Welcome to Upper School - Sept 2026

"Our core aim is to enable every learner in our community to be the writer of their own unique story."

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"To ensure our students are equipped and prepared to flourish in the 21st century."

Guy Claxton

- Academically
- Socially
- Physically
- Spiritually and morally
- Economically
- Creatively

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Aiming to achieve - students

- Each student achieves their full potential.
- This is most impacted by attendance and behaviours in the classroom – the way in which students work:
- Calm classroom.
- Key habits that will offer best chance of success.
- Plan in place for post 16.

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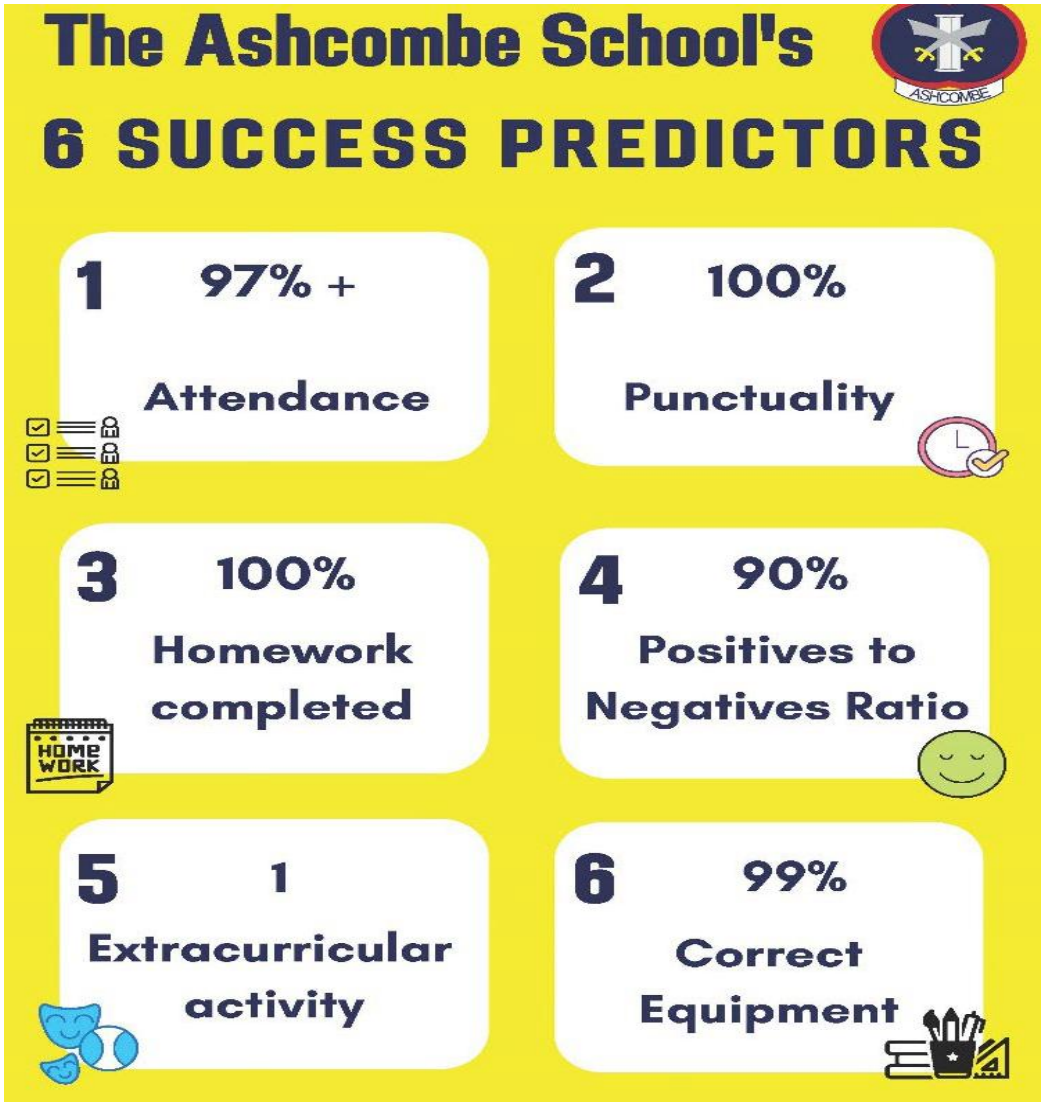
Aiming to achieve - school

