



Principal's UPDATE

19th April 2024



Dear Parents and Carers,

This last fortnight has been a busy one, as evidenced by the length of this Principal's Update! In particular I have been incredibly proud of the way in which students have engaged with changes around school; for further details on the launch of the House System this week and on the success of our new mobile device policy, please do keep reading to pages 4, 5 and 6 of this document.

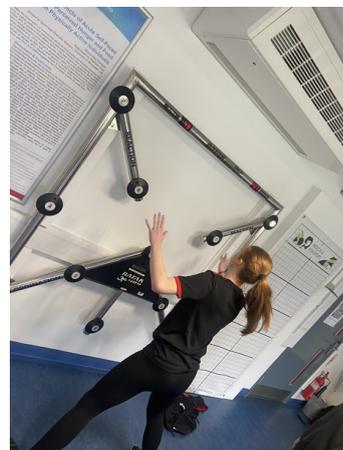
For nearly all year groups, the focus in the classroom has shifted to exam preparation - and again, page 8 has some useful guidance on how you can support your young person with this. For years 7 - 10, it is so important to remember that the main purpose of these exams to allow students to assess and reflect on what they have learnt and where future areas of focus should be; the exams are also an excellent opportunity to develop and refine revision and preparation techniques.

Finally, thank you to all parents and carers who have completed the survey previously sent by email, we have had 337 responses so far. The survey will remain open until Wednesday 24th April. Can I please ask that as many of you complete it where possible - your feedback is important to us. I will share a summary of the results with you all in a further Principal's Update.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R Thorpe".

Ms Rachel Thorpe
Principal, Alcester Grammar School

This Fortnight at AGS



Year 12 thoroughly enjoyed their University of Worcester Sports Science taster day with physiology and biomechanics practicals.

Year 9 - Life Skills lesson



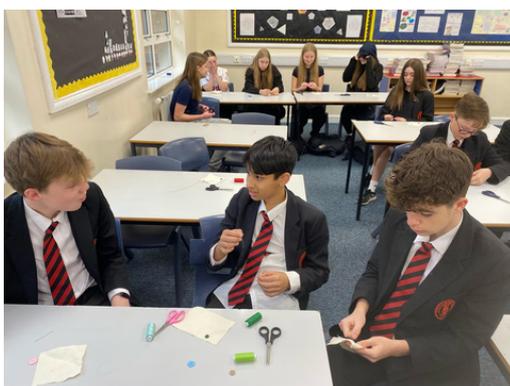
Meditation



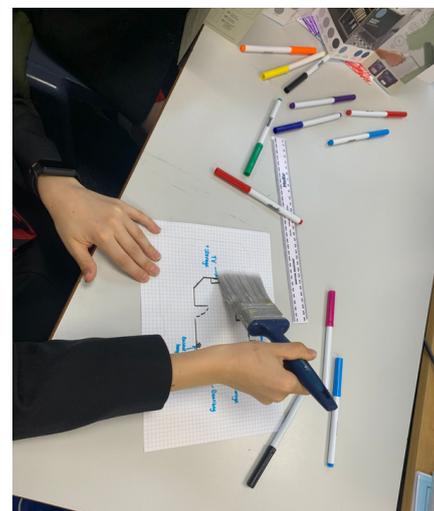
Changing a duvet and other life hacks!



Touch typing



Sewing a button



Decorating a bedroom



Launch of New House System

Exciting news!



As you may be aware, we are currently launching a new House system which will 'go live' after the May half-term holiday and then run Easter to Easter in subsequent years. As well as House points, four House trophies will be awarded over the course of the 'House' year for qualities pertinent to each of AGS' founders: Messrs Newport, Spencer, Wells and Dobell.

Last Friday, Y12 learnt about the exciting opportunities available to those wishing to serve the AGS community as part of the Student Ambassador Leadership Team (SALT): Senior Ambassador, Finance and Charity Ambassador, Events Ambassador and Communications and Outreach Ambassador. Students had until 9am on Thursday 18th April to submit their application form! Senior Ambassadors will be announced on Friday 25th April. There will also be appointed opportunities for Y7-II students available in due course.





Save the date!

