



Holmwood House Expansion to Age to 16 (GCSE)

FAQs

1. What does going to age 16 (GCSE) mean in practical terms?

Adding three more year groups at the senior end of the school, from age 13 (Year 9) to age 16 (Year 11 GCSE). We will do this by adding one year at a time and growing organically rather than parachuting in older pupils.

2. Why have you made this decision?

Over the years many of our parents have had to look further afield for the right local day school option for their child and we feel we are well-placed, with the staff and facilities that we have, to offer a really strong secondary school option. As a school we need to adapt and evolve to reflect the changing needs of modern education. We feel it is educationally the correct thing to do for the pupils in order to continue to deliver high quality education, which will extend all the best of what we already do beyond age 13. It gives our young people the opportunity to continue to be nurtured and supported through adolescence and beyond within our community.

3. When will this happen?

From September 2021 we will be welcoming pupils into Year 7 who will now have the opportunity to continue at Holmwood House right through to aged 16 and to study for their GCSEs with us. Our successful Year 7 and Year 8 programme will continue to operate as they have always done and our first Year 9 will open in September 2022 or 2023, pending a decision by the new Headteacher.

4. What will remain the same?

Almost everything but most importantly the ethos, culture and values of Holmwood. Holmwood House is a very special place and it is absolutely our intention for it to retain everything that makes it unique. The Pre-Prep and Prep phases of the school will remain central to our provision.

Academic excellence and outstanding pastoral care will continue; our staff will remain accessible and we will continue to develop confident, self-reliant and respectful pupils,

who are instilled with a lifelong love of learning.

5. Will you still support 11+ and 13+?

Yes. The staff and leadership team at Holmwood House prides itself on knowing the pupils individually and advising parents according to what is right for their children and their family circumstances. For some families, a move at 11 or 13 will be absolutely the right choice and we would be fully supportive of this in terms of preparing the pupils for Grammar School entry and 11, and 13+ entry to a senior school.

6. Will Years 7 & 8 still have the responsibilities and opportunities they have now?

Years 7 and 8 will remain flagship years at Holmwood. The programme of personal and academic development currently in place for these year groups will continue and will include opportunities for leadership, teamwork, personal and group endeavour. Positions of responsibility will continue to be a feature, along with exciting trips and overnight stay opportunities.

7. Will class sizes remain the same?

It is our intention to maintain class sizes in the region of 18 pupils. We do not plan to increase class sizes as this would be a change to the ethos of the school, to which we are fully committed.

8. Will you still offer boarding?

Yes. Our overnight stays are an integral and unique part of life at Holmwood House and much loved by the pupils. As the school grows we will consider how best to manage this provision to provide the best experience for each year group involved.

9. What subjects will you offer for GCSE?

We will be offering a range of GCSEs which will include: English, maths, science (double or triple award according to pupil demand), history, geography, PRE (Philosophy & Ethics) and French. Additional subjects (e.g. art, music, PE, additional languages etc) will be considered based upon pupil interest and staffing.

10. What extra-curricular activities will be available?

We firmly believe that learning extends beyond the classroom and that a broad range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities is integral to ensuring that our pupils gain confidence and build self esteem. Sport has always been a mainstay of a Holmwood education and this will remain so going forward. Examples of activities we may offer are: Sports Leadership qualifications, Duke of Edinburgh (or equivalent for the age range), Young Enterprise and Rookie Lifeguard courses.

11. Will you need new staff?

A large number of our teaching staff are subject specialists who have experience in

teaching at secondary level, many at GCSE. Staff will be given the opportunity to teach higher up the school if they choose and where necessary additional appointments will be made to ensure we deliver a high quality programme. Pupil/staff ratios in the Prep School will not be diluted.

12. Can the existing school site and facilities support the additional years?

Holmwood House is a large site with facilities that rival some secondary schools. Whilst we acknowledge that there would need to be a planned programme of development, the school could currently house additional Year 9 to Year 11 cohorts in the existing buildings with some repurposing and reorganisation (we currently have a number of unused buildings). As parents enrol their children for senior years at Holmwood we will develop our accommodation in order to develop some of the existing facilities to make them GCSE-ready. The intention is for the older pupils to have a designated area for their base and break times.

13. Will there be a change to the school uniform for the older pupils?

We will consult with staff, pupils, parents and take advice from our uniform supplier, Coes, but it is likely there will be some differentiation to ensure a distinct senior presence whilst maintaining the heritage and traditions of the school.

14. Would you go to A-Levels and become an 18+ school?

It is not currently our intention to do so. There are a number of excellent sixth form options in the area.

15. Will entry to the senior years be selective?

There will be no necessity for current Holmwood House pupils to sit a specific assessment to gain entry into the senior years, we feel we know your children extremely well by the time they reach that point. External candidates will be required to undertake an entrance exam.

16. Will you offer scholarships or bursaries?

We will be offering up to 2 Academic Scholarships, as well as up to 2 Non-Academic Scholarships for Sport or Creative Arts each year. These will carry with them a fee remission of 10%. Further details are available on the website.

If you have any further questions or would like to discuss any aspect of this in more detail, please contact us and a member of staff will be happy to get in touch with you.