

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Practical Questions

### **What is the school day like?**

Our day starts at 8.20, but the Library is open from 7.30am. We have one break-time and lunch is from 1.10—2.10, with the end of the day at 3.35pm. Most girls stay for clubs after school, or stay in the Library to study until 6.30pm.

### **How many pupils in the year?**

We aim to have 100 girls in the year group, across five form groups.

### **What are class sizes like?**

Our maximum class size is 24, but most classes have around 20-22 pupils in them. As you move towards GCSE, class sizes tend to get smaller, based on the subjects you choose.

### **What is the mix of state and private pupils?**

Around 40 pupils join Year 7 from our Prep, and of the 60 external pupils, around 40 will come from state school.

### **Where do pupils come from?**

Girls join us from around 40 different schools across Sutton, SW19/20, Epsom, Croydon, Kingston and Surrey. Some pupils travel from further afield, via Clapham Junction.

### **How do pupils get to school?**

We have a minibus service which around 40% of Year 7 pupils use. There are 9 routes which adapt to need. A late bus runs at 5.30pm towards Wimbledon.

Sutton and West Sutton train services are ten minutes away on foot, with trains from Clapham Junction, Wimbledon and Balham, as well as from Epsom/Ewell.

There are 14 public bus routes that stop outside or very near to the school, from Reigate, Banstead, Epsom, Kingston, Croydon, Morden, Mitcham and Tooting.

### **I heard that the school is growing?**

At present, there are 930 pupils in the school (with 300 in our Prep and 630 in our Senior/Sixth) and the school's capacity is 950. We aim to have 100 (across 5 forms) in each year group. Currently, this is the case in Years 7 –9, with Year 10 and 11 being slightly smaller. The school has increased in popularity greatly over the past three years, but we always offer with a view to having no more than 100 in a year (this would be five forms of 20).

We would aim for a total of 925-950 pupils in the whole school (300 in our Prep, 125-150 in Sixth Form and 500 in Years 7-11) and would certainly not want to go any larger than this (nor would we be allowed to, as 950 is our pupil cap).

## **Is more building work planned?**

Over the past three years, we have added a MUGA (astro) and new changing rooms, a Pastoral Hub, new Dining Room, Amphitheatre and CAD Room.

A new Sixth Form Centre, as well as a Mathematics Hub, are being built for 2025, to accommodate the growth of our Sixth Form. This build will take place in a part of the school that is currently out of use, so should not be disruptive. The existing Sixth Form block will be converted into a new Music Centre.

Whilst the build is in progress, an extensive, modern temporary Music Block has been build in the centre of the school.

## **What is the arrangement for lunches?**

All pupils have lunch in or Dining Room, and this is a cooked meal, with a range of choices for pupils to select from. There is also a salad and soup bar, sandwiches and jacket potatoes, in addition to the main cooked meal and vegetarian meal.

## **What about breaktime snacks?**

We run a breakfast café before school, where pupils can also purchase a snack for breaktime.

# **Academic Questions**

## **How do you choose the Form Groups and teaching groups?**

There will be around twenty pupils in a Form Group, and we allocate these by looking at your postcode, so that you will live near to girls you make friends with. We also mix up pupils from different primary schools.

You will be with your Form Group for some lessons, but for other lessons you will be in a teaching group that is made up of girls with a range of mixed ability.

In maths you will be in a set, based on your progress.

## **Which subjects do you study in Year 7?**

Girls study English, Maths, Science, Art, Drama, Music, Design Technology, Computing, PE, Religious Studies, Geography, History, Latin/Mandarin, Languages, Digital Literacy and PSR (Personal and Social Responsibility).

## **How many GCSEs do you offer?**

Girls here take nine GCSEs. They take Maths, English Literature, English Language and two of the three sciences (Physics, Chemistry or Biology). They then select four other choices and this is completely open—we guarantee to fit your choices in. If you want to take all three sciences, this counts as one of your choices (around half of each year group will do this). We also offer Additional Maths GCSE as a tenth subject. At GCSE, we introduce Psychology, Classical Civilisation, Dance and Business, in addition to the Year 7 subjects listed above.



## **Which languages do you offer?**

At the start of Year 7, pupils have a taster of each of our three languages (Spanish, French and German). They then select which of these three languages they will continue with for Year 8 and 9.

We have introduced Mandarin GCSE and will be offering this to Year 7 pupils from September.. Latin is also offered from Year 7.

## **How are pupils tracked and how do assessments work?**

At entry to Year 7, all pupils undertake a baseline test called MIDYIS. This test is sat by most Year 7 pupils nationally and uses a large dataset to create predicted GCSE grades for each pupil, for each subject. We use these grades as the basis for tracking our pupils as they move towards GCSE.

All pupils are assessed termly in every subject and this data is reported to parents, using a traffic light system against each pupil's personal targets. Assessments are taken by the full year group cohort for consistency, and they may be topic tests, a piece of classwork or a combination of class-based tasks.

