers will be aware that we believe examination results are just part of the story of a great education and school is about helping to shape young people to become their very best selves - both now and for the future. As a school we have reviewed and 'refreshed' our school values to ensure they are understood and shared by everyone in our school community. After wider consultation across the school community we have chosen the following key words to capture the core values we want everyone to share and demonstrate.

- Integrity (moral)
- Inclusivity (civic)
- Independence (performance/potential)

In my beginning of term assemblies, I have emphasised the importance of Ashlyns' students exhibiting these values both in and out of school. The writer C.S. Lewis famously remarked that 'Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching' and we hope our students will exemplify this in their everyday lives.

Communications and extra curricular offer

We know that regular communication is important to make sure that everyone is aware of news and key information. Please do take time to read our weekly e-Bulletin which will provide you with updates and outline key events for the term. (Please update us with any future changes to your contact details to ensure you receive these regular communications.) Over the year, the e-Bulletin will detail the highlights from our extra-curricular activities, competitions and trips; it is fantastic to be able to get back to offering this range of experiences for our students; we hope all students will be able to choose something from our extra-curricular programme, which is expansive and exciting. We are fortunate to be able to offer such a range of activities and we know participation in these clubs and events has a positive impact on students' learning and happiness at school. We hope you will encourage your son/daughter to try new opportunities, as well as carrying on with those they already enjoy.

As in any new year, we have some new teachers and members of support staff joining us and I am sure you will join me in welcoming our new members of staff; their details will be in this week's e-Bulletin.

Contacting us

To complement our regular communications, there will also be a range of opportunities for parents and carers to engage with school through a mix of online and in-person events and activities. However, please don't wait until a scheduled event should you have things you wish to discuss or changes in circumstances you wish us to be aware of. We are committed to ensuring our students receive the very best care and guidance and our staff are always here to deal with concerns. If you do have a query, please remember the first point of contact should be either your child's form tutor or subject teacher, or alternatively email in to admin@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk, which will help us address and resolve questions when staff are teaching and unavailable.

Our guidance on school communication can be found [here](#).

Safeguarding

Mr Beattie is our Designated Safeguarding Lead. Full details of the Safeguarding Team can be found on the school website [here](#). Regular safeguarding updates are given in the weekly e-Bulletin.

Behaviour Expectations

As ever, some things do not change with a new school year – and this is particularly the case with our high expectations of students. Alongside our school values, I would like to remind students about our high expectations of courtesy, punctuality and uniform. We hope you will support us in reinforcing these, as a strong partnership between home and school will help encourage positive behaviour and a

strong work ethic becomes a habit and is something that remains with students long after they leave school. A more detailed communication from Mr Beattie regarding behaviour expectations and our behaviour system will follow shortly.

Transport and Drop Off

On a practical level, we would like to urge all parents to encourage their child to walk to and from school, if possible, and to ensure they take care on the journey. However, if you are dropping your children off at the front of the school please remember that the only drop off point is at the top of the school driveway by the school gates. Punctuality to school is important and registration will start promptly at 8.35am. As such, we expect all students to be on site for 8.30am to ensure they are not late for registration. The school gates are closed from 8.35am, through the school day, until 3.20pm. Should you need to access the school site during school hours, please use the buzzer to the right of the gates. Please also remember that parking in the turning circle at the end of the school day is reserved for school authorised taxis and buses until 15.35.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support, and look forward to a positive and productive term for us all.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Shapland', written in a cursive style.

James Shapland
Headteacher