



# Sydney High Open Day

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## What does an education at Sydney Boys High offer you?

High has been nurturing scholar sportsmen since 1883. Pursuing excellence through opportunity is what we do. We set ourselves high standards. The school's motto "with truth and courage" exemplifies the mindset that underpins the school's programs. We face tough competition from independent schools in our co-curricular endeavours and equally severe challenges academically from other selective schools. The organisational glue bonding our school achievement is made up of the efforts of like-minded people. We rely not on bricks but brains, not on facilities but friends, not on resources but on relationships. We have an eclectic collection of skills, ideas, values and customs that coalesce in a multicultural setting. We have a wide variety of educational programs. We have teaching strength grown out of generations of successful experience with gifted students. High Old Boys are well represented among leaders in sport, law, the professions, business, the arts, universities, religion, politics and the civil service. They offer encouragement, mentoring advice and assistance to the school and to individual students. We are given great support by our students, parents, recent old boys and friends. Really good schools are made so by enthusiastic, competent, committed people. High has a way of engaging students and their families to share its goals and aspirations. One of our enduring slogans is: "you can't buy spirit!"

### **High is public, secular, egalitarian and multicultural.**

High is academically selective but not socio-economically selective – you cannot buy a place at High - only earn one. High is inclusive. The school has a multicultural, egalitarian and learning-oriented culture. There is no expectation to belong to or observe the rituals of any organised religion. Christians, Muslims, Jews, Confucians or Buddhists have equal access to the school to provide religious education if parents choose it for their sons. High is geographically dispersed. Students reside in >150 post codes. High has a strong set of guiding values. The school has a moral and ethical, but not doctrinaire culture. Our *Values Education* program attempts to inculcate the *Nine Values of Australian Schooling*. We stress *honesty, trust, integrity, respect, responsibility, compassion and tolerance*, while simultaneously offering real world advice on time management, self-organisation, resilience building and study skills. We have a social justice focus, with programs in community service, global citizenship and civic leadership. Our co-curricular activities help our boys to be the best that they can be.

### **High offers a rigorous, responsive, choice-based curriculum designed for gifted boys.**

The purpose of our curriculum is to prepare gifted boys for tertiary study. In Years 7 and 8 students are offered a choice of two languages from Latin, Chinese, French and German. In Year 8, students are offered two languages. In Year 9 as well as telescoped mandatory history and geography (teaching stage 5 in one year), students choose two electives from: commerce, film making, design and technology, architectural and engineering drawing, visual arts, visual design, music, drama, Latin, Chinese, French and German. In Year 10, three electives are

studied but in greater depth, one of which may be an accelerated stage 6 course. In addition to electives offered in Year 9, subjects such as history and geography electives, robotics and software design, Japanese beginners, a PE elective and commerce extension are available, infused with **Stage 6 concepts and skills**. An enrichment mathematics course is offered to talented students in Years 9 and 10, conducted by a UNSW lecturer. In Years 11 and 12 we provide special support for the study of languages, engineering studies, software design, drama, music and visual arts. All our students do advanced English and extension English in Year 11. Most students do mathematics extension. **English, mathematics extension, physics and chemistry courses in Year 12 are accessed via competitive entry only and enrolments in these courses are capped**. No standard courses are offered. Our Stage 6 curriculum choices are broad and include studies of religion. Senior science is offered in Year 12 to some science students.

Throughout the curriculum our focus is on nurturing life skills: problem solving, evaluating ideas, working in teams, communicating ideas and being creative and innovative.

### **High applies purposeful grouping practices to put able students with special learning needs together.**

People with similar interests and abilities learn better with and from each other. Information on our students is gathered from an analysis of test scores, from data supplied by applicants in an enrolment survey, from primary school principals and counsellors and from internal testing. In Year 7, some special classes are formed. We have a class of students who performed very well in the Selective Schools Entrance Test (*Outrider*). We have an *English Enrichment* class, for students with measured literacy improvement needs. Depending on results and data provided, from time to time, we have classes selected to encourage students with high General Ability Test scores (*GAT*), or with high English scores (*English Extension*). In other classes, students are grouped as a result of assessed musical talent or demonstrated sporting ability. Students may be brought together as a result of a common interest in studying a language.

