



HOLMWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

December 2021

Dear Parents

As we reach the end of my first term I am really excited to share my thoughts with you about the Holmwood 16+ Project. Modern education is about exciting children about learning; "Sparking Curiosity and Igniting Wonder". Seeing those light bulb moments, and generating enthusiasm. A high quality provision leading to excellent academic outcomes, all within a wonderful pastoral environment, is what this school is all about.

For any new Head starting is a great opportunity for a school to cast fresh eyes on the curriculum and teaching. I am passionate about curriculum development, innovation and academic rigour. I am also keen to ensure that the "sweet spot" of challenge is there for all pupils at all ages, whether through support or stretch. We provide excellent academic foundations, and this statement is backed up by data; however, we always need to be forward thinking and determined to provide the very best academic opportunities for your children alongside all the things that make this school special outside the classroom; what we teach and how we teach are two of the things I am most passionate about.

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced us to reevaluate how we, as teachers, provide a platform from which our children can learn and there can be no return to how it was before January 2020. Therefore we will provide the infrastructure at Holmwood which will allow pupils and staff to access the best digital experience possible and will build on the outstanding offer which Holmwood provided during the lockdown periods.

It is critical that the Year 7 and 8 experience keeps the best of the prep school world, and yet builds strongly for the demands of secondary education. Maintaining the leadership opportunities in Year 8 is a critical part of that. Wedding prep school pastoral care and extra-curricular opportunities, with a secondary academic education in Years 7 and 8 that builds for the future is the right way forward. We are building knowledge and skills for Year 11, with the opportunity to be personally stretched in academic readiness. An upwards looking academic model, in our pastoral context, is ideal preparation. We can do this more easily with our smaller classes and teachers who know the pupils holistically. This is something secondary schools don't always have the opportunities to

provide. We are about developing academic enthusiasm and outcomes in the right context, with the very best age specific teaching and care.

We have decided on the curriculum for Year 9 2023 and Year 10 2024 which I share below:

Year 9

Core Subjects	Options - three from this list
English Language English Literature Maths Biology, Chemistry, Physics A modern foreign language (French or Spanish) PE PSHCE Philosophy and Ethics IT Performing Arts Enrichment - including world issues, oracy, financial management, LAMDA plus more	A second modern foreign language History Geography Art DT

GCSEs

Core Subjects	Options - three from this list
English Language English Literature Maths Science (Triple Science initially - moving to Double for some - Biology, Chemistry, Physics) PSHCE Enrichment programme: including IT qualification, world issues, business, project work, philosophy and ethics	French Spanish History Geography Art DT PE Drama

It is critical that we run non-examined courses which will help pupils develop in character and give them the skills to discuss, debate, understand and influence the global issues which will fill their adolescent and young adult lives.

Now that we have decided on a curriculum our next stage is to ensure that we have the appropriate teaching spaces. Science is a real strength of Holmwood, and the opportunity to excite children about learning there fits our vision. To ensure we can continue to do this for all pupils we are committed to providing up to date GCSE Science facilities in the very first phase of the redevelopment. It is very exciting that our Year 3 pupils upwards, who already see specialist teachers for many subjects, will enjoy these new facilities too. We also need to provide separate recreation facilities for Years 9 to 11 to allow the current spaces to be used, as they have been, by younger years. I want to take some time to consider what would be the most appropriate for Holmwood.

Holmwood is a fantastically well equipped 13+ Preparatory School. Very few schools of our size have the volume of facilities we have including an indoor swimming pool, glass-backed squash courts, a tennis bubble, full-size sports hall (with four indoor cricket nets and a bowling machine), superb art facilities (including a kiln room), a fully equipped design and technology room, a large performing arts space, library, 4 outdoor courts and 25 acres of playing fields! We have begun the necessary repair and decoration of some areas of the school. Holmwood is 100 years old this year and we are keen to restore areas ready for the celebrations this summer.

As a leadership team we have been giving significant thought as to how we augment the sporting opportunities open to pupils, in particular how we improve access to all-weather and music facilities. In the first instance we will be enhancing the hockey offer by employing an experienced hockey coach. We are also keen to expand the opportunities for football, to match those for cricket, in all years for girls and boys. We have two very experienced football coaches on the staff already who have worked within professional clubs and we would like to utilise their experience more widely.

We are also bringing in bus routes from Chelmsford, Braintree, Mersea and the surrounding areas. There will also be a pick up from the main train station in Colchester. Exact routes, times and costs will be announced in due course.

Fees for pupils entering the school in Years 7 to 11 in 2022 or 2023 will be the same as the fees for Years 7 and 8 (i.e there will be no increase for Years 9 to 11). For 2024 entry it is our intention that fees for Year 9 remain the same as those for Years 7 and 8 with a slight rise in Years 10 and 11.

I do hope this gives you a flavour of what we are planning and of course I look forward to writing again enclosing further information regarding our plans. My focus has always

been on outcomes for ALL pupils and it is important that this vision drives our changes as we move closer to welcoming our first cohort of Year 9 pupils.

In the meantime, I wish you a very Happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you all in the new year.

With best wishes

Ed Bond

Head

Leading co-educational preparatory school and nursery for children aged 6 months to 13 years | www.holmwood.house

Holmwood House Preparatory School

Chitts Hill, Lexden, Colchester, Essex CO3 9ST
☎ 01206 574 305 ✉ office@holmwood.house

Holmwood House Nursery

151 Coach Road, Great Horkesley, Colchester, Essex CO6 4DX
☎ 01206 273 827 ✉ nurserymanager@holmwood.house

Holmwood House Preparatory School Limited | Registered in England | Company No: 11281218. Registered Office: 2nd Floor, St Albans House, 57-59 Haymarket, London, England, SW1Y 4QX

Part of the **bellevue** family

SPARKING CURIOSITY. IGNITING WONDER.