

# Years 7 and 8 Information Handbook



**2021**Aspiring to Excellence

#### Welcome

Each year of schooling brings exciting new opportunities and challenges and we encourage all students to be inquisitive and get involved in the school. Students should be familiar with this handbook and then ask questions of staff and older students to learn more about the School and the programs specific to their new year-level.

School is much more than attending classes and doing academic work. Students who are well informed and determined to involve themselves in the many opportunities provided for them at school are most likely to enjoy their time at school and achieve the greatest success.

Mr. Lukas Silver
Assistant Principal: Head of Secondary

Information Evening: Wednesday 3 February, 7pm the Lyceum Centre

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#### Using this Booklet

This booklet provides our students and families with information, which will assist the transition into the first two years of secondary school. The booklet helps to streamline the Parent Information Evening, held in the first week of Term One.

Please email any questions you have, as stipulated in the covering letter, by Friday 22 January 2021, as your questions will form the basis of the Parent Information Evening.

Mr. Lukas Silver: <a href="mailto:ls@ags.vic.edu.au">ls@ags.vic.edu.au</a>

The Principal, **Dr. Vivianne Nikou**, Assistant Principal Head of Secondary **Mr. Lukas Silver** and Transition Coordinator, **Mrs. Priya Wilson**, will respond to your questions at the Information Evening.

#### General Information

Years 7 and 8 are critically important years for students as they transition to secondary school and establish good habits that will set them up for success along their secondary school journey. The single, biggest change the students notice at secondary level is that they work with a different teacher in each learning area. Students at secondary level are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and manage their time accordingly. This includes completing all work requirements, homework and meeting all work deadlines.

Students who establish sound study habits and a positive approach to learning in Years 7 and 8 will set themselves up for future success at school. Homework is a regular element of the learning program and students are expected to meet their regular homework requirements.

Students in Years 7 and 8 are to participate in the scheduled sport and co-curricular programs. This includes the School's house program and experiential learning program. These activities are compulsory and form an integral part of an Alphington Grammar School education.

#### Senior Staff

#### Assistant Principal: Mr. Lukas Silver LS@ags.vic.edu.au

Mr. Silver is responsible for the pastoral care of all secondary students with the support of the Heads of House. Mr. Silver is also responsible for the delivery of the school's academic program with the support of the Heads of Faculty.

#### Transition Coordinator: Mrs. Priya Wilson PW@ags.vic.edu.au

Mrs. Wilson is responsible for the transition of students from primary school (Alphington Grammar School and other primary schools) into Secondary School.

#### The House System

All students are allocated a house. The four houses are **Aristotle** (blue), **Byron** (gold), **Pericles** (red) and **Socrates** (green). The House program underpins the pastoral care system of the School. It also facilitates house competitions in sport and co-curricular activities, as well as supporting nominated charities in the broader community. The four houses are led by a house team comprising the Head of House, House Mentors, House Captains (Years 11 and 12) and Future Leaders (Years 9 and 10).

	ARISTOTLE	BYRON	PERICLES	SOCRATES
HEAD OF	Toula Terezakis	Andrew Diviny	Con Papoulis	Trevor Adams
HOUSE	TTE@ags.vic.edu.au	AD@ags.vic.edu.au	CP@ags.vic.edu.au	TA@ags.vic.edu.au
MENTOR	Anna Milburn	Cameron Stone	Christina Katsifolis	Denise
HOUSE ROOM	Room B 101	Room B 216	Room B 206	Diakodimitriou
				Room B 207
MENTOR HOUSE ROOM	Ming Lei Room B 102	Samantha Evangelista Room B 215	Helen Mallis Room B 203	Matthew Logan Room B 209
	_	Evangelista		Matthew Logan

#### **Heads of House**

The Heads of House are responsible for the pastoral and academic welfare of students in their house, supported by the House Mentors who are responsible for the daily pastoral needs of students in their House Room. All routine enquiries and communication should be directed to your House Mentor. The House staff work in collaboration with the families of their students to deliver a coordinated approach with regard to student welfare and academic support.