In Years 8 through 12 classes in mathematics are streamed. Mathematics classes are graded in two streams in Year 8 and one stream in Years 9 -10. In other courses with multiple classes, an advanced learner class or two is formed according to individual department policy. The remainder of the classes are allocated as mixed ability groups. We have a *60/30 policy* for able students in English and science in Years 9-10. The top English and science classes in Years 9 and 10 are drawn from a high achieving pool of 60 students. In Year 11, mathematics extension and English extension classes are streamed.

### **Curriculum compacting and structured acceleration are features of High's Talent Development Policy.**

*Twenty-first century education is not about content but about concepts, not about rote learning but about reasoning, not about programs but process and projects, and not about instruction but inspiration.* What you can do with what you know is the priority. In general terms, we aim to have our programs in stages 4 and 5 compacted so that able students have had exposure to and have mastered, the major concepts and skills of their subjects. Consequently, by the end of Year 9, a large proportion of students have the background to undertake stage 6 coursework. Stage 5 is completed in the social sciences by the end of Year 9. Acceleration electives are available for Year 10 students who qualify as subject accelerants because of past performances.

Qualified, suitable and interested individuals have opportunities to accelerate in various courses. There is a formal, published procedure for admission to acceleration in each of the courses offered. Students need to complete an *Individual Learning Plan* signed off by their parents, and lodge it with the Principal for approval. The progress of subject accelerants is monitored by the Principal. Students are currently accelerating in business studies, geography, languages, mathematics, modern history and music. Each year 120-140 students in Years 10 and 11 access subject acceleration programs. Our students often undertake extension courses once they have completed HSC courses as accelerants. Non-accelerating students in Year 10 are offered more challenging topics exploring stage 6 principles and concepts to provide accelerative enrichment within their programs.

### **High has a range of programs to enhance wellbeing and student welfare, resourced with the help of DEC.**

Based around the *Values Education* program for years 7-9, student wellbeing is a major part of our curriculum. Boys are explicitly taught about issues such as anti bullying strategies, study skills, time management, personal organisation, ethics and motivation enhancement. In Year 10 there is a *Transition Program* which includes accessing Board of Studies and Career Voyage websites to raise student awareness of vocational offerings and academic responsibilities for the HSC. Each semester the topics covered are listed on the school report with participation ratings for each student. The *Wellbeing Team* has over 20 members, including Counsellors and a Parent Representative. It meets twice a term to plan strategies, review programs and discuss student issues. We have a Head Teacher Student Welfare who is responsible for a suite of programs designed to enhance student self-esteem, combat underachievement and promote a sense of belonging to the school. Our Quality Teaching team provides information and advice to parents and boys about usage of the internet, games and social networking sites. Peer Support and Peer Mediation training is offered. There are Academic Support Group programs in all Years 7-12.

We have applied technology to student attendance and progress monitoring in our *Student Attendance and Monitoring Policy*. Students use id cards to swipe on attendance each day. Rolls are marked in class each lesson and recorded electronically. The parents of absent students are contacted by SMS daily. Monitoring of attendance and progress occurs at all levels once per term through the Student Welfare team. We provide Year 7 boys with diaries which contain our major operating policies and procedures as well as a comprehensive calendar of school events. We encourage parents to use these diaries to communicate with teachers. At the end of each reporting period, a '*student monitoring register*' is created. The Principal and Year Advisers discuss students on the lists. Their parents are advised and follow up is undertaken, including: special programs by expert providers, Year Adviser interview, or referral to the School Counsellor or the Careers Adviser, or to an outside agency. Year Advisers mentor individual students in their learning. Every student is interviewed by the Principal at least twice each year to discuss his progress.

Students with special needs are supported. Our School Counsellors are actively engaged in our student wellbeing programming and offer referrals to specialist people and agencies. Special provisions, integration support and professional consultancy, reinforce our interventions designed to help our boys. We have a Learning Support Officer for three days per week to assist students with ongoing support needs. We can access DEC funds, resources and expertise to prepare staff and students to respond appropriately to individuals with special needs.