House Day - 23rd May

Staff and students get to come to school wearing something in their House colour if they can. There will be many house points up for grabs, lunchtime challenges and all money raised will go to charity.

House Music - 4th July

Students will showcase their musical talents by competing in a range of categories. Each year group will be able to cheer on their peers throughout the day,

Sports Day - 5th July

A further highlight of the school year will see students run, throw, jump, and compete in a whole range of sporting endeavours to achieve vital house points for their house, cheered on by the tireless supporters on the sidelines. Face paint at the ready!

Enrichment Week - 15-19th July

This year's Enrichment week will be further enriched by the addition of several house-related activities and further invaluable opportunities to gain house points. This will culminate in a House Festival for Y7-9 on the last day of term consisting of House challenges and a whole range of activities. There's everything to play for! We look forward to updating you further in the near future as we continue this exciting journey!

Finally, if you would like to stay updated with the launch of the new House system, you can now follow us on X: [@AGS_House](https://twitter.com/AGS_House).

Mobile Devices

Update from Mrs Shipway

This term has seen the introduction of our new and updated [AGS mobile devices policy](#). As I am sure most of you are aware, in February of this year, the Department for Education introduced new guidance for schools on prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day. Gillian Keegan (Secretary of State for Education) summed it up this way; “Children are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living their lives on and offline. This presents many exciting opportunities – but also challenges. By prohibiting mobile phones, schools can create safe and calm environments free from distraction so all pupils can receive the education they deserve.”

While the decision to prohibit the use of mobile phones throughout the school day is one that has come directly from the Government, the rationale behind this is something we fully support at AGS. It is evident that mobile phones do risk unnecessary distraction and disruption, can limit social interaction, and increase risks associated with social media and cyber-bullying, not to mention the peer pressure and possible stigma associated with owning what are often expensive devices, and anxiety about digital images being captured without consent.

We anticipate the benefits of this change will be huge and long-lasting. Without the use of mobile phones, a school culture can change for the better. The environment becomes safer, protecting pupils not only from the distraction and background noise of notifications and their lives outside school but from the pressure to be constantly on social media. Pupils have the headspace and calm to focus on their lessons and time to develop the important social interactions and communication skills that are essential for life.

We are delighted to see how well our students have embraced this change. The majority of our students fully understand the reasons behind this decision, and have embraced the opportunity to increase social interaction. Staff have noted an increase in verbal and social communications, and have been pleasantly surprised by the engagement of the vast majority. It is a delight to walk around at break and lunch and see students playing card games, a variety of ball games, utilising the table tennis or chess sets, and reading books.

I would like to thank you for your support of school in this matter, and have enjoyed the supportive feedback a large number of parents have provided regarding this change.

PTFA Update

PTFA met this week, great turn-out – here are the headlines from our meeting;

We have ordered two card-readers, so that paying for refreshments at school events won't require cash.. we're testing these out at the Spring Concert next week, so please come and give it a try! (But maybe bring some cash in case!)

Save the date – our first social event will be a **QUIZ NIGHT on Fri 5th July**. Full details to follow, but put the date in the diary now! Light refreshments, quiz and raffle – a brilliant way to support school and have a fun night with family and friends..

Can you donate a raffle prize? If so, please do get in touch, we would love to hear from you!

Have any views on what AGS Friends should be doing? Please fill in [this survey](#) or email us at ags-friends@alcestergs.com

Got any skills you can help us with? You don't need to commit to evening meetings, but there may be ways you can help – advertising, social media, fund-raising, grant applications, sponsorship. Please let us know what you can do!

Next AGSF meeting Weds 15th May, 6.45pm at school – this will be a planning meeting for the Quiz night, all welcome. (Please note, this meeting will include a brief agenda item to amend the constitution, following advice from the Charities Commission – formal notice to follow).



