



Aylsham High School

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

Dear Parent/Carer

July 2026

I hope that you and your family are looking forward to the summer holidays and enjoy the weeks ahead and your time together.

Although it seems a long way off, I know that your attention will turn at some point to the start of the new academic year. The essential parent guide 2026-27 can be viewed on our school website [Essential Guide for Parents - Aylsham High School](#). As well as providing details of purchasing uniform, we have also updated the dos and don'ts of what to buy in relation to uniform here [School Uniform - Aylsham High School](#). We hope you will find these useful to you. In addition to the guidance on uniform, the essential parent guide also includes some reminders around behaviour, attendance and our rewards and sanctions policy including behaviour support. The main reason for this is to ensure that we reinforce our expectations of all students and the roles we need to play.

The first day of term for students is Thursday 03 September 2026 when we will be on week 1 of the timetable. Students should go straight to their first lesson.

Free School meals are changing from September 2026 this is the new information:

Please read each point, as this may affect your eligibility.

1. More families are becoming eligible

All households on Universal Credit are becoming eligible, with two tiers of entitlement:

Targeted: if you earn under £7,400 a year, your children will be entitled to FSM and extra support for their school

Expanded: if you earn above £7,400: your children will be entitled to FSM only

All households who receive other qualifying benefits will also receive a Targeted FSM. A full list of qualifying benefits is available on our webpage: www.norfolk.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals You will only need to apply once per child.

2. Protected entitlements are ending

Children who were previously assessed as eligible for FSM had their eligibility protected. This meant they could not lose their FSM, even if the household was no longer eligible. These protections are ending in September, meaning some children may lose their existing eligibility. We will contact you to confirm your eligibility before the end of the summer holiday.

3. Annual eligibility rechecks

We will recheck the eligibility of all children on an annual basis. Parents already in receipt of benefits related FSM do not need to reapply, as your eligibility will be rechecked and confirmation of this will be sent to you before the end of the summer holiday.

4. No Recourse to Public Funds

Due to these changes, all households that qualify as No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and receive FSM must reapply or you will lose your entitlement. If you have any questions following receipt of your updated eligibility, please contact fsm@norfolk.gov.uk



LEADERSHIP in LEARNING
The Cambridge Network

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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Please contact Mrs Blois at rblois@aylshamhigh.norfolk.sch.uk for further information if you think you may be eligible or [click here for more information](#). If you have not yet informed us and you are a member of the armed forces, we would appreciate if you could notify us in writing either by letter, addressed to Mrs R Blois or via email - office@aylshamhigh.norfolk.sch.uk.

Students and families are advised to check [School bus timetables - Norfolk County Council](#) for details of any bus changes and timetables for September. Students who will continue to travel on a bus with the same bus number will not receive a new pass, and they MUST keep hold of their current pass and continue to use it in September. It is therefore important that students preserve their bus passes in as best condition as possible. If any students are changing bus number, new passes which will be issued to them in August. If a student loses or damages their bus pass, a temporary bus pass can be issued for a limited period by our receptionist. Parents will need to contact Norfolk County Council Transport on 0344 800 8020 to arrange a replacement permanent pass at a cost of £12. Sanders Coaches currently have a bus service to Aylsham High School from North Walsham, through Swanton Abbot, Skepton and Burgh. The timetables can be located at [Timetables | Sanders Coaches](#).

We are committed to providing the best possible communication links between school and home. General letters will be forwarded to you via email and will be available on the school website. Some letters are also available via SIMS Parent including your child's attendance letters. Our weekly digest is also published and uploaded to our website on a Friday at 4pm these can be viewed by following this link [Weekly communication digest and School Bulletins - Aylsham High School](#). We provide reports at key points across the year and these need to be accessed via SIMS Parent, for which an email address is essential. If you have not yet registered for SIMS Parent, please ensure that you do so in September by emailing simsparent@aylshamhigh.norfolk.sch.uk. It is important that we have your up to date email address at all times so please do advise us by writing to office@aylshamhigh.norfolk.sch.uk if your email address changes. Please also advise us by letter or email of any changes to your contact details, for example your address or phone number. This enables us to ensure our records are in order. We will also contact you via text from time to time.

The attendance letter for September 2026 has been included on the next page of this letter. Please make sure you read this. Further information about school attendance can be found on our website [AHS Attendance and Leave of Absence Request](#).

It is only by working together that we will continue to improve the standards we achieve as a school. A clear shared understanding of basic expectations around uniform, attendance and behaviour ensures that we do not lose time on trivial arguments when we should be focusing on learning. I know that I can count on your support in this as we all share a common goal of ensuring that Aylsham High School is the very best it can be.

Have a wonderful summer.

Yours sincerely



Duncan Spalding
Executive Headteacher



Aylsham High School

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Dear Parent/Carer

September 2026

Regular school attendance and parent's legal responsibilities

At Aylsham High School, we work closely with parents and carers to ensure that all pupils receive the best possible education and achieve their full potential.

Good school attendance is essential for children's learning, wellbeing and future opportunities. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly when they are registered at a school.

