

Holmwood House School



HOLMWOOD HOUSE
SCHOOL

*Sparking Curiosity
Igniting Wonder*

Parent Handbook

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HOLMWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

Welcome

Our School

Holmwood House School is a leading co-educational school and nursery for children aged 6 months to 13 years. Occupying over 25 acres of beautiful grounds in Lexden near Colchester, the school provides an inspiring learning environment and boundless opportunities for discovery and exploration through a broad curriculum, extensive range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to experience independence through our overnight stays. Founded in 1922, the school has stayed true to its heritage and tradition whilst pioneering new technology and innovation. At Holmwood House, we spark curiosity and ignite wonder in each and every child, allowing them to develop individuality, confidence and tenacity to reach their true potential and achieve personal success. Working in partnership with parents, we provide a genuinely happy and supportive community of inquisitive learners who successfully transition to a broad range of day and boarding schools in Essex, Suffolk and across the UK. ↗

Our Vision

To **spark curiosity** and **ignite wonder** in each child, through an inspiring learning environment and boundless opportunities for discovery and exploration that develop individuality, confidence and tenacity to reach their true potential, achieve personal success and be prepared for life. ↗

Our Mission

We aim to instil a **lifelong curiosity and quest for knowledge** through a broad, rigorous and enriching curriculum that is anchored in our unique learning philosophy – the 5Rs. We encourage each child to:

- be **resilient** - with a sense of high self-esteem, self-worth and confidence in their abilities to achieve their full potential in all areas of a rich, diverse, broad and balanced curriculum;
- be **resourceful** and **reflective** - with inquisitive minds, capable of independent and **reasoned** thought, adapting to an ever-changing world;
- be **responsible** - for their own learning, respect others around them, adopt a proactive approach to care, courtesy and consideration and be aware of their own wellbeing and that of others. ↗

Structure of the School

Introduction

Children begin their journey at Holmwood House either at our nursery at Great Horkesley or in Pre-Reception or Reception in our EYFS building on the main site. Set in its own lovely garden at the front of the school, they then progress to the purpose built Pre-Prep building at the rear of the school for Years 1-3.

The school is organised in 4 phases:

- Phase 1 (Nursery to Reception)
- Phase 2 (Years 1 to 3)
- Phase 3 (Years 4 to 6)
- Phase 4 (Years 7 & 8)

Each phase is led by a Head of Phase (HoP). ↗

Class Structure

- There are normally 2 equal mixed ability classes in each year group;
- In Reception, each class teacher is supported by a teaching assistant;
- In Years 1 to 3, a teaching assistant supports the whole year groups across the two classes.
- Specialist teachers take the classes for various subjects such as music, swimming, PE, games, Outdoor Learning and languages but the class teacher is in overall control of all their pupils and any concerns should be addressed to them. From Year 2, the classes have a specialist art teacher and in Year 3, they have a specialist Science teacher.
- In Years R to 3, each academic year, the classes are mixed again so that all children in any given year group know each other and there exists a close sense of community and identity regardless of the children's class.
- In preparation for the children joining the more complicated life of the Prep School in Year 4, Year 3 pupils make some leaps towards this. These steps include:
 - Year 3 activity sessions - Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays - involving staying until 4.00pm;
 - First matches against other schools;
 - Continued subject specialist teaching in Music, Sport, Art and languages but also going to the Prep School Science Laboratories for Science with a subject specialist;
- In Year 4, pupils have a class teacher for c.55% of their time (English, Maths, Global Studies, ICT, STEM, PSHCE) and specialist teachers for Science, French, Spanish, Art, Music, Drama, PE and Games.
- In Year 5, pupils have two main core teachers. One is their tutor and teaches them English, Global Studies and PSHCE, and the other teaches them Maths, Science, ICT and STEM. They have specialist teachers for French, Spanish, Art,

Music, Drama, PE and Games.

- In Years 6 to 8, pupils have specialist subject teachers for all their subjects.
- Where appropriate, some setting arrangements will be put in place to ensure the needs of all pupils are suitably catered for. The setting arrangements vary from year to year and cohort to cohort. ↗

The Pastoral System

The Element System

The school is divided into three Elements - Air, Land and Water - which dates back to the beginning of the school in the 1920s. Each pupil is assigned to one of these three Elements upon joining the school and remains with that Element for the duration of their time at Holmwood. Family links are always respected when known.

Each Element is led by one of our three pupil Heads of Element and supported by the Head of Phase 4. In the first half of the autumn term each year, a pupil Head of Element is chosen from amongst the Year 8 cohort whose role it is to help organise the weekly Element meetings and lead the Element through the events of the year. In addition to this a Deputy Head of Element and one or two Charity Representatives for the year are also chosen from the Year 7 and 8 cohort.

All non-tutor staff in both the Prep and the Pre-Prep are affiliated to an Element and support their colleagues within the Element structure. ↗

The Buddy System

Throughout the whole school the philosophy of care, courtesy and consideration is promoted and supported between the pupils with the help of the 'Buddy System'. This links individual pupils across all the year groups from Reception to Year 8. Within the system a Year 1 pupil, for example, would be 'buddied' with a Year 5 pupil from the same Element, and a Year 2 pupil with a Year 6 pupil and so on. This has been found to give the younger children confidence as they come into contact with older pupils and for the older pupils it helps them to assume some responsibility for others. Opportunities exist for 'Buddies' to have occasional play together and, where the whole school is involved in an event (for example the school's birthday), it has been very encouraging to see these buddy friendships working well. ↗

Bullying

'No-one at Holmwood supports bullying.' Bullying is one of the worst things that can happen to a pupil and it is also often the most difficult to deal with. The school always takes any allegation of bullying very seriously and tries to sort it out as quickly as possible. All Prep School children are given information about the school's bullying policy and how to get support; it is in their prep diaries for reference. This also allows parents to see and endorse it when their children bring the diary home. The school's code of conduct of 'care, courtesy and consideration' is constantly endorsed by staff

during assemblies and PSHCE lessons and implemented in the Pre-Prep through the "Golden Rules", which are displayed prominently. Bullying is also tackled in PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health & Citizenship Education) lessons on an annual basis and is a subject for whole school assemblies if the need arises. Some pupils in Years 6 to 8 are trained as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.

It is important for parents to take a child's comments seriously and contact the class teacher or tutor earlier rather than later so we are made aware of a problem. Copies of the school's bullying policy are available on the website. ↗

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is taken very seriously at Holmwood. Should anyone have a concern regarding the safety of a child, the contact points are available [here](#) or on the school's website. ↗

The Academic Year

Please note that all term dates can be found on the website [here](#) and on the [online calendar](#).

Beginning of Term

The term begins at 8.25am on the first day for all pupils. ↗

Half Terms

The autumn half term break is two weeks in duration and the spring and summer half terms are one week, starting at 3.15pm/3.25pm for Pre-Prep children (unless they go to Biscuit Club) and 6.15pm for Prep school children on the Friday and returning on the Monday at 8.25am. ↗

Ends of Terms

For Years R to 3, term always ends slightly earlier than the Years 4 to 8 so that parents with children in both sections can attend all the important functions.

The autumn term ends for the Prep School with a Carol Service in a local church, whilst the Pre-Prep Carol Concert is held at school on the day before. Term ends for the pupils at the ends of these events. The spring term usually ends on the same day for both the Prep and Pre-Prep.

The summer Term ends with the annual Speech Days and Prize Givings for both Pre-Prep and Prep School. The Pre-Prep Prize Giving is on the Friday afternoon and the Prep School on the Saturday morning. Again, term ends for these pupils at the end of these events. Parents are invited to attend these occasions and it is expected that every child will be present. ↗

Arriving at School

Years R to 3

Pupils should be at school by 8.20am each morning, ready for registration at 8.25am. The doors of Reception and the Pre-Prep building are open from 8.15am. Morning registration takes place formally with the class teachers in their classrooms. Children must arrive at school in full school uniform.

In Reception classes, children leave coats, etc in the main cloakroom before going to their classrooms. In Years 1, 2 & 3, children go straight to their classrooms and hang up coats, etc before starting the activity set up for them. We would ask parents, wherever possible, to use the children's reading diaries or pass on a quick message to the teachers at the door in the mornings. We also encourage the children to be independent and learn responsibility for their own possessions, so ask parents to encourage the children to say goodbye at the door and proceed to their classrooms on their own. We ask that parents not come into the Pre-Prep classes in the morning as this can be disruptive to the start of the children's day. ↴

Years 4 to 8

Signing in refers to the time before 8.25am. On weekdays children arriving at school between 8am and 8.25am must go STRAIGHT to the Dining Room via the backdoor to 'sign in' with a member of staff. This then provides a record of who is on site should there be a fire alarm before 8.25am.

School starts at 8.25am and all children should be on site by that time. At 8.25am the first bell of the day will sound and children should either line up in the yard (Years 4 and 5) or go directly to their tutor rooms (Years 6, 7 and 8).

At 8.25am tutors will officially register children on the school's database. Similarly afternoon registration occurs at 1.40pm when teachers will officially register children on the database.

Children may arrive at school between 7.30-8.00am **but not before 7.30am**. We ask that parents of children arriving during this time are booked in via the online system [Magicbooking](#) so that they can be added to the breakfast list and can be accounted for. Therefore no child should be on site before 8am unless this has been booked in advance. Those children booked in for arrival during this time may have breakfast (for which there is a small charge) or if not having breakfast they must sit at the end of the Dining Room until 8am when they can sign in with the staff member on duty.

