



# Open Day 2025

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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 offer many opportunities. We set ourselves high standards. The school's motto "with truth and courage" exemplifies the mindset that underpins the school's programs. We face severe challenges academically from other selective schools and equally tough competition from independent schools in our co-curricular endeavours. 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 collaborative multicultural setting. We have a wide variety of educational programs. We have teaching strength grown out of interacting with multiple cohorts of gifted students who succeed. High Old Boys are well represented among leaders in law, the professions, business, the arts, universities, religion, politics, sport and the civil service. They offer service, encouragement, mentoring advice and assistance to the school and to individual students. We are also given great support by our parents 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!" We are focused on developing respect, compassion, dedication and integrity in our young men. They are expected to engage with the life of the school.

## 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, Japanese and German. In Year 8, students are offered one language, with an option for Latin and Classical Greek. In Year 9 as well as telescoped mandatory history and geography (teaching stage 5 in one year), students choose two electives from: commerce, photography and digital media, design and technology, graphics technology, visual arts, visual design, music, drama, Latin, Classical Greek, Chinese, French, Japanese 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, IST robotics and software design, a PE elective (PASS) and a commerce extension course, are available, infused with **Stage 6 concepts and skills**. Opportunities are available for students to self-manage one of their Year 10 electives as an OLE (Online Learning Elective) by completing a suite of MOOCS or packaged courses for 120 hours. In Years 11 and 12 we provide *small class support* for the study of languages, engineering studies, software design, drama, music and visual arts. All students do English Advanced. Most students do mathematics extension. **English extension and mathematics extension are accessed via competitive entry only in Year 12 and enrolments in these courses are capped.** Our Stage 6 curriculum choices are broad and also include studies of religion, business studies, legal studies, economics, ancient and modern history. Throughout the curriculum our focus is on nurturing vocational skills: problem solving and critical

thinking, evaluating ideas, working in teams, communicating ideas and being creative and innovative.

### **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. 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 culture based on the *Nine Values of Australian Schooling*. Our *Values Education* program stresses our core values of *integrity, respect, compassion and dedication*, while simultaneously offering real world advice on ethical behaviour, 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. We try to show our boys how to enlarge their lives and become the adults they would like to be. Our co-curricular activities help our boys to be the best that they can be and to develop valuable social skills in team building, goal setting, resilience time management and self-discipline.

### **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 HPSU test scores, from data supplied by applicants in an enrolment survey, from NAPLAN data, 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 High School Placement Test (*Outrider*). We have an *English Enrichment* class, for students with measured literacy improvement needs. Depending on student test results, we may have classes selected to encourage students with high Thinking Skills Test scores, or with high English scores (*English Extension*). Students may be grouped as a result of demonstrated sporting ability, (*Sports Class*). Students may be grouped as a result of a common interest in studying a language (Language Class).

In Year 8, classes in **mathematics are banded** in two streams. One class is ability-selected in each stream, with the remainder mixed ability. There is one stream in Years 9 -10 with the top three classes ability grouped and the others mixed. We have a *60/60 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 English and science, based on Year 8 and Year 9 results, respectively. In Year 11, mathematics extension classes are banded across at least two lines in the timetable.

### **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 covering the curriculum but about collaborating to expand learning, not about programs but processes and projects, and not about instruction but about 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 at stage 5 level. Consequently, by the

end of Year 9, a 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. **Achieving an above average overall academic standard is a prerequisite for studying an accelerated course (top 75 overall cohort rank).** The progress of subject accelerants is monitored by the principal. Students typically accelerate in business studies, geography, languages, mathematics, modern history, design and technology, PDHPE and music. Each year 80 or more 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.

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

Based around the *Values Education* program for Years 7-9, student wellbeing is a major part of our curriculum. Boys are explicitly taught about 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. In Term 4, a *Life Ready* mandatory course is conducted. The *Wellbeing Team* meets twice a term to discuss how we implement and monitor wellbeing issues. We have a *Head Teacher Student Wellbeing* 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. Peer Support and Peer Mediation training is offered. There are *Academic Support Group* programs in all Years 7-12. *Individual Learning and Support Plans* are negotiated for selected students and then monitored by the *Student Learning Support Officer* and the Wellbeing Team. Our *Student Support Officer* engages with a large number of students to talk about wellbeing issues. Necessitous students benefit from our *Bursary Program*, financed by a large group of philanthropic Old Boys.

Students use id cards to swipe on attendance each day and purchase items from the Canteen. Rolls are marked in class each lesson and recorded electronically. The parents of absent students are contacted by SMS daily. Attendance at sport, sports training and GPS fixtures is recorded on *Clipboard*. Monitoring of attendance and progress occurs at all levels fortnightly through the Student Wellbeing team. At the end of each reporting period, a '*student monitoring register*' is created. The Principal, Head Teacher Wellbeing, the Student Learning Support Officer, Careers Adviser, Student Support Officer and Year Advisers discuss students on the register. Their parents are advised by letter and follow up is undertaken, appropriate to individual learning or socio-emotional needs. 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 full time *Student Learning Support Officer* to assist students with ongoing support needs. We can access DoE 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 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 'school' has a separate sports afternoon, uniform, library and assemblies, but students assemble 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. Direct instruction is a school policy. Cognitive load is addressed in our lesson planning. Concept-based, open-ended, student-centred, choice-infused, 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 two Year Advisers for each Year group.

