

AshfoldSchool



MAINSCHOOL

Handbook

2008-09

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Introduction

For those with children new to Ashfold, I welcome you and hope that the information contained in this handbook is helpful. This handbook is equally relevant to those of you who have been Ashfold parents for some time, because many things change in the Main School (Junior & Senior Departments). So, whether you are new or experienced Ashfold parents, could I encourage you to read this handbook? If having done so you have anything else you would like to know, please do not hesitate to ring us.

Forms and Structure of the School

Main School children are allocated to forms based upon their age as at 1st September.

For example:

Junior Department:

7 year olds	Form I	Year 3
8 year olds	Form II	Year 4
9 year olds	Form III	Year 5

Senior Department:

10 year olds	Form IV	Year 6
11 year olds	Form V	Year 7
12 year olds	Form VI	Year 8

Form III is a transition year between the Junior and Senior departments of the school, so although they are full members of the Junior Department, they begin to be introduced to Senior Department opportunities, for example evening activities and boarding.

Throughout the Main School we have two forms per Year group. In allocating children to these forms we try to achieve a balance of ability, ages and sexes. As a rule children generally stay in these forms throughout their time at Ashfold.

Forms are identified by the initial of their Form Tutor, so for example Form VI (V) is tutored by Mr Venn.

Generally, in the final week of the Summer Term, children and parents are informed about who will be their new Form Tutor and children are taken to meet them and to visit their new Form Room.

Houses

On entry, the children are allocated to Houses for competition purposes: Lions (red), Gryphons (blue) and Dragons (green), and they stay in their House throughout their time at Ashfold. Brothers and sisters are always allocated to the same House.

Houses compete against each other in all areas of school life; in everything from sports House matches to House Singing, and from House Poetry to the Swimming Gala on Speech Day. Every two to three weeks **Credits**, and occasionally **Debits**, earned by individuals (see Discipline, Credits and Debits) are added to House totals and thus also contribute to which House wins the House Challenge Cup each term.

The First Day

On the first day of each term, Form Tutors will be in their form rooms to greet all children and their parents. Please bring all games and PE kit, boots and coats to form rooms for checking.

Children who are new to the school should go first to the Saloon (immediately on the right, inside the front door of the Main Mansion). There they will be met by both Mrs Hartley (The Headmaster's PA) and their guardians (a child in their Form who will help them for the first few days, showing them where to go for Registration and guiding them around the school). Please note that if the first day of term is a Wednesday, pick up time will be at 3.30 p.m.

Morning Drop-off Arrangements

No child should be dropped-off before 8.00 a.m. Between 8.00 a.m. and 8.15 a.m., a member of staff will be 'on duty' outside. All children must be in their form rooms by 8.15 a.m. for Registration. Children arriving after 8.20 a.m. must report in to Matron who can be found in Surgery in the Main Mansion. She maintains an up to the minute record of all children 'on-site'.

We ask that Junior Department children are always supervised between the car parks and the Junior Department entrance (Creedo's Porch), after which parents/carers are welcome to escort children into their form rooms if they so wish. In the Senior Department we feel that children are old enough to make their own way to and from the front of the school.

We expect all children to wear their school blazers and to take responsibility for carrying their own bags to and from school each day.

Car Parking

To help keep your children safe please use the footpaths, drive cautiously, and do not park in front of school by the cricket nets, around the Oval, or off the ends of either of the Main Mansion wings.

Car parks are generally busy, so if parents could drop-off/pick-up children quickly and where possible park in the following areas, this will help ease congestion:

Junior Department parents on the Exit Drive.

Senior Department parents with children in Clock Courtyard form rooms, on the Entrance Drive. Parents with children in other Senior Department forms on the Exit Drive; this should encourage your children to and from their form rooms via the North Terrace.

The areas immediately off the ends of the two Main Mansion wings are 'pull-in' areas for parents who are dropping children off. Please do not park here.

Registration

At the start of the day children are registered by their Form Teacher/Tutor. They record those children who are absent, off games, staying late to tea and activities, or boarding. Parents are asked to write a note to Form Teachers/Tutors confirming such arrangements.

Late Pick-Ups

Any child not picked up after their normal pick-up time will be looked after as follows. However, if you are going to be late, we would really appreciate a call, so that we can set your child's mind at rest.

Between 5.10 - 6.00 p.m. Junior Department children will join Junior Activities. To find out where these activities are taking place please check the whiteboard immediately outside the Staff Room, then collect them from there.

