

HOLMWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL



CURRICULUM POLICY

This policy applies all pupils in the school,
including in the EYFS

Created: July 2015

Review Date: August 2025

HH Reviewed: September 2025

Reviewed by Jonathan Collins - Director of Studies

Next Review: August 2026

Contents

Curriculum Policy	3
Aims of the curriculum:	4
Objectives of the curriculum:	4
Curriculum	5
Foundation Stage (Age 2 – 5 yrs)	5
Key Stages	5
Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding:	7
Pupil Progress and Assessment:	8
English as an Additional Language (EAL):	8
Further Information:	9

Curriculum Policy

This policy applies to all pupils in the school, including in the EYFS.

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Education Act 2002, Education Reform Act 1988, National Curriculum in England, Generative AI in Education (2025), PSHE Guidance (2021), EYFS statutory framework (2025), SEND Code of Practice (0–25) (2024), Equality Act 2010, Careers guidance and access for education and training providers.

The school follows its own wide-ranging academic curriculum, tailored to the needs of its pupils. All subject areas keep themselves up-to-date about its requirements and developments; much of what is taught draws upon the best practice of what is happening nationally and in other schools. As part of our responsibility to keep abreast of the national agenda, our subject coordinators are committed to reviewing the government's revised National Curriculum and should we feel that content and skills are relevant and useful to our context, we will take account of them, being guided without being limited by the content.

The curriculum aims to marry together the strengths of the National Curriculum with either the entrance requirements of the selective senior schools to which pupils apply or the next phase of their education alongside the aims and ethos of the school.

In Y7 & 8 the school's curriculum aims to prepare children effectively for 13+ transfer or Years 9 to 11 at Holmwood by providing the key knowledge and skills required in this section of the school; inspiring and igniting a desire to learn.

The school will take all reasonably practicable measures to fulfill the requirements of any pupil's SEND or support guidelines, including pupils with a statement or EHC plan and inline with its obligations in regard to the SEND Code of Practice (5).

The curriculum is balanced and broadly-based, and strongly promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils. It prepares our pupils well for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British Society, including the provision for their economic well-being. It enables pupils to acquire skills in speaking, reading, writing, listening and numeracy. Where a pupil has English as an additional language and in the rare event that they need specialist teaching to develop appropriate fluency, parents will be guided and supported in finding such support outside school, as well as being advised of the support the school can provide.

The school provides full time supervised education for pupils between the ages of 3 and 15. Our nursery provides care for children from 6 months to 4 years in a separate setting. Up to the age of 5, pupils follow a curriculum which meets the learning, development and assessment requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), further details of which can be found in separate EYFS documentation.

Throughout the school, the curriculum provides pupils with experiences in life skills

and linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education, appropriate for their ages and aptitudes. At each level it provides opportunities, responsibilities and experiences, in preparation for the next stage of their education and their adult lives. The school is committed, through its curriculum and extracurricular pursuits, to helping pupils to understand how to stay safe, build positive and healthy relationships and promotes inclusion and respect, as well the welfare and safeguarding of children at all times.

Woven through this curriculum is a 'learning to learn' philosophy based around the 5Rs - Resilience, Resourcefulness, Responsibility, Reasoning and Reflection – through which we aim to create for pupils opportunities to develop genuine independent and collaborative skills.

Aims of the curriculum:

We believe that a successful curriculum should be broad and balanced and delivered in innovative ways to provide appropriate stretch and challenge to all our pupils, exciting and engaging them and giving them ownership in their learning.(7) We believe that exceptional results should be a by-product of the education that we offer, not the exclusive focus. Pupils are encouraged to aim high and we aim to provide them with everything they need to succeed. It is our aim to furnish each child with the appropriate skills to develop fully their academic potential, as well as developing their personal and social values in preparation for life in British society. It offers a robust understanding of safeguarding through the comprehensive PSHCEE, RSHE, and e-safety programmes.

Objectives of the curriculum:

We are committed to providing an educational environment that challenges, nurtures, excites and involves every single pupil in the school through a curriculum which

- At each level prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of the next stage of their education and lives
- Challenges the individual academically and allows them to discover their own intellectual strengths in the pursuit of academic excellence and encourages a love of learning
- Encourages independent learning and critical thinking skills and provides opportunities for pupils to express their learning and understanding in different ways
- Is balanced and broadly based and encourages pupils to explore a breadth of academic, cultural, aesthetic, creative and sporting interests
- Is responsive, providing inclusivity and diversity and reflects our responsibility to ensure our pupils are equipped to understand the integral part that world and British history plays in shaping society today and the role that our pupils have in helping to continue this path of reform.
- Is flexible enough to respond to change and incorporates innovation as appropriate
- Enables pupils to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy

- Uses technology effectively in supporting teaching and learning and gives pupils opportunity to present work in personalised ways
- Provides opportunities for collaboration with other schools in the group to enhance learning
- Ensures pupils have an understanding of their own personal safety and that of others, including awareness of safeguarding
- Enables our pupils to work collaboratively and successfully develop the 'soft skills' needed to equip them for life.
- Encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics stated in the 2010 Equality Act (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). Please see the Equal Opportunities policy.
- Enables pupils to know themselves better and begin to understand how their strengths, weaknesses and interests relate to the world of work, providing impartial and non-stereotyped guidance and support to help pupils make informed choices in the selection of future subject choices and begin to consider their options for higher education, training and careers.
- To ensure that pupils develop an understanding of fundamental British Values and uphold these throughout the curriculum, e.g. PSHCE, assemblies, pastoral system, etc.