Pupils will be 'on track', 'almost on track' or 'not on track', for each subject, at each data-point. Pupils can also be 'exceeding', and where this is consistently the case, their target will be increased, so that pupils are always challenged to achieve their very best.

Where a pupil is not on track, they will be provided with an action plan and one-to-one support to get back to their expected level.

## **What is Academic Support?**

Each week we run an Academic Support session, where all academic Heads of Department, along with our Heads of Year, are present to support pupils

Pupils can be put into Academic Support for any of the following reasons:

- The teacher feels they would benefit from one-to-one support
- They have missed a homework and been unable to complete it independently
- They have not met our school values in a lesson and need some support to improve focus, or encouragement to take on extension work

Parents are informed when a pupil is placed into Academic Support.

## **How often are devices used in lessons?**

Teachers instruct pupils to use their devices as part of their 'learning toolkit' only when it will move learning forward, such as a research task or computer-based quiz. A recent evaluation of this showed that pupils are using their laptops for approximately 30% of their teaching time.



# Enrichment Questions

## **What extra-curricular activities do you offer?**

We have over 100 clubs running each week and our clubs change every term, so that there are always new things to try. There are sports clubs (our main sports are hockey, cricket, swimming and tennis, as well as swimming, netball, football and gymnastics), music clubs (Choir, orchestra and ensembles like Jazz Band or Flute Ensemble), drama clubs, art clubs (like Digital Photography, Clay Club and Printmaking), science clubs (STEM Society, Coding Club and Robotics). As well as all of these, there are specialist clubs, run by our teachers, such as Debating, Young Reporters, Smart Law, History Society, Knitting, Young Librarians, Cultural Diversity, Magic Club, Playwriting, Maths Wizards...

Almost all of our clubs are free and there are no limits on how many you can choose, but all girls have to take part in at least two clubs every week. The only clubs where a charge is made are LAMDA, British Sign Language Qualifications and Pineapple Studios Street Dance (though a free dance club also runs).

Clubs run before school, at lunch and after school. Before school, most clubs are sports-based, with our swimming and gymnastics training taking place early-morning.

After school clubs usually conclude by 5pm.

Some clubs run all year (such as Choir, Orchestra, STEM Society, Swimming), while some clubs only run for a term and focus on a specific project.

## **What trips do you go on?**

In Year 7 you start your first week with a sleepover at school. You can also visit a European city (such as Madrid, Brussels or Vienna) and go to France for an adventure trip. There are lots of day trips, too. We run sports tours each year to a range of countries (South Africa last year, Malta this year) and a Choir Tour every other year (this year to Valencia).

## **Do girls mix in different year groups?**

All girls are part of a House. There are four Houses and this encourages you to mix across the year groups. The House Captains are in the Sixth Form, and they lead events such as House Dance, House Debating, House Eco-Fashion Show and many others, as well as our Sports Day. You will mix with the girls in your House regularly, and you will also have a buddy in an older year.

## **What is Kaleidoscope?**

In Year 7 and 8, on a Wednesday afternoon, the timetable is suspended, so that pupils participate in an enrichment activity. In Year 7, all girls learn valuable life skills, undertaking courses in self-defence, cooking, British Sign Language, outdoor education and first-aid. In Year 8, a range of options is offered, which pupils choose from, alongside a core of Eco-Awareness and Entrepreneurship (LEAD).

# Questions About Our Rules

## What are your uniform rules?

Pupils are expected to wear our base uniform smartly (Blazer, white reverse shirt and either navy trousers or the kilt skirt). Beyond this, we offer significant opportunity for self-expression, which we feel is vital in encouraging individuality within our school community.

- Pupils can wear make-up and nail varnish, but not false nails or eyelashes (for health and safety reasons).
- Pupils can wear their hair in any colour, length or style (and we support the Halo Code), but hair that is below the shoulders must be tied back (for health and safety reasons)
- PE kit is worn on the days when pupils have Games or PE lessons, or if they have a sports-based club. The PE kit has a range of options for pupils to choose from, including a skort, shorts, joggers and leggings.

## What are your rules on devices?

All pupils are expected to bring a fully-charged laptop to school every day and these are used as a learning tool in lessons, as and when teachers feel this is the most appropriate way for a class to learn.

All lesson materials, for every lesson, are posted into Microsoft Teams after the lesson, so that pupils can revise or catch-up as needed.

Mobile phones can be brought to school but must remain out of sight and off throughout the day, including at break and lunch. Phones that are seen in school will be confiscated and collected at the end of the day. A record is kept and three confiscations will result in a detention.

## What are the rules on homework?

Pupils will have around one hour of homework per night. We encourage girls to manage their own time and so all homework has a full week for completion. Girls will plan their homework time in different ways, to suit their commitments outside school. All subject set 20 minutes per week.

Records of all homework are kept and any missed homework results in the pupil attending Academic Support that week, to complete the homework with support from a member of subject staff.

All homework is logged on Microsoft Teams, so that pupils can access the tasks and any necessary materials at all times.

Academic Peer Mentors are in the Library every afternoon from 3.45-4.30pm, to help Year 7 with homework.

