

Princess Helena College

Essential Information 2019/20



PHC

Hitchin
Independent School





“Inspiring every individual to believe in their potential, to explore who they are and who they will become.”

Our School



Princess Helena College is a co-educational independent day and boarding school for students aged 11 – 18. Currently, we welcome girls into all year groups and day boys into Years 7 and 12. From September 2020, we will be welcoming boys, both day and boarding into Years 7, 8, 9 and 12. We combine academic excellence with a wide range of co-curricular opportunities and outstanding individual attention.

Our History

PHC was founded in 1820 as one of England's first academic schools for girls. We took our name from Queen Victoria's third daughter, Princess Helena, who became our president in 1874. In 1886, the school was granted a Royal Charter and has since enjoyed the patronage of royalty; the Queen is our patron and the HRH The Duchess of Gloucester is our president.

We moved from London in 1935 to our current home in Preston, Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The school building was previously known as Temple Dinsley and is a magnificent Queen Anne mansion dating from 1714. Late last century, celebrated architect Sir Edwin Lutyens was commissioned to enlarge the house and Gertrude Jekyll redesigned the formal gardens.

Our School



Our Beliefs

- The development of the individual through diversity of education;
- Inspiring intellectual curiosity and academic achievement;
- Encouraging self-reliance and independence;
- Working in partnership with students, their parents and the community;
- The importance of the boarding community for the whole school.

Why Choose Princess Helena College?

- Our ethos nurtures and develops individuality and enables our students to be themselves.
- We create the foundations for success, producing young people with self-belief and confidence, ready to find their place in a competitive world.
- A personal approach to each student's education: every student has a Mentor whose role is to provide support and inspiration to ensure every student achieves their best.
- High academic standards; students are supported and encouraged to exceed their expectations.
- Individual attention from subject specialist teachers.
- A powerful Alumni network provides careers talks, internships, work experience, enterprise, leadership and team building opportunities.
- A wide-ranging and diverse co-curricular programme, designed to unlock the potential in every student.
- Our extended school day offers students the chance to stay in school for prep and take part in the co-curricular activities on offer.
- Close proximity to London gives our students access to a wide range of cultural events and historic venues to enrich their experiences.
- Our historic buildings set in 100 acres of beautiful Hertfordshire countryside, are tranquil and safe, providing a perfect setting for learning.

“Our staff are committed to developing the potential of every student.”

Lessons are taught by subject specialist staff in modern facilities. The curriculum is overseen by the Head, who works closely with teachers to ensure the highest standards are maintained.

We deliver a programme of study and enrichment which is tailored to meet the needs of each individual student, encouraging them not only to succeed but to exceed.

Each student's progress in all areas of the curriculum is managed closely by their Mentor and Form Tutor, in partnership with parents, and overseen by the Head of Key Stage. Each student meets with their Mentor weekly. Mentors offer guidance and support (both academic and pastoral), help manage workload, advise on best learning and revision practices, and ensure a good balance of activities is maintained.

Individual attention and highly qualified subject specialist teachers encourage students to push their boundaries and discover the resilience to challenge themselves and thrive academically.



Academic Excellence

Key Stage 3 (Years 7 - 9)

Students in Key Stage 3 study:

- Art and Design
- Computer Science
- Dance
- Drama
- English Language
- English Literature
- French
- Geography
- History
- Mathematics
- Music
- P.E.
- Performing Arts
- PSHE
- Religious Studies
- Science
- Spanish

P.E. and PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education) continue as an important element of the curriculum for all students.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11)

All students study GCSE or IGCSE compulsory core subjects:

- English Literature
- English Language
- Mathematics
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics

Beyond this core curriculum, students choose three or four additional subjects from the following options:

- Art and Design/Photography
- Business Studies
- Computer Science
- Dance
- Drama
- French
- Geography
- History
- P.E.
- Religious Studies
- Spanish

Students are encouraged to gain greater independence in their learning in Key Stage 4, with a separate work area for prep and study periods, as well as their own common room and kitchen.

Support is provided in subject selection and we aim to accommodate most combinations of subjects.

Overseas Students

Students whose first language is not English have tailored EAL lessons, either 1-1 or in small groups. These lessons help improve their written and spoken language but also support them in their other subjects. IGCSE English as a Second Language is offered, as well as IELTS tuition in the Sixth Form.