#### The House System

#### **House Activities**

Alphington Grammar School promotes a strong House Competition between the four houses. Students in Years 7 to 12 compete in a range of house activities throughout the year, including:

- Athletics
- Bake Off
- Charity Fundraising
- Cross Country
- Debating
- Futsal Competition
- Swimming
- Music
- Trivia Competition

#### Wellbeing

Student wellbeing is a high priority for the School. The School's Vertical House pastoral care structure underpins the student wellbeing program with the support of the School Nurse and the Exceptionality Team, comprising relevant members of the School Management Team, The Heads of House and School Psychologist.

#### **Mentor Program**

The School runs a Mentoring Program as part of the Transition Program for Year 7 students. The program provides a support mechanism for Year 7 students led by senior students, which also affords these students an opportunity to utilise their leadership skills. Students can apply for the position of Future Leader in Years 9 and 10. Future Leaders work closely with Year 7 students as they transition to secondary school and have the opportunity to attend Years 7 or 8 camp where their academic commitments allow.



The A.L.P.H.A Initiative (Advanced Learning Programs for High Achievers)

At Alphington Grammar, academic acceleration and extension opportunities are a crucial element of our curriculum. To cater for and extend our most able, high achieving students we created the A.L.P.H.A Initiative at Years 7 and 8. This program encourages and stimulates the talents of our students, sharpens their critical thinking and problem solving skills, refines their leadership capabilities and extends their philosophical and intellectual understanding of the world in which they live.

The program is a select entry program where nominated students who fulfil specific criteria take part in an interview process to qualify for entry. Identification occurs through formal assessments (internal and external), student performance, and direct referrals from a student's subject teacher. Selection of Year 7 ALPHA students will take place in the first four weeks with the program commencing in week 5 of Term 1.

If you have any questions about the ALPHA Initiative, please direct your queries to **Ms. Samantha Evangelista** <u>se@ags.vic.edu.au</u>.

#### **Learning Support**

We also run a variety of support lessons from Year 7 through to Year 12. Students can be withdrawn from classes to receive one-on-one language support with our Senior Tutor or they can receive inclass support with one of our Learning Support Teachers. Learning support is determined using teacher referral, current assessment and our prior knowledge of the student, including NAPLAN and PAT testing. If you have any questions about Learning Support, please direct your queries to Ms. Michelle Yarnton, Head of Support MY@ags.vic.edu.au.

#### Homework

Homework in secondary school is considerably different to what students have experienced in primary school. It is important that students establish productive study habits early in their secondary learning. By the time they reach Year 12, an average homework load in VCE could be in excess of 3 hours per night. Homework may sometimes be a continuation of the work carried out in class or further independent research. The more effectively your child works in class, the less burdensome homework tasks will be.

It is the students' responsibility to record homework in their diaries and refer to Schoolbox to monitor any assigned homework, in order to maintain an effective schedule and ensure that all homework is completed on time.

Year 7 students should expect to complete an average of 45 minutes of homework per night, whereas a Year 8 student will average 60 minutes per night. If, for any reason, homework is not completed, the assigning teacher should be emailed informing them of the situation.

Homework should always extend and build upon the learning that takes place in class; it will not be set without careful planning by the teacher so its completion is essential for optimum performance.

# Year 7 Homework Schedule



## Year 8 Homework Schedule



#### **Homework Club**

Homework clubs run three times per week after school from 3:45 -5:00 pm in the library. Each core subject (English/EAL, Math and Science) is represented at the Homework Club and is staffed by a subject specialist. Please encourage your child to attend. The teacher is available for specific subject assistance but also to assist in designing a homework timetable for the student.

Day	Subject
Tuesday	Maths
Wednesday	Science/EAL
Thursday	English/Greek/Humanities

#### Co-Curricular Experiential Learning

#### **AGS Enrichment Program**

The Enrichment Program in the Secondary School complements the broad, dynamic classroom curriculum, whilst also offering students the opportunity to immerse themselves in an array of character-building programs. We encourage all students to explore the many activities on offer, in order to broaden their knowledge, learn a new skill and get to know students from across different year levels.

