

Aylesbury High School Sixth Form FAQs

This document - and the other resources for this Open Event - describe the usual working and organisation of our Sixth Form. This year has been anything but ordinary, so the way we are working right now is a little different to that described here. We choose to believe that we will be able to revert to a more conventional model in September though, and that is what is described here.

The sections of this FAQ document are

- Lessons and classes
- School day
- Organisation and arrangements for Sixth Form
- Destinations and life after AHS
- Sixth Form Admissions

Lessons and classes

How many A Levels will I study?

Most of our students study three A Levels (and an extension subject), but some choose to study four (or exceptionally five) - see [this section](#) of the prospectus.

Should I think about doing four A Levels?

If you achieve the entry requirement (of 64 points or more from your best eight GCSEs), then you can choose to study four A Levels. There is no obligation to do so and we would encourage you to think carefully about this, as it represents a significant risk and formidable challenge. Most universities - even the most competitive and prestigious - only require three A Levels, and three excellent A Levels is nearly always better than four quite good ones. However, we absolutely respect and encourage intellectual curiosity and genuine enthusiasm for a range of subjects, so if you think this might be for you, then do apply for four and we will discuss this with you during the application process.

The two available routes are set out [here](#).

How do I choose which A Levels to study?

We would encourage you to think carefully about what you enjoy, what you are good at and what will be useful in the future. Something you enjoy is important because you are going to spend a lot of time working on this subject in lessons and at home. Obviously you will have a sense of what you are good at from your subjects and your mock exams but don't just choose the subjects you have the highest grades in because you might not enjoy them and they might not be useful for your future plans! Students who are currently at AHS have been introduced to Unifrog and that's a great way to find out about where particular combinations of A Levels might take you, in terms of both possible higher education and career options. All applicants will have the opportunity to discuss their subject choices with a senior member of school staff during the Spring Term.

See the [Choosing your Subjects section](#) of the Prospectus.

Can I change my choices after I have applied?

Usually - see the Prospectus FAQs [here](#)

Do you offer T-Levels, BTECs or any other qualifications?

We offer a wide range of A Levels and a small number of AS Level courses in the Sixth Form.

What are Extension Studies?

Students taking three A Levels also take an Extension Study, and students taking four A Levels may opt to do so if their timetable permits. Your chosen course may be one that directly supports your A Levels (such as Maths for Chemistry) or it may provide a contrast and broaden your curriculum. Some Extension Studies, such as EPQ or AS Maths, offer a formal qualification but others don't. The time commitment required by each Extension Study varies so do have a careful look at the course descriptions [here](#).

Can I do PE?

Girls Active is an optional fun physical activity session just for Sixth Form students - more details are [here](#).

How large are Sixth Form classes?

There are usually no more than 18 students in each class, and often fewer than this.

How are A Levels different from GCSEs?

A Level stands for Advanced Level, and fundamentally the difference is largely in the level of depth and detail. While the subject may feel familiar from GCSE, it will push and challenge you in new ways. Some subjects will be completely new to you as it is not possible to study them at GCSE. The best way to understand the A Level courses is through the subject pages in the [prospectus](#).

How many teachers do we have for each subject?

Usually two.

School day**How is the school day organised?**

There are five lessons each day, each lasting an hour.

How many lessons would I expect to have on a typical day?

On average, four. In Year 12, you will usually have a lesson in each A Level subject every day. You will have a lesson in your Extension Study on 1-4 days, depending on your chosen subject. You will have a Current Issues lesson once a fortnight and may have Girls Active or Foreign Language Assistant lessons.

What happens when I do not have a scheduled lesson?

We expect you to study independently during your study periods. Information about available study spaces is [here](#).

How much study am I expected to do outside lessons?

We generally expect you to do an hour's independent study for each hour that you are in the classroom. This is important to secure your learning and understanding and goes beyond completing homework and set tasks.

Do you have to be in school when you don't have a lesson?

Our school day starts at 08:45 with Registration, and we expect all students to be here for that. After Christmas, Year 12 students are usually allowed to leave the school site for home study in Period 5 if they do not have a lesson scheduled then, but it is an earned privilege and we keep it under review. Sixth Form students can usually sign out at lunchtimes but must be back for Period 5 if they have a lesson.

Are there places where I can socialise and relax?

At break and lunchtime, the Sixth Form Study Centre becomes a social space, and the Sixth Form have access to their own kitchen area, which includes microwaves and refrigerators.

During study periods, Sixth Form students can work together in groups in the Dining Hall.

What about music? Are there orchestras, music and sports clubs?

There is a wide variety of opportunities to take part in music activities - more information [here](#).

Organisation and arrangements for Sixth Form**How big is the Sixth Form? How many students are in each year group?**

There are usually approximately 400 students in the Sixth Form, 200 in each year group.

How are Sixth Form tutor groups organised?

We have 10 tutor groups in each Sixth Form year group, with around 20 students in each. Each is made up of students from each Year 11 form and students new to the school, so that everyone has a chance to make new friends and get to know each other.

Who looks after the Sixth Form?

The core Sixth Form team is Mr Ochiltree (Head of Sixth Form), Mrs Sutton (Deputy Head of Sixth Form), Mrs Dalby (Pastoral Support Assistant) and the Sixth Form tutors.