Year 7-10 Revision Guidance

The dates for Year 7-10 exams this summer are as follows:

Year 10: Thursday 2nd - Friday 10th May (Sports Hall)

Year 7: Monday 13th - Friday 17th May (classroom-based)

Year 8: Monday 20th - Thursday 23rd May (Theatre)

Year 9: Monday 3rd - Friday 7th June (Theatre)

You can access exam timetables for each year group here: [Year 7-10 exam timetables 2024](#)

Subject-specific revision guidance will be available on SatchelOne, but an overview is available here: [Year 7-10 revision guidance summer 2024](#)

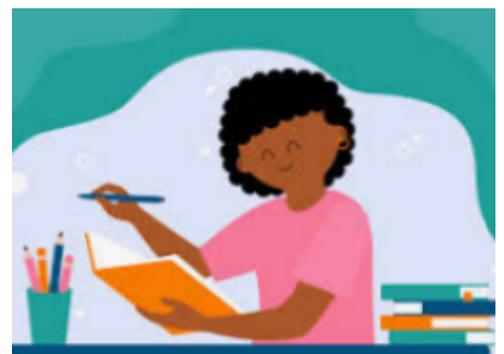
Students will be receiving advice on revision skills over the next few weeks through the tutor programme and/or Friday morning Life programme.

All the revision skills materials are available on the AGS Intranet (Study Skills \ Revision) and can be accessed using the student's login.



For each year group, this includes the following:

- A revision shopping list
- An electronic revision planner template
- Active revision strategies
- how to store knowledge in the long term memory
- how to retrieve knowledge



Year 7-10 Revision Guidance

How you can support your child with revision:

1. **Revision timetable** – work together on creating this. Colour code, highlight and tick off what has been achieved. Timetable in treats and breaks.
2. **Space** – Consider which area of the house will be best. Somewhere quiet with natural light and no distractions if at all possible
3. **Materials** – Check your child has all the necessary stationery and highlighters etc.
4. **Varied revision methods** – Use whatever works for them; post its, video clips, mind maps or other ideas.
5. **Take a break** – Plenty of sleep, exercise and breaks are also needed.
6. **Bite-size chunks** – It's easy to overestimate what can be achieved, especially with a limited concentration span. Use a timer to know when to have a break. Try the Pomodoro technique?
7. **Stress and worry** – Help your child re-plan their time to include relaxation techniques.
8. **Apps and online help** – Mix it up with engaging interactive activities, without too much screen time!
9. **Be on hand** – Be available where possible and interested in their revision. On the other hand, allow them space to learn to work (and relax) independently.
10. **Food** – Keep those treats close by, including healthy brain food!
11. **Check the revision guidance** – ensure they haven't missed out on anything crucial.
12. **Ask for help** – If there are any concepts that are confusing, encourage them to ask teachers for help
13. **Study friends** – Revising with a friend can make it more fun. As long as that is what they are doing!
14. **Build confidence** – Keep encouraging and motivating. Remind them that you are proud of their efforts and whatever the outcome, they will still be awesome.
15. **Focus** – finally, turn off background music and notifications, whatever your child says, it does not help!

All the best to all our students in their exams, and thank you to parents for your support.

South Africa 2024

The sports tour to South Africa was an unforgettable journey for the 45 students and 6 staff members involved. It proved to be an incredible experience, both on and off the field.

Throughout the tour, the team played three fixtures against diverse opponents, experiencing a range of cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds, enriching their understanding of the country. Beyond the sports matches, the tour included visits to iconic landmarks such as Table Mountain, Robben Island, Boulder Beach, Hermanus, Cape Point, and the V&A Waterfront. Immersing themselves in the local culture, the group also embarked on a Langa township tour, gaining insight into the vibrant community life. However, the highlight of the tour was undoubtedly the exhilarating game drive at the Garden Route Game Lodge, where they witnessed South Africa's magnificent wildlife up close.

Overall, the tour was a perfect blend of sportsmanship, cultural exploration, and adventure, leaving everyone with cherished memories of their time in South Africa.

Mrs Hemming



News and Notices

Exams Update

Good luck to pupils who will be taking their MFL speaking exams. Please arrive at least five minutes before your scheduled time.

Year 11 to 13 should check their timetable on their AGS portal. The rooming has now been finalised so please check you have a room and seat number for every exam.

Year 11 - For History and RE there is more than one paper on the timetable but only one with a duration. This is because the paper covers more than one topic and pupils answer the relevant questions. The exam with a duration will show a room and seat no and the other papers won't. Some subjects will have TBA , this will probably be for the modern foreign languages speaking tests and art. Dates for these will be communicated via their teacher.