After 6.10 p.m. All children who have not been collected will go to the Main Dining Room where they will be supervised by the Housemaster

The Daily Routine

8.15 a.m.	Registration
8.22 a.m.	Assembly
8.40 - 10.35 a.m.	Lessons
10.35 - 10.55 a.m.	Break(Fridays Break 9.55 - 10.35, followed by lessons)
11.00 a.m.	Lessons
1.00 - 1.35 p.m.	Lunch
1.35 - 2.05 p.m.	Break/Orchestra/Ensemble & Choir practices
2.10 p.m.	Registration & Lessons
3.25 - 4.25 p.m.	Games
4.30 - 5.00 p.m.	Forms I & II Prep
5.00 p.m.	Forms I & II children go home
5.00 - 6.00 p.m.	Senior Prep and Junior Activities
6.00 p.m.	Senior Department children go home
6.10 p.m.	Supper for Boarders and those staying for Evening Activities
6.30 p.m.	Break/Boarders' Music Practice
7.00 - 7.55 p.m.	Evening Activities
7.55 p.m.	Day Children go home/Boarding Routine begins

Variation for Wednesdays

2.05 - 3.15 p.m.	Games/School matches
3.30 p.m.	All Day children go home (unless they are in school matches, in which case they are generally free to go home at: 4.45 p.m. after home matches 5.30 p.m. after away matches)
3.45 p.m.	Registration followed by free time
4.00 p.m.	Snack tea for Boarders
6.00 p.m.	Boarders' Supper

After-School Care

Junior Activities are a chargeable extra which take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays between 5.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m. They are provided exclusively to help you if you have children in both the Junior and Senior Departments of the School, so that you can have just one pick-up time. Exceptionally, children may be invited to join Junior Activities by a member of staff, or where lift-shares necessitate a non-sibling joining the activities.

Full details of Crèche and Junior Activities can be obtained from the School Reception Office.

Parents' Room

The Parents Room is provided for parents' use. This is sometimes also used by staff for individual meetings with parents and occasionally as a small meeting room for staff meetings. Information about Next Schools is available there such as a location map showing where local senior schools are, their prospectuses, magazines and Open Morning dates. Many parents will use this as a place to sit quietly between their children's various pick-up times. Alternatively, immediately outside it is a small

garden where parents may sit and supervise their younger children playing. There are tea and coffee making facilities for parents' use as well as a loo.

The Curriculum

Junior Department. The aim of the department curriculum is to build upon the Pre-Prep child's interest and to develop more specific knowledge of different subjects.

The Form Teacher continues to teach the majority of lessons during these three years, concentrating upon the Core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science, as well as Religious Studies, History, Geography, and PSHE (Physical Social & Health Education). In this way each child's progress in the crucially important skills of reading, handwriting, spelling and numeracy can be closely monitored by just one teacher. French, Art, Information Technology and Physical Education (PE) are taught by specialist teachers and all children are coached in the full range of major team sports every day for approximately forty-five minutes. Latin is introduced to the curriculum in Form III.

The curriculum is based upon the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, but tailored to suit the demands of the Independent Schools' Examining Board. At Ashfold we do not participate in the Key Stage 1 or 2 SATs examinations.

We use a whole school reading scheme to enable us better to monitor the progress and support the individual needs of each child. This scheme is centred upon the new Ginn scheme, but other publishers are also included. Nelson spelling and handwriting schemes are also used in these years to ensure graded progress and continuity. The Mathematics scheme is based upon Abacus, with a wide range of ICT resources used to support all levels of ability.

School examinations are introduced from Forms I onwards and are sat both at the start of the Spring term and towards the end of the Summer term.

To help the children prepare for the Senior Department the children are also introduced to preps in Forms I & II. These are taken by the Form Teacher on a daily basis (excluding Wednesdays) for thirty to forty five minutes, depending on age. In Form III children do an hours prep which is composed of two thirty minute subject preps.

Senior Department. The aim of this department is to develop further the skills and subject knowledge following on from the Junior Department and also to prepare the children for their senior school examinations. The majority of children take Common Entrance examinations in Form VI, a few girls take them in Form IV. Some children in Form IV will also take the Buckinghamshire LEA 11+ examinations for Grammar School entry. Each year we also prepare a number of children for senior school scholarship examinations.

Children have a Form Tutor who takes on the pastoral responsibilities and teaches PSHE. All the other subjects are taught by subject specialists. Children continue to be taught in mixed ability and gender groups, but we do set children for the Core subjects in Forms V and VI where appropriate.

The curriculum incorporates the demands of the National Curriculum for Key Stages 2/3 and the Common Entrance syllabi. Examinations are sat in all these subjects both at the start of the Spring term and towards the end of the Summer term.

The schemes for Reading, Spelling, Handwriting and Mathematics from the Junior Department are continued in the Senior Department. Games coaching is increased to approximately one hour per day.

All children have prep for one hour a day (except Wednesdays). This is composed of two thirty minute subject preps.

Period Orders and Supercharts

Twice a term staff assess your child's progress. Form Teachers/Tutors then give you a report grading your child's effort over the full reporting Period. Children in Forms IV - VI are also awarded attainment grades for each Period. Staff are encouraged to use the full range of grades available so that you are given as accurate an indication as possible of your child's efforts - warts and all!

Children who work particularly hard are rewarded for their efforts (attainment is not rewarded) with additional **Period Order credits**, a **Commendation** in an Headmaster's Assembly, or for the hardest workers, a **book token**. Children whose effort is unsatisfactory may be given a **Tutor Reprimand** and may be sent to see the Head of Junior Department or Director of Studies (as appropriate) if their efforts do not improve.

If you would like further information about this system, please ask your Form Teacher/Tutor, or ask at the School Reception Office for a handout.