Children arriving on site after 8.25am must immediately go to their tutor rooms where they may already have been registered as an 'unauthorised absence'. If the tutor is able to, they will change the registration label to 'late'. However, if they are unable to do this, as the registration 'window' has been closed, they will be sent to the front office for the amendment to be made.

If during the day a child arrives at school outside registration times (e.g. – returning from an appointment), they must register (often referred to as ‘signing in’) in the front office before going to class, etc. ↗

Punctuality

The school day for pupils and staff is very full and adherence to times for all lessons and activities is essential. It really does make a difference when all pupils are in school and ready to start to learn on time. Pupils who are repeatedly late (excluding abnormal traffic conditions), will be noted and parents contacted.

If for any reason you know that your child will be late or will not attend school through illness, please phone the school between 8.00am and 8.30am or email office@holmwood.house so that the class teacher is aware. Please keep the school informed of the health of your child, should he or she be off sick for more than one day. ↗

Absences and Guidelines

If a pupil is absent through illness, please advise the school as soon as possible by phoning 01206 574305 or emailing office@holmwood.house. The school will contact parents every day that a child is absent without notification to the school.

Routine medical, dental and hair appointments should be made outside of school hours. If, however, it is necessary to take a pupil out of school for a medical appointment, then the office must be advised by email. If it is necessary to ask for extended time out of school, please make a WRITTEN REQUEST (email is fine) to the Headteacher, or class teacher who will pass it on to the Headteacher.

If a pupil becomes ill during school time and the school healthcare assistant considers it necessary for the pupil to be away from school, she will contact the parent directly and advise the teacher. ↗

Departing from School

Collection Times

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Reception | Collection is at 3.15pm . Wait in the playground and the teacher will release the children to you. |
| Years 1 & 2 | Collection is at 3.25pm . Wait in the playground. Children are brought to the Pre-Prep Hall and released when staff see you. |
| Year 3 | Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at 4.00pm (following Activities), collect children from Pre-Prep. Wednesday and Friday at 3.25pm , collect children from outside of the Pre-Prep ramp entrance (the same doorway they enter in the morning). |
| Years 4 to 6 | Pupils may be collected from the Sports Hall at 4.00pm. If they are staying on for prep/activities, collection time is either 5.10pm or 6.10pm from the Talbot Room. |
| Years 7 & 8 | All pupils in Years 7 & 8 stay in school until the end of the day, 6.10pm and should be collected from the Talbot Room. |
| Boarders | Any pupil staying overnight should sign in to boarding in the boarding house at 6.10pm. ↗ |

Permission for Another Adult to Collect

The school expects that a child's parents will collect their child unless otherwise informed and introduced to the relevant adult. Commonly, this may be a grandparent or a Nanny/Au pair. Children also often go home with friends but the school must be informed of this. If your child is being collected by someone else, you should inform a member of staff in the morning. A late arrangement can be emailed or phoned through to the office.

Regular arrangements for the collection of your child should be written down and handed to the class teacher or front office. If you are more than ten minutes late collecting children, they will join wraparound care and a charge will be made. ↗

In the Event of Non-collection of a Child

Occasionally a parent is unavoidably delayed. Pupils who have not been collected on time will read quietly until they are collected by their parents from the front office and signed out by the member of staff on duty. Children of parents who are unavoidably delayed after the 6.15pm sign-out has finished are supervised by the overnight stay staff (on nights where boarding is taking place) or by a member of the Leadership Team until the parent arrives. ↗

Where a child has not been collected by the appropriate time, we will take the necessary steps as laid out in the Collection and Non-Collection of Pupils Policy. ([Policies](#)) ↗

Years 4 to 8 - Signing out

Pupils must 'sign out' routinely when they leave school at the end of each day. For departure times, please see Programme of the Day by year group at the end of this booklet. The children should present themselves promptly in full uniform, wearing their blazers, in the Talbot Room where they will be signed out by the member of staff on duty. Pupils may only sign out if their parent (or authorised person) is in the Talbot Room. ↗

Collection times for Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

| | |
|--------|---------------------------------------|
| Year 4 | 4.00pm (before tea), 5.10pm or 6.10pm |
| Year 5 | 4.00pm (before tea), 5.10pm or 6.10pm |
| Year 6 | 4.00pm (before tea), 5.10pm or 6.10pm |
| Year 7 | 6.10pm |
| Year 8 | 6.10pm ↗ |

Wednesday Afternoons

School finishes at 4.00pm for Year 4 pupils on Wednesdays whereupon signing out for them takes place in the Talbot room.

School finishes at 4.00pm for pupils in Years 5-8 however, signing out on a Wednesday afternoon for these is a moveable feast and will vary for each pupil from week to week.

Where a child is **not** involved in a match, we expect them to remain in school on Wednesdays until 4.00pm when they sign out at the Sports Hall.

Where a child is involved in a **home** match, parents may sign their child out at the end of the match at the Sports Hall.

Where a child is involved in an **away** match, parents may either sign their child out with the coach responsible for the team and take them directly from the away school or sign their child out when the team returns back to Holmwood from the Sports Hall.

A wraparound care service operates for all pupils on a Wednesday for those whose parents are unable to collect them when school finishes. Parents of pupils who need to use this service must ensure that the front office is aware of this and this can be done by contacting the front office directly giving more than 3 hours notice unless in the case of an emergency. ↗

'Regular Oddities'

In some circumstances permission may be given by the Headteacher for a Year 7 or 8 pupil to attend regular late afternoon activities outside school during school time. Parents must collect the pupil from the front office where they will be signed out. Application for such permission should be made in writing to the Headteacher. ↗

Appointments

There are occasions when it is necessary for a pupil to leave school during the daytime to attend a medical appointment, for example. Permission for this should be made in writing to the tutor and the pupil must sign out (and back in) at the front office. ↗

Wraparound Care

At Holmwood, we offer care for children in all year groups from 7.30am in the morning and up to 6.15pm in the evening.

Early Morning

We offer an early morning 'Breakfast Club' from 7.30am to 8.20am. Your child will be given breakfast (unless you opt out) and will then have the chance to enjoy a short session of supervised play before the official start of the school day. For children in Years R-3 there is a charge, but older children only pay for their breakfast.

Alternatively, your child may join this group at 8.00am for supervised play until the day staff come on duty at 8.20am.

We ask that children are booked in via the online system [magicbooking](#) so that they can be added to the breakfast list.

For full details and prices please see the school website. ↗

After School - Biscuit Club (Years R to 3)

Our after-school 'Biscuit Club' is extremely popular and children in Years R-3 are supervised by members of Holmwood House staff. We can facilitate those pupils who attend one of the after-school activities, e.g. dance, ballet, tennis, etc, and can dovetail those with attendance at Biscuit Club.

Session 1 3.15pm - 4.15pm

Session 2 4.15pm - 5.15pm

Session 3 5.15pm - 6.00pm

Biscuit Club runs 5 days a week. Bookings can be made for the term or as needed, via the [magicbooking](#) system. Places are limited and bookings should be made with a minimum of 24 hours notice. Bookings made on the day required will incur an additional £7.00 late booking charge.

Please note that Biscuit Club is never available at the end of each term.

Cancellations should be made by 6pm on the previous day.

Ballet, musical theatre, squash and tennis are available as after school activities (Years R to 3) at an additional cost. These activities are taken by our Dance & Drama teacher (Mrs Mayhew) and by our squash (Paul Allen) and tennis (Rob Twyman) professionals in the school facilities. Please see the school website for the current academic year Pre-Prep Activities timetable.

Places in the ballet and musical theatre activities should be requested by contacting the front office at the school. An email reminding parents of the ballet and musical theatre schedules and sign-up procedures for the next academic year is sent out towards the end of each summer term.

Places in the squash and tennis activities should be directly addressed to the squash and tennis coaches at the Squash club:

Rob Twyman (tennis) - lexdentennis@gmail.com

Paul Allen (squash) - paulallensquash@googlemail.com

If a parent wishes that their child join Biscuit Club after an activity this can be accommodated and can be booked via [magicbooking](#).

Any child going home at the end of one of these activities must be collected from either the Pre-Prep hall (for ballet and musical theatre) or Squash Club (for tennis and squash).

↗

Uniform

Expectations

Parents and children should be aware that uniforms are meant to ensure that the children are smart, but it also stops the competition caused by fashion. Please try to avoid letting your child arrive at school dressed in something that may technically be uniform but will start a “fashion” that then ends with ill feeling.

It is essential that a child always has at school all the appropriate items on the clothes list and that every item be clearly and permanently marked in the correct WAY. (‘Iron-on’ name tapes are generally not satisfactory; boots and shoes also need clear marking; most games clothes must be marked on the outside as shown on the diagram with the clothes list). ↗

Availability

Your child is expected to wear school uniform. This is supplied by Coes Schoolwear and can be purchased online at www.coesschoolwear.co.uk or in-store at their shop in Ipswich. There are also a number of second hand uniform sales held at school throughout the school year. Please ensure ALL items of clothing are clearly named. ↗

Appearance

We strongly encourage children to take pride in their appearance at all times - in the classroom and during sporting activities. Clean, polished shoes with laces tied, shirts tucked in and well-knotted ties all help to encourage a respect for each other and property in general.

