

HIGHDOWN SCHOOL SIXTH FORM PROSPECTUS



FOR ENTRY 2026



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WELCOME

Welcome to Highdown's Sixth Form: a vibrant and exciting place in which to study, develop and mature. This prospectus provides an overview of the ambitious and fulfilling programmes on offer and also details the enrichment and co-curricular provision that truly makes Highdown unique. We are delighted to welcome applicants from other schools as well as being the first-choice destination for our own students. Our culture of success is fuelled by a love of learning, by passionate subject expert teachers and the unstinting belief that every student can excel. Highdown students leave with exceptional academic results, a broad portfolio of experiences and the confidence to forge their own paths. We are incredibly proud of the considered, articulate and compassionate adults they become.

Whether the plan is to go to University, enrol onto a Graduate Apprenticeship or to enter employment at a higher level, Highdown provides excellent opportunities for all. We have an enviable record of success at A Level and Technical qualifications and a key part of our work is to help Highdowners focus on their next steps. We have tailored packages of support for all students; from specialist Oxbridge, Medicine or Dentistry preparation to expert guidance for apprenticeship applications.

Students at Highdown are encouraged to make the most of their independent study with open access to study materials, newspapers and periodicals, as well as to a virtual student careers library. Our facilities offer students their own dedicated spaces: from comfortable, well equipped study rooms, Art Studio, silent study area and a popular Sixth Form coffee shop, a great place for studying, socialising and tasty refreshments.

You will find Sixth Form life very different from the earlier years of schooling. You will pursue your chosen subjects to a higher level whilst having opportunities to develop your many talents. You will have the chance to work with the rest of the school as Student Leaders or House Captains, giving a lead in many, many different activities. We want you to enjoy your time in Sixth Form as well as achieving your academic and other goals. The world is a competitive place for young adults and there is nowhere better to beat the competition than in our Sixth Form.

Ms L Mathews
Headteacher



INTRODUCTION

Welcome from the Highdown Sixth Form Team! You are about to start the most exciting stage of your educational journey, and we are delighted you have shown an interest in joining us.

We are a large and thriving Sixth Form, with a wonderful balance of students. Many choose to continue with us after their Year 11 studies at Highdown, but each year we continue to recruit an increasing number of students from other schools in the wider Reading area. Whatever your background, you will be assured of personal attention as we match the best curriculum offer to your skills and ambitions.

Being in the Sixth Form is about discovering your potential and developing the skills you need to achieve success. We offer a wide range of experiences and courses which will give you the opportunity to achieve your ambitions.

Key Sixth Form Staff

Mr K Prior – Head of Sixth Form

Miss L Pattison – Second in Sixth Form (Pastoral)

Mr S Lilley - Second in Sixth Form (Academic)

Mrs J Kaminska – Learning Mentor and Attendance Lead

Mrs C Sawdon-Smith – Welfare Lead



Where Highdown can take you

"I achieved three grade 9s, six grade 8s, and two grade 7s at GCSE . I followed an academic study programme and in Year 13 achieved:

- *A Level Mathematics – A**
- *A Level Biology – A**
- *A Level Chemistry – A*

I am currently studying Medicine at Imperial College, London."

"I achieved one grade 9, two grade 8s and six grade 7s at GCSE . I studied a mix of vocational and academic subjects, and in Year 13 achieved:

- *BTEC Sport – Distinction*
- *A Level Geography - A*
- *A Level Psychology – C*

I am currently studying Teacher Training (Physical Education) at Plymouth Marjon University."

"I achieved ten grade 9s, and one grade 8 at GCSE . I followed an academic study programme and in Year 13 achieved:

- *A Level Mathematics – A**
- *A Level Further Mathematics – A**
- *A Level Physics – A*
- *A Level Economics – A*

I am currently studying for an Engineering Degree Apprenticeship with Dyson."

APPLYING TO JOIN OUR SIXTH FORM

STEP 1

22 OCT
2025

- Attend Subject Fair.
- Discuss your options with parents, teachers and other adults.

STEP 2

5 NOV
2025

- Application form goes live.