## **Sydney High is organised as two discrete schools within one to facilitate greater engagement by staff with individual students.**

To help personalise an individual's educational experience at High, the administration of the school is divided into a junior and a senior school, each headed by a Deputy Principal. Each 'school' has a separate sports afternoon, uniform, library and assemblies but students assemble together for special occasions. In the *Junior School* the pedagogical philosophy centres around **personal development** with emphasis on the development of the whole child (cognitive, emotional, social, civic, creative, spiritual and physical). Collaborative and cooperative learning is encouraged. Open-ended, student-centred, choice-based, heuristic programming nurtures *meta learning* (or learning how to learn) and promotes individual motivation and rapid development. Year Advisers focus on monitoring, mentoring and supporting academic wellbeing. There are three Year Advisers for Year 7 and Year 8 boys to support their transition into high school. The two Year Advisers in Year 9 focus on helping boys to engage with the co-curricular life of the school to increase their emotional wellbeing and self confidence. Year 8 boys volunteer to help a Teacher Mentor with incoming Year 9 boys.

In the *Senior School* the centre of effort is **academic achievement**. The *Senior School* delivers what is for many a three-year program of HSC preparation. Academic content and skills and assessment protocols as prescribed in Stage 6 syllabuses, dominate the pedagogy. Learning is future oriented and comparative. Students are expected to become autonomous, independent learners. The *Senior School* has as its primary purpose preparing our students for tertiary entrance. Students develop skills in analysis and problem solving and learn to express what they know in more sophisticated language – the meta-language of each discipline. We generally allocate a full number of face-to-face teaching periods even to small classes in the HSC, to allow for diversity.

## **High encourages individuals and teams to take on challenges and develop leadership skills through its Talent Development programs.**

We automatically enter boys in a wide range of *academic competitions* as part of our talent development program. We sponsor individuals or teams to enter competitions in: writing, public speaking, the environment, business, computing and visual arts. In Years 8-10, talented mathematics students are targeted for extension studies with university personnel guiding their development. Tournament of Minds and the Da Vinci Decathlon are team performance and problem solving competitions which we enter annually. We also enter the Youth United Nations competitions. We offer financial assistance where needed to high achieving boys who incur expenses representing themselves and the school at national and international levels. *High Societies* for various purposes – journalism / media, ISCF, Amnesty International, The Share Trading Game, the Islamic Society, the Chinese Eisteddfod – are fostered.

*The Prefect System* works very well at High under the experienced guidance of our Prefects Master. Thirty-six *School Prefects* are elected each year. There are stringent qualifications for candidates. Above average academic achievement, good attendance and behaviour records and demonstrated participation in the Student Awards Scheme over a number of years, set the standards for our student leaders. *School Prefects serve an internship of three terms before they are inducted at an official assembly*. During their internship, Prefects have to maintain their standards in academics, dress code, participation and punctuality. The *School Prefects* have a range of liaison, social and representational duties and serve in the School Canteen.

The *Student Representative Council* has four elected representatives for each year. It functions as a sounding board for student opinion. It undertakes research and makes representations to the Principal for improvements to facilities for students. It alerts the Principal to workplace health and safety issues that arise from time to time. The SRC offers leadership opportunities outside the school at District and state level. SRC representatives attend school Council meetings. Leadership opportunities abound in sports teams and as initiative in co-curricular activities. *High Resolves* is one of a number of leadership training programs, along with *Elevate Education* which provide opportunities for interested boys to extend their leadership skills.

High has had involvement with cadets and military training since 1883. We have a well-supported *Cadet Unit* with up to 50 boys participating. The cadets represent the school at various official and ceremonial functions in the city, including the Anzac Day March. Student leaders undergo training courses within the cadet organisation to improve their interpersonal, leadership and communication skills.

### **High involves its parents and alumni in school governance, co-curricular activities and program implementation.**

High parents and Old Boys have specified positions in the governance of this school. In the constitutions of the *Sydney Boys High School Council*, the *Sydney High School Foundation* and the *Parents and Citizens Association*, parent representative positions are established. In the *Wellbeing Team*, Canteen Sub-Committee, Sydney High School Foundation sub-committees and Library Committee, parents are important members of these decision-making groups. Parents are represented on *Year Groups* to discuss and make recommendations about issues specific to each academic year. These *Year Groups* bring matters of concern straight to the Principal's attention. In addition, parents chair and make up the bulk of a number of standing Parent Support Groups for the administration of: debating, music, chess, athletics, fencing, football, tennis and basketball. Parents serve on committees of Incorporated Associations to manage the affairs of rifle shooting, sailing, rowing, cricket and rugby.