Sixth Form

Our Sixth Form provides students with the opportunity to study, socialise and gain the skills of independent living. The aim of the Sixth Form is to develop the students as leaders, role models and positive young adults, and our students leave PHC as independent learners ready for the next stage of life's journey in this global, competitive and fast-paced world.

The dedicated Sixth Form area of the school has study spaces, as well as a well-equipped kitchen, and Common Room. There is wireless internet access throughout.

To ensure every student has access to continuous support and guidance the Head of Sixth Form's office is located in the Sixth Form area. Further guidance and support are provided for every student by their Form Tutor and their Academic Mentor.

Students generally study three A Levels from a wide choice of subjects and many complete an Extended Project Qualification in an area of their choice. Students are guided and supported through the UCAS process as well as receiving tailored careers advice.

Please see our Sixth Form Information Booklet for further details.

Alumni Association

Students benefit from continued links to our extensive network of alumni, parents and valued associates. Careers talks, work experience and internships can be accessed via these links and members of the alumni are regular visitors to the school.

This powerful network provides support for our students as they move on to the next phase of their lives. Our alumni are welcomed to the school for several events each year, such as the recent visit by our President, HRH The Duchess of Gloucester.



Academic Excellence

Reports and Communication

Parents receive information about their son/daughter's progress in the following ways:

- Regular grade cards outlining effort and attainment in each subject area.
- Full written reports commenting on each student's academic and co-curricular achievements and social development.
- Parents' meetings held once each academic year. The Heads of Key Stage monitor each student, and parents are welcome to get in touch at any time to discuss their son or daughter's progress. Any queries can also be directed to the Assistant Head (Pastoral).

Learning Support

Extra support is provided for students with specific learning difficulties through tailored lessons either 1-1 or in small groups, provided at an extra cost.

Accelerated Reader

Accelerated Reader is an online reading programme that enables the assessment of students' comprehension in an exciting and stimulating way.

We were early adopters of this ground-breaking programme which has been proven to significantly improve comprehension skills, which are so vital to academic and social wellbeing, and to foster a genuine love of reading. It is available in Key Stage 3, and has really aided our strong reading culture. An annual prize giving ceremony is held which rewards students based on their Accelerated Reader scores.

Exam Results

The academic rigour we instil is demonstrated by the excellent academic results our leavers achieve. These results have enabled our students to go on to study at leading universities both in the UK and internationally, including Oxford and Cambridge and Russell Group universities.

A Level Grades - 2019

A*-A



A*-C



GCSE Grades - 2019

9-7



9-4



Sample of University destinations 2015-2019

University of Birmingham	Geography
University of Bristol	Physics with Industrial Experience International Studies & Spanish
Cardiff University	Psychology
Central Saint Martins	Art Foundation
University of Exeter	History History of Art
The Hong Kong University of Science & Technology	Risk Management & Business
King's College London	Music
University of Leeds	Media & Communications Sustainability & Environmental Studies
London School of Economics	Geography Law
The University of Manchester	Biology
Newcastle University	Philosophy
University of Nottingham	Geography
Nottingham Trent University	Communication and Society and Philosophy
University of Oxford	Japanese Russian
Oxford Brookes University	Marketing Management Social Anthropology Geography
Queen Mary University of London	Law and Politics
University of Reading	English Literature
Royal Agricultural University	Environmental Conservation & Heritage
University of St Andrews	Philosophy
University College London	Classical Archaeology and Classical Civilisation
University of East Anglia	Medicine
University for the Creative Arts	Interior Architecture and Design
Bangor University	Banking and Finance
University of Portsmouth	Pharmacology
University of Warwick	Classical Civilisation English Literature
University of York	Philosophy English Literature

Co-curricular

We recognise the value of a rounded education that develops the whole self. As well as an excellent academic education, every individual needs to develop a number of other important skills to enable them to become confident leaders, ready to face and overcome challenges.

The activities are designed specifically to appeal to different year groups, allowing for progression from Year 7 through to Year 13. The programme offers activities at lunchtimes and after school, as well as longer term projects and one-off events, ranging from cinematography to the DofE Award and from life-saving to the Model United Nations.