STEP 3

5 DEC
2025

- Complete your application form by this date.

STEP 4

JAN-FEB
2026

- Attend a meeting with the Sixth Form team to discuss your application.
- A provisional offer will be made.

STEP 5

22 JUN
2026

- Attend our Induction Day to start your journey as a Sixth Form student and find out about your Pre-Course tasks.

STEP 6

20 AUG
2026

- Collect your results (available from 8:30am).
- Confirm your choice of subjects.
- Students from other schools attend an enrolment meeting.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

For courses starting in September 2026

All students must meet the standard Sixth Form Entry Requirements:

5+ GCSEs graded 4-9, including 4+ in both Maths AND English.

Students can also choose to study Mathematical Studies (Core Maths) or EPQ alongside their chosen subjects.

A student may study 4 A Level subjects following approval from the Head of Sixth Form.

The following entry requirements apply for specific subjects:

SUBJECT	GCSE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS
Art and Design (Fine Art)	4+ in Art/Art Graphics/Photography. If no Art/Art Graphics/Photography at GCSE, you must have portfolio of evidence and interview with Curriculum Leader.
Art and Design (Textiles)	4+ in Textiles/Art. If no Textiles/Art at GCSE, you must have portfolio of evidence and interview with Curriculum Leader.
Art and Design (Photography)	4+ in Art/Art Graphics/Photography. If no Art/Art Graphics/Photography at GCSE, you must have portfolio of evidence and interview with Curriculum Leader.
Biology*	6-6+ in Science or 6+ in Biology and 5+ in Maths.
Business*	4+ in Business. If Business not studied at GCSE, 5+ in Maths.
Chemistry*	6-6+ in Science or 6+ in Chemistry and 5+ in Maths.
Computer Science	6+ in Computer Science and 5+ in Maths. If Computer Science not studied at GCSE, 6+ in Maths.
Digital Media	Sixth Form Entry Requirements.
Drama	4+ in Drama. If Drama not studied at GCSE, 5+ in English.
Economics*	5+ in Maths, 5+ in English (5+ in Economics if studied at GCSE).
English Lang/Lit	5+ in both English Language & English Literature.
English Lit	5+ in both English Language & English Literature.
Further Maths	8+ in Maths (must be taken with Maths A Level).
Geography*	5+ in Geography, 5+ in English.
History	5+ in History, 5+ in English.
Languages	5+ in French/Spanish (Higher tier) as appropriate.
Maths	7+ in Maths (strong 6 considered).
Mathematical Studies (Core Maths)	Sixth Form Entry Requirements
Music	Either 5+ in Music and 5+ in instrument/voice OR 5+ in Music Theory and 5+ in instrument/voice.
Music Technology	4+ in Music/Music Technology (if studied). If no Music/Music Technology at GCSE, you must have portfolio of evidence and interview with Curriculum Leader.
Philosophy	Sixth Form entry requirements.
Physics*	6-6+ in Science or 6+ in Physics and 6+ in Maths.
Politics	Sixth Form entry requirements.
Psychology*	5+ in English and Mathematics.
Sociology	Sixth Form entry requirements.
Sport (BTEC)	Sixth Form entry requirements including a 4 in Science.

*We recommend studying Mathematical Studies (Core Maths), if not already taking A Level Maths to support the mathematical content within these subjects.

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

ENRICHMENT

At Highdown Sixth Form Centre we 'go the extra mile' (Y12 student) to support our students in their studies, help them prepare for their examinations, and provide information, advice and guidance related to their next steps – university, apprenticeships, employment or even a gap year volunteering.

Academic Enrichment

At Highdown we offer a range of opportunities to help students achieve their best. Many students may opt to study the **EPQ**, a dissertation-style qualification aimed at developing independent project-management skills, and prepare them for university studies. We also offer the **Core Maths** AS Level qualification, which not only supports any student studying science and social science subjects, but also equips students with the mathematical skills required in the modern workplace.

