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Principal

## ARLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

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July 30, 2025

Dear Arlington High School Families,

As I write this letter launching the 2025-26 school year, it is a beautiful July day with heavy machinery rolling back and forth by my window. We are excited to wrap up this 10-year construction journey. There has been so much change and growth at Arlington High School over these past ten years, as the new building supports our vision of engagement, belonging, and educational opportunity. I look forward to another exciting year of studying and sharing together. Many thanks to the custodians, administrative assistants, teachers, facilities staff, and administrators who work over the summer to ensure a smooth start to the new school year!

**Using this Letter.** There's a lot in this letter. Please take time to review the information. We will also review key information with students and will send email reminders. We have emailed this letter to our caregivers (parents, guardians, and caregivers) and students. The letter will be posted on our website (<https://ahs.arlington.k12.ma.us/>). We will also send a hard copy mailing with important information. Because there is a lot of information to cover, much of this letter contains links which work best in the digital version.

If you need printouts or translation, please contact Morgan Cummings (781-316-3658).

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## Back to School Schedule and Building Information

### New Deans and Counselors at AHS

After their teachers, a student's primary sources of support are their Dean and School Counselor. As we begin the new school year, we are pleased to share several important updates to our student support team.

As Arlington High School continues to grow—with enrollment now reaching approximately 1,750 students—we have added a fourth Dean of Students and an eighth School Counselor to strengthen our ability to support all students. With these changes, students will now be grouped into four house assignments, and counselor caseloads have been adjusted to ensure more personalized support.

- [Counselor and Dean Assignments](#) – [Find your student's assigned Dean and Counselor here.](#)
- [Deans' Welcome Letter](#) – Important information on attendance, reporting absences and dismissals, and school-wide policies is outlined in the [2025–26 Deans' Welcome Letter](#).
- [School Counseling Website](#) – Learn more about scheduling appointments and accessing resources on the [AHS School Counseling Website](#).

### Farewell & Gratitude

After 29 years at AHS, **Dean Rob DiLoreto** is departing to become Vice Principal and Head Football Coach at Everett High School. We thank him for his dedication and wish him the very best—he will always be a part of the Spy Ponder family.

We also say goodbye to **Counselors Karen Botcheller and Amy Lyons**. We are deeply grateful for their many years of service to our students and families, and we wish them well in their next endeavors.

### **New Hires & Expanded Support**

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to our student support team:

- **Amanda Donohue and Scott Darlington** will serve as our third and fourth Deans. Amanda previously worked as a Special Education Team Chair, and Scott served as Interim Assistant Principal last year.
- **June Choi, Samantha Ferrari, and Sarah Gormally** join our counseling department, bringing us to a total of eight School Counselors.

The three new counselors will serve students in grades 9–11 using the standard alphabetical assignment model. Seniors who were previously assigned to Karen or Amy have been reassigned among the new counselors. This smaller caseload will allow for more focused support during the college and post-secondary planning process.

### **Student Schedules**

Student schedules will be released in the PowerSchool Parent Portal on or around August 19, 2025. We will send an email notification once they are available. Please note: any schedules visible before this date may not be accurate.

Schedule changes are common during the first weeks of school. School Counselors will be available before and after school starts to address scheduling issues. Changes will be reviewed in phases, beginning with students who have incomplete or incorrect schedules (e.g., missing core classes or insufficient credits). After that, counselors will address elective or level change requests. **We do not make schedule changes based on teacher preference.**

For more information:

- [AHS Schedule Change Process \(Add/Drop\) 2025-26](#) - This document outlines the timeline and process for schedule changes.
- [Counselor Summer Schedule Change Appointments](#) - Information on how to schedule an appointment with your Counselor.

Schedule change support hours:

- August 25 & 26: 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM, *in person*
- August 29: 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM, *via Zoom* (link to be provided)

### **First Day of School**

The school year begins for students on Tuesday, September 2, at 8:30 am and the school day will run from 8:30 am to 2:56 pm. We will follow a modified schedule on the first day of school to allow students to meet their teachers, attend class meetings, and orient themselves to the new school

year. Students in grade 9 should report to the Auditorium at 8:30 am on Tuesday, September 2. Students in grades 10-12 should report to their Advisory Teacher. The modified schedule can be found [HERE](#). Schedules will appear in the [official bell schedule site](#) as will the daily schedule throughout the year.