What kind of pastoral support do you have?

In addition to the team above, there is a huge variety of great support available to students. Mrs Westcott, our Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead, offers specialised support to any student who needs it, which you can read about [here](#). Mrs Nix, our [Matron](#), is another excellent source of support, while Mrs Crafts and her team support students with [special educational needs](#). We also have a fantastic team of Sixth Form Student Ambassadors who are trained by MIND and offer drop in sessions at lunchtimes and one to one mentoring.

How many students come to AHS from other schools for Sixth Form?

Our admissions policy says "There will be places for a minimum of 20 external students who have fulfilled the entry requirements. It may be possible to admit more than 20 external students to Year 12 (i.e. over PAN) once the number of Year 11 students transferring to Year 12 is known". In recent years about 40 students have joined Year 12 each year from other schools.

And how do they get on?

We very much appreciate and value the students who join us from other schools. They make a huge contribution to school life and new students quickly become well established - academically and socially - in the school. Our admissions process gives external applicants opportunities to talk to staff and students to find out more about the school, while our induction resources and activities aim to help students settle into the school quickly.

There's no Sixth Form uniform. Does that mean that I can wear whatever I choose?

No! We have a Dress Code ([here](#)) that we require you to follow. It's quite relaxed and enabling, but it is definitely not 'anything goes'!

What is the 16-19 Bursary?

This is funding made available from the government to provide assistance to Sixth Form students whose access to, or completion of, education is inhibited by financial constraints or barriers. Eligible students may apply to the school for funding to support their studies.

How do students in the Sixth Form get to AHS? Do school buses still run?

Some students continue to travel on school buses, while others opt to travel on public buses. As students progress through the Sixth Form, sometimes they are able to drive to school and choose to car share, though there is no student parking available on the school site.

Are there opportunities for me to develop as a person beyond the requirements of my A Levels?

As well as developing as a learner during your time in the Sixth Form, you will have many opportunities to develop other skills and build experience. In more

usual times, we run an extensive programme of trips and visits and a very well-supported Duke of Edinburgh award programme. Student leadership is very important to the school and the contributions of our student leaders are highly valued. Year 12 students lead our annual fund-raising week and our House competitions, which bring together students from all year groups across the school. We are also keen for our Sixth Form to contribute to the local community, and this is exemplified by our Community Involvement programme in Year 13 where all students carry out a volunteering placement.

Destinations and life after AHS

What help is available to us in deciding what to do when we leave school?

We offer an extensive programme of “Next Steps” support, beginning in Year 12 with consideration of “Is university for me?” Students follow a structured programme to explore Unifrog, which gives them access to a wealth of materials and guidance which are invaluable in researching post-18 options. Our Future Success Day in July of Year 12 aims to get students ready to make applications. Mrs Sutton has specific responsibility for Sixth Form transitions and, together with your form tutor, will provide support and guidance in making these decisions.

What support do you offer with applying to university?

Our ex-students speak highly of the support they received in making university applications, in preparing their personal statement, making their choices and discussing their options.

Does everyone go to university?

We find that the majority of each cohort do choose to go into higher education. These are personal decisions, made after students have had the opportunity to research and understand all the options open to them. We support students with whichever pathway they choose, whether that is to apply to university, for an apprenticeship, for a job or anything else. Please see the prospectus for further information about [destinations](#).

How do you support students planning to apply to study Medicine?

We run an information meeting for students considering applying to Medicine (and their parents/carers) and support them in preparing applications. We have an excellent student-run Medic Society which is a great source of support. We work with students during Year 13 to prepare for interviews and run a practice Multiple Mini Interview session.

Sixth Form Admissions

How do I apply?

Students currently at AHS should complete the online application form emailed to them on 20 November. Students currently at other schools are asked to complete [this online application form](#).

What are the entry requirements?

These are explained in detail in the prospectus [here](#) but essentially, you need a minimum of 44 points from your best eight GCSEs (including at least grade 5 in English Language and Maths), and you need to achieve the entry requirement for each subject.

Can I choose whichever subjects I like?

You can apply to study whichever subjects you like. We don't ask you to select from option blocks; we do our best to meet everyone's requests and can normally accommodate most combinations of subjects. A subject will only run if we have enough students opting to take it.

What happens if I don't get the GCSE grade required to take a specific A Level? Can I still take that subject?

You need to meet the entry requirement set out for that subject in the prospectus. If you have not gained that grade, but you have met the overall entry requirement for admission to the school, you will be asked to choose a different A Level subject.

How will I know if I have a place?

We guarantee Year 11 students currently at AHS a place in our Sixth Form, subject to meeting our entry requirements. We will contact external applicants by 1 April 2021 to confirm whether we can offer them a place - further information is [here](#).

If I miss out on an offer in April, can I try again after I get my results?

We sometimes have a small number of places available after GCSE results have been confirmed. If you do not receive an offer and are still interested in joining the school, please look at the school website on the afternoon of 27 August 2021 to see whether we have any places available.

Do you have a question which hasn't been answered?

Please complete [this form](#) to ask us your question. Please also drop in to talk to us online on Wednesday 2 December from 17:30-19:00 - the meeting link will be posted on the school website by Monday 30 November.