Curriculum

Foundation Stage (Age 6 months – 5 yrs)

Pupils have a broad programme of study, based on the revised EYFS Framework, statutory from Sept 2021, (10) which focuses on the

- Three prime areas of learning most essential for children's readiness for future learning and healthy development; Communication and Language, Physical Development, and Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Four specific areas of learning which build on the prime areas; Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design

Within these the EYFS setting works to ensure that

- Children develop the characteristics of effective learning including, Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, and Creating and Thinking Critically
- There is a balance of structured activities and child initiated play with opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors. The curriculum includes music, French and physical education.

Key Stages One, Two and Three

Pupils have a broad and balanced curriculum with plentiful opportunities for active and personalised learning, both independently and collaboratively. Pupils learn the following subjects:

Academic - English, mathematics, science,
Linguistic – French, Spanish,

Human and Social - Global Studies (incorporating history, geography and PRE)
Aesthetic and creative education - art, music, performing arts, drama
Life Skills – PSHCE (personal, social, health and citizenship education), enrichment
Physical – PE, individual and team sports, athletics, activities
Technological - Information Technology, digital literacy and Design and technology, STEM (12)
Outdoor Learning - Outdoor Learning in Years R to 3, Bushcraft-type activities in Years 5-8.

The curriculum prepares the pupils for transition at the end of Year 8 (either into Holmwood House Senior School or an alternative Senior School) in English, mathematics, science, French, Spanish, global studies, physical education, music, art and DT, Computing and IT, and PSHCE.

Key Stages Four and Five

In the Senior School (years 9-11), additional provisions include:

Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver Awards

The World Scholars Cup program

Careers talks and visits to careers fairs

Students select their options subjects during year 9 to undertake their chosen options at GCSE level at the end of Year 11.

Teaching and Learning

Holmwood House School was opened **“to develop the individuality and abilities of each child, to make them self-reliant and adaptable and to help them face reality”** (original 1922 statement).

Whilst still retaining our firm belief in this original ethos, we believe **happiness is the key to progress** and that each individual child should be valued for their own merits.

We aim to achieve this by fostering a lifelong **love of learning** through **academic rigour**, encouraging pupils 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 enquiring 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.

Pupils are supported by our approach to teaching and learning that encourages independence, autonomy and encouragement in using their initiative.

We believe that pupils learn best when they:

- are happy;
- are interested and motivated;
- achieve success and gain approval;
- clearly understand the task;
- are confident, feel secure and are aware of boundaries;
- are challenged and stimulated.

Learning Aims

At Holmwood learning takes place in an environment which:

- is challenging and stimulating;
- is happy and caring;
- is organised;
- is well-resourced;
- makes learning accessible;
- is encouraging and appreciative;
- provides equal opportunities;
- enables good progress.

Educational Trips

The curriculum is enhanced by a range of residential trips (e.g. Pembrokeshire, Rhoscolyn, Bushcraft, etc) as well as one day educational visits which are an integral part of the curriculum (e.g. Victorian Day, Layer Marney Tower, Bletchley park, National Space Centre, the University of Essex). Additional offers from the World Scholars Cup program have included recent residential trips abroad to countries including Azerbaijan and Qatar.

Education for Life

The processes of synthesising, reasoning, creating and understanding of self and others are qualities that hold within them the skills and knowledge that underpin our spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. These qualities are learned by pupils indirectly through the school ethos and values, throughout the 5Rs aspect of the formal curriculum, directly through the PSHCE and academic curricula, and as a result of sporting, performing and creative learning opportunities.

Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding

The curriculum at Holmwood House School is designed to ensure equal opportunities for all learners, regardless of ability, gender, ethnicity, religion or disability. As a non-selective school, we operate a Learning Support Policy and a policy for gifted and talented pupils to ensure the needs of all learners are met.

Within our curriculum, we build in opportunities for our pupils to understand safeguarding issues which may affect them and to ensure they feel safe and supported at school. More broadly, our curriculum takes account of and promotes

our pupils' mental and physical health and development in order to prevent any impairments that would affect the best possible outcomes for all our pupils. The inclusion of opportunities within lessons to address and promote positive relationships, health, mental well-being and resilience is adopted by all subject leads within the school when considering adaptations to schemes of work and by practitioners in their day to day practice as part of our broad and balanced curriculum offer. Our Director of Enrichment and PSHCE lead oversee this.

