



Aylsham High School

*Part of the Aylsham Learning Federation
It takes a Whole Community to Educate a Child*

Dear Parent/Carer

January 2026

Year 8 options process and 'virtual' options evening – Wednesday 14th January 2026

When students enter year 9 at Aylsham High School they begin the transition to key stage 4. This involves them making choices about which option subjects they want to study from year 9 and allows students to start studying option subjects that are of interest to them in more depth.

Prior to the Christmas break year 8 students had two assemblies explaining the options process. To further support with this process we will be holding a 'virtual' options evening on Wednesday 14th January 2026. You will be able to book appointment slots with subject teachers who will be able to answer any questions that you or your child may have about the subjects available. We have also created the following information to support you and your child in making their decisions.

1. Options process 'overview' videos

Please view Mr Sweatman's options presentation - Foundation Pathway to Success by using this QR code or by clicking on the link below. If you have any questions after watching the videos, please book an appointment with Mr Sweatman on options evening.



[Click here to access the playlist](#)

2. Options subject videos

There are also videos available for each of the various option subjects that we offer. These include, for example, what level they are, what the students will do, what are the expectations of students and how they will be assessed. If, after watching the videos, you have any questions about a particular subject, please book an appointment with the relevant subject staff and they will be able to resolve any queries you or your child may have.



[Click here to access the playlist](#)

3. Options information on the school website

Options information is available on the school website and includes information about the key stage 4 curriculum, how the options process works, an options booklet, options presentations and guidance on how to make options choices.

<https://www.aylshamhigh.com/optionchoices>

The options booklet also contains links and QR codes to each of the available subject videos.

Executive Headteacher: Mr D Spalding B.A. (Hons) M.Ed. (Cantab)

Deputy Headteachers: Mr C Bridge B.Sc. (Hons), Mr P Brockington B.Sc. (Hons) M.A., Mrs K Garnham B.A. (Hons) M.A.

Director of Business and Community Strategy: Mrs J Tuttle



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4. Virtual options evening – How it works

On Wednesday 14th January 2026, subject staff will be offering 5 minute appointments between 6.00pm and 8.00pm via SchoolCloud. You only need to book an appointment for this event if you and/or your child have any questions for myself about the options process overall, or if you have any questions which were not answered in the options booklet or the options videos and you would like to speak to an individual subject teacher.

As we are using SchoolCloud to host this event, please be aware of the following information to help you book an appointment if required:

- **Using SchoolCloud**

Guidance on how to use SchoolCloud can be found on the school website:

<https://www.aylshamhigh.com/ahsinstructionsforschoolcloud>

- **Booking appointments**

Please visit <https://aylshamhigh.schoolcloud.co.uk/> to book your appointments. Appointments at the virtual options evening will be available with Mr Sweatman and/or subject teachers between 6pm and 8pm on Wednesday 14th January. **Appointments can be added from 4pm on Wednesday 7th January and the booking system will close at 12pm on Wednesday 14th January.** Should you wish to make any changes after this date, please contact the school office via email office@aylshamhigh.norfolk.sch.uk.

- **Appointment times**

Each appointment lasts for 5 minutes. The SchoolCloud system will time each appointment and end at the allotted time. There will be a countdown timer visible so that everyone can see the time remaining for their appointment. The SchoolCloud system will automatically end each appointment after 5 minutes which may mean that conversations could be cut off abruptly. It is therefore important to keep an eye on the clock and perhaps have some questions ready to ask the subject staff.

- **Cancellations**

If, for whatever reason, you and your child are unable to attend the options evening after making appointments, we would be very grateful if you would log into the SchoolCloud system to cancel your appointment/s; these appointments can then be made available for other families to select.

Guidance on how to cancel or amend appointments can be found on our website:

<https://www.aylshamhigh.com/ahsinstructionsforschoolcloud>.

- **Camera and microphone**

Families will need to have use of a device, which has a camera and microphone and can access the internet, in order to attend this event. If you require support with your device please contact our pastoral family liaison officers via pflo@aylshamhigh.norfolk.sch.uk

5. SIMS Options videos for using the online system

To support families with using SIMS Options, we have made some videos available for you to watch which explain:

- how students choose their options using SIMS Options
- how students log into their SIMS Student account to access SIMS Options
- how a parent/carer approves their child's options via their SIMS Parent account



These videos can be accessed [here](#) or via the QR code above.

On this playlist is a video for each year group and pathway. Please ensure that you watch the relevant video for your child's pathway which is shown on your child's SIMS Options page.

6. SIMS Options

Following the virtual options evening, once your child has decided on their options, choices can be selected and saved via SIMS Options by using SIMS Student and then you, as the parent/carer, will need to approve your child's options through your SIMS Parent account. SIMS Options online will be activated on Thursday 15th January at 4pm. We will only be accepting options from students who have the parent/carer approval box ticked. **Choices for all students need to be selected and saved via SIMS Options by Friday 13th February at the latest.**

Please ensure that you and your child have read carefully the information in SIMS Options explaining the pathway that your child has been assigned and the choices that they need to make. It will explain that students need to order their option choices in order of preference but then, if they have certain years they would like to study these subjects in, they need to add this information into the student comments box. We are unable to guarantee that we can follow these year preference requests but we will try to ensure that we follow these if at all possible.

Form tutors and the SEN/pastoral team will be able to support students with their option choices if needed.

Questions and queries

Please ensure that you read the options booklet and watch the videos available to see if they answer any questions you may have before you book an appointment. If you are unable to attend the virtual options evening, or if you are unable to book an appointment due to availability, please be aware that heads of department may also be contacted via email. Email address for staff can be found here: <https://www.aylshamhigh.com/usefulcontactsandemailaddresses>

We also have an online year 8 parents' evenings via SchoolCloud the following week on Monday 19th January and Tuesday 20th January 2025 where your child's teachers will also be able to offer advice and guidance. Information about this parents' evening has been sent to you separately.

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Stonestreet, astonestreet@aylshamhigh.norfolk.sch.uk or your child can seek out option subject staff, their form tutor or see a member of staff in the STAR office.

Yours sincerely



P Brockington
Deputy Headteacher



D Sweatman
Lead Practitioner for Inclusion and Safeguarding
and Head of Nurture