DofE Award Scheme

The DofE Scheme is an opportunity for students to develop their leadership and teamwork skills, and is a popular and important element of the co-curricular programme. Many students complete their Bronze D of E Award and we are proud of the high number of students achieving Silver and Gold before leaving school.

Service and Volunteering

Through PSHE and our co-curricular programme, students are encouraged to participate in activities such as charity work, community service, volunteering and National Citizen Service. These foster a sense of responsibility towards themselves and others and focus their attention on the world beyond school.

Trips

The school organises a wide range of educational and co-curricular trips each year. Recent trips include:

- Geography trip to Isle of Wight
- Camps International treks to Borneo and Peru
- Warm weather athletics training to Lanzarote
- Languages trips to France and Spain
- Creative Arts trip to New York
- Ski trip to Austria

Shorter day and weekend trips to a variety of destinations are a regular feature of the PHC experience, both to complement the curriculum and for leisure.

“Our co-curricular programme has been designed to enhance every student’s education by offering a wide choice of activities to challenge and stimulate.”

Recent co-curricular activities include:

- Art Club
- Athletics
- Badminton
- Bridge
- Chamber Choir
- Charities Committee
- Chess
- Coding for Fun
- Composing & Music Theory
- Cookery
- Cross Country
- Dance Company
- Debating
- Drama/LAMDA
- DofE
- Eco Schools
- Fashion Illustration
- Fitness Training
- Football
- Gymnastics
- Gym Squad
- Junior Choir
- Lacrosse
- Languages and Culture Club
- Law and Debating Society
- Life Drawing
- Media Studies Club
- Model United Nations
- Music Composing Club
- Netball
- Orchestra
- Photography Club
- Polyglot Society
- Psychology Club
- Public Speaking
- Rounders
- School Magazine
- Senior Choir
- String Ensemble
- Swimming
- Table Tennis
- Touch Rugby
- Trampolining
- Volunteering
- Wind Band
- Yoga

“We like to think of the Houses as families where each student can offer support and guidance to others in a safe and creative environment; this embodies the warm and supportive nature of PHC.”

Location

We are conveniently located in north Hertfordshire, just outside the market town of Hitchin, London is 33 minutes by train and Cambridge is 31 minutes.

A minibus service provides transport to and from school from North London and towns across Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

House System

With an emphasis on nurturing and encouragement, the House System is the epicentre of our community spirit. Every student is allocated to one of our three Houses: Gloucester, Windsor or York.

The House System offers a platform for students across the year groups to work together in creative endeavours, co-curricular activities and fun competitions; whether it be choreographing a House dance or researching for public speaking.

Pastoral Care

Our excellent pastoral care is a key part of what makes PHC such a special place for students.

We ensure students have a voice in the school, and have direct responsibility for implementing changes they want and believe in.

The formal pastoral structure is provided by the Assistant Head (Pastoral), Heads of Key Stage, Form Tutors, and Boarding House staff. All new students are helped to settle in by our buddy system. For Year 7, this is a student from the year above, who acts as a mentor and friend and for students in other year groups a student from their form.

Students have nominated members of staff to whom they can go for advice and support. We also have a school counsellor.

We believe in the importance of a spiritual and moral education. Whilst we are a Church of England school, we welcome students of all religions and support their wishes to observe festivals, diets and traditions.

Medical Care

The Surgery is staffed by our School Nurse. In addition, we have a number of trained first aiders in school.

Boarders are registered with the local GP Practice.

About PHC

Boarding

Community, care and fun are at the heart of the Boarding House. Students are able to develop, thrive and form lifelong friendships within the diverse community of UK and international boarders. Each young person is encouraged to develop their own character and sense of self, growing in confidence, courage and compassion.

Our boarding staff work to create a supportive and relaxed environment where each student can develop at their own pace. They guide students using liberal praise and encouragement, whilst upholding high expectations of behaviour. Much emphasis is placed on ensuring each boarder feels valued as a member of the boarding community to which they are encouraged to contribute.

Our Boarding House offers a range of boarding options including full, weekly and occasional options from Year 7-13 for girls. From September 2020, we will be welcoming boys into boarding in Years 7, 8, 9 and 12. Families can choose the type of boarding that best suits their needs.