When travelling to or from school, a pupil should wear a blazer (Prep School only) and normal school uniform (with or without a sweater according to the weather). If a

raincoat or anorak is necessary, it should be worn over the blazer. Holmwood coats and kagoules are available from Coes Schoolwear. A blazer is also worn on a number of occasions when the child represents the school, including sports fixtures at other schools. ↗

Games Kit

From Year R—Yr 2, the same games clothing is required and this increases when the children join Year 3 - see the uniform list. The extra clothing is needed because the children practise their skills in a team environment and their timetable progressively includes more sport. An extra towel is also needed from Year 3 as all children shower after games sessions.

In Years R, 1 & 2, children keep their PE and games kit in a maroon drawstring bag available from the uniform suppliers. This bag is kept on their peg in the classroom. Please name the bag clearly. Big bold letters make life a lot easier! In Year 3, children are allocated a locker in the changing rooms and use a kit bag available from the uniform suppliers.

FOR SAFEGUARDING REASONS, PARENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER THE GAMES CHANGING ROOM AT ANY TIME.

For all children, it is important that every item of kit is named. We encourage children from an early age to develop responsibility for their possessions and be independent in their dressing. It is of great benefit if your child can tie their shoelaces before joining Year 3. Before purchase, please ensure your child tries on football boots whilst wearing the regulation socks!

The children in Year 3 will bring their kit home for washing periodically. It must be returned on the Monday morning. Usually Year R-Yr 3 will only need their kit to be washed every half term unless it has been worn outside and has got muddy. However, parents may also take their child's kit home on any weekend to wash and return on Monday morning.

Swimming kit is kept in a separate nylon drawstring bag and taken home for washing after every swimming session. Please name all items clearly including hat and goggles and attach a loop to one of the longer sides of the towel so that it can be hung safely away from wet floors during the swimming session. ↗

Lost Property

Every item of clothing - uniform and games kit - must be clearly labelled. Tidiness of PE lockers is strongly encouraged. All lost property will be kept in a box in the Pre-Prep Foyer or outside the PE Office. Items such as spectacles and wristwatches will be kept in the front office. ↗

Shoes


Black, formal shoes are required as part of the uniform. Trainers are not permissible nor are slip-on pumps, patent or lightweight shoes. Pupils may be asked to bring in a pair of wellington boots for occasions such as the schools' birthday or educational visits.




Haircuts

Boys' hair should be off the face (i.e. no long/sweeping fringes; sufficiently short so that vision is not impeded), off the collar and should not fall below the ears.

For **girls**, longer hair must be neatly tied back in either a single central ponytail on the back of their hair or two side bunches/plaits, and only school coloured bands or ribbons may be used. Hair slides/clips must be plain and neutral in colour (i.e. not bright colours).

Hair products, if absolutely necessary, should be minimal, discreet and for the benefit of keeping hair out of eyes. Customisation of hair styles, including dying, tinting, shaving and the use of hair accessories, e.g. beads, etc is not acceptable. 

Jewellery, Make-Up & Watches


No jewellery, earrings, nail varnish, make-up or dyed hair are allowed in school. Wristwatches may be worn from Year 4, but they should have black straps, i.e. not brightly coloured. No 'smart' watches such as Fitbits are allowed. 

Toiletries


Liquid soap/shower gel is provided for all children in the changing rooms for showering after games/PE. However, children may bring in their own preferred shower gel/shampoo if they wish.

Deodorants are encouraged for the older children, but must not be in an aerosol form, i.e. roll-on or stick deodorants are acceptable.

Sun lotion is supplied for the Pre-Prep pupils, however, parents may supply a preferred brand if they so choose. In the Prep school, children must bring in their own supply of sun lotion and keep it in their games lockers.

Insect repellent cream/gel is supplied by the school when appropriate for those children taking part in Outdoor Learning activities. 

Non-Uniform Days

Occasionally the school holds events for which children should come in home clothes or 'Element colours', e.g. a specific charity day, Songfest, School's Birthday, etc. The Element colour for Air is white; for Land, red and for Water, blue. Prior to such a day we will always notify parents by email and inform the children either in tutor times or assembly. 

Equipment

Bag and Contents

Year R to 3 have a blue book bag. Years 4 - 8 carry a black rucksack, although caution must be taken to ensure they are not overloaded and too heavy. Bags can be purchased from Coes, our uniform supplier, and should be named and contain only the items of equipment listed below:

Pencils cases should contain:

- Any suitable pen with cartridges/refills (Blue or black ink only)
- 2 HB pencils, rubber & pencil sharpener
- 360° protractor
- Long ruler (30cm)
- Set of coloured pencils
- Highlighters (minimum 2 - any colour)
- Earphones (labelled with your child's name)

All equipment is available from the front office. Should a pupil need an item of equipment, they will be sent to the front office where they will receive it and it will then be added to your account at the end of each term.

A Chromebook (mandatory for Years 4 to 8 from September 2021) which is managed through the school.

Rough book (supplied and replaced by the school when full)

Reading book (either from home or the school library)

Calculator - Year 6 up (provided by the school and added to your account)

Prep diary: this is an essential piece of equipment used by staff, parents and pupils in different ways. In addition to recording prep details, pupils use it to record music lessons, reminders, show ups and show downs and activities, as a reading log and to check their daily timetable. Staff and parents use the diary as a means of communication. At the end of every week pupils take the diary home for their parents to see and sign. When it is returned to school on Monday, the tutor will countersign the diary and read any comments made by parents. It is important that the diary is kept in good condition as it may be 'checked' at any time. An annual competition is held for pupils to design the front covers of the prep diaries for the following academic year.

Great care should be taken with bags and their contents. Broken or damaged items will be replaced if considered necessary. Replacement of all items of equipment (excluding the rough book) will be charged to the individual pupil's school account. [↑](#)

Personal Property & Lost Property

Pupils may bring to the school suitable items of personal property such as watches (provided they are small and conservative and not brightly coloured), toys, books, etc., provided that they are prepared to look after them properly and that EVERY ITEM IS CLEARLY AND PERMANENTLY MARKED. Though we try to protect property or to find it if lost, we can accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to individual property. ↗

Mobile Phones

Pupils are not allowed to bring in mobile phones under any circumstances. Pupils staying overnight in Years 7 & 8 should refer to the overnight stay handbook regarding the use of mobiles. The misuse of mobile phones will result in confiscation. iPods and MP3 players are also not allowed in school. (Please see Policy on Mobile Devices). ↗

Money

No child may have cash in his or her possession at school except:

- a) for special trips and then only on the day concerned;
- b) for an approved purpose such as on a charity day. ↗

Communication

The Reading/Prep Diary

The reading diary/prep diary is an important point of contact between parents and the school and can be used to convey general messages between teacher/tutor/subject teacher and home and vice versa. For upcoming school absences or changes to collections, please advise the front office via email so we have a record and can log the absence and inform the relevant staff members. ↗

Contacting staff

Pastoral care is all-important within our school and is only successful if there is regular and clear communication between school and home. Teachers may be available for a quick word at the beginning or end of the school day but for a longer discussion it is essential to make an appointment in advance so that the teacher can make arrangements to be free at the required time.

Parents may email staff directly using the format of the staff's initials followed by @holmwood.house. General enquiries should go via office@holmwood.house. Emails for the attention of the Headteacher should be sent direct to Headteacher@holmwood.house.

The front office is staffed from 8.00am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday and any telephone messages will be given to the appropriate members of staff. Parents may phone the school and request to speak to a member of staff about a matter, but please be mindful that academic staff may be teaching at the time you call and may have to return your

call at a later stage. We encourage parents to leave a message as to the reason for their call so that, where necessary, any information to help bring an issue to a prompt resolution can be sought prior to returning the call.

You can also contact the accounts team at accounts@holmwood.house and the School Business Manager, Fiona Marlow, is available every weekday on fmm@holmwood.house between 12pm and 5pm. .

Staff endeavour to get back to parents as soon as is practicable by phone or by email and will always, where there is an answering phone service in operation, leave a message to say they have phoned. ↗

School Emails & Texts

The school operates an email and text communication system and uses this to send out relevant information and reminders to parents regarding events that do not feature on the school's website, such as reminders of non-uniform requirements on special days, permission seeking for educational visits, changes to the normal school day where events are taking place. We endeavour to send emails only to the parents whose children will be directly affected by the information in the communication and therefore we urge you to read any emails you receive carefully. ↗

Website

The website is the most important place for information and parents are asked to familiarise themselves with this as most of the answers to questions asked can be located there. The website also contains a huge range of information about school, including an extensive list of policies.

There is a special 'parent secure' area set up which has specific information not destined for the general public to see, such as the weekly music timetables, and requires a password to access. Please contact the front office if you need a reminder of this password.

In the event of bad weather and the school being closed, the website is one means by which this information is communicated to parents by 7.00am on the relevant day. ↗

Newsletter

The bi-weekly newsletter is emailed every other Friday. To this end it is vital that we are kept up-to-date with an email address which is accessed regularly. ↗

Consents

Upon joining the school, parents complete a consents form giving permission for various activities. At the start of each academic year, we invite parents to give us any updates in consents for use of photos on social media and travel in cars other than the parent's own car. In addition to this, consent is sought prior to any educational visit or event which takes the child off site. Consent is also sought from parents where the

school would like to use a photo in the local press where the child's name is required to appear in print. ↗

Complaints

The school prides itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect it to be dealt with correctly and the school has procedures that it follows once a complaint has been registered. The full complaints procedure is available [here](#) or can be requested from the school, but initially any complaint should be directed to the class teacher or tutor who will hopefully resolve the matter quickly and informally, or pass it 'up the line'. ↗

Children's Health and Wellbeing

Children's Health

The responsibility for children's health is in the hands of the School Health & Wellbeing Assistants during the day and the boarding staff when children are boarding. At all times when a child is at school, the school will act 'in loco parentis' should an emergency arise.