### **High recognises and rewards its students for their achievements.**

We are justly proud of our *Student Awards Scheme*. We feel it represents best practice in recognising and rewarding students for achievement. A majority of boys in each Year 7-12 fulfil the demanding requirements of successful participation in several of the 20 areas of endeavour, described by category and activity. Participants are awarded points for participation. Students are honoured at Year Assemblies, at sports dinners, special assemblies and ultimately at Presentation Night. They receive handsome medallions (bronze, silver, gold, platinum) for the first four stages of achievement followed by a School Plaque and School Trophy for the senior years. Outstanding students receive the Nathan McDonnell Award and a cash prize. Exceptional students are honoured with the Joseph Coates Award.

*High Flyer* is a biannual colour publication dedicated to promoting the achievements of students and good news about the school. *The Record* annually lists the achievements of students and publishes their results, articles, sports reports and literary and artistic works. There is a 'high talent' section of our weekly newsletter *High Notes* that is devoted to praising students for their achievements. Honour Boards around the school bear the names of prize winners in many areas of endeavour. Photographs of successful students adorn our foyer. Framed blazers on corridor walls highlight the intergenerational examples of all round excellence prized by the school. Student artworks are hung on the interior walls. Our archives

room preserves our history. Recognition of student achievement builds tradition. The school is a living museum, recording displaying and celebrating its people and their achievements.

### **High is unique in its access to sporting competition and its shared campus location.**

I believe our school offers a unique educational experience. At High, we enjoy the best of both worlds in education, private and public. Through our membership of the AAGPS we have access to great competition in sports, debating, public speaking and chess. We are improving our sports facilities and have access to wonderful independent school facilities and participate in events that are very well organised and managed. In addition, as a public school we have entitlements and access to the programs and support provided by state education. We access CHS competitions in athletics, sports knockouts, carnivals, performance music, drama and debating.

We offer single sex education, yet share a site and various programs and social activities with the girls at SGHS. We have gifted boys. It is our responsibility to nurture and motivate them to transform their gifts into talents. Excellence is fostered as our boys interact with a challenging and nurturing environment. We provide opportunities for boys to test their abilities and reach their potential. We try to motivate individuals to perform to their personal bests in a wide variety of endeavours. Girls and boys perform in drama productions and music ensembles. High runs on spirit. The spirit of cooperation drives our endeavours. Students participate in activities because they want to. They want to share experiences with others for their personal enjoyment and growth and because they learn to love their school and desire to enhance its reputation.

### **High has a high quality, in-depth sports program to cater to a wide range of individual interests and to challenge boys at the highest level.**

High boys were responsible for organising the first athletics competition for secondary school boys in NSW held in August 1886 at the SCG. Self help is our tradition in sports organisation. We are justly proud of our association since 1906 with eight independent schools, comprising the Athletic Association of Great Public Schools (AAGPS). The AAGPS committee conducts a peerless schoolboy competition in ten sports: athletics, rowing, rugby, cricket, basketball, football, swimming, rifle shooting and cross-country running. Members of the AAGPS also compete in volleyball, water polo, fencing and sailing. High alone competes in them all. Boys train during the week and compete on Saturdays because they want to. We encourage choice and independence. As a founding member of the Combined High Schools Sporting Association formed in 1913, High offers opportunities in state schools knockout competitions and Combined High Schools carnivals. We have the Five Highs cricket tournament, played each year in a different capital city. We have sports tours to The Armidale School and Melbourne High and to CHS rowing venues in Grafton or Taree. We send teams to the national basketball and volleyball tournaments in Melbourne. With **fifteen school organised sports**, High has boundless sporting opportunities.

### **High has a comprehensive and well resourced co-curricular program to provide opportunities for boys to extend their experiences and skills.**

#### **High trains a large number of musicians in various ensembles.**

Our music program is highly regarded for its quality. Each year it attracts several hundred students to be involved in performance ensembles. We are supported by an academic staff of three co-ordinators, two professional ensemble leaders, multiple experienced tutors employed

by the school and a strong fundraising program through the *Music Committee*, run by parents. We have an annual Music Camp that is very well patronised. The DEC Performing Arts Unit targets several of our boys each year for its orchestras. They are offered extra training and are given opportunities to perform at major events. We have a *marching band* that is now a regular feature of the Anzac Day March. Our boys have significant performance opportunities each year at school seasonal music festivals, soirees, assemblies and periodic overseas tours.