Prep and Homework

Prep is an integral part of the school day for all children in Forms I - VI. Work is set so that it can be completed within the school day, but if for any reason your child fails to complete a piece of work they may be asked to finish it at home. In such cases it should then be returned the next morning.

All children are expected to read regularly and they will be given a reading diary to record this. Your child will also be given a list of spellings and tables each week, upon which they will be tested.

Special Educational Needs

We aim, by regularly assessing and screening children, to pick up children who might have learning support needs. If we believe that your child needs extra support, you will be contacted by your Form Teacher/Tutor and also by the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO). We may recommend that you to seek advice from outside agencies (E.g. medical, ophthalmic, speech and language assessments, or educational psychologists). We will then devise a course of extra tuition to best help your child. There is a charge for this tuition.

Communication

The School Reception Office (Tel. 01844 238237) which is situated on the left after entering the front door of the Main Mansion, is staffed daily between 9.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. They are happy to try to answer any questions you may have, or to pass

messages on to staff. Outside these times any mail for the school and staff can be posted in the Office letterbox and telephone calls are routed via a number of different phones. We only have two incoming lines so it may take some time for us to answer your calls - please hold on and be patient!

Form Teachers/Tutors are the first people to contact on most matters relating to your child's welfare. The best times to catch staff are in person immediately prior to Registration in the mornings, or at normal school collection times. If you require longer than a few minutes, then please make an appointment with them.

Other Matters. If matters are unresolved, or you need more help please contact either The Headmaster or other staff directly as follows:

Mr D. Venn	Deputy Headmaster	Serious matters of discipline
Mr A. Downie	Director of Studies	Academic matters
Mrs C Bentley	Head of Junior Department	Junior Department issues
Mr & Mrs A. Bentley	House Parents	Boarding
Mrs G. Crampton Smith	Child Protection Officer	Child Protection
Mr A. Williams	Director of Music	Music lessons
Mrs C Strong	Matron	Health, medication, lost property

Chairman of Governors

In the event that you wish to write to the Chairman (R. Williams Esq.) please write to him C/O the school and we will forward his mail.

Elync Post. Most general school communications, such as newsletters and reminders about school events, are emailed to you via an Elync website. If you have not subscribed to this service, please ask at the Reception Office for further details.

Blazer Post. Sometimes we still send home letters, notices and fliers with your child. We generally warn you of such communications by placing a notice on the whiteboard situated on the South Wing of the Main Mansion. However, it is always a good idea to check your child's school bag every Friday. Letters relevant to the whole school are usually only given to the eldest member of each family to prevent over printing.

Reading Record Books are another means of communication between you and your child's Form Teachers/Tutors. As your child uses this book daily, it is best not to use it for more sensitive or confidential matters. Such written communication is best put in a sealed envelope and handed directly to a teacher, or placed on their desk.

The Fasti - Calendar of School Events. A calendar of events for each term, which we call the Fasti, will be sent to you before, or at the beginning of each term. It also contains future term dates and holidays. Please look through it as soon as you get it and book key events into your diaries.

Parent Newsletters. Occasional newsletters keep parents up to date with news, forthcoming events and any changes to the Fasti.

Parent Meetings. These are held twice a year and are formal opportunities for you to meet staff to discuss your child's work. Dates and times are published in the Fasti. For **Tutors' Evenings** formal appointments are made for one to one meetings with Form Teachers/Tutors; at **Parents' Meetings** you have the chance to meet each

member of staff who teaches your child for five minutes in the Sports Hall over a glass of wine; at **Parents' Open Afternoons** Senior Department parents are taken round by their children to view their work and discuss in general terms the content matter with Heads of Department/Subject Teachers. You child's work generally comes home at the end of each term and is also available for discussion with teachers at Tutors' Evenings in the Junior Department, and at Parents' Meetings in the Senior Department. Should you wish to meet a teacher at another time to discuss your child's work, it is helpful if you can give staff, particularly Tutors, a little notice.

Written Reports. You will receive a written report of your child's progress at the end of each term. This will arrive by post a week or so after the end of term.

Telephones. All children who board may use the pupil telephones. Boarders may also receive calls on 01844 238227. The best times for you to call are between 6.30 - 7.00 p.m. and 8.15 - 9.00 p.m. Children who do not board and who wish to make telephone calls may do so via the School Reception Office or Surgery. No charges are raised for any telephone call. Mobile phones are not permitted in school.

Parent Contact Details. It is obviously essential that we are able to contact parents of children at any time during the school day. We would therefore be grateful if any changes of address and telephone, especially mobile numbers, could be given to your child's Form Teacher and the School Reception Office as soon as possible. Further details regarding Communication can be found at the back of the Fasti.

Suggestions

If you have any suggestions or concerns that you would rather not talk directly to the Headmaster, staff, or members of the Parents' Committee about, do please feel free to write to the Headmaster.

Complaints

The school has a formal complaints procedure; copies of which are obtainable from the School Reception Office. If having used the available communications channels, you feel that you have a complaint, please contact the Headmaster or feel free to make use of this formal procedure.