The Government is clear that children should only miss school in exceptional circumstances, Schools and local authorities are expected to work with families to promote good attendance and reduce avoidable absence.

When could a Penalty Notice be issued?

Under the national framework for school attendance, a Penalty Notice may be considered when a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

What does this mean?

- A school day consists of two sessions – a morning session and an afternoon session
- 10 sessions is usually equivalent to 5 school days
- The unauthorised absences do not need to happen on consecutive days
- The 10-school-week period can span different terms or school years

Examples of unauthorised absence may include:

- Holidays taken during term time without authorisation
- Keeping a child away from school without an accepted reason
- Persistent late arrival after the close of registration

Can a Penalty Notice be issued before the threshold is reached?

Yes. In some circumstances, the Local Authority may decide to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is reached. For example, this could apply where there have been several unauthorised term-time holidays. The Local Authority may also consider alternative legal action where appropriate.

How many Penalty Notices can be issued?

A maximum of two Penalty Notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling three-year period. The three-year period begins on the date the first Penalty Notice is issued. If the national threshold is met for a third time within three years and two Penalty Notices have already been issued to the parent(s), the Local Authority may consider prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.



Business & Enterprise



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A successful prosecution could result in:

- A criminal conviction
- A fine of up to £2,500
- Any other penalties available to the court

Who can receive a Penalty Notice?

For the purposes of school attendance law, a parent includes:

- A child's natural parent
- Any person who has parental responsibility for the child
- Any person who has day-to-day care of the child

Penalty Notices will usually be issued to parent(s) responsible for the child's attendance or who allowed the absence to occur. This may apply regardless of which parent submitted a request for leave of absence.

How much is a Penalty Notice?

First Penalty Notice	Second Penalty Notice
The first Penalty Notice issued to a parent for a child will be: • £160, payable within 28 days; or • £80, if paid within 21 days.	If a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the first Penalty Notice: • The charge will be £160 • Payment must be made within 28 days • No reduced payment option is available.
Important information about payment • Penalty Notices must be paid in full. • Part-payments are not accepted. • Payment plans are not available. • There is no right of appeal against a Penalty Notice. • Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per child. This means that where two parents are liable for a child's absence, each parent may receive a separate Penalty Notice and will be responsible for paying their own fine.	

Requests for leave of absence during term time

Government guidance states that schools should only grant leave of absence during term time in **exceptional circumstances**. Each request will be considered individually, taking account of the specific circumstances presented. Although we recognise the value of family time together, requests for family holidays during term time will not normally be authorised. Government guidance states that a need or desire for a holiday or other leisure activity is not considered an exceptional circumstance. If leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time authorised.

How to request leave of absence

Requests for leave of absence should be made in advance of the planned absence. Making a request in advance allows the school to consider the circumstances before a decision is made. Where leave has not been requested in advance, the school may be unable to consider individual circumstances, and the absence is likely to be recorded as unauthorised. The school reserves the right to request evidence in support of absences reported immediately before or after a holiday period.

Support with school attendance

We understand that children and families can sometimes face challenges that affect attendance. If you are experiencing difficulties or require support to help your child attend school regularly, please contact Trina Wheeler (Student Support & Attendance Officer) on 01263 733270 or via email on attendance@aylshamhigh.norfolk.sch.uk.

We will work with you to understand any barriers to attendance and discuss the support available.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D Spalding', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

D Spalding
Executive Headteacher



**A better, safer way
to report when your
child is sick and off
school.**



Studybugs is an app which Aylsham High School requests all parents and carers use.

With a few taps or clicks, you can give us all we need to record absences (e.g. illness/medical appointments/college interviews) for your child(ren).

Get the free mobile app now...  or  or register online to use your web browser: [Studybugs](https://studybugs.org)

Please remember to register using the same email address as the one you used on your admission form.

How it helps

Why Parents and Schools Choose Studybugs



Helps Safeguard Your Child

Studybugs automates schools' processing of sick reports, so if any children are unaccounted for, they'll know right away. Also verifies that reports of your child's absence have really come from you.



Contributes to Public Health

Studybugs collects anonymised data on illnesses going around — to help schools, parents and public health organisations take preventative action as early as possible.



Saves You Time

It takes seconds to give the school all they need, and know they've got the message even if you're reporting at 6am or 11pm the night before.



Guides You

With official guidance from the UK Health Security Agency (formerly Public Health England) on the need to stay off school, based on the symptoms or illnesses you enter.



Confidential and Secure

Your personal data is kept strictly confidential between you and your child's school. We never share your personal data with third parties. Your child's school cannot see your location. All shared illness data is first anonymised so your personal data is always kept confidential. You can also opt out of having your anonymised data shared. Studybugs is hosted from purpose-built secure facilities and all communications with our apps and website are encrypted.

See [security and privacy notice](#) for more details.



UK Research and Innovation



Department for Education



“It's so fast and easy to use the app as a busy parent of three children.”



Lisa Fransson
Parent

If you need help using Studybugs please contact Aylsham High School: attendance@aylshamhigh.norfolk.sch.uk