JCQ have designated the afternoons of Thursday 6 June and Thursday 13 June and the morning and afternoon of Wednesday 26 June as contingency sessions for examinations. All pupils must be available on these dates so that if exams cannot take place due to widespread, sustained national or local disruption in the UK they can be rescheduled.

Pupils should be checking their AGS emails as I have emailed information to those who have clashes.

Any questions please email exams@alcestergs.com

Mrs Silcox

£1044.56 raised from March Non-Uniform Day and split equally between :



Nominated by Mr Bayliss who is running the London Marathon on Sunday for this charity



Charity aiming to improve lives for those living with Type 1 diabetes.
Nominated by AGS students living with this condition

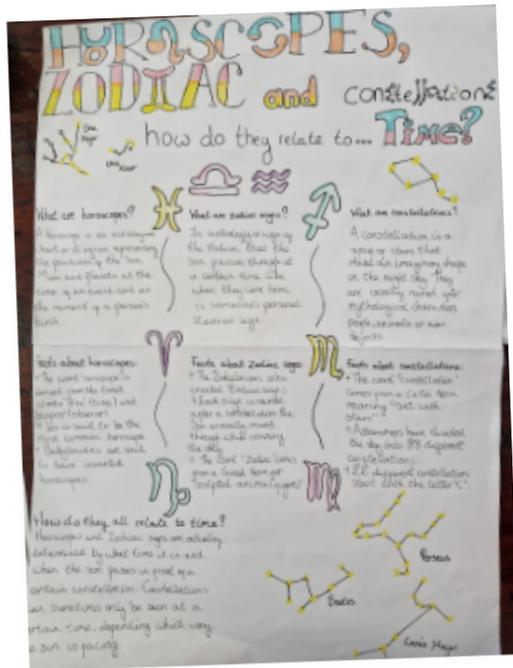
Thank You

News and Notices

Virtual Work Experience Winner.

Ryan Patra, in year 9, is the lucky winner of a £50 Boots voucher! Ryan attended all 8 sessions of the “Boots Camp” 2024, a programme of virtual work experience led by Boots UK, showcasing different careers in their organisation. Even more impressive is that he found and signed up for the programme himself.

Well done Ryan!



Science Week Competition Winners!

Just before the Easter holiday, the Science Department celebrated British Science Week, which included a few competitions!

Entries to all competitions were absolutely fantastic so well done to all who took part! Special congratulations to Evelyn L in 7MJ1 as the winner of the poster competition, and to Georgie S in 7BSL as runner up.

Also special congratulations to Cori A in Year 12 as the winner of the short story competition - a wonderful piece of writing.

All prizes and certificates will be making their way to you in form time!



News and Notices

Whole School Photograph

We gathered together over 1400 staff and students last Thursday to take the whole school photograph, another snapshot in time of AGS history that will join the others along our Dobell corridor.

Should you wish to view or order the photograph (one of us setting up is below) then follow the instructions on the paper order slip from your child.



MFL Update

Many congratulations to our year 13 Spanish class who did their speaking exam last Friday.

Maria Chadzynska, Hannah Coward, Samantha Curry, Vienna Eagles, Pearl Erskine, Kareem Farag, Tom Hemming, Saoirse Kelly and Maria Stefanova.

We would like to wish all of our year 11, 12 and 13 linguists the best of luck in their GCSE and A level speaking exams which will be happening from Wednesday 24th April until Friday 3rd May. Well done for your hard work and dedication this year!

A reminder from Ms Blud Jones that the year 8 French trip meeting will be at **6pm on Tuesday 23rd April** in the theatre.

AGS MUSIC DEPARTMENT

SPRING CONCERT

WEDNESDAY 24TH APRIL

18:30 START

AGS THEATRE

TICKETS AVAILABLE VIA PARENTPAY

REFRESHMENTS & RAFFLE

AGS MUSIC ENSEMBLES & SOLISTS

STRATFORD UPON AVON BOAT CLUB
proudly present



29th July - 23rd August 2024

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