Absence from School & Time Off

In emergencies, when your child is ill, or if they are going to be late in, please telephone Matron after 9.00 a.m. If they are ill, please follow this up the next day with a note to the Form Teacher/Tutor. Please note that before 9.00 a.m. all staff on site will either be having breakfast with boarders and getting them ready for their school day, or will be making final preparations for their day's teaching, so there is no one waiting by the phone to take your calls.

For planned absence from school please write to us. In the case of dental or medical appointments, a note informing your child's Form Teacher/Tutor is sufficient. For all other cases, please write to The Headmaster seeking permission for absence. Please be aware that the Headmaster too has a duty to ensure that you child attends school. He is legally required to keep a record and to report unauthorised absences. You would not expect him to be enthusiastic about children taking time off school to go on holiday, even if it does mean that you can get a cheaper holiday during term-time! He is also particularly keen that children attend ends of term, because it is then that we celebrate as a school the achievements of individual children and Houses. If children

miss these opportunities to come up in front of the school to be congratulated, or if they do but half their friends are in the Bahamas, it somewhat undermines what we are trying to achieve. That said, the Headmaster is a family man and he does understand the importance of being able to get together as a family to celebrate Great Aunt Enid's 80th birthday in Scotland.

Behaviour

Discipline, Credits and Debits. We believe that giving **time, praise and encouragement** to children is the best way of promoting good behaviour and a positive learning environment at Ashfold. **Credits** are our formal way of recognising and rewarding children. They can win them for academic effort, good manners and courtesy, representing the school in matches, plays and concerts, or for anything that makes a notable contribution to school life.

If a child has to be disciplined we ensure that they understand how they have misbehaved, the impact of it and how they should behave in future. If more than a **verbal reprimand** is needed a child may need to be asked to stand outside the staffroom in order to calm down. The **loss of free time** or **privilege** is reserved for pupils who have produced unacceptable work or behaved inappropriately. For more serious misdemeanours, a **Conduct sheet** may be given for the child to complete at home with their parents. For repeated or very serious errors of judgement, children may be given a **Debit** or a **Detention**.

Detention takes place in the library from 1.35pm to 2.05pm and is supervised by a member of staff. (This time is also available for pupils to catch up any work missed or uncompleted for various reasons such as SEN lessons or Music or the occasional dentist's appointment.)

For very serious breaches of discipline there is the ultimate sanction of **Exclusion** from school, but this outcome would be only instigated after a full case conference with parents, the Headmaster and all other staff involved.

We believe that children should be allowed to make small mistakes and have them dealt with at school without necessarily always involving you as parents. However, you will of course be informed of more serious matters of unacceptable behaviour. In the event that we have to discipline your child, we ask that you do your very best to support our decisions and to help your child to learn where the boundaries lie.

Bullying. Bullying is not tolerated at Ashfold, so if you ever have any concerns that your child might be being bullied, you should contact us immediately. We have a very positive response to bullying and you are welcome to copies of our Anti-bullying and Behaviour policies. Please ask for these at the School Reception Office. Also available is guidance produced by the DfES about how to deal at home with a child who you might be worried could become a bully, or who is themselves is a victim of bullying.

E-Bullying. The school recognises the potential for internet and mobile phone bullying and abuse and so has taken steps to restrict and monitor use of communications technology at school. We would very much appreciate the support of parents in continuing to be involved in supervising their children's home use of the internet and mobile phones.

Assembly

On Mondays the Main School meets in the Saloon and the Headmaster celebrates children's achievement. On Tuesdays assembly time is set aside for Form Teacher/Tutor time. On Wednesdays we have separate Senior and Junior Assemblies when Forms are responsible for leading our thoughts. On Thursdays, Houses meet together to celebrate their achievements. On Fridays the Headmaster leads a Main School Assembly in Dorton Church. During Assemblies we sing a hymn, pray and celebrate principally Christian and some other Multi-cultural festivals, stories from the Bible, moral issues associated with a chosen 'Theme for the term', and children's achievement.

Boarding

Boarding at Ashfold is an integral part of the education we offer your children and is open to Form III and Senior Department children. It teaches them valuable life skills about living together with other people. It helps them to gain greater independence and the chance for families to see whether boarding might be an option when choosing the next school. For those that do, the boarding experience at Ashfold provides invaluable preparation.

After school each day, the Houseparents and boarding staff assume responsibility for looking after boarders until after breakfast the next day. They do their very best to ensure that children enjoy and learn from the experience in as homely an atmosphere as possible. That around 80% of all Form III and Senior Department children choose to board is a measure of their success.

During the Summer term when your child is in Form II, you will be given the chance to learn more about boarding and to tour boarding accommodation. Your children too, will be given the chance to have a 'Taster Boarding Night'.

Towards the end of each term we publish a letter inviting Form III and Senior Department children to opt into the next term's Evening Activities Programme (see later) and Boarding. They may choose to board regularly between one and four nights each week, but it is for you to decide how many nights you will allow them to stay with us. Generally, children start boarding one night each week and build this up as they, and their parents, become more confident

Further information about boarding is available in a 'Boarding at Ashfold' leaflet which is given to all new boarders, and in our Boarding Policy and Handbook. Copies of both of these are available from the School Reception Office, but do please contact the House Parents if you have any boarding questions.

