



04 September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back from all of us at Ashlyns.

I hope that you had a good summer and that students are rested and ready for another busy and exciting year ahead of them. As well as welcoming back students in Years 8 to 13, I would like to extend a special welcome to our new Year 7 students and those joining us in the Sixth Form for the first time; we are delighted they are part of our school community and wish them every happiness and success during their time at Ashlyns. We look forward to getting to know them all.

Staffing

At the beginning of a new year, we also have new staff joining us and I know you will join me in welcoming them to our community. The staff list for 2024/25 will be linked in Friday's e-Bulletin. Alongside our new staff there are also some updates to our Head of Year team. Mrs Massey will be the new Head of Year 7 and Mr McDonald will be Year 9's Head of Year.

The summer is always a busy time planning and undertaking updates to school facilities and this year has been no exception. Please find below a brief update on the various developments as well as some key reminders for the new year:

Examination Results

A key milestone during the summer break is, of course, the examination results at A level and GCSE, which mark the achievements of our students who sat public examinations. You may have noted the media reports about the full return to 2019 standards. It's hard to believe that last year's Year 11 students were in Year 7 when we had our first lockdown and that Year 13 were in Year 9 deciding on their GCSE options. A key message over the past few years has been how the tenacity and determination of our students has meant they have succeeded, despite the interruption to their learning. I am pleased to report that this year is no different. Our ex Year 13 students celebrated another strong set of results and secured their preferred destinations. Not to be outdone, our ex Year 11s achieved a fantastic set of results both individually and as a whole year group and we are delighted that so many are staying to continue their studies in the Sixth Form at Ashlyns.

We are very proud of them all and hope that those students moving on will stay in touch and let us know of their future successes. 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 of these two year groups inspire and provide encouragement to all our current students, and especially those in Years 11 and 13.

Summer Club

We were also pleased to welcome over 100 new Year 7 students taking part in a week of team building activities and taster lessons during the holiday. My thanks go to Miss Hirst, staff members and Sixth Form/Year 10 'buddies' for delivering this rich programme of events.

Premises

As ever, the summer holidays provides an opportunity for the rolling programme of premises work and improvements at Ashlyns. This year the student toilets in the main building have been completely replaced and updated.

Now this work is complete, the extension to the music block is underway.

I would like to thank our Premises Team for their hard work in refreshing key areas of the school and for their dedication to keeping our beautiful buildings and grounds looking their best.

Communications and Contacting the School

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 remember to update us with any future changes to your contact details to ensure you receive these regular communications.)

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](#).

Extra Curricular Offer

Over the year, the e-Bulletin will continue to detail opportunities and highlights from our extra-curricular activities, competitions and trips. 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. Please do encourage your child to join in.

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.

School Values and 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 of integrity, inclusivity and independence, I would like to remind students about our high expectations of them as part of our wider school community. We want students to be respectful towards others, kind and self-disciplined. We hope you will support us in reinforcing these expectations, as a strong partnership between home and school will help continue to encourage positive behaviour.

Transport and Drop Off

As always, we would like to urge all parents/carers 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.

Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to a positive and productive term.

Yours sincerely



James Shapland
Headteacher