

HIGHGATE



Senior School & Sixth Form

Pastoral & Wellbeing

highgateschool.org.uk

Highgate's proactive pastoral care underpins everything we do: pupil wellbeing is at the heart of all our thinking and teaching.

We want our pupils to enjoy their childhood to the full and to realise their endless potential within a kind and nurturing community. All staff urge pupils on with care and sensitivity, guided by a specialist pastoral and wellbeing team who provide additional support where needed. We work collaboratively with families to ensure that children are fully supported.



The Senior School is split into three discrete sections to help pupils transition through the school: Lower (Y7-8), Middle (Y9-11) and Sixth Form (Y12-13). We have dedicated pastoral teams at each stage to ensure pupils are supported to flourish in their personal development.

“The House system has allowed our children to explore leadership, team spirit and has created a really supportive family feeling.”

Senior School parent

Years 7 and 8

The pastoral structure in Lower school is designed to ease the transition from primary. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are placed in a form class – eight classes are in both years, with no more than 24 pupils in each, assembled horizontally as a year group.

Pupils remain in their forms for most of their lessons, although they are mixed up for maths, languages and for sport, so they spend a reasonable chunk of their day together. They attend assemblies as a year-group and there are inter-form competitions to build connections and encourage team spirit. The form Tutor is an excellent person to talk to for support as well as the Head of Year, who acts as the point of contact for parents, providing a full picture of each child's welfare and development.

House System

One of the defining features of the Senior School is the House System, providing pupils with a sense of identity, community and friendly competitive spirit from when they move into Y9 until the end of their time at Highgate.

Consisting of 12 houses altogether, the House System groups pupils from Years 9 – 13 into small tutor groups. With one House group in each year, usually around 16 pupils

in size, together they combine vertically to form a larger House 'family'.

Pupils gather in their tutor group each morning for registration as well as regular tutor times, assemblies, House meetings and fortnightly PSHE lessons.

The tutor reports up to the Head of House, who remains the first point of contact with parents, liaising across the school with academic and pastoral staff to form a rounded impression of each pupil's individual experience and progress. As the years go by, Heads of House can monitor each child's personal and academic growth, offering support where needed.

There is a busy schedule of competitive events throughout the year, from the classic sporting tournaments (hockey, cricket, fives, tennis, athletics, cross country and more), debating, singing, drama and chess, to 'participation events' such as baking, puzzles or quick-fire art. These collaborative efforts help to build friendships and team spirit, whilst having fun and making great memories.

Sixth Form

Highgate Sixth Form offers a rewarding opportunity for greater independence and responsibility, in both academic studies and personal development.

There are various ways to play a part in the school community. When pupils reach the Sixth Form, they can apply to be one of two House Captains in Y13, who act as the bridging figures between the pupils and the Head of House, helping to make younger pupils feel welcome.

Sixth Formers can also apply to be Heads of School, Prefects, Sports Captains and committee chairs. Together they form the pupil leadership team to represent pupil experiences and help implement positive change around the school.

Sixth Formers partner with their peers at our sibling school London Academy of Excellence Tottenham, on academic events, social issues, university and career workshops, co-curricular clubs and charity walks.

Pupil Voice

Across the school, a range of committees allow our pupils to raise their voices on critical issues relating to the future of the planet, mental health, equality and inclusion and how the school might run better.

Every year group has a Pupil Action Committee (PAC) to input queries and receive prompt feedback as well as offering valuable suggestions for change. Highgate's Environment Committee has made many notable alterations around the school as part of our collective drive to be more sustainable.

“Any student passionate about improving people’s lives should be involved in student voice and as Highgate pupils, we have all these pathways to make change.”

A pupil from the Y10 Action Committee



Highgate Citizens offers the opportunity to be part of a wider London community, working together for social justice. The Charity and Community Action Group and the Safi Coffee team play a key role in raising funds for good causes.

The Wellbeing, Inclusion and Safeguarding Committee (WISC) has helped us review policies, introduce an anonymous reporting system, develop our PSHE curriculum and input to the school's work on anti-bullying and racial inclusion.

Personal Growth

Pupils are encouraged to discover greater independence and freedom as they journey through the School, whilst learning how to take on responsibility and make their own choices and decisions.

Time is set aside each week for co-curricular activities, providing time away from studies to explore personal interests and make new friends. Our wide programme of activities enables pupils to have fun, whilst developing personal qualities such as self-motivation, collaboration and leadership.

PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) and RSE (Relationship and Sex Education) lessons play a vital part of pupils' personal development, encouraging them to think about their role in the world, leading by example and being a good person. In the Sixth Form, there are conversations about being responsible citizens, including within Highgate's Bystander Intervention Programme. This unique 12-week course gives pupils the tools to challenge inappropriate or negative behaviours, empowering them to stand up for others in a constructive and safe way.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We take a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing that is based on education and awareness, prevention and therapeutic support. By educating our community in this area, we hope to normalise conversations around mental health and wellbeing and encourage young people to reach out as early as possible.

A dedicated Wellbeing team work collaboratively with school staff to ensure they are equipped to understand and respond to the wellbeing needs of each pupil, knowing when to refer on if needed. The Head of Pupil Wellbeing works closely with our Clinical Mental Health Lead and oversees three wellbeing practitioners, a team of counsellors, and our School Nurses, to cater for a range of therapeutic needs.

We work closely with teachers and Learning Support to help pupils cope with exam stress and learn to self-regulate; understanding the difference between beneficial stress and when anxiety becomes something to seek help with managing.

In the Senior School, members of the Pupil Leadership Team are trained as Peer Mental Health Champions, with regular ongoing training, learning how to support other pupils and guide them through difficult situations.



Inclusion

At Highgate, we are actively working to ensure that everyone in our community feels a true sense of belonging, where they can be themselves and celebrate others. These values are embedded across the school, through our curriculum work, special events and a collective commitment to inclusion.

Our inclusion societies, such as PrideSoc, Equalities Society, FemSoc, Neurodiversity Society, African and Caribbean Society and South and East Asia Society, create an inclusive forum to connect and are open to all.

Highgate has embedded racial literacy training and anti-sexism through the Active Bystander course into its PSHE curriculum to provide Senior School pupils with the specific skills, knowledge, and personalised recommendations to address society-wide racial and gender inclusion and challenges.

Learning Support

At Highgate, our Learning Support team works to educate, support and empower our community to embrace the many talents of being neurodivergent, and to build an inclusive culture that celebrates difference.

In the Senior School, we have specialists in English, Maths, French and Science. We also support with things like study skills, time management, revision, exam techniques. Our support doesn't limit only to children with neurodivergent conditions, we will support anyone who needs help.

The Learning Support team deliver CPD (Continuing Professional Development) sessions to teachers. Recent topics have included 'inclusive classrooms' – looking at how teachers plan, deliver and assess lessons with neurodivergent children in mind.

"I have no words to express my gratitude for the light and hope given in dark times, as well as the shared joy in the children's accomplishments."

Senior School parent.

Collaboration

We strive to foster an authentic partnership with our parents/carers; working together to support the academic and emotional growth of the young people in our care. We provide regular consultation meetings and reports throughout the year and staff are available outside these times should parents/carers want extra support.

When pupils join our House System in Y9, Heads of House offer a home visit to establish the foundations of support for the onward years at Highgate. There is a schedule of pastoral talks and workshops for parents and carers across the whole school, often involving external speakers. Experts cover a broad range of topics, from sleep to substances, nutrition to neurodivergence.