OFSTED is responsible for inspections in all boarding schools. They publish all inspection reports on their website www.ofsted.gov.uk. Their contact details can be found on their website.

Child Protection

As a school we are well placed to help protect your children. Our Child Protection Policy, which is available to you from the School Reception Office, has three main elements:

Prevention, through the teaching and pastoral support we offer children.
Procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. Because of our day to day contact with children, we are well placed, and trained, to observe outward signs of abuse. In addition to teachers,

Matrons, Classroom Assistants, GAP Students and other Support staff can be the first point of disclosure for a child.

Support to children who may have been abused.

Our policy applies to all governors, staff and volunteers working in the school. If you are at all concerned about a possible Child Protection matter, please contact either the Headmaster, the Child Protection Officer (Mrs Gill Crampton Smith), or the school governor responsible for this area, Mrs Addie Henderson.

Classroom Equipment

We provide most of the equipment your child needs whilst at school, but you do need to provide them with a pencil case including pencils, colouring pencils, a ruler and eraser. Older children require a fountain pen and calculator, but we will let you know when these are required.

Dogs at School

For obvious reasons we would rather parents avoided bringing dogs to school, but if this is unavoidable then the school's policy is that dogs are only welcome at school if:

- they are kept on leads at all times
- they are kept under control and away from groups of children
- remain outside all buildings
- owners remove any faeces

End of Term Events

Autumn Term:

Carol Service. On the last day of term we hold a School Carol Service for all Main School children and parents in St Mary's Church, Thame. At 2.30 p.m. please collect your children from school and all their bags, then take them to the service. If you cannot manage this, please let us know and we will take them, but they must then be collected by you immediately after the service. The service, and term, ends at around 4.30 p.m.

Spring Term:

Concert. On the last day of term we hold a School Concert for all Main School children and parents in All Saints Church, Brill. At 1.45 p.m. please collect your children from school and all their bags. Then take them to the concert. If you cannot manage this, please let us know and we will take them, but they must then be collected by you immediately after the concert. The concert, and term, ends at around 4.00 p.m.

Summer Term:

Parents' Barbecue. On the last night of the term the Parent's Committee hosts an informal evening when parents and children from the whole school get together for a barbecue (generally cooked by the press-ganged husbands of Committee members). Parents bring their own drinks and rugs; the Speech Day marquee providing ample chairs and cover in the event of rain. A children's entertainer keeps them busy in it for much of the evening. Normal pick-up times apply this day, but for this day only, Junior Activities are open to all Junior Department children. If you would like your child to stay for these activities and to meet you at 6.00 p.m., please book them in with your child's Form Teacher at Registration.

Speech Day. On the last day of term we hold a formal Speeches and Prize Giving in the Marquee for all Main School children and parents. Please drop children off at school no later than 10.30 a.m. and they should then report directly to the Saloon. Following Speeches, we hold drinks with the Governors for parents of Form II, IV and VI children. Families then go into the grounds for picnics before returning for the Inter-House Swimming Competition, in which all these children take part. After this there is tea in the Marquee and the day ends around 4.00 p.m. Crèche is available for any Transition or Pre-Prep child who is attending the day with their families from 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon. This is a fairly formal event; fathers generally wear jacket and ties - mothers seem to need no excuse to dress up, but might feel a little lonely wearing a hat!

Entry to Senior/Secondary Schools

Older children are prepared both for Scholarship, Common Entrance examinations and other school assessments to senior independent schools and for entry into the Buckinghamshire grammar schools.

In Form III parents will be invited to a 'Choosing the right School' meeting where there will be an opportunity to meet Senior School heads/registrars. Soon after this, the Headmaster likes to meet individually with parents to discuss next school options.

Prospectuses and the addresses of almost all senior schools within about an hour's drive of Ashfold can be found in the Parents' Room (next to the Bursar's office).

Evening Activities

Each evening a number of activities and clubs are run between 7.00 and 7.55 p.m. for Form III and Senior Department children only. Activities change termly and a letter outlining the options is sent home towards the end of the previous term. There is no charge for most of these activities, but you will be charged a small fee to cover the cost of tea if your child is not boarding that night.

Evensong

In choosing Ashfold for your children, you have chosen a school committed to educating your children both in and outside the classroom. Your child's spiritual education and celebrating our Christian tradition and the values that make us the kind, caring, loving and supportive community that we are, are compulsory parts of the wider curriculum. All Form III and Senior Department children are expected to attend the termly evensong, dates for which can be found in the Fasti. Parents are encouraged to join us at these services too.

Examinations

Children in Forms I - V have assessments or examinations in the Autumn and Summer terms; Form VI pupils sit a 'mock' 13+ C.E. exam in the Spring term and their C.E. exam proper in the Summer. During the week leading up to these, staff help children revise 'in-class', during prep time and, for boarders, each evening before bedtime.

We ask you to encourage your child to spend a little time revising at home, so we generally send home revision guidelines and materials. If in any doubt about how much revision your child should be doing, please discuss this with their Form Teacher/Tutor.