Additionally, our PSHCE curriculum affords opportunities to be responsive to arising issues, and E-safety awareness is taught throughout the curriculum and particularly within the Computing and IT and PSHCE curriculum. The school uses the Jigsaw PSHCE programme. Relationship Education and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is provided as appropriate for the pupils' ages and stages of development, and in line with statutory guidance effective September 2020 (and implemented from Summer 2021). The principles underpinning our PSHCE curriculum development are in line with the aims and ethos of the school, with the aim of supporting our pupils to develop the skills they need to be happy, successful and productive members of society; to be able to respond positively to the increasing challenges they experience; to develop the knowledge and capability to take care of themselves and to know how and where to seek support if problems arise. All pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress in PSHCE.

Central to this is our pupils' ability to believe that they can achieve goals, both academic and personal; to stick to tasks that will help them achieve those goals, even when the reward may be distant or uncertain; and to recover from knocks and challenging periods in their lives. This is complemented by development of personal attributes including kindness, respect, integrity, generosity, and honesty. Further details can be found in the **Relationships and Sex and Relationship Education (RSE) Policy**. Relationship and Relationship and Sex Education, are a mandatory part of the school curriculum from September 2020 (delayed until Summer 2021) and the school **has consulted with parents during the devising of its curriculum in these areas** ensuring that this programme complements, but does not duplicate content covered in other subjects in the curriculum (eg citizenship, science, computing and PE). ([Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education guidance 2019](#)). the school will also take account of the [most recent RSE](#) guidance and that for [September 2026](#). Health Education (HE) is not mandatory for Independent Schools but recommendations within the guidance are used to cross check against current PSHE practice and curriculum.

Pupil Progress and Assessment:

Regular formative assessment and discussion with pupils enables our pupils to have visibility over their learning and progress and colleagues work closely with each other to ensure that learning is triangulated and moderated throughout the year. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their work and provide feedback to their parents and discuss this one to one with their teachers/tutors in an age specific context.

Standardised testing carried out each year enables benchmarking of pupils attainment and progress against national standards.

Data Collection: The purpose of collecting any data about a pupil/cohort in the school is to understand and use it to make informed and evidence based decisions about next steps and interventions that will lead to the best outcomes for those pupils and to then compare data sets to ensure these have had the desired impact, supporting in signposting what further action is needed. At Holmwood House we complete this termly; so that teachers create actions from their analysis to maximise pupil learning and outcomes for the following term; this is quality assured internally by Heads of department, the Director of Studies and external quality assurance is provided by our central education committee through governance.

Assessment and GDPR: Individual pupils' assessment data is part of pupils' personal information. Care should be taken with the collation, storage and analysis of data. While it is appropriate to share consolidated assessment information outside of school any individual data must be anonymised - referenced also in the school's Assessment Policy.

Pupil progress meetings take place termly and help to determine if pupils are reaching the required milestones in relation to their own ability and national and school indicators. Where pupils are not making adequate progress, they will be identified for close monitoring/small group intervention or 1:1 intervention as appropriate. If it is determined that the children are still not making adequate progress they may be referred to the school's Learning Support Coordinator for further investigation into their needs. Where specific needs are identified and can be met with 'reasonable adjustment' by the school there will be no additional costs for support. Where it is deemed most appropriate for there to be intervention from an internal or external resource, the cost for these services will be the responsibility of the parent.

In EYFS the school will assess according to the statutory Early Years Profile and the 2 Years olds progress check. Results of the Early Years Profile are provided to parents and Essex Local Authority on request.

English as an Additional Language (EAL):

We maintain an EAL register as part of the SEND register, which is updated annually. Across the school, occasionally there are a small number of children for whom English is classed as an additional language, as defined by the DFE, though the majority would be considered to be fluent in English. Our annual cohort composition determines what extra facilities and activities we will incorporate into our classrooms and environments.

We aim to provide opportunities for children to share their home language in learning as appropriate and ensure they have opportunities to share their heritage. We work to ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a

good standard in English from EYFS through to Year 8. Where a pupil has English as an additional language and in the rare event that they need specialist teaching to develop appropriate fluency, parents will be guided and supported in finding such support outside school, as well as being advised of the support the school can provide. Where needed we will also provide an interpreter to facilitate parent meetings and any opportunity that affords communication regarding a child's progress.

Careers Information Provision

Careers information provision is compulsory in schools which provide secondary education.

At Holmwood House we provide:

- guidance for parents and pupils on the selection of senior schools and post-16 options
- guidance for parents and pupils on GCSE subject choices
- careers discussions as part of the PSHCE programme
- parents and guest speakers talking about their careers
- information on our website about our careers offer
- university/careers/sixth form college fairs
- work experience for Year 9 pupils

Further Information:

Further detailed information on the subjects taught in each year group can be found in the Curriculum Guides, which is available for download from the school website, or a copy may be requested from the school office.

END