## Daily Bell Schedule

Arlington High School follows a 5-day, 7-period schedule in which one or two periods drop each day. There is also an X-block and an Advisory period each week. There are periodic variations on the schedule for special events and early release days. These are posted on the high school events calendar and on the official daily bell schedule calendar.

- [Printable Standard Bell Schedule](#)
- [AHS Events Calendar and Daily Bell Schedule](#)
- [APS School Calendar](#) - The district calendar provides an overview of the year.

## School Hours

Students should arrive before 8:30 am in order to have time to reach their 8:30 am classes. The building is open from 7:30 am-4:30 pm, allowing access to the Student Center. The Library is open from 8:00 am-4:30 pm. The Learning Center is open for academic help from 8:30 am-4:00 pm, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and from 8:30 am-3:00 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays.

## First Period Arrivals and Announcements

AHS does not have a daily homeroom. Students are expected to report to their first period class promptly at 8:30 am. The daily announcements will begin at 8:30 am and students will be considered tardy if they arrive in class during announcements. Announcements will also be available on the [Daily Post](#) for those students who don't have a first period class.

## Flexible X-block

The high school schedule includes a flexible X-block. This time is considered school time and is reserved for students to meet with teachers for extra help and assemblies. Classes may be scheduled until 2:56 pm for events. Because the time is unassigned in student schedules, they may also use the time for clubs and other activities. Students should plan ahead to be available during this time on request.

## Cell Phone Policy Update

This year, Arlington High School is tightening up practices around the cell phone policy that was introduced last year. At the start of each class, students will place their phones in a designated classroom caddy or holder. Phones may not remain in pockets, backpacks, or on desks during instructional periods.

Outside of class time—during lunch, passing periods, and before/after school—phone use remains a family and student choice.

This change reflects feedback from students, families, and staff and is designed to increase consistency, reduce distractions, improve focus, and create a more respectful, productive learning environment. Thank you for your support in reinforcing this expectation with your student.

For additional details, please review the letter and FAQ below. You can use this [Policy Questions Form](#) if you have further questions.

- [AHS Cell Phone Policy Update Summer 2025](#)
- [AHS Cell Phone Policy FAQ 2025-26](#)

## Open Campus

In the spring of 2021, we introduced open campus as a way to allow students more options to interact and be outside during the school day. Based on the success of the program, we have continued the practice. With Open Campus, eligible students in grades 10-12 are not required to remain on campus when they have a free period. Students who remain on campus must be in supervised areas (e.g., teacher classroom, study hall, Library, Learning Center, Cafeteria, Cafe) during any unassigned time.

If a student needs more support or supervision, caregivers can contact their Dean so we can arrange for the student to use our Learning Center. We will review eligibility for Open Campus at the end of semester 1 and may extend the privilege to grade 9 students in good standing. See the [Open Campus Guidelines](#) for the details of the program.

## School Supply Recommendation

At the high school level, we don't provide a specific supply list. Instead, we encourage students to **develop a system that works best for them**. If you need advice, please don't hesitate to ask your classroom teachers or academic support teacher. To get started, we suggest students bring the following basic supplies:

- Something to hold handouts (e.g., a large pocket folder)
- Loose paper
- Pen and pencil
- Something to take notes in (loose-leaf paper or a spiral notebook)
- A planner or calendar
- Additionally, we recommend that students purchase a Chromebook or laptop computer that can run Chrome.

After the first week of classes, students will have a better idea of what additional supplies they may need. If you need assistance, please contact your Dean.

## Building Project and Access

The five-year construction project at Arlington High School is scheduled for completion on September 26, 2025. Field and site work will continue into the start of the school year. The final

phase includes a new roadway along Mill Brook Drive and expanded access to campus. Once completed, the school will have two main entrances: one on Massachusetts Avenue and one on Mill Brook Drive. However, the main lane for vehicle drop off remains along Massachusetts Avenue.

Phase 4 focuses on exterior site work, including:

- A new roadway along Mill Brook Drive
- Two full-sized, multi-use turf fields with lighting
- A connector to the Minuteman Bikeway
- A restroom facility near Peirce Field

A community tour of the completed school will be offered in October 2025. For updates and site maps, visit [ahsbuilding.org](https://ahsbuilding.org).