When your child first sits exams in Form 1 we are keen that they score highly as this help boost confidence, so the average marks awarded in subjects are generally between 70% and 85%. As your child progresses up the school, we gradually introduce Common Entrance (CE) style papers where average marks are nearer 55%. Indeed, you should know that the most academically selective schools in the country have CE pass marks of around 65%. Consequently, it is important, when comparing your child's performance year on year, to bear this in mind and to look closely at the Year group average mark for each subject.

Fees

Direct Debit. We would prefer you to pay fees monthly by direct debit and ask that you see the Finance Bursar for an application form to set this up. Schemes are adjusted annually in July and payments are made from August to May inclusive.

Fees in advance. Parents who may be in a position to pay fees early and out of capital should be aware of the benefits of our fees composition scheme which gives a discount set by Governors according to current interest rate movements. Details are available on request from the Finance Bursar. The scheme is offered for a minimum of two years.

Termly Payment. For those who choose not to pay by direct debit, fees are payable by the first day of each term. Late payment causes considerable extra work for the Finance Bursar and cash flow problems for the school. Unless special arrangements have been made, children whose fees remain outstanding will not be permitted to return to school after the first full week of term until fees have been paid in full. A system of interest charges will apply to late payers.

Extras. We have tried to reduce these to the absolute minimum and only add 'extras' to your bill after first seeking your permission in writing. This way there should be no uncomfortable surprises when the bill arrives. For example you will be asked if you want optional extras such as individual music lessons, boarding, school fees insurances and uniform insurance. We do not charge for educational school outings, but we might ask you for a contribution towards the cost of boarders' trips to the cinema, or for the more expensive Evening Activities (e.g. shooting).

Fee Increases. We constantly strive to improve the quality of the education we provide for your children at Ashfold and inevitably this costs us more each year. However, we endeavour to keep fee increases to the absolute minimum and only raise fees once a year in September. The Chairman of Governors notifies parents in writing a term in advance of any fee increases.

Hardship. Parents who find themselves in financial difficulties, which may impinge on their ability to pay fees, should contact the Finance Bursar or Headmaster as soon as possible. Short-term assistance with fees, in the form of bursaries, is sometimes available at the discretion of the Finance Committee of the Governing body.

Notice. We will give a minimum term's notice of any fee increase. Equally, parents are required to give a full term's notice in writing to the Headmaster of intention to withdraw a child from the school, or they will be liable for the full term's fees.

Gravediggers

This is a parent and staff cricket team which plays a number of fixtures each summer at school against local teams. We are always on the lookout for new talent, so if you have played before and would like to join us, do please contact Mr John Miller (parent) on 'johncmiller.freereserve.co.uk'.

Games

Children are coached games every afternoon with matches being played generally on Wednesday afternoons. Children are allocated to Games groups as follows:

Form	Girls (Team Name)	Boys (Team Name)
Transition	Game 4	Game 4
I	Game 3 (U8)	Game 3
II	Game 3 (U9)	Game 2 (U9)
III & IV	Game 2 (U11/10)	Colts (Colts A & B)
V & VI	Game 1 (U13/12)	Game 1 (1st)

Library

The Library is always open for children to choose books. They issue themselves books using a 'thumbprint' scanner and are encouraged to take up to three books at any one time, one of which is a reading scheme book. The Library also has an extensive non-fiction section for help with school topics and hobbies.

Children are expected to be responsible for their own books and for bringing them back promptly once they have finished reading them. All books must be returned by 1st July each year; the cost of replacing any books not returned by then will be added to the end of term bill.

Lost Property

Children invariably lose things. If their possessions and clothes are named, then we stand a good chance of reuniting them with what they have lost, so please name everything. If they have lost something, the first place to look is in the lost property basket in the corridor behind the Bursar's Office. If it is not there, Matron will be more than happy to help. After this, a word to the Form Teacher/Tutor will initiate a more thorough search. If, inadvertently, your child has returned home with someone else's belongings, please return them to Matron.

Matches and Directions to Schools

If your child is likely to be selected for school matches it is wise to put all dates, especially weekend fixtures and tournaments, into your diaries as soon as the Fasti arrives.

We try to select teams for matches two days before the match and publish team lists on the games board located in the Well outside the Staff Room. So, for a match on Wednesday, we aim to have posted team lists by Tuesday morning. If a match has to be cancelled at short notice we ask children to ring you in the morning. However, if you have not heard by 12 noon and the weather is bad, please check by calling the School Reception Office to see if the match is still on.

We positively encourage parental support at matches as it shows our strong family ethos and inspires the children. Our match teas, provided as an additional incentive to all spectators in the Saloon after home matches, are legendary! If you are in any

doubt about the etiquette of supporting at matches, copies of an extract from the IAPS Sports Handbook is available in the School Reception Office.

After matches children can only be released by staff into the care of another parent with the written consent of that child's parents. So, if you would like your child to be picked up directly from a match by another parent, please write to the member of staff in charge of the team.

Directions to all schools against whom we play matches are available from the School Reception Office and are accessible via our website.

Meals

At mealtimes teachers sit with your children. Not only does this give us the chance to get to know them better, but it also enables us to ensure that they eat healthily and that their table manners are acceptable.