Full boarders stay in school throughout the week and enjoy a full weekend programme that includes visits to London and Cambridge, outdoor activities such as scaling high ropes and canoeing, as well as various planned sporting and other activities within the school's buildings and grounds.

Weekly boarders arrive either on Sunday evening or on Monday morning and return home on Friday afternoon, spending four to five nights in school.

Occasional boarding allows families to decide which nights their son or daughter boards. This allows students to gain the experience of boarding without being away from home full time. It can be arranged on a permanent basis or ad-hoc, subject to availability.

Sixth Form boarders play an active role in supporting boarding students in all year groups through the 'family' structure within the Boarding House, organising fun activities which take place throughout the year, as well as offering a more experienced 'ear' for younger students to turn to.

Boarding Facilities

Students in Years 11, 12 and 13 have individual study bedrooms, while students in Year 10 share twin spaces, and those in the junior groups share in rooms of between four and six. Bath and shower rooms are allocated to a small number of students in each section of the House and there are kitchens and common rooms for relaxation and games. Boarders have access to the music practice rooms, sports facilities, IT suites, the Learning Resources Centre and the Art Department in the evenings and weekends.

“Students are able to develop, thrive and form lifelong friendships within the diverse community of UK and international boarders.”



Admissions



We understand that choosing the right school for your son or daughter is one of the most important decisions you can make, as a result we have created a straightforward admission process to help you along the way.

Open Events provide a great opportunity to visit us and get to know the school.

We hold a number of events throughout the year, please either visit our website or contact our registrar, for more information on our next event. In addition, we can arrange for an individually tailored tour of the school on a date convenient to you.

On your tour you will meet with the Head, our teaching staff and students, and have the opportunity to see first-hand the activities and opportunities on offer.

From September 2020, we will be accepting boys for entry into Years 7, 8, 9 and 12.

Our Admission Process:

Visit the School and meet the Head

The Head meets each family informally to discuss your application and get to know your child personally. This visit will include a tour of the school during a normal working day.

Register your child for our Assessment Day

Following your visit to the School, please complete a Registration Form which includes a non-refundable £100 registration fee.

Assessment Day

Prospective students sit the School's own entrance exam which comprises papers in English, Mathematics and a Verbal Reasoning Test. Previous school reports and a confidential reference from your son/daughter's current school will be requested. Late applications can be considered after the Assessment Day, and offers made subject to availability.

Our Assessment Day for 2020 entry into Year 7 and 9 is Thursday 16 January 2020.

Students may be accepted into the School in other year groups, provided space is available. An interview, assessment and a satisfactory report from the current school will be required.

Entry into the Sixth Form is based on performance at GCSE. Prospective students will be invited to have a taster day in Year 11 to give them a taste of Sixth Form life.

Across all year groups, Princess Helena College offers priority to siblings and children of the clergy and servicemen and women.

Confirm your son/daughter's place

To confirm and secure a place after the formal offer is made, a deposit of £650 for day students and £1,000 for boarders is required for UK resident nationals and £1,500 for overseas residents. This must be returned to the School with the completed and signed Acceptance of Place form.

Guaranteed Place Scheme

We offer a Guaranteed Place Scheme for students in prep schools who wish to join PHC at 13+. The scheme enables students to secure a place into Year 9 after completing the assessments in Year 6. The early assessment and subsequent guaranteed place gives parents the assurance of a secured place for their son/daughter's future school education.

For more information on our admission process or to register your son/daughter please contact our Registrar:

Melanie Harper

melanie.harper@phchitchin.com
01462 443888

Admissions

Year 7 and Year 9 Bicentennial Scholarships

External Candidates

All students applying to PHC who have achieved a high enough level of attainment on the Assessment Day in January will be invited to sit a further assessment and interview for the Bicentennial Scholarship.

Internal Candidates

Students who have achieved a high enough level of attainment within internal examinations (Year 9) or GCSE examinations (Year 11) will be invited to an interview that will assess their suitability for the Scholars Programme.

The KS5 Bicentennial Scholarship

The KS5 Bicentennial Scholarship will be awarded based on high attainment across a range of GCSE subjects.

Creative Scholar Programme

Applicants can apply for a Scholarship if they excel in a particular area of art, dance, drama, music or sports.