An AGS Enrichment Fair will run during the first week of school providing students with the opportunity to not only learn more about the programs on offer, but to also sign up to participate. The activities will span the areas of music and performing arts, dance, sport, games, debating, STEM Club and many more. An Enrichment Program timetable will be released at the start of Term 1. All students in Years 7 and 8 are expected to meet the minimum requirements for enrichment points each semester. Each student must accumulate 20 enrichment points per semester.

Student Name:	Year :	Year :	
Activity	When	Points	
Orchestra	Monday before school and Wednesday lunchtime	10	
Running Club	Tuesday before school	5	
Robotic Club	Friday lunchtime	5	

At the end of each academic year, students will receive a **Certificate of Enrichment Achievement** by fulfilling their 20 co-curricular points per semester. A **Certificate of Enrichment Excellence** will be awarded to students who have obtained an excess of 40 co-curricular points per semester. Students are expected to be engaged participants in their chosen activity, and in order to satisfy their enrichment tally of points an attendance rate of 90% must be maintained.

The program will offer a bespoke experience for each student and an opportunity to develop lifelong skills.

#### Inter-school Sport

All students from Years 7 to 11 are involved in our inter-school sport competition.

Alphington Grammar School is a member of the EISM (Eastern Independent Schools of Melbourne), which incorporates many schools in the eastern part of Melbourne. The competition includes weekly sport against other EISM schools, along with the annual swimming, athletics and cross-country carnivals. Only approved school sports apparel is to be worn for school sports training and interschool competitions. Parents are asked to ensure their child has the approved uniform. EISM regulations require all participants to be correctly dressed or forfeiture may apply.

#### Outdoor Education

All students in Years 7 and 8 are involved in the Outdoor Education Program. They attend a five-day camp once a year. The camp provides students with the opportunity to step outside their comfort zone and challenge themselves by trying new things.

#### Year 7 Camp

Dates: 29 November – 3 December 2021

Location: Marysville
Activities include:

- Climbing
- Abseiling
- Hiking
- Mountain Biking
- Overnight Campout (setting up tents, cooking etc. this is a lead up to Year 8 camp where they camp in tents all week)
- Low Ropes Course
- Archery

#### Year 8 Camp

Dates: 11 - 15 October 2021

Location: Lake Eildon

#### Activities:

- Rafting
- Mountain Biking
- Overnight Survivor
- Students are independent and required to set up their own tents, help with cooking and cleaning. They are required to navigate and hike to the activities each day.

#### Understanding the Timetable

At Alphington Grammar School, we operate a two-week (10-day) cycle so it is important that students know which day they are working on. Week 1 consists of Days 1 to 5 and Week 2 consists of Days 6 to 10.

Your child's House Mentor will be able to guide them through any issues, as will Student Leaders and older students. One of the benefits of the Vertical House System is that more experienced students are always available to assist junior students.

#### '16 Habits of Mind'

Underpinning all of our programs are the *16 Habits of Mind* that we first introduce in the Primary Years. We believe these 16 problem solving, life related skills are essential for our students to effectively manage living and working in the world they encounter at the end of their journey here.

The habits of mind provide each student with the ability to work through real life situations and provide them with the skills needed to be well-rounded, socially responsible adults.

- Persisting
- Managing Impulsivity
- Listening with Understanding and Empathy
- Thinking Flexibly
- Thinking about Thinking (Metacognition)
- Striving for Accuracy
- Questioning and Posing Problems
- Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations
- Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision
- Gathering Data through All Senses
- Creating, Imagining, Innovating
- Responding with Wonderment and Awe
- Taking Responsible Risks
- Finding Humour
- Thinking Interdependently
- Remaining Open to Continuous Learning

These skills are introduced to students through our pastoral care program, and are embedded within each subject area.

#### **School Absences**

If students are unexpectedly absent from school, e.g. due to illness, parents/parent liaisons are requested to contact School Administration prior to 8.45am to register and provide a reason for the absence.

For planned absences from school, parents/parent liaisons are asked to write to the Head of House requesting leave of absence for the relevant dates, and providing a reason for the absence.