Towards the end of each term, we send you a copy of the next term's menus. These are regularly reviewed and take account both of guidance offered by nutritionists and of our experience in what we know children will eat. You are able to opt for your child to have a salad alternative to the main cooked meals of the day, but we encourage you to think carefully about the importance of a balanced diet, before allowing your child to choose these regularly.

Money

As a general rule children should not bring money into school. Very occasionally they may need to do so, for example for a charitable event, in which case we will notify you.

Music

All children are taught class music throughout their time at Ashfold. The majority of children in the Junior and Senior Departments take up an instrument and have individual music lessons. External music examinations are prepared for as appropriate. Parents, who wish their child to start playing an instrument, or have any queries about music lessons, should contact the Director of Music.

Peripatetic music staff issue invoices before the beginning of each term and after the first lesson if these have not been honoured, staff have been advised to stop teaching the child involved. If a child wishes to terminate individual musical tuition a full term's notice must be given.

We run a number of ensembles for instrumentalists such a String, Brass, Woodwind and Guitar. The School Orchestra comprises our best instrumentalists and as well as performing at the major concerts throughout the year, also provides the accompaniment for the hymn at Monday assemblies. All instrumentalists and singers have an opportunity to perform each year in Informal Concerts. The Spring Concert at Brill Parish Church features items from the ensembles, choirs and orchestra as well as our most advanced individual musicians. Ensuring that your child has their instrument at home for regular practice and at school for music lessons, weekly rehearsals and concert can be something of a test for us all.

We have four **Choirs** at school. All Junior Department children are automatically part of the Junior Choir. The best singers are then invited by the Director of Music to audition for the Intermediate or Senior Choirs. Senior Department children may of

course ask to be auditioned if they would like to join. The Senior Choir is for the best singers in the Senior Department and it rehearses three times a week: after lunch on Tuesday and on Fridays during Assembly time and first prep. The Intermediate Choir is a training ground for Form II - IV children which feeds into the Senior Choir. It rehearses once a week from 5.00 - 5.30 p.m. on Mondays. These choirs are supported at our annual Choral Concert and Carol Service by a Parent's Choir. If you would like to join this please ask the Director of Music; it rehearses on Friday evenings during term time at 5.30 p.m. in the Saloon.

Open Mornings

We hold one of these each Autumn and Spring term on a Saturday morning. These are great opportunities for children to gain confidence from showing prospective families around and from talking enthusiastically about their lives at school. All children in Forms III & the Senior Department are therefore required to attend. If for any reason your child cannot fulfil this responsibility please write to the Headmaster.

Outings & Trips

Each year we endeavour to ensure that every child goes on at least one educational school trip or outing. In addition we run a number of other annual trips such as a Senior Choir trip and a VIth Form Leavers Expedition. Often we also run holiday ski and adventure activity holidays. When we take children off-site for such trips, we like to increase the adult/child supervision ratio. Although we generally use teaching staff to do this, we occasionally ask if parents are able to help us. The school has a lengthy policy covering all aspects of current legislation with regard to the safety of children on these visits, copies of which are obtainable from the School Reception Office.

Parents' Committee

The Committee's main function is to organise social events for parents each term. Dates for these events are published in the Fasti, included in the Newsletter and are advertised via 'Blazer Post'. Although a few of these events are fund-raisers (The Christmas Fayre and biennial May Ball), the majority are either free (Coffee Mornings) or run at cost (Quiz Night, Autumn Dance, Fireworks & Bonfire Night); the aim being for us all to meet each other and to celebrate being members of the Ashfold Family.

Each year we organise a number of sporting events to enable staff and parents to get together to play sport. In the Autumn term we play hockey and netball. In the Spring term football and in the Summer, rounders, cricket and tennis. The aim is to have fun and generally all you need to join in is enthusiasm; the cricket and football matches tend to be more competitive; the rest are jolly free-for-alls! If you would like to play, please ask, or simply sign up on the sheets which are posted prior to the events.

The Committee also provides an additional route for parent views to be represented to the Headmaster, so it tries to ensure that it has a representative from each Year group in the school on its body. It meets formally each term, so if you have any points that you would like raised at these meetings please contact the Chair, or your Year group representative. Parents new to Ashfold are invited to a drinks party at the start of each Autumn Term to meet the Committee and other new parents. A list of the current Committee is available in the School Reception Office.

Restraint Policy

We are required by law to have a policy on the circumstances in which we might have to use force to restrain your child and to tell you about it. The full policy document is available from the School Reception Office, but broadly it is as follows.

Staff are required to use all other means possible before using force. In the extremely unlikely event that they have to, they may only use the minimum reasonable force necessary. Circumstances in which this might be necessary are if they believe there is no other way of preventing a child hurting themselves or another person, or if they are about to commit a criminal offence. You should also know that if a member of staff has had to restrain a child, they are required to provide a detailed report to the Headmaster; he would immediately contact parents to discuss the situation.

School Athletics Finals

After the Summer Half Term children begin to compete during games time in athletics heats. This culminates in a School Athletics Finals afternoon. Unlike in the Pre Prep Department where every child is involved in numerous races, this event is principally for finalists. However, every child will run in at least one race and it is a great House event, so we do encourage you to come and support it. The afternoon ends with prize giving and a sumptuous tea for parents and children. School finishes somewhat earlier than usual on this day, so if you haven't been able to attend you will need to make special arrangements for an early pick up.