For more information, please refer to:

- [AHS Student Quick Guide – Fall 2025](#)
- [AHS Building Project – Phase 4 FAQ \(August 2025\)](#)

## Back-to-School Support for Families

### Technology and One-to-One Laptop Support

Arlington High School classes operate on a one-to-one laptop model. Teachers plan classes around a one-to-one environment and maintain their assignments on Google Classroom.

We ask all students to bring a Chromebook or any laptop that uses the Chrome browser. At the high school, we are “bring your own device” ([BYOD](#)) meaning that most students provide their own laptop. We can provide Chromebooks to any student who can not provide their own. Please use the link below to request a Chromebook. Please contact Jeff Snyder, [jsnyder@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:jsnyder@arlington.k12.ma.us) or 781-316-3572 for questions.

- [AHS Bring Your Own Device \(BYOD\) Agreement](#)
- [AHS Device Care Agreement](#)
- [AHS Chromebook Loan Request Form 2025-26](#)
  - The previous year’s returns must be complete before new devices are issued.
  - Chromebook requests can be initiated by completing the [Chromebook Request Google Form](#).
  - By completing the form, parents/guardians/students are agreeing to the terms of the [AHS Device Care Agreement](#).
  - Distribution is from Mr. Snyder in room 440C.

### Free School Breakfast and Lunch

We are fortunate that the state of Massachusetts has chosen to maintain the free breakfast and lunch program begun during the pandemic. ALL children are able to get FREE lunch and FREE

breakfast in school. We begin serving breakfast in the cafeteria at 8:00 am. Lunch follows the published lunch schedule.

- [Arlington Food Resource Information 2025-26](#) - Information about Arlington community food resources.

## Nursing Clinic Staff

Sports physicals for Fall sports and grade 10 physicals may be hand delivered to the health office or emailed to [ahs.nurse@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:ahs.nurse@arlington.k12.ma.us). Per the Arlington Public Schools medication policy, all medication accompanied by medication orders should be delivered by a responsible adult to the health office. For anyone wishing to drop off medication/forms or discuss student specific health care needs in advance of the first day of school, the nurses will be available in the health office on August 27 & 28.

## Back to School Communications

### Required Back to School Forms

Arlington Public Schools uses PowerSchool as our student information system to support communication with families. The **PowerSchool Parent Portal** provides access to student schedules, contact information, grades, and more. (Note: Report cards are not mailed home unless requested.)

At the start of each school year, families must **complete the Back-to-School Update** to ensure student information is accurate. You will receive an email with instructions, or you can access the portal directly at: <https://aps.powerschool.com/public/>.

- The update allows you to review and confirm key details, including:
- Student address and parent/guardian contact information
- Emergency contacts
- Student health information, allergies, and medication permissions
- Media permissions, technology agreements, and other district policies
- Note: Arlington High School shares student names and photos in publications to recognize student achievements. If you do not want your student's name or photo shared, please notify the school.

If you have not previously logged in, we encourage you to do so now. For assistance, contact Jeff Snyder at [jsnyder@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:jsnyder@arlington.k12.ma.us) or 781-316-3572.

## Student Handbook

We encourage all parents, guardians, and students to review the AHS Student Handbook to understand the expectations, policies, and resources that guide student life at Arlington High School. The handbook includes important information on academic integrity, attendance, conduct, health and safety, extracurricular eligibility, and more. It can also be accessed anytime on the AHS website under the "Students" section.

- [AHS Student Handbook 2025-26](#)

## Attendance Reporting

We want to reinforce the importance of attendance, while also allowing students to take time when necessary. It is important that parents/caregivers notify the school when students will miss class. We provide students with 6 optional absences per quarter in each class. The absence limit allows room for parents/guardians to excuse students from a class without providing documentation. If students are approaching the absence limit, they have missed roughly ⅓ of class meetings in a given class and we want families to reach out to the Deans to document the reasons and to make sure that students are receiving appropriate support and accommodations. Please review the absence procedures:

- [Absence Reporting Procedures 2025-26](#)
- [FAQ on Excused Absences and Field Trips 2025-26](#)

## AHS Calendars and News Site

A central location for AHS information is the Calendars and News section on the high school website. There you can see our main events calendar, athletics calendar, Daily Post, and links to read or sign up for our social media feeds.