Parents/parent liaisons should be aware that requests for leave during the school term are strongly discouraged. The resultant disruption caused to the academic program can affect the learning of the student. Students are responsible for keeping up with all classwork and homework set via Schoolbox.

#### ICT in the Classroom

All students and parents are required to sign the 'ICT Acceptable Use' policy, which outlines the guidelines associated with using our school network.

#### Mobile Phones and Other Devices

Students can bring mobile phones to school; however, Mobile phones are NOT permitted in classes.

Students in Years 7 will receive their laptop on the first day of Term 1 2021. All other year groups will bring their laptops or other personal devices to school for academic use. Students will take responsibility for their own belongings. Alphington Grammar School requires students to use electronic devices responsibly at all times.

#### Labelling Uniform Items and Books

The School asks parents to ensure that all items of personal property are appropriately labelled. This includes all books and items of school uniform.

#### Lockers

All secondary students are issued with a locker and a lock. Lockers are located in House areas. Students are responsible for the security of their own belongings and for ensuring lockers are neat and tidy. All Schoolbags must be stored in the student's locker.

#### School Bulletin and Newsletter

The School Bulletin and School Newsletter are emailed to all families, staff and students. They operate on a fortnightly cycle during the term, with the Bulletin distributed one week and the School Newsletter the other week.

The School Bulletin contains notices, and important dates to remember, detailing upcoming excursions and incursions, as well as reminders of any other upcoming events around the school.

Parents have a responsibility to read the School Bulletin, and take note of any events or activities that may be coming up for their child. The bulletin is emailed fortnightly on a Wednesday.

The School Newsletter - *Alpha News* details the stories of news and events that have taken place around the school that week, including photos of events, stories about excursions and camps, as well as a regular feature from our Principal, and other Senior Staff. The Newsletter is emailed fortnightly on a Friday.

#### **School Reports**

Reporting student learning and progress is a fundamental element of education and is currently going through significant developments. Schools are now able to harness technology to improve the delivery of reporting in real time. At Alphington Grammar School, we have moved away from the traditional model of one report at the end of each semester, to a more continuous method of communicating attainment and progress to students and parents; known as 'Progressive Reporting'.

Progressive Reporting refers to the practice of reporting in regular installments throughout the year. Typically, at key moments throughout the semester, teachers provide updated assessment feedback, which is uploaded to Schoolbox and made visible to students and parents.

The main benefit in Progressive Reporting is the timely manner in which work is submitted, assessed and meaningful feedback supplied to students and parents. Reporting at the end of the semester is often seen as 'too late' to remediate any learning issues or deploy additional support.

The following information is designed to assist parents with:

- Navigating Schoolbox to access the Progressive Reporting Domain.
- Understanding Assessment Schedules and the amount of assessments per semester and per subject.

This will vary due to the nature of the subject requirements.

Interpreting the scores and level of progress.

Instructions on how to view student grades on Schoolbox can be found in **Appendix 1.** You will receive an Interim Report in Terms 1 and 3, which coincide with Parent/Teacher interviews. The Interim Report is a one-page snapshot of your child's progress in every subject.

If you need any help accessing Schoolbox, please contact the **Campus Administrator**, **Mr John Savopoulos JS@ags.vic.edu.au** 

#### **Progressive Reporting**

#### Formal Assessment and Reports

In addition to formative (ongoing) feedback and assessment given in the classroom, students will have several formal assessments for each of their subjects over the course of a semester.

In place of Semester Reports, this format will provide students and parents with detailed, ongoing feedback about progress throughout the semester. In addition, students' learning skills, in class behaviour and organisation will be assessed via an end-of-semester, chart of indicators.

Given the differing requirements of each learning area, the number and types of formal, reportable assessments for each subject will vary, as detailed in later sections of this document.

#### Types of formal assessments

Theoretical knowledge and practical skills in subjects may be assessed through any combination of:

- Assignments
- Essays
- IT related tasks
- Posters
- Practical reports
- Practice exams
- Presentations
- Tests

Students in years 9 and above also sit Semester Exams.

#### Types of scores and feedback

All assessment scores will be given primarily as a percentage score. A weighted average of these scores form the overall grade the student receives for the subject.