A child who is sent home ill should remain at home until fully recovered. Please note that in the case of vomiting or diarrhoea, a child should not be brought back into school until they have been free of the symptoms for 48 hours. This is to help prevent the spread of infection within the school community. (Please read the [PHE document](#) for useful guidance on a range of ailments and conditions.)

Any child who is too ill to attend school is too ill to work. Teachers will not set work for absent children unless they are recuperating from a long illness, operation or physical restriction. ↗

Mental Health

The school takes very seriously its commitment to the emotional as well as physical wellbeing of its pupils. Four members of staff are trained with Mental Health First Aid and there are school counsellors to whom children may be referred if required and with parental agreement and permission. Further information about the school's approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing can be found [here](#). ↗

Accidents and First Aid

The Health & Wellbeing Assistants and members of the overnight stay staff are fully qualified First Aiders and many staff members, both teachers and assistants, have undergone training to enable them to cope with minor accidents around the school. If a child requires treatment, the Health & Wellbeing Assistants or one of the other First Aiders will administer it in the first instance.

If a child has a head injury, or other problem that may require hospital treatment, you will receive an email notifying you of this and/or the Health & Wellbeing Assistants will telephone you if immediate treatment is necessary. It is essential, therefore, that

parents provide up-to-date telephone numbers for emergency use. Children will be taken to hospital by the school if necessary, although parents will be contacted to enable them to join their child as soon as possible. ↗

Medication

It is essential that the school be made aware of any medical or dietary issues that a child may have and that any medication brought into school is labelled with the child's full name and handed over to the class teacher (Pre-Prep) or Health & Wellbeing Assistants (Prep School) when necessary.

Parents of children who require specific long term medication such as inhalers or epipens must ensure that the school always has an in-date inhaler or epipen to keep in the surgery at all times. We endeavour to remind parents where the medication is going out of date so that a new prescription can be sought from the GP.

We always keep the child's inhalers, epipens or other regular medication in school, therefore, where pupils require regular medication on an educational visit, parents are asked to provide the necessary medicine (i.e. inhaler, epipen) for the duration of the trip.

Children may not carry medication on them during the school day, this includes cough 'sweets' which may be open to misuse or sharing out amongst friends. ↗

Catering

Breakfast is served for children staying overnight and children coming into school for Breakfast Club from 7.30-8.00am.

Break is from 10.10-10.25am. Children may have biscuits, a healthy option e.g. rice cakes, fresh fruit and either squash or water. Hot chocolate or milk is also available in the winter months. Fruit is available from the dining room at all meal and break times. Drinking water is always available for the children. In the Prep School there are numerous drinking taps located around the classroom blocks and the school grounds in order to fill their water bottles. Children are encouraged to drink water between meals as this may affect their ability in class.

Lunch is served from 12noon-1.30pm. There is generally a main hot dish, a pasta option, a baked potato option, a full salad bar and a vegetarian choice. Bread and butter and fruit are available. All children are expected to eat lunch - packed lunches are not allowed. We can cater for special diets and this should be discussed with the school. All meat and vegetables are obtained fresh from local suppliers on a daily basis.

At lunchtime, children in Reception are taken over to the dining room by their class teacher. They are seated and served by their teacher and classroom assistants. Pre-Reception children are served lunch in their own area. They are provided with the hot meal of the day, dessert or a choice of fruit. We encourage the children to drink water. We expect the children to be able to use a knife and fork and to have an awareness of manners. Our aim is to build upon and reinforce the high standards

demonstrated at home.

Children in the 1s, 2s and 3s are offered the choice of a hot main meal, followed by a dessert or a choice of fruit. The children are also offered further choice from the salad or pasta bars. Bread and butter is always available. The children are expected in most cases to eat the food they have chosen and staff ensure that they have a balanced diet.

All children are expected to display good table manners and set an example to the younger children.

Afternoon break is available from 4.00-4.20pm. This is a substantial snack provided for children who are staying beyond 4.20pm for activities/Prep/Wraparound Care (Year 4 and above). ↗

Food preparation and Nutrition Information

All food is prepared on site at the school and adheres to a strict no-nuts policy. Where children have other dietary requirements, the kitchen is able to provide meals to suit these requirements. There is always a vegetarian option available to pupils however Halal and Kosher alternatives are not available.

Catering staff monitor the food the children take at lunchtime and teatime so as to ensure that they are getting a balanced diet and eating the correct amount. Pupils whose eating habits cause concern are flagged with members of the pastoral team so that this can be followed up as necessary. ↗

Menus

Weekly menus are published on the website, half termly in advance for parents to see. ↗

Birthday cakes

We enjoy celebrating a child's birthday with them and where they wish to share a birthday cake with their class (Pre-Prep) or tutor group (Prep School) we operate a birthday cake ordering system. The cost of the cake is then added to your child's bill and the children can enjoy the cake knowing that any dietary or medical needs among the group have been taken into consideration. Please do not send a bought or homemade cake into school. ↗

Allergies

No food is to be brought into school by pupils or parents. The school operates a nut-free policy and provides a drink and snack at break time as well as lunch and evening meal. Tuck is available for boarders in the evening.

At the end of term, pupils may wish to bring in a sweet bar as a present for their buddies. In these cases we have very specific times when such presents may be handed over and these are always handed over to the child's class teacher who will then ensure that it is given to the parent rather than the child. ↗

School Events

The School Calendar

A calendar showing school events, including matches, is prepared at the end of each term for the following term and will be sent home at the end of the preceding term. Parents should understand that alterations or additions might be made to the calendar and these are detailed in the regular Bulletins and Newsletters sent to parents. Please make a note of all school events that involve your child's age group in order to avoid clashes. All relevant information is also available on the school's website at www.holmwood.house. This is updated on a weekly basis. It is possible to sync your electronic diary to download the school calendar data. [↗](#)

The School's Birthday

It was on 5 November 1921 that Mr and Mrs E F Duggan first visited Holmwood House and decided that they would found their school. A celebratory party for all the children is held on or near that date every year, culminating in a bonfire and firework display at 6.00pm on that day to which parents and friends are welcome. Following the bonfire, a celebration party is held in the Jubilee Hall where refreshments are available to purchase (organised by the Friends of Holmwood House) and where the entertainment is supplied by a variety of Holmwood House musical groups. [↗](#)

Parent Information Evenings (R to 3)

Information Evenings are held at the beginning of the September term so that staff and parents may become better acquainted with what and how their child will be learning that year. General information about the structure of the year is given but these meetings are not meant to be a time for specific talk about a child's progress. The time for that is either at the report interview (see later section on reports) or at a time convenient to both teacher and parent when privacy is assured.

A series of other information evenings will be available to parents to cover topics such as The Holmwood House Certificate, Scholarships, Applying to Senior Schools, Assessment workshops, etc. [↗](#)

Parent Consultation Evenings (4 to 8)

Parents will be invited to Consultation Evenings in the relevant terms to meet tutors (Years 4 & 5) or all subject teachers on a one-to-one basis to discuss a child's progress (Years 6 - 8). At other times appointments to see individual teachers may be made by asking the child's teacher to organise a meeting. A schedule of parent evenings and reports will be issued at the start of each academic year. A schedule of reports and parents evenings is available on the Parent Secure Area of the school website. [↗](#)

Sports Days

The Pre-Prep and Prep School Sports Days are held in the Summer Term. At the Pre-Prep Sports Day, parents usually bring picnic lunches for themselves and their children to eat in the grounds. ↗

The School Fête

This is traditionally held annually on a Saturday in June. ↗

Speech Day and Prize Giving

This takes place on the final day of the Summer Term, which is a Friday afternoon for the Pre-Prep and Saturday morning for the Prep School. ↗

Concerts & Productions

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Autumn Term | Songfest Rs and 1s Christmas Production 2s and 3s Christmas Production Prep School Christmas Concert Pre-Prep Carol Concert Prep School Carol Service |
| Spring Term | 4s and 5s Production 6s and 7s Production |
| Summer Term | Prep school summer concert Pre-Prep summer concert 8s Production |
| All Terms | Prep School <i>Vibes</i> - musical performances with readings and poetry that take place at lunchtimes |

Other performances may be held to enable all the children to participate if they wish. In the Prep School, children may also be able to become involved in the backstage work including sound, lighting and videoing of the performances. Parents will be invited to attend these informal but immensely enjoyable events. ↗

Academics

Our Academic aim

At Holmwood we aim to provide every pupil with a curriculum that is rich, varied, challenging and inspiring, which provides the opportunity for each pupil to fulfil his/her potential to the highest possible standard. The development of our children's learning must always be our prime concern. ↗

The 5Rs

We are keen for our pupils to engage in learning how to learn rather than just learning what to learn. By improving our pupils' ability to study independently, to manage themselves, to persist in the face of difficulty, to understand their responsibilities, to try to make sense of what they are learning and to be able to stand back from their learning and reflect upon what it all means, we aim to develop independent learners and thinkers. To that end, we have adopted a philosophy of learning; the 5Rs.

