

HOLMWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL



CURRICULUM POLICY

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

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Curriculum Policy

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

This policy takes account of the following statutory legislation and guidance documents:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory Guidance
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Equality Act 2010 & DfE Guidance on Sex and Gender in Schools
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- DfE Position Paper: Generative AI in Education
- Education Act 2002 & Education Reform Act 1988

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 and Equalities Act 2010.

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 2 and 16. 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. 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 for each child in our school to achieve academic excellence as a natural byproduct of a rich, engaging education, while explicitly cultivating strong character traits (Character Education), core cognitive skills, resilience, adaptability, and personal values in preparation for life in modern British society. Through our 'Life Learning' framework (incorporating PSHCEE, RSHE, digital safety, and well-being), we provide a robust foundation for personal safety, inclusion, and active citizenship.

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 and Generative AI ethically and effectively to support learning, developing pupils' digital literacy, AI competency, and critical thinking skills while guarding against cognitive over-reliance.
- 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.
- Explicitly embeds Character Education across the curriculum to foster resilience, integrity, self-regulation, and a sense of belonging (Bellevue Strategy 2029).
- Integrates active Pupil Voice through School Councils, Eco-Councils, and Climate Action Planning, empowering pupils to take meaningful ownership of environmental sustainability and community initiatives.

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 - Computing, Coding, Computational Thinking, Information Technology, Digital Literacy, Design Technology, and the Bellevue AI Curriculum (Years 5–8), focusing on ethical AI use, prompt literacy, data privacy, and critical evaluation of AI outputs alongside online safety.

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 Stage Four

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 aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks

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

A co-curricular enrichment program including lessons on Martin Lewis' Young Enterprise remain compulsory components of the timetable for Secondary pupils.

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. 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 in Primary and SPARK in the Secondary school, 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.

Sport

As children get older, some sports are typically taught and played in single-sex groups. In any sport or game, or activity of a competitive nature, where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average girl would put her at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy (or vice versa), the school will separate children according to their biological sex. Sports may be played in single-sex groups

- to ensure children's safety, and where this is the case there must be no exceptions
- for reasons related to fairness

Where requests are made regarding pupil participation in sports or social transition, the school will act in strict accordance with statutory safeguarding duties (KCSIE), Equality Act 2010 provisions, and official DfE guidance on sex and gender in schools, placing paramount emphasis on child welfare, physical safety, fairness, and the well-being of all pupils.

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 Head of Secondary (DSL) and PSHE lead oversee this.

Additionally, our PSHCEE 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 curriculum. 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. The principles underpinning our PSHCEE 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 PSHCEE 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. Relationships and Sex and Relationship Education (RSE) Policy.** Relationships Education (Primary) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE, Secondary) are delivered through our PSHE 'Life Learning' curriculum in full compliance with statutory DfE RSE guidance. In alignment with Bellevue's 'Connecting and Belonging' strategy, the school maintains proactive, transparent consultation with parents regarding lesson content and resources. Life Learning is designed to equip pupils with the knowledge to build safe, healthy, and respectful relationships, while addressing online safety, filtering and monitoring awareness, mental well-being, and personal safety in an age-appropriate manner.

Pupil Progress and Assessment — Assessing to Deliver:

Assessment is fundamentally used as a formative planning tool to deliver adaptive, personalised learning, rather than as a passive tool for measurement. We operate on the principle of 'Assessing to Deliver': evaluating prior attainment and diagnostic tasks (e.g., prior learning checks) before delivering core content to ensure learning is correctly pitched, dynamic groupings are formed, and stretch is provided for all

pupils.

- **Curricular Agility:** Staff use real-time Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Point in Time Assessment (PITA) to adapt learning journeys dynamically to cohort needs, rather than simply teaching prescribed 'out of the box' schemes of work.
- **Standardised Testing & Forensic Data Analysis:** Periodic standardised testing provides objective national benchmarking. Teachers retain direct ownership of data analysis, conducting forensic interrogation of assessment trends to drive targeted classroom interventions.
- **Collaborative Moderation:** To ensure consistency and high standards across the group, teachers engage in regular cross-year and inter-school moderation, establishing a shared language of educational excellence.

Assessment and Data Protection (UK GDPR):

All pupil assessment data constitutes personal data managed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. Assessment records are stored securely within centralised management systems. Data access is restricted to authorized educational staff. Any assessment data shared externally or with the central Bellevue Education Committee for governance and benchmarking purposes is anonymised and consolidated, adhering strictly to data minimisation principles.

Pupil progress meetings, held termly, 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 10 pupils

Careers Guidance & Future Readiness (Ages 11–16):

In secondary education phases (including Key Stage 3 / Years 7–8 and Key Stage 4), the school provides independent, impartial, and non-stereotyped careers guidance. The careers curriculum introduces pupils to future world-of-work skills, vocational and academic pathways, higher education options (UCAS), and industry connections.

Further Information:

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