- That we understand and support all students.
- Proud of our pastoral system and its emphasis on positive relationships between students and staff.
- Creating a culture where students are seen as individuals and know we are here to support them no matter what.
- To know the barriers that each student and family may be facing with any issues.
- SEND as an important factor.

Aiming to achieve - school

- To have an inclusive approach to offer kindness, care and support.
- This, along with our PSHE, safeguarding, mental health and wellbeing programme, ensuring students and parents know we are here to support and in turn allow students to access school.

Ashcombe Success Predictors



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Attendance and punctuality

- Students need to be in tutor room/assembly for 8.45am; after this they will be marked as late
- Late sign-in must be completed at Student Services after 9.15a.m. We will issue sanctions for persistent lateness.
- Turning up on time is a life skill and gets lessons off to a good start.
- We are here to support students who are absent for some time in returning to school successfully.
- Attendance and punctuality is part of a Sixth Form/college reference
- Colleges/Sixth Form will expect 97%+ Less than this may impact upon firm offers for post-16 and will impact learning.
- Direct correlation shown in August 2026 results between attendance and grade outcomes.

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Attendance and punctuality

- Regular attendance is fundamental for academic success and personal growth at Ashcombe.
- It helps students stay engaged, establish routines, and develop responsibility.
- Attendance fosters a positive learning environment and enhances social interaction among peers.

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Reminder of times

08.45 – 09.15 registration

09.20 – 10.30 Lesson 1

10.35 – 11.45 Lesson 2

11.45 – 12.15 Break

12.15 – 13.25 Lesson 3

13.25 – 14.05 Lunch

14.05 – 15.15 Lesson 4

Clubs start at 3.30pm and end at 4.30pm or 5pm.

Homework Club finishes at 4.30pm

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Arbor – Attendance & Behaviour

- Arbor provides students and parents with attendance and behaviour information. Homework is set and submitted on Microsoft Teams.
- You can log in via the parent app on your phone or any web browser.
- Further information is available on the school website.
- Please email passwords@ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk for help.

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Why homework matters

- Homework completion is crucial to success at GCSE. It builds on class learning and allows students to practice what they have learnt.
- Homework is usually linked to classwork, but it has been proven that spaced learning and returning to topics improves learning.
- Homework tasks include NEA assessment work, contributing to the final grade. This work must be their own.
- Departments plan homework carefully to ensure both content and exam skills are covered.

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Microsoft Teams - Homework

- Key Stage 4 – each piece of homework should take approximately 60 minutes, totalling around nine hours a week.
- All subjects in Years 10 and 11 set homework weekly – eight or nine pieces, some spanning several weeks as project work.
- May be set as one substantial piece of work.
- **All homework is set as assignments on Microsoft Teams – not Arbor. Students manage their own assignment list and mark work as submitted.**
- A Homework Concern is logged on Arbor if homework is regularly not completed; a detention is cancelled if the work is completed before it.
- Parents will receive a weekly digest email listing submitted, late and upcoming assignments. We are in the process of setting this up.
- Students will know if, and when, the homework links to an internal assessment.

Uniform

Link to uniform expectations:

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Key points:

- Shirt and tie **OR** polo shirt.
- School jumper is now round neck dark-navy sweatshirt.
- Girls – dark navy-blue skirt – pleated, not-rolled, knee or dark navy-blue calf length or black trousers
- Jewellery is not permitted except for 1 plain gold or silver stud earring in the lower part of the ear. Any other facial or body piercings are **NOT** permitted, e.g. nose, lip or eyebrow.