A wide range of courses are offered to help students achieve their ambitions. We expect high levels of commitment from our students, and so we strongly encourage all students to take advantage of our many **Enrichment Opportunities**. We focus on offering students a range of **Supercurricular Opportunities** throughout the year, encouraging students to participate in **MOOCs**, to apply for prestigious **Summer Schools**, and engage in wider online **Masterclasses**.

We also offer weekly **Enrichment Lessons**, where students can develop skills for later life, such as preparing for their driving tests, learn foreign languages, and learn the planning and skills needed to cook on a budget!

Personal Development

There are many opportunities for students to develop a range of skills beyond the formal curriculum. We offer many **Volunteering Opportunities**. Sixth Form students take the leading role in Highdown's **Student Leadership Team**, in their roles as House Chairs and Deputies. Students can take part in our established **Student Mentoring** scheme, and also act as **classroom volunteers**.

Support for your next steps

During Year 12 and 13 decisions have to be made about life after Highdown and for many that may not necessarily mean applying for university. We provide access to excellent support to help students choose their future destinations. Students are offered help in researching and applying for jobs and apprenticeships, writing CVs and standing out in interviews. In June all Year 12 students undertake a **Work Experience** week to help them gain experience of the modern workplace.

We are proud of the support we offer for those wishing to apply for Further or Higher Education. Our trained mentor team supports students through every step of the **UCAS** process. We invite admissions tutors from local universities to our **Pathways Evening** every September, to tell you what they are looking for in an outstanding application. Our network of university admissions staff support us in running **'Personal Statement Clinics'** and **mock interviews** for students.

We run an **Aiming High** club to raise students' aspirations. This group does not have a fixed membership, and new members join as the year progresses. We recognise that many of our new recruits are already high achievers, and yet many more blossom as sixth formers once they have focused on more specific programmes of study. We are keen to raise the aspirations of all and have a strong track record in supporting students into their first choice universities.



GOING THE EXTRA MILE

HOW WE SUPPORT YOU

At Highdown Sixth Form Centre we pride ourselves on the levels of support we offer students and parents.

Sixth Form Pastoral Support Team

To equip students with the study skills, resilience and dedication needed to succeed at A Levels, we have developed a comprehensive induction and support programme delivered through daily mentor periods. Through this programme, students are prepared not only for the challenges of Sixth Form study, but also for the realities of the wider world.

Our experienced mentor team are supported by our **Second in Sixth Form (Pastoral)** to help students develop a range of attributes known as the Sixth Form Mindset. Much work is carried out to help all students settle in, and strengthen the mental flexibility needed to be a success in Sixth Form. We also recognise the need to foster positive mental health among all students, and we have appointed a dedicated **Sixth Form Welfare Lead**, who offers support slots to help Sixth Form students on a range of emotional and pastoral issues.

Sixth Form Academic Support Team

Highdown has a great range of teaching staff with excellent subject knowledge. Through ongoing assessments and formal timetabled PPEs (mock exams), we are able to track students' progress and help them set targets for improvement. Our **Second in Sixth (Academic)** works with students and staff to help promote the vision, organisation and effort to make effective progress.