- [AHS Calendars and News](#)

## AHS Pondercast – Video News

We're excited to announce that The Pondercast, our weekly teacher-led and student-produced video news show, will be a regular feature this year. The Pondercast will highlight important school happenings, upcoming events, and student stories. New episodes will be shared weekly and can be found on the AHS Calendars and News link on the school website.

## AHS Monthly Newsletter 2025-26

Starting last year, we began a monthly newsletter, the Spy Ponder Update. This newsletter is released on the 1st of every month during the school year. I try to keep it brief and focused on what you need to know, but there is a lot going on at the high school. Please do read the important information and upcoming events. I have attached a link to the upcoming newsletters and the archive from last year.

- [AHS Monthly Newsletter Links 2025-26](#)
- [AHS Monthly Newsletter Archive 2024-25](#)

## AHS Website

The AHS website (<https://ahs.arlington.k12.ma.us/>), contains a huge amount of important information. Please take a moment to orient yourself to materials you can find there. If you find an error or something missing, please contact Jeff Snyder, [jsnyder@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:jsnyder@arlington.k12.ma.us) or 781-316-3572.



## Important Dates

- *New Parent/Guardian Orientation* - AHS Auditorium - September 18, 5:30-6:30 pm. The high school administration will present important information on the transition for students to their first year of high school.
- *Open House* - September 18, 6:30-8:30 pm. This is an opportunity for caregivers to come to the school to meet their student's teachers and hear about their courses.
- *Teacher Conferences* - These meetings provide 10-minute, one-to-one conversations for parents/caregivers with a teacher where there is a need. Where there are issues that require more attention, we recommend that caregivers contact School Counseling, their Dean, or the Teacher. Conferences are both remote and in-person. Sign-ups begin in November.
  - November 18 & 19 12:15-3:00 pm (In Person)
  - November 13 & 20 6:00-8:00 pm (Remote)
- *Parent-Guardian-Principal Monthly Meetings* - Each month I schedule an open meeting for parents and guardians. This is an opportunity for me to hear from caregivers, parents, or guardians; to provide updates and to gather input on our annual school improvement plans. Meetings are one hour each month and vary from mornings to evenings and from remote (zoom) to in person meetings.
  - [Caregiver Advisory Council Schedule](#)
- *Last Day of School* - The 180th day of school is currently scheduled for June 18, Families should prepare to hold their summer plans until after June 26 to allow for snow days.

## Mailing Information

While we are collecting and sharing much information electronically, we have included some key documents in the mailed version of the letter. Your attention to this will help your student begin the year smoothly.

- [AHS Teacher Appreciation Donation](#) The Teacher Appreciation Committee is organized to acknowledge and thank our faculty and staff at several events throughout the year.
- [Parent/Guardian Notification Law](#). This letter contains required notifications regarding human sexuality curriculum, bullying, and substance use.
- Publishing Notice - AHS periodically publishes student photos or names in promotional materials or to announce student achievements. Please, notify the school, if you do **not** want your student's photo or name shared.

## Translation/ Traducción/ Tradução/ Traduction/ 翻译/ 翻訳/ अनुवाद

**To translate:** Go to **Tools** → **Translate document**, choose a language, and click **Translate** to create a copy.

**Para traducir:** Ve a **Herramientas** → **Traducir documento**, elige un idioma y haz clic en **Traducir** para crear una copia.

要翻译: 点击 **工具** → **翻译文档**, 选择语言, 然后点击 **翻译** 以创建副本。

**Para traduzir:** Vá em **Ferramentas** → **Traduzir documento**, escolha um idioma e clique em **Traduzir** para criar uma cópia.

**Pour traduire :** Allez dans **Outils** → **Traduire le document**, choisissez une langue, puis cliquez sur **Traduire** pour créer une copie.

翻訳するには: ツール → ドキュメントを翻訳 を選び、言語を選択して 翻訳 をクリックするとコピーが作成されます。

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Thank you for taking the time to review this packet. I look forward to working with all of you;  
please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Janger', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Janger, Principal