Our Scholarships are reserved for the most able of performers, and we expect that any recipients will have a passion for learning and demonstrate diligence and resilience. Scholars are expected to take part in extra-curricular activities. They are also entered for any relevant workshops/competitions. Practical assessments will be conducted in the candidate's chosen subject (art, dance, drama, music or sport).

Internal Candidates

For the Creative Scholars Programme students must achieve a minimum Grade 7 in their chosen subject at GCSE.

Creative Scholars Programme: Criteria

• Art

- Creativity: Demonstrate inventiveness and originality in their artwork and approach/ thought process.
- Experimentation: Explores and experiments with media and techniques with confidence and forethought. Has the ability to add refinement, achieving technical control, which results in a more sophisticated finished piece of artwork.
- Materials and Processes: Students use materials and processes in creative, practical and inventive ways; they explore alternatives and respond to new possibilities and meanings.
- Formal Elements: Composition, colour, space, line, form and movement are handled with great sensitivity and excellent visual understanding.

• Dance

- A well-structured solo performance demonstrating a strong sense of performance, including musicality, timing and focus.
- Solo performance shows appropriate use of action, dynamics, and spatial elements to communicate the intended theme.
- Appropriate choice and use of accompaniment for the chosen genre and theme, demonstrating their ability to 'use' the music.
- Shows a range of well executed physical skills throughout routine, including flexibility, strength and balance.
- Performs with sustained confidence; engaging with the audience.
- Enthusiasm beyond the classroom.

• Drama

- Performance demonstrates a detailed knowledge of the text provided.
- An independent, well informed, creative interpretation of character.
- Appropriate use of voice, space and movement in performance.
- Focused, sustained engagement with the audience/task.
- Analytical comments made in discussion.
- Obvious energy and enthusiasm for the subject.
- Collaborative approach to working with others.
- Proven commitment to drama outside of the classroom.

• Music

- Year 6 auditions (for the Years 7-9 scholarship): Grade 3/4.
- Year 9 auditions (for the Years 10-11 scholarship): Grade 5/6.
- Year 11 auditions (for the Years 12-13 scholarship): Grade 7/8.
- Engagement with and commitment to musical groups.
- Developing knowledge and aural skills.
- Performance skill.
- Ability to recognise and describe musical features.

• Sport

- Performance at district, county or national level.
- A high level of fitness.
- Excellent skills in a range of core sports.
- Proven success in sport (a range of, or a specific sport).
- Proven commitment to sport outside of the school curriculum.
- A clear passion for sport.

Bursaries and Assistance with Fees

PHC has always strived to ensure that students who would benefit from an education at the School are not excluded for financial reasons.

Each year we offer a limited number of means-tested bursaries to enable students to attend PHC whose parents might not otherwise be able to afford the fees. Applications are invited at 11+ (Year 7), 13+ (Year 9) and 16+ (Year 12) only, and financial assistance is based on means-testing the household income and assets using a formula widely used within the independent sector and may include a home visit.

Parents are required to make a written statement to support their application and bursary applications should be submitted prior to the Entrance Examination dates.

Awards range in value according to financial need and the funds available for bursaries allocated by Governors and in all cases of financial support, parents are expected to contribute to the fees.

For those to whom a bursary has been awarded, the balance of fees due and any other additional charges for the term (e.g. bus travel) are payable by the parents.

Sibling discount

We offer a sibling discount of 5% for the second child and 10% for the third and subsequent siblings who attend Princess Helena College at the same time.

Armed Forces discounts

If you are entitled to claim the Forces' Boarding Schools Allowance – Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) – you will be pleased to know that Princess Helena College is on the approved list.

We recognise the Ministry of Defence's discount scheme and offer a 10% reduction in fees to families from the Armed Forces. Although PHC is on the list that qualify for CEA, there is no guarantee you will receive the allowance. If you register your child with us and do not get CEA entitlement, we will refund the registration charge in full.

Members of the Clergy

Princess Helena College offers a fee remission of 10% for children of full-time members of the clergy.

