

22 April 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope you and your families are well and enjoyed the Easter school holiday period. As usual at this time of year, I am writing to inform you about fees for the coming academic year and to update you on progress and the issues we face at the Haberdashers' Elstree Schools.

2025/26 School Fees

It is our commitment to keep fee rises to a minimum, given the future plans and stewardship responsibilities we have for the Schools. We appreciate the sacrifices many families make to benefit from the wonderful education we provide at Habs. Nevertheless, as we explained during our online parent event earlier this month (and in writing from the Executive Principal shortly afterwards), the independent education sector is currently facing a set of significant challenges. The most significant issue is VAT on fees, but this sits alongside a host of other financial pressures, such as the loss of Business Rates relief and increasing employment costs (National Insurance, minimum wage, teachers' pensions) in the context of sustained economic uncertainty and rising costs.

In response to this new reality, we commissioned some research to consider how best to respond for the benefit of current and future Habs pupils. As part of this research, we considered options such as reducing our entry requirements to retain scale at all costs (as some schools have done) to maintain operating model efficiencies; or seeking to limit fee rises (or even reduce fees) by significantly reducing the quality of educational provision.

Habs has a very strong reputation, focused on academic strength, alongside a nurturing and broader education, to prepare your children for the uncertainties of the world they will move into and our strong partnership with parents is the bedrock of our community. The research suggested that parents are not keen on substantive changes to the current education we provide. We are committed to remaining highly selective and have not, in any way, reduced our entry requirements in the recent admissions round, even though this may result in schools which are slightly smaller in the future.

We have also made a number of pragmatic decisions to seek efficiencies and to best manage costs. This includes tight controls on salaries and efficient timetabling, reduced energy consumption, and reductions in large cost areas. We have also generated additional revenues by letting out the School site to more external hirers. However, it is important to stress that despite these steps we have not been able to offset every cost increase. It is important that Habs continues to generate sufficient surplus to meet our debt obligations and invest for the future to deliver the highest quality experience for pupils and families.

Furthermore, parental feedback was also very clear regarding growing expectations in return for increasing fees. This included a strong focus on: accountable and accessible high-calibre teachers; high-quality opportunities outside the classroom; a nurturing culture in which all pupils are known and valued; clearer and more consistent communication around logistical and personal issues; academic results that are consistently among the very best in the country and help pupils secure places at top universities in the UK and beyond; an exceptional Sixth Form experience which is both academic and increasingly independent and provides the best



of both worlds (genuinely co-educational experiences which prepare pupils for life after school, without losing that sense of belonging to one's home school); and a genuine sense of partnership between school and parents in support of the children.

As I have affirmed in previous years, it is our firm belief that the value of education should be the same regardless of gender and we continue to work towards complete harmonisation of fees between the schools. One area of parental feedback was the perceived difference in provision and experience between the Boys' and Girls' Schools and this is a priority for Governors to address. A girl's education should be of equal value and quality to a boy's education, and the Girls' School must be supported to make faster progress in this regard, hence the major recent investment in B Block (following investment in the car park and STEM centre in prior years). There are evolving plans to develop the Girls' School playing fields and the Junior School, as well a drive towards a more collaborative approach in the co-curricular programme under a single leader working across both Schools.

Therefore, considering all the above, termly fees for the academic year 2025/26 will be:

	Habs Boys Inc. VAT	Habs Boys Ex. VAT	Habs Girls Inc. VAT	Habs Girls Ex. VAT
Reception to Year 2	8,413	7,011	8,413	7,011
Year 3 to Year 6	9,849	8,208	9,201	7,667
Lower 4/ Year 7 to Upper 5/ Year 11	10,423	8,686	10,039	8,366
Sixth Form/ Years 12 to 13	10,423	8,686	10,166	8,472

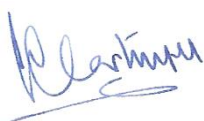
As I have said previously, to help manage costs we are dependent upon parents paying their bills promptly and in full via direct debit. If you have not established a direct debit, I would urge you to do so. We are currently exploring the option of monthly payments in the future, further communication to follow on this.

Our longer-term strategy remains absolutely relevant and our mission remains steadfast: in a rapidly and constantly evolving world, our responsibility is to develop and prepare 'the whole child' for the future, so they can thrive and have a profound impact on, and in, that future world. At the core of the strategy is a recognition that academic excellence is fundamental to Habs and that there can be no reduction in ambition nor outcomes at the Schools, just as we must educate beyond the formal aspects of A Level grades and the curriculum to develop the digital skills and human attributes that will serve them well and equip them to thrive and best serve society in the future.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your continuing support for the students, staff and leadership teams of the Haberdashers' Elstree Schools during what continue to be challenging times. The past year has again been exceptional in many ways and, as we approach the Summer Term, we should reflect on the past twelve months and be grateful for the environment in which we live and work. I hope you are able to enjoy the benefits of being part of communities such as those associated with these outstanding Schools.

In the meantime, my best wishes for the remainder of the holiday period and the coming term.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Simon Cartmell, OBE
Chairman, Haberdashers' Elstree Schools Governing Body