In addition to their scores, students will receive diagnostic feedback on their submissions. Both percentage scores and feedback will be published on Schoolbox and visible to students and parents.

#### Frequency of assessment: Years 7 - 10

The table below shows the minimum number of formal assessments which will be set and published on Schoolbox for subjects in each of the learning areas, per semester. For years 9 and 10 students, this can also include the end of Semester Exam.

Learning area	Minimum number of Assessments
English, Humanities and Social Sciences	2
Health and Physical Education	2
Languages other than English	2
Music and Performing Arts	2
Physical Education	2
Science, technology, Engineering and Maths	2

#### Frequency of assessment: VCE

This will be dictated by the VCAA specified requirements for each subject. SATs/SACs are posted as 'due work', so that staff can provide feedback. We post SAT/SAC results plus Semester Exam results, including grades in percentages. Please note that SAC/SAT scores are subject to change due to statistical moderation.

#### Parent/Teacher/Student Interviews

Parent/Teacher/Student Interviews scheduled for late Term 1 and early Term 3 will be conducted on Microsoft Teams. Five minute interviews are scheduled with all classroom teachers, on the request of parents. Follow up meetings can be arranged as required.

#### Parent Involvement

Whilst it may appear that there are diminishing opportunities for parents to be involved once your child is in secondary school, there are many opportunities to become involved at Alphington Grammar School.

The School has a very active Parents and Friends Association (PFA). The PFA meets monthly during the term and new parents are always welcome. The date of each meeting is published in the weekly newsletter. The AGM of the PFA occurs in February, and during this meeting, the committee is formed for the coming year – new members are always welcome.

The PFA operates the school's Second Hand Uniform Shop, and relies on parents to volunteer their time to ensure its viability.

The PFA works in support of the school programs, helping stage school community events throughout the year and raise valuable funds to assist with special projects, which support the learning program.

#### **Commonly Asked Questions and Answers**

#### What time should I arrive at school each morning?

Students arrive at school each morning between 8.30am and 8.40am, in order to be ready to attend House Room at 8.45am.

#### What is House Room?

A daily timetabled pastoral session, attended by all students in their allocated house group, facilitated by the House Mentor. These meetings serve many purposes, including the maintenance of school attendance records, dissemination of key information regarding school programs, they also provide opportunities for regular contact with house staff, and student leaders who are play a critical role in the daily care of all students.

#### What happens if I am late to school?

Students are expected in House Room at 8.45am each morning. If students arrive at school after 8.45am but before 9.00am, they must move directly to House Room where they will be registered as 'late' by their House Mentor. If students arrive at school after 9.00am, they must report to School Administration and sign in prior to attending class. Students are not permitted to attend class without first attending House Room (prior to 9.00am) or, signing in at School Administration (after 9.00am). Please note that repeated late arrival to school will result in sanctions being imposed on students.

#### What if I need to leave school early for an appointment?

Please note that while it may at times be unavoidable, medical appointments should not be routinely scheduled during the school day. If there is a need for students to leave school during the school day, parents/guardians must contact the Head of House to request early leave, giving a reason for the early departure. Students leaving during the day or before the end of the school day will need to sign out at School Administration.

#### Where do Years 7 and 8 students play at recess and lunchtime?

Years 7 and 8 students are permitted to play on the outdoor courts and on the oval (unless advised to the contrary). Students are encouraged to move outside during their break times as eating is not permitted inside the buildings.

Appropriate areas are provided for students to play ball games. Kicking of balls is not permitted on the outdoor courts due to the potential danger posed to other users of this common area.

Students are expected to be mindful of noise levels when playing in the immediate vicinity of primary classrooms as the primary school operate on a different timetable.

#### Whom can I speak with if I have a problem?

There are a number of people available to students to speak with if they are experiencing a problem.

Future Leaders are Years 9 and 10 student leaders who work closely with staff and House Captains in support of students and the leadership of the house. They also work closely with Year 7 students as they transition to secondary school.

**House Captains** are Year 11 and 12 students who, along with house staff, have significant responsibility for the care of students and the leadership of the house.

The **House Mentor** is responsible for the daily pastoral needs of the students in their House Room.

