



Parents' & Students' Newsletter: *March 2014*

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Looking Ahead

As we await Year 9 option choice forms next Monday, Year 12 are looking forward to the Higher Education Evening on Wednesday, which is a step in the process of choosing from an estimated 50,000 degree courses from 300 universities and other providers. Many of Year 13 are awaiting offers from universities (they will hear before the end of the month) and the lucky ones with several offers then have to decide which to accept and which to decline.

Monday 3 March was National Offer Day for Year 6 pupils and we were delighted to learn that we are anticipating a full year group in September (even though we feel there is capacity for more qualifiers from the local area). The pupils had taken the new selection test and, overall, the revised process has gone very well.

We have also had a very large number of applicants for entry into Year 12 from students at other local schools. The applicants are invited in to have a look round this month and have invariably commented on the calm and productive atmosphere in lessons, which is something that we possibly take for granted.

Meanwhile, staff and students are not only working hard in lessons but also planning for Sport Relief, the joint concert, a variety of trips and DoE expeditions, the Netball National Finals and further House events. It certainly keeps us busy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Alan Rosen'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alan Rosen

Study Leave Dates

The final day for both Year 11 and Year 12 will be Friday 9 May, with Year 11's Prom that evening. GCSE and AS exams start on Monday 12 May but A2 exams start a bit later so Year 13 will go on study leave at about 2 pm on Thursday 15 May after their leavers' lunch. The Year 13 Ball is on Sunday 29 June, after their exams have finished. Year 12 return from study leave on Monday 9 June.

Term Dates 2014-15

Please note that these are not the same as for Buckinghamshire Schools; in particular, we start the Autumn Term earlier and finish the Summer Term earlier. Also, following discussions with Aylesbury Grammar School and Sir Henry Floyd (with whom we co-ordinate term dates because of sharing bus services) we have agreed to put the 5th INSET day on a Wednesday to avoid missing more Mondays and Fridays.

Term	First day of term	Half Term	Last day of term	Other days to note
Autumn 2014	Wednesday 3 September	Monday 27 – Friday 31 October	Friday 19 December	INSET 1: Monday 1 September INSET 2: Tuesday 2 September INSET 3: Friday 10 October
Spring 2015	Tuesday 6 January	Monday 16 – Friday 20 February	Friday 27 March	INSET 4: Monday 5 January
Summer 2015	Monday 13 April	Monday 25 – Friday 29 May	Friday 17 July	INSET 5: Wednesday 15 April Bank Holiday: Monday 4 May

Possible Industrial Action

Following last October's action by some professional associations, one of them has indicated that they are planning to have a further day on Wednesday 26 March (although there are still talks taking place which could affect this). As always, we will endeavour to run as normal a service as possible but, ultimately, it will come down to practicalities. I will give as much notice as possible of any plans but it is the nature of these days that we don't necessarily know in advance who will be taking part.

AHSA Summer Ball

There are only two tables left for the AHSA Summer Ball. This is a great opportunity to dress up and party. The Funktion Band will be playing, fresh from their gig at the Waterside Theatre. The food will be wonderful and it promises to be a super evening. There will be a silent auction with a great choice of prizes. Tickets are available from the Front Office. Support your school and have a lovely night out.



11th Best State Sports School of 2013

School Sport Magazine has produced its first ever list of the best schools in the country, based on 120 national competitions across 20 sports. We were delighted to find AHS in 11th place (also top girls' school, and top Bucks school). Our successes across so many sports is obviously being recognised and that's a tribute to both our talented students and the dedicated and hard working staff, so well done to all of them.



Of course, it's not just our elite performers who benefit from AHS sport, with the numerous House events ensuring that a large number of girls get to compete throughout the year. And there's a chance for everyone to prove that it is the taking part rather than the winning which is (sometimes) important with the forthcoming Sport Relief Mile on Friday 21 March.

Fundraising Thanks

Since last year's Good Cause payments were made to an impressive number of charities, raising around £10,000 for a variety of causes, we have received 'thank you' messages from a number of them, so well done to the following and to everyone who contributed so generously (remember they are last year's form names).

Year 12	Florence Nightingale Fashion Show	£2000
8M	Make a wish	£1032.57
9C	Water Aid	£548.86
8A	Rennie Grove Hospice Care	£529.64
8W	Water Aid	£364.97
7A	Starlight	£235.53
7W	Cancer Research	£81.95
???	Tiggywinkles	£70.41

Imagebank – a new way to view images from AHS

We now have our new ImageBank up and running, courtesy of Gilman and Soames. Here we will post images taken of events at school and from school trips – the photos taken by staff during the Year 8 Aberdyfi trip are there now to view. You can simply view them or order photos or a download from Gilman and Soames with the advantage of a profit share from any sales coming back into the school to pay for some extras. We hope that this will build into an interesting archive collection of life for the students at AHS.

To have a look, go to <http://www.gimagebank.co.uk/ahsonline/login/> and use the “token” **2013parents2537**. This will remain valid until the first newsletter in the autumn term and will then change each academic year.

Home to School Transport Consultations – a message from Bucks CC

(see <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/schools/transport.page>)

Do you have children at school in Buckinghamshire? If so, Buckinghamshire County Council would like to hear your views about home to school transport services.

To date, we have been able to subsidise the cost of school transport for many children – going above and beyond what many other councils do to meet their legal requirements – but we can no longer afford to do so at the same level. We are therefore considering a package of measures to reduce costs, but cannot avoid proposing to increase fares.