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. Where possible, 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 try to 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 and Leadership programs.**

We 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, coding, robotics, computing and visual arts. *Tournament of Minds* and the *Da Vinci Decathlon* are team performance and problem solving competitions that 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, PAWS, the Equality Committee – are fostered.

*The Prefect System* works very well at High under the experienced guidance of our MIC for Prefects. Up to thirty-six *School Prefects* are elected each year. There are stringent qualifications for candidates. Above average academic achievement, good attendance, uniform compliance 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, sports participation, dress code, punctuality and Student Awards Scheme participation. Prefects have a full day Induction Workshop to develop

leadership skills. They have a range of liaison, social, community service 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. The SRC promotes organised fun events for the wellbeing of students. Leadership opportunities abound in sports teams and as initiative shown in co-curricular activities. *Elevate Education* provides opportunities for interested boys to extend their leadership skills.

High has had involvement with cadets and military training since 1883. We have a *Sydney High Cadet Unit* (including cadets from SGHS). The cadets represent the school at various official and ceremonial functions in the city and local communities, including the Anzac Day March. Student leaders undergo training courses within the cadet organisation to improve their interpersonal, leadership and communication skills. Three support staff manage the program in conjunction with AACC officers.

### **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 Ltd* the *Parents and Citizens Association*, the Canteen Sub-Committee and the *Governors Centre Ltd*, parent representative positions are established. 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, fencing, football, cross-country and tennis. Parents serve on committees of *Incorporated Associations* to manage the affairs of rifle shooting, sailing, rowing, cricket, basketball 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 participation and achievement. A large number 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, School Trophy, in the senior years. Outstanding students receive the Nathan McDonnell Award and a cash prize. Exceptional students are honoured with the Joseph Coates Award.

*The Record* annually lists the achievements of students and publishes their results, articles, sports reports and literary and artistic works. *Flying Higher* is a biannual colour publication dedicated to promoting the achievements of students and good news about the school and its community of parents and Old Boys. 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. Prizes are occasionally named in honour of Old Boys

Photographs of successful students adorn our foyer. Framed blazers on corridor walls highlight the intergenerational examples of all-round excellence prized by the school. The Ethel Killip Memorial Art Collection features collections for Aboriginal Art (Na Ngara) and Judy Cassab. 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.**

*Our school offers a unique educational experience.* At High, we enjoy the best of both worlds in education, public and private. 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 knockout competitions and regional carnivals. Through the Performing Arts Unit we can access programs in 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 co-productions, musicals 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 abilities 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 twelve sports: athletics, rowing, rugby, cricket, basketball, tennis, football, swimming, rifle shooting, cross-country running, water polo and volleyball. Members of the AAGPS also compete in fencing, table tennis and sailing. High competes in them all. **Boys train during the week and compete on Saturdays.** We encourage choice and independence. As a founding member of the Combined High Schools Sporting Association 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 an annual sports tour to The Armidale School. We send teams to the national basketball, fencing and volleyball tournaments. 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 in performance ensembles. We are supported by an academic staff of three coordinators, 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* and *Concert* that is very well patronised. We organise periodic international music tours that are very popular. The DoE 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 a regular feature of the Anzac Day March. Our boys have significant performance opportunities each year at school seasonal music festivals, special events, soirees and assemblies.

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

We have won the Hume Barbour trophy, the state school Year 12 symbol of debating supremacy, twenty-seven 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 have won the GPS debating Louat Shield 18 times. 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. Legal debating has developed strongly over recent years.

**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 *Manager in Charge of Public Speaking*, a budget and a coaching program in place to support our contestants. High boys have been successful in public speaking contests such as English Plain Speaking Competition. (Won four times). We also enter the prestigious Lawrence Campbell Competition for oratory organised among GPS schools. (Won 9 times). Individual 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 an MIC for Chess and a Chess Coach who has implemented a structured training program in the Junior School. Since 2006 High has hosted a GPS Chess Tournament each year for teams of 8 players from GPS Schools. High has won the trophy eleven times. 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 7-10. Experiences and skills are built upon in successive camps with successful participation records

kept for each student. By Year 9 boys are offered an opportunity to go on expeditions. The program allows successful participants to qualify for requirements of the *Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme* up to silver level. We have a teacher coordinating the *Outdoor Education Program* and one for the *Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme* to mentor and support students attempting to qualify for bronze, silver and gold awards.

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

The school has an active *Community Services Committee*. Each academic year has a project 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* and 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 significant funds 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. Students engage in outreach programs at Bourke Street PS (Bourke Street Buddies). Since 2004 High has had cultural exchanges with Boggabilla Central School.

### **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 an 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 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.sydneyhigh.school](http://www.sydneyhigh.school) and Facebook page are 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 and a 'Schoolzine' app. 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. Parents are offered an email service to receive *High Notes* electronically. They can monitor their son's attendance or punctuality through daily SMS messages, *Clipboard* or weekly emailed updates. *Flying Higher* publications are emailed. 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. We communicate with parents via email and SMS messaging.