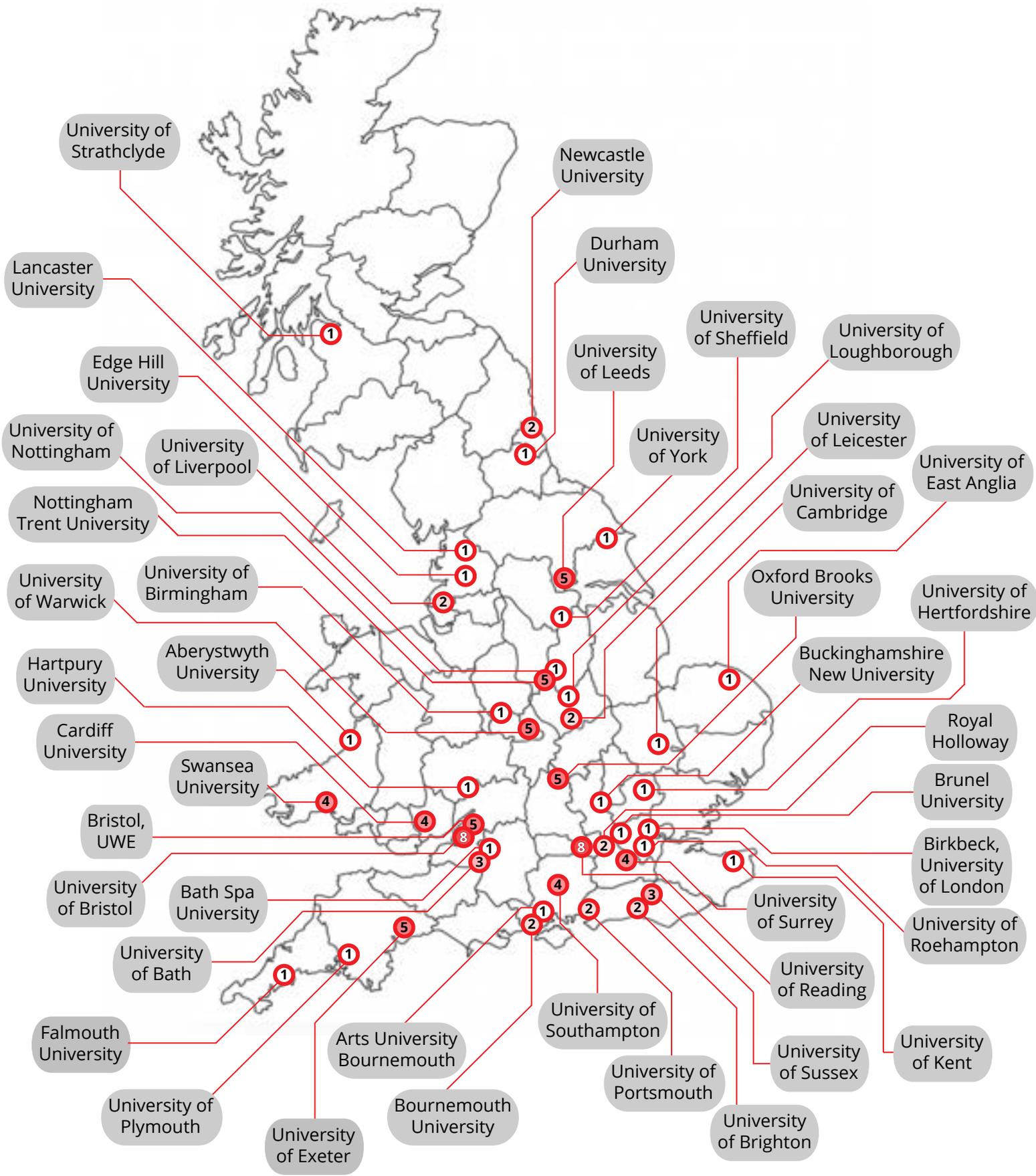
We have a dedicated **Learning Mentor**, who is available to support students throughout their route through Sixth Form. We also offer a range of Study Zones, including 2 dedicated **Study Rooms** equipped with a range of computers. We also have an **Attendance Lead** who tracks attendance and punctuality issues, and works with staff, students and parents in overcoming any difficulties.

16-19 Bursary Fund

We also strongly promote the use of the 16-19 Bursary, to enable students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access the best educational opportunities. The bursary can be used to help purchase essential books and equipment, contribute towards travel costs, and also help with school trips. Our Welfare Lead oversees this scheme and application forms are available from the start of the academic year in September.



2025 UCAS DESTINATIONS





Highdown School & Sixth Form Centre, Surley Row, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8LR



0118 901 5800



office@highdown.reading.sch.uk



www.highdown.reading.sch.uk

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GLF Schools is a Multi-Academy Trust of 43 schools serving over 17,000 people aged 2 to 19. The Trust comprises 8 secondary schools and 35 primary settings across Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Surrey, West Sussex and the London Boroughs of Wandsworth and Croydon. Each school serves the needs of their own communities, but they are united by the desire to deliver excellent educational outcomes.