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Mobile phones

- We recommend that mobile phones are not brought to school as they are not essential.
- New legislation introduced for mobile phone use in schools.
- Mobile phones must be switched off as soon as the student enters the school site and **not seen on site.**
- **They must be placed in bags, not pockets.**
- Students who need their phone for pre-approved medical needs such as diabetes monitoring may still use their phone.
- They are only to be switched on or checked **once off the school site.**

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Mobile phones

- **Mobile phones should not be in pockets during GCSE exams – this can invalidate the exam even if they are off.**

- If a parent needs to send an urgent message to their child, then please contact the school and staff will pass on the message.

- If a phone is seen it will be confiscated and a lunchtime detention issued. If the incident is the first time, students may collect the phone at end of day.
- For any subsequent confiscations parents/guardians must collect the phone from the school office (closes at 4.30pm).
- Refusal to hand in the phone to a member of staff will mean internal isolation.

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Starting the GCSE journey

- Just begun the journey towards the GCSE exams and post 16 courses.
- Students must feel they can do it and be successful. This comes from encouragement from school and home backed by incremental improvements.
- Students who have secured their plans can be more motivated but it's fine not to know!
- **We would recommend attending the Careers Fair on 22nd September.**
- The school calendar page on the website will give you an overview of the year, including assessments.
- There will be times of pressure during the year, but planning will help.
- The teachers will support students. Please do contact us. Ms Ramsdale (Head of Year) and the form tutors who are keen to help.
- We have a dedicated team of staff working on student progress led by Mr Robinson.

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The two-year course

- Two-year course with final exams in 2028.
- Chosen subjects they enjoy.
- **No subject changes after 16th September.**
- **Unable to drop subjects** later in years 10 and 11.
- Targets will be set later in Year 10.

- Might be worried by expectations and pressure (mostly that they put on themselves).
- “Marathon not a sprint”.
- Keep in contact with tutors and Ms Ramsdale if concerned.
- Triangular relationship lets students succeed.

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What do the GCSEs look like?

- Terminal exams for most subjects. The majority are written exams will be held in Ranmore Hall
- Some have NEA (non-examined assessment) during the course which forms part of final grade.
- Students will know if the work is part of their NEA.

- Can be multiple exams on a day – **we cannot change these times as they are set by the exam board.**

- Mocks will also have multiple exams on a day to help get the students used to this pressure.
- Mocks are run with same GCSE exams behaviour expectations.

- Year 10 assessments in January and June 2027
- Year 11 assessments in December 2027