Resilience

Resilient learners will be able to:

- persist in their learning in a positive way even when the going gets tough
- collaborate in a group and remain committed throughout
- cope well and adapt when situations change
- persevere in communicating thoughts, feelings and ideas

Resourcefulness

Resourceful learners will be able to:

- ask relevant questions
- generate creative and imaginative ideas
- find, gather and select information from different sources
- innovate solutions to problems
- express themselves clearly and effectively VERBALLY
- express themselves clearly and effectively IN WRITING
- express themselves clearly and effectively USING ICT

Responsibility

Responsible learners will be able to:

- be ready, self-motivated and prepared to learn
- listen attentively and follow instructions
- think of things to learn independently
- understand the need to plan and set targets
- review and practise skills
- contribute effectively and sensitively to group discussions
- organise and delegate effectively and sensitively

Reasoning

Reasoned learners will be able to:

- draw together evidence and information to arrive at or deduce a conclusion
- apply existing facts and knowledge in an organized way
- evaluate and assess own work
- identify ways to improve work and learning
- explain their thinking

Reflection

Reflective learners will be able to:

- think deeply, pausing to look, listen and consider
- review targets and consider next steps
- respond positively to constructive feedback and advice
- describe progress
- discuss experiences, emotions and responses

We believe that these qualities are intrinsic to each child's achievement and development. ↗

The Curriculum

Curriculum Overview Plans

The curriculum is planned across all subjects with a view to ensuring pupils make links between different bodies of knowledge and with the world in which we live. The termly overview plans can be viewed on the Parent Secure Area. ↗

Learning Support

Within the course of their school careers, some children will experience particular difficulties in their learning which go beyond the norm of simply finding things challenging and which hinder the development of their full learning potential. These difficulties can present themselves at any time during a child's years in formal education. Our aim at Holmwood is for all children to achieve their full potential and, where a difficulty is identified, at home or at school, offer support and guidance for both the pupil and their parents.

What Learning Support cannot provide is a simple or quick solution to the learning difficulties experienced; such solutions do not exist. However, our aim is to help all children achieve their potential and to help teachers and parents support the child's learning. Our philosophy is one of encouragement.

We aim to improve pupils' feelings about who they are as learners - to see their strengths clearly as well as identify their learning needs. By learning more about themselves, children can then use strategies, such as personal planning and organizational skills, to continue learning in any context throughout their lifetime.

We monitor pupil progress closely in order to ascertain that the strategies we are implementing in lessons are having the desired outcome. If progress is not being made then we look closely at the intervention being used and make adjustments.

Details on our Learning Support programme can be found on the Parent Secure Area of the school website. [↗](#)

The Holmwood House Certificate

At Holmwood House, our Learning to Learn philosophy comes to life through the 5Rs. This approach provides pupils with the opportunities to develop the skills enveloped in Resilience, Resourcefulness, Responsibility, Reasoning and Reflection. We introduced the Holmwood House Certificate some years ago and although we still use CE papers, within certain subjects, we do not follow the Common Entrance (CE) curriculum. In addition to their achievements in academic subjects, we have introduced a more imaginative way of enabling our children to demonstrate what they have learned in all subjects, including non-academic subjects, in an independent, collaborative, creative and engaged manner. This takes the form of a portfolio of learning in each subject area, incorporating a degree of cross-curricular work, with formative and summative assessment built in to help teachers and children measure their progress. We believe children benefit enormously from this approach as pupils leave Holmwood with a range of well-honed learning skills as opposed to a quickly fading body of facts.

The learning log, accounts for 50% of the overall subject result of the certificate, aims to demonstrate the child's learning throughout the course. The other 50% comes from an accumulative result of all assessments sat throughout the three year course, The learning log may take different forms for different subjects and within subjects. It should be an opportunity for pupils to demonstrate what they know and what they can do. The process leading to this learning log should involve a high degree of independent learning activity as well as creative and collaborative experiences. The work can be recorded in a variety of ways using traditional paper-based models as well as technology-based material. Full details and information about the Holmwood House Certificate can be found on the Parent Secure Area of the school website. [↗](#)

Moving on

Staying on or choosing a Senior School

The Headteacher meets with each child's parents, at around the Year 5 stage, to discuss whether staying on at Holmwood or a move to a senior school might best suit their child in the future. It can be a daunting task for parents to make this important decision but the Headteacher's knowledge of, and relationship with, a wide range of senior schools makes this task somewhat easier for parents. For further information, please see the Parent Secure Area of the school website. [↗](#)

Scholarship route to senior school

A number of our pupils each year gain entry to their chosen senior school with an academic or non-academic (art, music, sport, all-rounder, etc) award. Please discuss this route with the Headteacher.

11+ or early testing for 13+

Each year we recognise that a few of our pupils may seek 11+ entry to their senior school (independent or grammar or take early tests for 13+ entry. In these cases we do our best to help prepare them for sitting any potential examinations at this point. Holmwood has bought into the Atom Learning platform to help with this preparation. [↑](#)

Senior Schools Exeunt

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|--|---|
| <p>Local Day School Options: Colchester Grammar School Colchester County High School for Girls Ipswich School</p> <p>Local Day and Optional Boarding Options: Culford Felsted Framlingham College New Hall Royal Hospital School</p> | <p>National Boarding Options: Benenden Brighton College Eton Gordonstoun Gresham's Haileybury Harrow King's, Canterbury The Leys Millfield Oakham Oundle Rugby Stowe Uppingham Westminster Woodbridge</p> |
|--|---|

Should you be interested in sending your child to a senior school not mentioned on this list, the Headteacher is always happy to guide you accordingly. [↑](#)

Assessment

Introduction to Assessment

At Holmwood House we provide our children with the opportunities to achieve their potential within an environment where they feel valued, fulfilled, confident and emotionally secure. In order to help identify their potential and track progress we use a broad range of assessment information, including both formative teacher assessment and standardised testing. We believe sharing standardised assessment data will give parents a picture of how their child is performing against national expectations and help us to work together to ensure each child at Holmwood House reaches their potential.

In addition we believe that a key contributor to a child's progress and attainment is how happy and secure they feel at school and whether they have a positive approach to learning. With this in mind, it is important that, in addition to assessment data, we focus on your child's pastoral development; how they have settled in the year group, who they are developing strong social and work relations with, and how we can support their pastoral needs to ensure they thrive academically. We have introduced PASS (Pupil Attitudes to Self and School) to help us gauge some of these important aspects of your child's development and progress. PASS helps us get into the mindset of each child and informs our interventions, structures and everyday interactions to help us support your child at school.

What are Cognitive Ability assessments?

The tests assess your child's reasoning ability in four areas: Verbal - working with words; Quantitative - working with number; Non-Verbal Reasoning - working with shape, and Spatial - working with shape and space. They provide teachers with information to help set targets, predict future attainment and understand likely academic potential. VR and NVR are assessed in Year 1 and CAT4 tests are completed from Year 2 onwards.

How do we use this assessment data?

We use this data to identify the children's approximate raw academic potential, strengths and areas for development and inform our planning as the children progress through the school and begin to prepare for their senior school transition. In addition, this information will support both you and the school in selecting potential senior schools that are a good fit for your child. These assessments are completed at the start of each academic year.

What are PTE and PTM assessments?

The *Progress Test in English* (PTE) assesses your child's technical English skills (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and reading comprehension, while the *Progress Test in Mathematics* (PTM) assesses your child's mathematical skills and knowledge including number, shape, data handling and algebra, and conceptual understanding of the taught curriculum. As with the CAT4 tests, these tests are provided by GL Assessments.

We will complete these tests in the summer term of each academic year so that the teachers can track the progress of your child. Using these tests, year on year, will allow the teachers to gain a clear profile of both attainment and progress for your child. The information is used alongside a range of other evidence to inform the teacher's own assessment of how a pupil is progressing, and where they may have particular strengths or development needs. This data is used within school and year groups to inform teachers' planning and assessment year on year.

NGRT - Reading Tests

This is an adaptive, standardised, reading assessment. As it is adaptive, it offers a personalised experience for each pupil, ensuring it is accessible for those who are struggling and challenging for those who need to be stretched. Tests do not just measure the ability of pupils to decode what they read, but also to comprehend and

apply meaning. Tests can also be used to measure phonemic awareness in less able readers.

Interpreting the results

Children are given a Standardised Age Score (SAS). This SAS is based on the pupil's raw score from each test which has been adjusted for age and placed on a scale that makes a comparison with a nationally representative sample of 100,000 pupils of the same age across the UK. The national average score for a child is 100. Using the SAS is the fairest way for us to compare the performance of different pupils within a year group or across year groups. A score between 90 and 110 is within the national average range; a score below 90 is working towards the national average, and a score above 110 is working above the national average, and 120+ is working well above the national average. The possible score range for these tests is between 70 and 141.

Teacher Assessments and Professional Judgement

This type of testing must only be viewed as part of a wider, complex process which looks at the individual pupil as a person and as a learner through the quality of work in the classroom and through his/her teachers' professional judgements about performance and progress. Your child's teachers will use the assessment data to **confirm** or **challenge** what they see in class and in other forms of assessment which take place as part of the ongoing learning process.