Important Dates

- Deadline for entrance scholarship and bursary applications - Friday 1 November 2019
- Incoming Year 7 & 9 Assessment Day - Thursday 16 January 2020
- Scholarship interviews - Monday 20 January - Friday 24 January 2020

Contact

Please contact the Registrar, Mrs Melanie Harper, for all scholarship and bursary enquiries: melanie.harper@phchitchin.com or 01462 443888.

Fees for 2019/2020 Academic Year

We aim to make our fees as inclusive and clear as possible to allow parents to plan in advance.

All Fees Include:

- Break, Lunch and Afternoon Tea
- Extended Day and Prep Supervision
- Most Clubs and Activities (excluding paid extras)

Boarding Fees

Additionally Include:

- Weekend activity programme
- Breakfast and Supper
- All laundry

Fee remissions:

- Members of the Armed Forces - 10%
- Members of the Clergy - 10%
- Sibling discount - 5%
- Sibling discount - third or subsequent child - 10%

Registration Fee	
UK/EU	£100
Non-EU	£225
Deposit	
UK/EU - Day	£100
UK/EU - Boarding	£1,000
Non-EU	£2,000
Short Stay (less than one term) – subject to availability	£500

Deposit is non-refundable if the student fails to attend, otherwise it will be refunded after the student's final term.

Day Fee		
Years 7 – 13	Per term	£5,700
Boarding Fee		
Year 7 – 13 Full Boarding	Per term	£10,125
Year 7 – 13 Weekly Boarding (4 nights, Mon – Thu)	Per term	£8,125
Occasional Boarding	Per night	£70
Obligatory Extras		
Overseas Students – EAL Lessons	Per term	£800
Personal Accident Insurance	Per term	£6.25
Academic Support		
Initial Assessment		Free
Further Assessment		£42
Group Lessons		£23
Individual Lessons		£42
Extra Activities (per term)		
Musical Instruments	Per term	£280
Speech & Drama	Per term	£280
Dance	Per term	£280
Tennis	Per term	£280
Fee Remissions		
Members of the Armed Forces		10%
Members of the Clergy		10%
Sibling Discount		5%

The PHC Community

Patron

Her Majesty The Queen

President

HRH The Duchess of Gloucester

Visitor

The Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of London

Senior Members of Staff

Head

Mrs Sarah Davis

Assistant Head and Head of Sixth Form

Mrs Lorna McPherson

Assistant Head and Head of Year 7-8

Mrs Anna Fells

Bursar & Clerk to the Governors

Mr Andrew MacFarlane

Please visit www.phchitchin.com for a full list of our staff

Governors

At Princess Helena College we are very fortunate to have a truly professional, committed and enthusiastic team of governors.

Chair

Mr David Prosser

Vice Chair

Mrs Louise Smith

Treasurer

Mr Ian Chambers

Please visit www.phchitchin.com for a full list of our Governors.

School Policies

School policies are available to download on the school website: www.phchitchin.com/About-Us/Recent-Reports-and-Policies or can be obtained from the PA to the Headmistress: head@phchitchin.com

United Learning

In 2018, Princess Helena College joined United Learning, becoming part of a national educational group that aims to provide excellent education to children and young people across the country.

As part of United Learning, we are now benefitting from developing relationships with other schools across the group, and taking up opportunities to be involved in programmes, events and initiatives that no standalone school could ever provide on its own, enabling our students have access to truly exceptional and inspiring experiences.

PHC Parents Association (PHCPA)

The School benefits enormously from the work of this dynamic and committed group of parents who organise social events and help fundraise. Fundraising events have included:

- Quiz and Curry evenings
- Art Festivals
- Christmas Markets
- Family fun days
- Summer Ball

Most recently the fundraising projects have allowed investment in:

- Fitness Suite
- ICT Facilities
- Two new minibuses
- Gymnastic mats
- Old Hall lighting
- Sound and lighting equipment
- Outdoor pursuits equipment
- Sports Pavilion
- Printing Press



PHC

Hitchin
Independent School

Princess Helena College
School Lane, Preston, Nr Hitchin,
Hertfordshire, SG4 7RT, United Kingdom
Tel: 01462 432100

This Information Booklet broadly describes the principles on which Princess Helena College is organised. Whilst we have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this booklet and associated documents, this does not form part of any contract or agreement between parents and the School. Changes to specifications and fees may occur during any given year and the School reserves the right to implement the changes.

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