***High has established an enviable debating program.***

We have won the Hume Barbour trophy, the state school Year 12 symbol of debating supremacy, twenty-five times, significantly more than any other school. We have won the Karl Cramp Year 11 trophy 14 times – again more than any other school. We were GPS debating co-premiers in 2006 and 2008. We have a highly structured program of GPS debates and also enter all state school contests for Years 7-12. We are foundation members of the East Side debating competition. We are participants in the Friday Evening Debating Competition (FED). Our teams regularly represent the school in state finals or semi finals. Boys debate on Friday nights for GPS and during the week for state sponsored competitions. Multiple teams are trained by a large number of experienced and successful coaches. Social debates with Sydney Girls are organised. High enters the Les Gordon history debating competition each year. The Debating Supporters Group raises funds to support the debating program.

***High has a solid Public Speaking program.***

The art of public speaking is recognised as an individual skill that requires special coaching and training. We have a separate Coordinator for public speaking, a budget and a coaching program in place to support our contestants. High boys have been successful in public speaking contests in recent years, with several state finalists. We also enter the prestigious Lawrence Campbell Competition for oratory organised among GPS schools. Individuals boys are supported in their entries into community based speaking competitions and Rostrum Voice of Youth Competition.

***High has a strong Chess program.***

We have successful chess teams, backed by organised Friday evening competitions and electronic training programs. Our teams have had victories at state and national level. We have a Chess Coach who has implemented a structured training program involving up to 30 boys in the Junior School. High hosts a GPS Chess Tournament each year for teams of 8 players. High has won this trophy 2006-2012. We also enter competitions organised for schools by the Junior Chess League.

***High has developed an excellent Outdoor Education program.***

The philosophy behind the program is that boys develop social and physical skills over time and require several opportunities to enhance them. Year camps are organised for each Year 7-9 and are very well patronised. Experiences and skills are built upon in successive camps with successful participation records kept for each student. By Year 10 boys are offered an opportunity to go on expeditions. The program allows for successful participants to qualify for the requirements of the *Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme*. We have a teacher coordinating the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme to mentor and support students attempting to qualify for bronze, silver and gold awards in the Senior School.

## **High has established social justice programs to instil community mindedness in boys.**

The school has an active *Community Service Committee*. Each academic year adopts a charity or organisation and raises funds for its benefit: Year 7 *Stewart House*, Year 8 *Jeans for Genes*, Year 9 *Boggabilla Central School*, Year 10 *Lak Saviya Foundation*, Year 11 *Sir Roden and Lady Cutler Foundation*, Year 12 *OASIS*. Mufti Days barbecues and Talent Quests are organised to raise funds for charities and schools. Representatives of charities and service organisations are invited to speak at student-run cohort assemblies, to inform students of the work of volunteer organisations. Every year the boys collect more than \$100,000 for various charitable causes. Individual boys as members of the Charities Committee volunteer as collectors for a range of charities. Boys are encouraged to serve their school as parking assistants, library monitors, or student committee members. The school has a recycling club and boys regularly attend organised gardening days to maintain the school grounds. Senior school students give their time to help at Vincentian House. Our boys help with reading programs at Bourke Street PS (Bourke Street Buddies) and with ESL students at Cleveland St. ILC (Convo@Cleo).

## **High nurtures the spirit.**

High runs religious education classes on Friday mornings. Christian, Muslim and Buddhist classes are held for students in Years 7-10. We have ISCF and a SBHS Islamic Society. We offer classes in meditation techniques. Modules on philosophy and ethics are taught in Values Education classes. 'Studies of Religion' is offered in the Senior School for study at one unit and two unit levels.

## **High communicates well with its community to promote inclusiveness and transparency.**

Apart from our weekly *High Notes*, our web site [www.sydneyboyshigh.com](http://www.sydneyboyshigh.com) is accessed regularly by parents and students, particularly to find maps of venues, to confirm events and dates, to use our hot links to various sub-committees, sports, agencies and supporting websites, or to find out more about our policies or programs. Parents have access to a Parents' Portal. Our internal website has daily updates of our calendar and variations to school routine. Regular meetings, social events and correspondence through *High Notes*, keep our community informed about what is going on. Parents are offered an email service to receive *High Notes* electronically or to monitor their son's attendance or punctuality through daily SMS messages or weekly emailed updates. *High Flyer* and *High Bulletin* copies are posted to parents or emailed as preferred. Students vote for the SRC online. Staff and students vote for School Prefects online. Online surveys are used increasingly to gauge staff and student opinion on issues or procedures.