Measuring Progress

A child's academic progress can be viewed in a number of different ways throughout the year but one measure of progress which can be extracted from the above data is the comparison of PTE and PTM scores against each other over time as well as against the pupil's most recent relevant CAT4 results. For example, their CAT4 score for Verbal Reasoning may be 105 and their PTE score is 115; this would suggest that the child is performing above their underlying potential in this area. Similarly, if their Verbal Reasoning was 105 and their PTE score was 95, this would suggest that the child is not yet achieving their potential. Teacher assessment and professional judgement would then contextualise these scores via parent consultations and written reports.

Other important considerations

The tests have a 90% confidence band because performance on tests like GL can be influenced by a number of factors and the confidence band gives an indication of the range within which a pupil's score lies. This means that 90% confidence bands are a very high level estimate. It is also important to note that these tests are a point in time (online) assessment, and the results your child achieves might not always be reflective of their day-to-day performance in class as assessed by your child's teacher.

As CAT4 is a measure of potential or ability rather than attainment, you would not expect to see the score significantly increase or decrease year on year. Whereas for PTE, PTM the scores will fluctuate according to their attainment and progress. It should also be noted that the PTE and PTM assessments do not measure all the skills a child is developing in the core subjects, e.g. creative writing in English is not assessed by these tests.

As the children progress up the school they will become more confident taking these tests, therefore Year 5 and 6 results, for example, are considered more accurate than those of younger years.

Reports

Assessment data will be made available on the Parent Portal in the final week of the summer term along with written reports. The written reports will put the assessment data into context for each child.

Other Academic Considerations

Revision

When school assessments are looming, the Heads of Phase will give guidance about the preparation required.

In Years 7 and 8 special extra revision sessions are organised and supervised within the school day. Revision planning sheets are completed in consultation with the pupils' tutors to support the development of independent learning.

The school's policy on Year 4 and Year 5 assessments is that we do not expect revision to take place. The assessment results do not directly influence setting for the next academic year, which is based on teachers' professional judgments and their knowledge of the children over the course of the year.

For more detailed guidance on revision, please click [here](#). ↗

Use of computers and the internet

We are working in an era where the use of technology, ICT and the internet is increasingly the go-to option. At Holmwood we are proud to be leading the way with technology, and encourage the pupils to use these in their learning. As such we operate strict usage policies to ensure that our pupils stay safe whilst using the technology and details of those policies can be found [here](#). We have four trained e-safety staff on site.

Pupils in Years 4 to 8 all have a Chromebook with them as part of their equipment which is purchased and managed through the school. It is the pupils' responsibility to ensure that their Chromebook is charged adequately before the start of the school day as they will not be lent a replacement..

Pupils in other year groups are able to use the school owned Chromebooks held by subjects and are given opportunities to do so as and when lessons require it. ↗

PSHCE

Children who are emotionally and mentally healthy do better in their school life and as such we have a strong provision for PSHCE throughout the school. The Government mandates certain topics as part of this and further details about the school's RSE programme can be found on the website.

Reception

Pupils begin to consider PSHCE under the umbrella of looking at the 'World around them'.

Year 1

With Year 1 pupils we aim to encourage awareness, respect and responsibility for themselves and others by considering 'Our own and others' feelings and emotions' and 'How our behaviour affects those around us.'

Year 2

The children will be encouraged to show respect and responsibility for themselves and others through self-awareness. They will study citizenship and health education. Topics they will cover include caring, sharing, families, friendship, good manners, consideration for others and behaviour (knowing right from wrong, bullying, etc). Many links are made with other curriculum subjects, for instance Science and RS as well as the 5Rs skills.

Year 3

Through the topic of 'Choices', the children explore decision-making, discuss likes and dislikes, choices and consequences. Children express and share ideas about developing the school grounds. Through a focus on 'Changes', pupils examine issues related to the transition to Year 4.

Years 4-8

The PSHCE curriculum is flexible and may be adapted to incorporate and deal with emerging issues both within the school and the wider community. Much of the curriculum is paper free and designed to encourage children to feel confident speaking, expressing and justifying opinions and being open to the views of others. A copy of the PSHCE syllabus for each year group can be found in the relevant Curriculum Guide.

A copy of the curriculum map for each year group can be found on the Parent Secure Area of the school website. [↗](#)

RE/RSE

From September 2020 it has been a statutory requirement that all schools teach Relationship Education (Years 1-6) and Relationships and Sex Education (Years 7-8). RE/RSE is delivered through the PSHCE curriculum. Unlike Relationships Education, Sex Education is not compulsory for pupils receiving primary education, although some schools may choose to teach it. Following consultation the School has decided that it will teach puberty education which may allude to "how babies are made" in Year 6 but will not explicitly teach sex education until Year 7.

Homework/Prep

Most days, pupils in years R to 3 will bring home a reading book to share with parents. The book should then be returned to school the next day in the blue book bag. To begin with in Year R this will be a picture book to 'read' with your child. In Year R children will start to bring letter (sound) cards home, whilst children in Year 1 and some in Years 2 & 3 will have a 'key-ring' of high frequency words to practise reading by sight each night. Please return these in the book bags as well. Please record any reading in your child's reading diary.

In Year R your child will bring home a Maths game or story sack each week for you to enjoy together. In Years 1, 2 & 3, most children will have a number of spellings each week that reinforce the phonic pattern being learned or to practise high frequency 'tricky' words. Towards the end of Year 2 and in Year 3, your child will also have some 'Quick Maths' homework.

Pupils in Years 4 to 6 may opt in to the after school programme, but days and timings of pick ups must be notified prior to the start of each term.

Prep is a supervised homework session that can be completed in school. Pupils start having Prep in Year 4 and 5 where they have English and Maths prep set.

In Year 6 this increases to English, Maths, Science, and French.

In Year 7 and 8 they have prep for all subjects; English, Maths, Science, Global Studies and languages. A sense of independence is encouraged by pupils during prep.

This is being reviewed in the first part of the Autumn term 2021-22 and further details will be shared.

They are free to get and return equipment such as white boards, glue sticks, paper, etc without disrupting prep or wasting their time waiting to ask a member of staff. All supervised in school preps take place in the Library or in the ICT rooms depending on the work set; occasionally it takes place in classrooms. Teachers can also request that pupils complete their preps on Chromebooks. Should the prep entail discussion or collaboration the Maths rooms may be used, in addition to the small computer room. In addition to these sessions, pupils are expected to read at home, with and without supervision and learn times tables and spellings. Their reading should be recorded in their prep diaries which go home on a daily basis. [↑](#)

Sport

Games

All pupils are involved in games. From Year 3, a few fixtures are played to begin to develop the pupils' understanding of team and competition. By Year 4, fixtures become more regular and by Year 5, all pupils have games sessions at some point in the week and fixtures on Wednesdays. After each games session, pupils either shower and change into full uniform or remain in sports kit if they have a further sporting activity after a quick break. A member of staff supervises the children in the changing rooms.

Parents are not allowed to enter the changing rooms at any time. ↗

Sports Schedule

The sports for each Year group vary from term to term and are as follows:

| | Boys | Girls |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Autumn Term | Years 3 & 4: Soccer Years 5-8: Rugby | Years 3 & 4: Netball Years 5-8: Hockey |
| Spring Term | Years 3 & 4: Rugby Years 5 & 6: Soccer Years 7 & 8: Rugby | Years 3 & 4: Hockey Years 5-8: Netball |
| Summer Term | Years 3-8: Cricket | Years 3-8: Cricket |

Swimming is part of the academic timetable for those pupils in Years R to 6. For pupils in Years 7 & 8 the opportunity to swim exists as an activity as part of the evening activities programme from 4.15pm. From term to term this changes according to need.

↗

Matches

Most matches occur on Mondays and Thursdays for pupils in Year 4 and Wednesdays for pupils in Years 5-8, but do occasionally occur on other days as well to fit in with other schools' match days. Year 3 pupils have occasional U8 fixtures throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to attend to support their children in these events. These matches are held in a friendly atmosphere, encouraging the development of sportsmanship.

If a pupil is involved in a match, he/she will be involved in the following teams:

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Year 3 | U8 | Year 6 | U11 |
| Year 4 | U9 | Year 7 | U12 or U13 |
| Year 5 | U10 or U11 | Year 8 | U13 |

The fixtures for each term can be found on the school website ([calendar page](#)).

Details of the teams and fixtures can be found on the notice boards outside the dining room, the PE foyer and in the Talbot Room.

These details include start times, finishing times and, in the case of away matches, the postcode of the host school. It is the parents' responsibility to check, using one of these points of information, whether or not their child is involved in a match week on week and therefore at what time their child needs collecting from school.

Where a match may be cancelled we endeavour to inform parents via text or via the website as soon as possible, however, there are occasions when a match be cancelled as late as on the morning of the match itself, especially where bad overnight weather plays a part or where the match is away at another school who needs to cancel a fixture at the last minute. If you are in any doubt regarding the location of any away match or cancellation due to poor weather, etc, please check the website for the latest information or, if that is not possible, speak to the secretary in the front office. ↗

Match Teas

Parents are welcome to watch all school matches (home or away), support their children and attend match teas held in the Talbot Room (winter) or on the sunken lawn (summer).