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Tiered entry

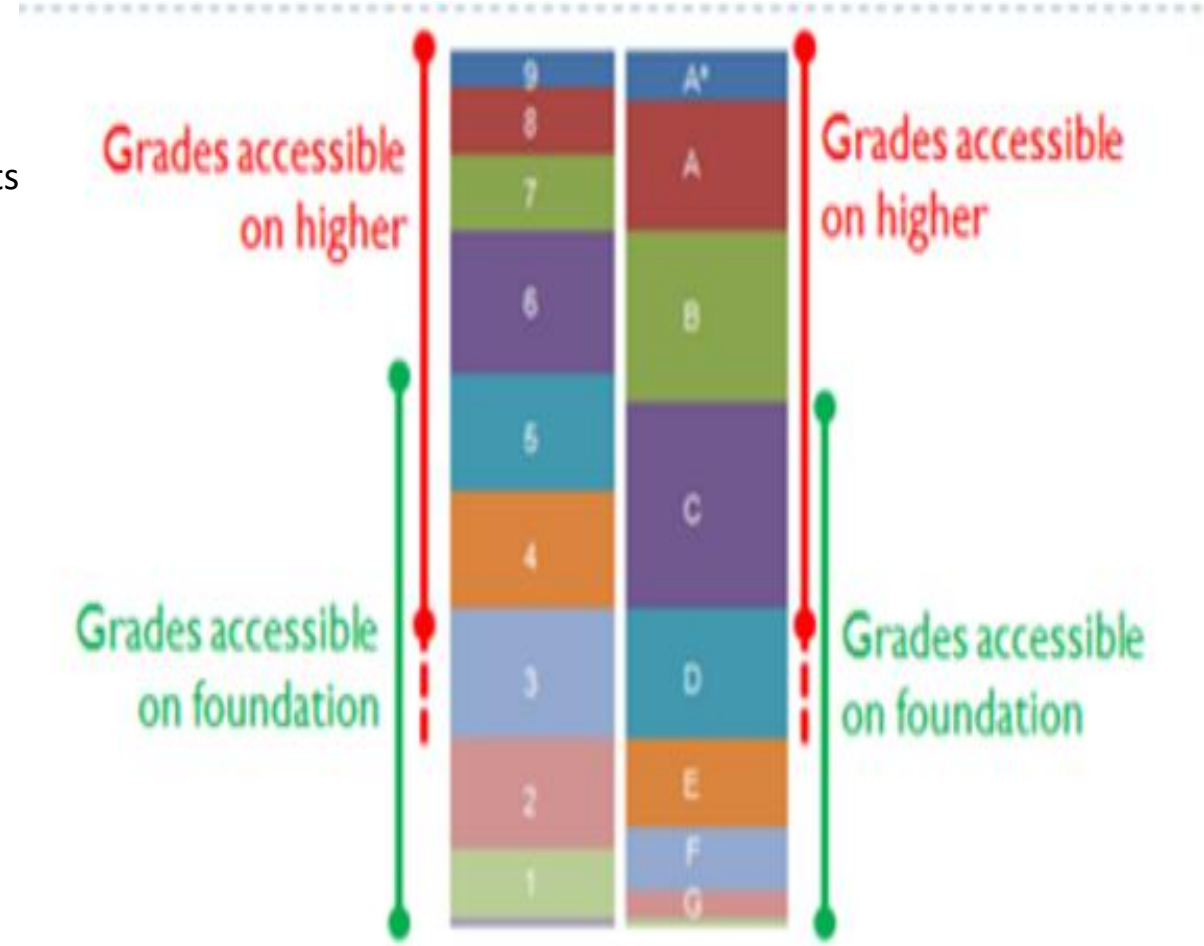
- **Tiered levels of entry for GCSE exams**

- The following subjects have tiered exam papers for students to sit either the higher or foundation papers.

- Science
- Maths
- French, German, Spanish, Italian

- The HOD will decide which paper a student is entered for based on their progress during their time in Upper School.

- Higher Paper – Grades 9-4
  Foundation Paper – Grades 1-5



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Wellbeing

- Whilst we want pupils to succeed, we also want them to be happy and healthy.
- Please let us know if you are worried about any changes and we will help as much as possible.
- Challenge any change that concerns you.
- Some will be “teenage behaviour”, but some may be more concerning.
- We will do another evening on revision and specific year 11 stresses (on both student and parent!)

- Link to wellbeing information on school website https://www.ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk/Wellbeing/

Social events

- As a school we firmly believe in the value of extra-curricular trips and will do all that we can to ensure that these are a feature of Upper School.
- Generally, criteria based for non-curricular trips.
- However, we do need to balance this with the cost-of-living crisis and entitlement for all students.
- If finances are a concern, please contact Ms Gray, in confidence.

Extracurricular

- Timetable of extracurricular clubs for all subjects will be sent home as soon as possible.
- Encourage all to become involved with at least one club.
- Information regarding clubs and an up-to-date extracurricular timetable will be on the school website.

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Upcoming events

- On Head's weekly letter
- Link to school calendar
- https://www.ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk/Calendar/
- Yr10 parents evening Tuesday 24th November, virtual

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Working together

- Contacts:

Deputy Head (Curriculum) – Mr Simmonds

simmonds.jay@ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk

Pastoral – Head of Year, Ms Ramsdale

ramsdale.stephanie@ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk

Assistant Head (Pastoral) Head of Upper School - Ms Gray

gray.pam@ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk

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Thank you

- Thank you for the support
- Please do get in touch if you have concerns or questions

- The PowerPoint will be uploaded to the school website.