The **Transition Coordinator** supports the transition of Year 7 students from primary school to secondary school.

The **Head of House** is responsible for the pastoral and academic welfare of the students in their House.

The **Exceptionality Team** includes the School Psychologists, working alongside the Principal, Assistant Principal / Head of Secondary, Assistant Principal / Teaching and Learning, the Heads of House and other appropriately qualified support staff.

#### What happens on bad weather days?

Indoor areas are available to students on bad weather days. Teaching staff will advise students of these alternative arrangements.

#### Are there areas of the school, which are Out of Bounds?

The following areas are out of bounds for students, unless directly supervised by a member of staff:

- all classrooms at break times
- the Gym (Hall) unless directly supervised by a teacher
- staff work areas and offices
- equipment storage areas
- playground areas designated for primary age students
- car parking areas
- all areas outside the school fence or boundary

#### What if I feel unwell or, suffer an injury during the school day?

Students who feel unwell or suffer an injury during the school day are to report to the Health Centre at the rear of Flowerdale. The School Nurse and the School Psychologist are both located in the Health Centre. If the Health Centre is unattended, students should report to School Administration. All school staff are required to have first aid training. Students who are unwell may be sent home during the school day after parents have been contacted. Students are not permitted to leave school during the school day due to illness or injury without the approval of the School Nurse and/ or their Head of House.

#### Where are toilets located?

Toilets for students are located in the Secondary Building and also in the Andrianakos Centre. The Andrianakos Centre toilets/changing rooms can be accessed externally as well as from inside the building.

#### What if I lose an item of personal property at school?

Students who lose an item of personal property should report this immediately to their Class Teacher (if relevant), followed by their House Mentor. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own belongings. All items of personal property should be clearly labelled with the student's name. Lockers and locks are provided to all students to support this. Lost property is located in the School Canteen. Please speak to one of the School Administration team if you need assistance.

#### How does the school communicate with parents?

Alphington Grammar School produces a fortnightly school newsletter, which is distributed to all school families by email on Fridays during the school term. All letters and other pertinent information regarding school programs are distributed via email our fortnightly School Bulletin on Wednesdays during term.

#### Will I have Incursions and Excursions?

Incursions and excursions are arranged to support the academic and co-curricular program and form a compulsory part of the curriculum. Parents are requested to sign their consent for students to attend these events at the beginning of each school year. All incursions and excursions are subject to a rigorous process of approval by the Assistant Principal/ Teaching and Learning. This includes provision for appropriate staff supervision of students and all health and safety requirements.

#### Where can I go if I need to print work or use the photocopier?

The School provides facilities for printing and photocopying for students. These facilities are now available in the computer laboratories and also in Flowerdale. Students are required to use their Student ID Card to access these facilities.

#### How should I wear my school uniform?

Students are expected to wear their school uniform correctly and with pride. Parents are asked to maintain the school uniform and ensure that it adequately fits the student as they grow. As part of the winter uniform, students are required to wear their blazer to and from school each day, the school jumper is not to be worn as the outer garment. The top button of the school shirt must be done up. School ties should be worn correctly with the knot worn at the neck. The school shirt should be tucked in during lessons. Blazers may also be required for other special occasions, as advised by House Staff.

#### What is an Infringement?

An Infringement is a minor sanction issued to a student by House staff or teachers for a breach of school uniform or punctuality requirements.

#### Where is the Homework Club?

Homework club takes place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons during the school term from 3:50PM until 5:00PM. The location is the library.

#### What is Yard Duty?

Yard Duty is a sanction issued to a student by a teacher for a minor breach of student behavioral expectations.

#### What is a Detention?

A Detention is a sanction issued to a student by a teacher for a breach of student behavioral expectations. A Friday Detention is a sanction issued to a student by the Heads of House/Heads of Faculty for a serious breach of student behavioral expectations.

A Saturday Detention is a sanction issued to a student by the Assistant Principal / Head of Secondary or Assistant Principal / Teaching and Learning for repeat transgressions, and for students who fail to attend compulsory school events, without adequate notice or parental permission.

# **Alphington Grammar School**

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