A "Match Tea" is offered after home matches for both parents and pupils. A major purpose of match days is to teach children how to host visiting pupils so all children must stay until the visiting teams have departed. ↗

Match Tea Etiquette

Match teas are essentially for parents who have watched their child/children play in a match. Younger siblings are welcome to join their parents, but we ask that they display good manners, use the table and seating (benches) provided for children's refreshments and are closely supervised. As there are flasks of boiling water as well as hot cups of tea and coffee, good behaviour is essential. ↗

Off Games

No child's name will be placed on the 'Off Games' list unless put there by the Health & Wellbeing Assistants and, for Pre-Prep pupils, after a letter or telephone call has been received directly from parents; verbal messages through the child are not enough!

When requesting that a child should be off games, parents are asked to be specific about the number of days concerned, to state which activities are excluded and to put the date on any notes they send. ↗

Music

Music Lessons

All pupils have a weekly class music lesson with a music specialist. In addition to this the following opportunities also exist:

Christmas and Summer Concerts: All pupils in Reception through to Year 6 (optional in Years 7 & 8) perform in these special musical events.

Pupils in Years R-2 have a weekly class music lesson involving movement and singing, building the elementary blocks of pitch and rhythm. Individual music lessons on some instruments are also available to pupils in these year groups.

Strings: All pupils in Year 3 participate in our strings programme involving a weekly group lesson. Pupils borrow a school violin to use in music lessons and to take home to practise.

Many pupils have individual music lessons which are at an additional cost. These may begin as soon as a child is physically mature enough to handle a suitable instrument (usually about the age of 7 or 8 but sometimes earlier) and with the agreement of the child's class teacher as the music lessons rotate throughout the school day and will involve the child missing 30 minutes of lesson time.

If parents wish to request individual music lessons, initial contact should be made through the Music School. A trial will be arranged by the Director of Music. Please note that lessons operate on a rota basis throughout the school day. Care is taken to try to avoid the same lessons being missed each week. It is normally not recommended that a Pre-Prep child have more than one music lesson a week although exceptions may be granted. ↗

The Post 4.00pm Programme (Years 4 to 8)

Activities

We provide opportunities for our pupils to receive further instruction on activities which particularly interest them through our varied activities programme. This programme provides not only the opportunities for our pupils to expand their interests, experiences and expertise, but also a stimulating environment in which children can discover new interests. The programme is reviewed on a termly basis in order to ensure that we continue to introduce new activities whenever possible, and that children make full use of our facilities.

The activities on offer change from term to term and the timetable of activities for the term can be found in the Parent Secure Area of the school website.

Here are some of the activities that have been on offer:

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arts & Crafts ● Airfix Model Making ● Archery ● Badminton ● Art ● Cricket - Boys & Girls ● Cookery ● Chess ● Dance ● Rounders ● Football "5-a-side" ● Tennis ● Squash ● Jewellery Making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Athletics ● Current Affairs ● Table Tennis ● Puppet Making ● Lifesaving ● Water Basketball ● T-shirt Designing ● Baseball ● Gardening ● Karate ● Softball ● Diabolos ● Computer Games ● Water Dodgeball | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fencing ● Knitting ● Radio controlled model racing ● Drama ● DT ● Dodgeball ● Geography Society ● Debating ● Soap making ● Yoga ● Pilates ● Swimming ● Upcycling ● Cheerleading |
|---|--|--|

An activity schedule is released prior to the start of term, and all post 4pm activity sessions must be booked in advance via the magicbooking system. These are booked in advance for the term and are unable to be changed once booked.[↗](#)

Independent Study

Independent Study (previously called Prep, essentially, supervised homework) is organised between 4.20-6.05pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday for Years 4 to 8. The scheduling of the IS sessions for each year group takes into account any lessons and other factors that may have a bearing on the post-4.00pm Programme, e.g. production rehearsals in the spring term. Work is set in all core academic subjects. The aim is for all work to be completed by the pupils within school hours, but older pupils may need to complete some at home in addition to this.

Additional Activities

For those pupils in Years 4 to 8 there are a few additional activities in the post-4.00pm programme which are offered by external members of staff and for which parents pay the coaches directly. Currently this includes Ballet, Musical Theatre, LAMDA and the Squash Squads. [↗](#)

Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards

Good behaviour, effort and achievement are recognised in the following ways:

- Verbal praise is given by all members of staff, not just class/subject teachers, for achievement and effort in both academic work and behaviour.
- Verbal praise can initially be reinforced by drawing their achievement or behaviour to the attention of other members of staff and, in exceptional cases, to members of the SLT.
- Show Ups are a more formal reward for academic achievement or good behaviour. They are recorded by the class teacher in Years R to 3 or marked in the pupil's prep diary in Years 4 to 8. They are collected over the year and are included in the Element Competition. Effort in any area of a pupil's school life can be rewarded with show ups. Each pupil's show ups collected over the academic year are converted into Element stars. These, together with the behaviour and attitude of each pupil, are taken into account when deciding upon the bronze, silver and gold prizes awarded at the Prize Giving event for pupils in years R to 3 or on Speech Day for pupils in Years 4 to 8.
- Golden Awards and 5Rs are made weekly to individuals in each class in Years R to 3 based on the Golden Rules and our learning philosophy. Under these criteria, the awards are made for the whole term, the child receiving an annotated leaf (years 1 to 3) or Proud Cloud (Reception) which is placed on the Golden Tree for all to see. In addition the child receives a Golden Award badge to wear for the week. The presentations are made weekly in the Pre- Prep assembly. Golden Awards are recorded in the Golden Award book as well as appearing in the weekly newsletter.
- Many additional awards are given out at Speech Day for prep diaries, Laetatum, subject prizes (for pupils in Year 8) and specific awards for music, the arts and sport.

As part of the reward for gaining positions of responsibility, badges are awarded in a number of areas, such as pupil Heads of Element, Deputy Heads of Element, Charity Representatives (for pupils in Year 8), and School Council Representatives and Boarding Representatives (for pupils in Years 4 to 8).

Recognition of achievement and effort in sport, music and drama is made throughout the year in the form of 'Colours' which are worn as badges and in the case of sports colours a 'flash' is sewn onto the pupil's games kit.

Additionally, pupils who demonstrate exemplary conduct, outstanding effort and progress, academic achievement and service to the school are recognised. ↗

Sanctions

The main thrust of the current sanctions policy is to remind, reiterate and reinforce the behaviour of the pupils according to the code of standards which are introduced from Reception (EYFS, exemplified by the Golden Rules).

The sanction system is based on 6 levels ranging from verbal reprimands at the lowest level to the most severe sanction of exclusion at level 6. Most children respond positively to levels 1 and 2 and it is rare for the higher levels to be invoked, but should this be necessary matters are referred to the Deputy Head.

Level 1

Verbal reprimand: at the time of the offence, a verbal reprimand is given to the pupil(s) expressing disapproval/disappointment and a reminder is given of the correct, acceptable behaviour.

Examples of behaviour which would come into this category of sanction with the average pupil would include talking in class, lack of courtesy towards peers and staff, running in the Garden Block, talking in prep, uniform discrepancies, etc.

This makes up the majority of sanctions needed, but where unacceptable behaviour becomes frequent the following sanctions may be used as appropriate.

Level 2

For pupils in Years R to 3:

Loss of free time: on the playground, a further occurrence after a verbal reprimand, may result in 'time out' for a short time. Where a pupil fails to respond, they may lose free time (playtime) and remain indoors under supervision.

The use of '**name on the board**' strategy for low level disruption has proved an effective deterrent. If their name appears on the board, a pupil is sent to the Head of Phase and may lose free time, write an apology, etc. Some class teachers may use a traffic light system as a visual monitor of behaviour, which is equally effective.

For pupils in Years 4 to 8:

Written warning: used to reinforce a verbal warning for repeated offences or used immediately, depending on the offence. These are recorded in the pupil's prep diary and on the iSAMS management information system.

Loss of Free Time: as an alternative or in addition to the written warning at this level, a member of staff may remove a pupil's free time with immediate effect. An example of where this would be appropriate would be if a pupil wastes lesson time despite being prompted to focus on the task in hand. This is a teacher-led sanction and is quite distinct to the 'removal' sanction found at Level 5.

Level 3

For pupils in Years R to 3:

Recording and Reporting: if, after the sanctions at Level 2, a pupil continues to display inappropriate behaviour, incidents will be recorded by the Head of Phase and logged on iSAMS as a Pre Prep Intervention/File Note. Any concerns that staff may have or, that a parent or child report, regarding any child's behaviour will be discussed in staff meetings so that all staff can help monitor the situation. Behaviour strategies will be discussed and may be raised with parents if felt appropriate.

For pupils in Years 4 to 8:

Showdown: recorded in the pupil's prep diary, in the specific section, giving details and initialled by the member of staff and on iSAMS. The pupil is required to hand in the Show Down to their tutor (or in their absence, the Head of Phase) at the earliest opportunity. Given immediately for offences such as a pupil being offensive to a peer, repeated transgressions already given levels 1 & 2 treatment, or for continuous lack of effort with academic work including prep. The significant difference between Level 2 and Level 3 is that it is recorded on the tutor report as well as in the child's profile on iSAMS.

Level 4

The Referral

For pupils in Years R to 3: repeated poor behaviour will be discussed with parents. If necessary, a 'behaviour programme' will be implemented in discussion with parents, pupil, class teacher and Head of Phase. The Deputy Head will be kept informed and all meetings minuted. The information will be noted on iSAMS.

In exceptional circumstances, where repeated actions as outlined above do not appear to be moderating behaviour, or where the behaviour is seriously poor (i.e. bullying or swearing), the pupil may be sent to the Deputy Head or the Headteacher. The parents will be informed of the action taken.