We want to hear from parents/carers and young people who are likely to be affected by these changes. This includes users of home to school transport of all ages, under and over 16 year olds.

Please visit our website (www.buckscc.gov.uk/haveyoursay) for more information and our online survey.

We will also be holding public meetings where you can find out more information and ask questions about the proposals:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Time</i>
<i>Monday 17 March</i>	<i>Aylesbury High School, HP21 7SX</i>	<i>7-9pm</i>
<i>Tuesday 18 March</i>	<i>The Misbourne School, HP16 0BN</i>	<i>7-9pm</i>
<i>Wednesday 19 March</i>	<i>Sir William Borlase's School, SL7 2BR</i>	<i>7-9pm</i>

Student Welfare Co-ordinator

Our Student Welfare Co-Ordinator, Miss Maguire will be going on Maternity Leave from 24 April 2014. We will be appointing someone to cover her Maternity Leave and wish her well.

You may recall that this post was new this year and Miss Maguire has proved to be a valuable resource for both students and staff. Her role includes organising the appointments for the 2 Counsellors who work 2 mornings a week. She also liaises with external agencies arranging support for students outside of the school environment. In school, Miss Maguire runs lunchtime group sessions for students covering issues such as friendship, managing exam nerves and time-management strategies. She also contributes to the PSHE programme and has run some sessions on Mindfulness. Please do not contact her directly as referrals for individual students have to be made via Year Heads.

Curriculum reforms



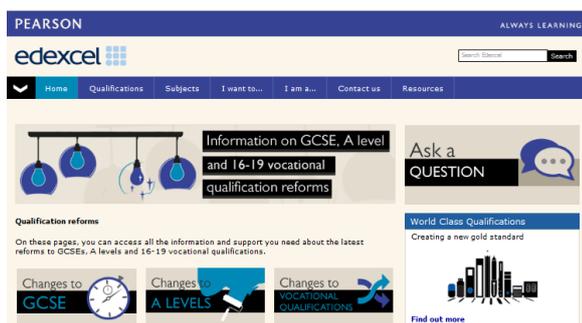
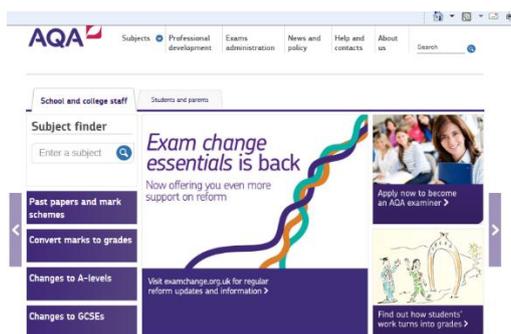
The next few years will see major changes (again!) to the National Curriculum, GCSEs and A Levels. There are both educational and political reasons driving the changes. The plans are still being worked out by the government, Ofqual and the awarding bodies (exam boards).

Years 11, 12 and 13 can breathe a sigh of relief as they will escape all of the changes. The new National Curriculum is being implemented from September 2014 and will start with next year's Year 7, while the GCSE and A Level changes will affect the current Years 7 to 10.

New GCSEs and A Levels are being introduced in two phases and the present timescale is as follows (but may well vary as planning proceeds):

2013-14		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Y6	→	Y7 New National curriculum	Y8 New National curriculum	Y9 New National curriculum	Y10
Y7	→	Y8	Y9	Y10 Phase 2 GCSEs first taught	Y11 Phase 2 GCSEs first examined
Y8	→	Y9	Y10 Phase 1 GCSEs first taught	Y11 Phase 1 GCSEs first examined	Y12
Y9	→	Y10	Y11	Y12 Phase 2 A Levels first taught	Y13 Phase 2 A Levels first examined
Y10	→	Y11	Y12 Phase 1 A Levels first taught	Y13 Phase 1 A Levels first examined	

For more information, the awarding bodies are producing some helpful guidance – if you are reading this electronically then clicking on the images below will take you to their websites.



Premises Plans

We have been looking at our short-term and longer-term premises needs under the headings of:

- Sufficiency – do we have sufficient of each type of space (eg enough specialist spaces such as labs and workshops, enough general classrooms etc)
- Condition – is the school in a suitable condition to operate (eg does the roof leak, do the boilers work, is the lighting good enough?)
- Suitability – are the spaces we have fit for the use to which we put them (eg our older science labs are not as good for teaching in as the newer labs; the Tower Block classrooms are smaller than modern recommendations)

Overall, we have a good set of buildings and visitors often make complimentary comments about how well we look after the site. However, having done a major analysis of our present position, including asking staff and students, we have a long 'wish-list' and have decided to prioritise the following projects this summer:

- Replace the boiler and associated systems in the block containing Art, Languages, Business Studies and Economics, Psychology, the Library, SEN and Student Support
- Replace the windows in the Dining Room and the second half of the Main Hall
- Refurbish eight toilet areas to bring them up to the standard of our newer facilities
- Replace our fire alarm system across the school

Together, these are likely to cost around £500-600,000. We have applied to the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund for help with two of these, but bids to the Fund are running at about four times the available funding so we have to be pessimistic about our chances of success, and are budgeting to finance all of the projects ourselves.

Next year our attention is likely to turn to a major development project to enhance teaching facilities – watch this space!