School Magazine

This is published annually before Christmas. We aim to ensure that every child is represented in photographs and articles, or by contributing creative pieces of writing or artwork. Only one copy is distributed per family. Extra copies are available from the School Reception Office.

Sick Children, Infectious Diseases and Medicines in School

Although it can be difficult if parents have commitments during the day, we ask that you do not send a sick or unwell child into school. It makes life difficult for both the child and for staff, and can spread sickness to other children, families and staff. As a rule we recommend that if a child is ill, they do not come to school for at least 24 hours and in the event of sickness and diarrhoea, 48 hours. Please do not send them back to school after illness unless they are well enough to participate fully in lessons and are able to eat.

Children who are on prescribed medication can come to school providing they are not infectious. Any child who needs medication during the day should report to Matron before Registration with a note from their parents and their medication. Matron holds and administers all medication as required.

If during the school day a child becomes unwell, we will monitor their condition and send them to Matron if we feel medical intervention is necessary. Matron assesses each case and if she feels that a child would be better off recuperating at home then she will contact you as soon as possible. If you are not able to collect your child, then we will of course continue to care for your child in surgery.

Matron is always happy to discuss any medical concerns and in particular any long-term medical condition, such as asthma or diabetes, which may require regular monitoring or medication.

Head Lice and Verrucae are perennial problems in all schools. Please do not bring children into school if you discover they have head lice (or their eggs are present) until they have been treated. If they have verrucae please provide them with a pair of flip-flops for them to wear when they shower. Matron has a stock of verruca socks which she will issue children who lose their flip-flops, but I am afraid we will have to charge you for these. Matron has literature about the most effective treatments currently available.

Sports Equipment and Mouth Guards

Because almost all dentists and sport governing bodies now recommend that mouth guards be worn when playing rugby and hockey, we do so too. These are best when fitted professionally. Matron arranges for a specialist firm to come in to fit mouth guards during the Summer term, but you may wish to see your own dentists. In addition, we also require all children to wear shin pads when playing both hockey and football. Children will not be permitted to play contact games or matches without them. We provide all the other necessary sports equipment, but if your child manages to persuade you to buy them a cricket bat, hockey stick etc, they are of course welcome to bring these into school.

Sports Facilities - Parent Use

If parents and their families wish to use the school swimming pool or tennis courts during the weekends and holidays, all you have to do is join our Parents Tennis or Swimming Clubs. There is a small charge for these and full details are available from the School Reception Office. I am afraid that other sports facilities, including the playgrounds, are not open for parents and families during the holidays and weekends.

Sweets, Snacks and Birthday Cakes

These should not be brought into school as we do not encourage children to walk around school eating, sweet papers invariably cause litter and cakes can be dangerous for those with food allergies. Snacks and drinks (cakes, biscuits, fruit, milk, hot chocolate, squashes and water) are provided at break times and drinking water is available throughout the day. For boarders there is a Tuck Shop on Wednesday nights and if they are boarding on their birthday, we are happy for you to send in a birthday cake for them to share with other boarders that evening.

Uniform

All items of the Ashfold School uniform can be purchased from Shepherd & Woodward in Summertown, Oxford (01865 554559). Uniform lists are sent to parents at the start of each year, but further copies can be obtained from the Ashfold website (www.ashfoldschool.co.uk) or from the School Reception Office. Second hand uniform is available at our on-site shop, which is situated opposite the Music block and shop opening times are published in the Fasti. We ask that all items of clothing are clearly named so that children are able to identify their own clothing.

Valuables

We recommend that children do not bring items of value to school; if they do, these must be suitably marked.

Weather - Snow

In the of bad weather continues, or that weather reports indicate that severe weather is forecast, the school will endeavour to get all children to go home by 3.30 p.m. so that parents do not have to battle to school in darkness and through bad weather. Being a

boarding school, we have rarely needed to close the school, but have the following procedures in place should the need arise. If you hear nothing, you can safely assume that 'we are open'.

A company called Xpedite provides a service whereby one telephone call from me to them results in you all being called instantly with my recorded message. The service also sends me a status report indicating which parents had and had not answered the call, or where messages had been left on answer-phones, so that we could then follow these up as necessary by alternative means. We automatically send Xpedite your contact telephone numbers. Should you not wish for us to do so, please let us know. If you have not received details of this system, please ask at the School Reception Office.

Website

The Ashfold website www.ashfoldschool.co.uk contains a copy of the current Fasti, a copy of this handbook and directions for away matches.

Weekend Commitments

Although there is no formal school at weekends, some school events have to take place then, such as our Open Mornings, matches against a few schools and tournaments. These dates are always published in the Fasti and we ask that you support us by ensuring that your child is able to attend these events.

Wigan Run

Each Summer term all children take part in a school cross-country run around the grounds. Different length courses are run for children of different ages. It is a great opportunity for you to support your child, so we do encourage you to attend. Children go home after it, so if you can't attend, please be aware that school finishes after the race at 4.00 p.m.