For pupils in Years 4 to 8: issued for more serious offences, such as disobedience, rudeness to a member of staff, some forms of bullying, stealing, vandalism, some forms of aggressive or violent behaviour, etc. The referral may be dealt with by the Head Of Phase/ Deputy Head, depending on the nature of the offence. However, in all cases all the relevant staff must be informed, as well as the parents. The punishment can take a variety of forms, from detentions/loss of free time/removed from matches or games, etc. On occasion, matters may be referred to the Headteacher who may implement suspension from school.

Head of Phase (HOP) Detention

A referral is also implemented when a pupil has gained 5 Show Downs. Under these conditions the pupil receives a HOP detention following a discussion of the offences with the HOP

The Conduct Card (not to be confused with the Help Card)

As a result of a referral or repeated incidents where a pupil's behaviour, attitude, or progress causes concern and a supportive mechanism for monitoring this is required, a Conduct Card may be issued by the HOP in consultation with the tutor and Deputy Head. Parents will generally be informed. It should be monitored on a daily basis by the child's HOP and the outcome fed back to relevant staff as agreed at the point of issue.

Level 5

This level should only be used in the most serious cases and is intended as a mechanism for dealing with major behavioural cases which are not otherwise responding to the above sanctions.

Removal from lessons, activities, etc.: this is a fast track method of implementing a severe sanction immediately and is aimed primarily at pupils who display serious disruptive or offensive behaviour. The duration of loss of free time, ie 'removal', will vary to some degree according to the offence, and will be determined by the Deputy Head. However, a pupil should beware of being 'removed' as the next infringement could initiate the following item or even a Level 6 sanction. Parents will be informed of the sanction and both parents and pupil will be made aware of the seriousness of the next stage.

The Report Card is issued by the Deputy Head, following repeated poor behaviour/effort/ attitude where the pupil has been on a Conduct Card for two weeks with no improvement or a 'removal'. Other members of the SLT and the pupil's parents are subsequently informed. It is seen by the Deputy Head, HOP and tutor at least once daily, possibly more frequently, depending on the severity of the situation. There is close communication with the parents over any transgression while the pupil is on report. A prolonged period of corrected behaviour is required before a pupil can be released from being on report.

Risk Assessment (Behavioural): in cases where a child's behaviour is causing a high degree of concern and has reached Level 5, a Pastoral Risk Assessment Form will be completed. Expectations and support mechanisms will be identified in consultation with the pupil, parents, class teacher, Head of Phase, Deputy Head and Headteacher.

Headteacher's Detention - In the extremely unlikely event of a pupil gaining 10 showdowns in a term, a referral is made to the Headteacher, who implements a 'Headteacher's Detention'.

Level 6

Suspension or Permanent Exclusion: the temporary or permanent exclusion of a pupil can only be instigated by the Headteacher (or his Deputy in their absence) following a single or repeated offence of extreme seriousness. It is a serious measure which is introduced to send a very clear message and the last resort when all other

avenues have been explored or the behaviour is so serious as to merit all other levels being missed out. ↗

Extras

Outdoor Learning

Outdoor Learning is a series of regular visits to a wooded outdoor area where the children will have the opportunity to develop personal and other skills. This aims to support their learning alongside the development of their independence and self-confidence.

Why have Outdoor Learning?

Outdoor Learning uses a combination of different approaches to learning:

- Increasingly, the children themselves will take the lead with the activities and learning they wish to explore.
- It encourages the children to be aware of hazards and risks, and to take responsibility for themselves and others.
- It gives the children time to explore, through play, and to develop practical skills to build and strengthen their bodies and minds.
- It develops an informed awareness of the natural environment and our impact on it.

Health & Safety

Each session will be planned and led by the class teacher and is risk assessed before each visit. Sessions will not take place in stormy or very windy conditions. The adult/child ratio will be appropriate.

Guidance regarding the children's responsibility for their own safety and for that of others will be addressed and reinforced at each session.

The use of a natural insect repellent cream will be used, as the season dictates. Parents will receive correspondence separately regarding this.

Clothing

In the autumn term, we will be using your child's maroon tracksuit top and bottoms for Outdoor Learning sessions. We will provide waterproof jackets and trousers for wet days. Your child will also wear his/her coat and boots as needed. As the weather gets colder, your child may require extra layers, along with a hat, scarf and gloves. We would greatly appreciate it if you could ensure that your child has these items on the appropriate day. Your child will not enjoy Outdoor Learning if they are cold! When the weather warms up, we ask that children have a long sleeved t-shirt and lightweight long trousers to wear during their sessions.

What happens during a session?

The walk to the Outdoor Learning area is part of the session. If we are crossing the driveway we always practise how to cross the drive safely. We may talk about any changes that the group notices since our last visit. We may do some Maths - measuring the circumference of a tree by holding hands around it and then comparing it with another tree. We may pretend to be a creature and move as the creature would. This is a real opportunity to extend vocabulary.

We will establish a base, usually around the fire circle, remembering agreements made about how to move around safely in this area. On wet days we may build a shelter, where we will have a story.

We will reiterate our behavioural and environmental boundaries, using games for reinforcement.

We will talk about possible activities (these may be specifically chosen to support and develop skills and/or learning, based on observation and assessment from previous sessions).

We will gather at our base towards the end of the session and review and reflect before we leave The Spinney. We may read a story.

We will ensure that we have left minimal evidence of our visit to The Spinney. ↗

Boarding (Overnight Stays)

Overnight Stays are a quintessential part of Holmwood and now take place one night a week for Years 7 & 8 and a different night a week for Years 5 & 6.

In addition to this there are a number of 'themed' evenings throughout the year for pupils in Years 4-8. A communication is sent out to parents prior to the evening taking place along with an opportunity to sign children up for the event. The overnight staff will explain the procedure and will help with any queries. ↗

Parent Representatives

Each yeargroup has a Parent Representative from within its body who has kindly undertaken to assist in the liaison between parents and the school. This tenure is usually 3 years. They meet once a term with the Headteacher and provide a very useful channel for ideas; often they can help other parents by supplying information, explaining systems, etc. Each term, after the meeting, the minutes are posted on the parent secure area of the website. ↗

Friends of Holmwood House (FOHH)

The Friends of Holmwood House exists to organise social events for parents and staff and to provide a means for friends of the school to assist in the funding of projects, which might otherwise not be possible. ALL parents automatically become members of the Friends of Holmwood House when their child joins the school. The small

organisational committee generally meets informally twice a term and anyone who wishes to help run an event or submit an idea for an event should contact the Chairperson. Contact details are on the website.

The Friends of Holmwood House are always appreciative of help and compile a list of people who might be willing to help at events. ↗

Driving and Parking in School

The school drive is potentially a dangerous place and, amazingly, it is often parents who are to blame. Please drive very, very slowly through the school, being aware that small children move very quickly and do not have road safety at the front of their minds. Additionally, parents who drive into school talking into mobile phones are not thinking of their children's best interests. There is parking on the drive and in the car park near the rear of the school. The car park outside the Squash Club is for club members only and must not be used for school parking. There is a separate car park for staff at the entrance to the school drive and this must not be used by parents.

When a parent is collecting a child, they must come into the appropriate area to pick up their child. ↗

Adventure Playgrounds

There are two adventure playgrounds within the school, one for the Pre-Prep pupils and one for the Prep School pupils. The Reception Year's playground has equipment for the younger children and is available for any child in Reception or younger. No child over the age of 6 is allowed to play on these facilities. ↗

Library

Each child in the Pre-Prep visits the school library on a weekly basis and takes out a library book in addition to any book provided by his/her class teacher. In the Prep school children can visit the library in their free time and take out up to 3 library books at one time. These books may be kept out for 2 weeks at a time and taken home if desired. Books that are lost and not found after a reasonable length of time will be charged to the pupil. All books must be returned by the end of each term to enable a stock take to be completed. ↗

Text Books & Library Books

Any text books or library books which may be issued are done so 'on loan' to pupils and remain the property of the school. A badly damaged or lost book may be charged to the pupil responsible. At the end of each term, pupils are asked to return their library books so that stock taking can take place. Pupils and parents are made aware of the return date via messages in the school newsletter and reminders via the child's tutor. After a number of reminders the cost of a replacement book is added to the child's account. ↗

Holiday Courses

Each year the school either directly runs or hosts runs a number of holiday clubs and courses for children both from Holmwood House and from other schools. Attendance at these courses incurs a charge and we advise early signing up for a course in order to guarantee a place. The schedule for courses is available on the website [here](#). ↗

The Squash Club

The **Lexden Rackets & Fitness Club (the 'Squash Club')** is a private members' club, which is situated within the school grounds but runs independently from the school. All Holmwood House pupils are automatically made members of the club and parents can join on a reduced subscription. There are 5 squash courts, 2 tennis courts (covered in winter), a gym (adults only) and use of the school's swimming pool. The club's squash and tennis professionals teach all the children during individual sports time and the children can have extra coaching through the club's squad system in both these sports. Our own staff teach swimming and a lifesaver is always present. The club's facilities are available to the pupils in the holidays as well as during term time.

Strict rules apply regarding pupils' access to the club. During the school day, pupils are always accompanied by a member of staff. They do not access the club's toilets and changing rooms for safeguarding reasons and may not access the club at any time if unaccompanied by an adult. After school, pupils may only enter the club if part of an organised event or with their parents. ↗