

Sophia HIGH SCHOOL

Parent Handbook

2026 - 2027

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Welcome to the Future of Education

Our Purpose, Ethos and Aims

The future of education. No compromises.

We founded Sophia on a conviction and an uncomfortable truth. The conviction: education is the answer.

The truth: for too many young people, school has stopped working.

The elite footballer training with a Premier League academy. The student excluded from a school in a small British town. The family building a life across three continents, families with children working at a different pace to their peers, or the young person suffering with confidence and mental health challenges. The system was not designed for them. So we designed a school that is.

Sophia High School is an accredited British independent school, delivered online, that refuses to choose between flexibility and excellence. Founded in 2020 by former headteachers and senior leaders with over 100 years of combined experience in outstanding British schools, we deliver the English National Curriculum through daily live, interactive lessons in market-leading small classes, taught by fully qualified and highly experienced British-curriculum teachers — from Early Years through GCSEs and A-Levels.

Wherever our students are in the world, and whatever brought them to us, they receive the same thing: a genuine British school experience, without compromise.

Our Ethos

Students first. Always.

Every decision we make begins with a single question: what does this child need to flourish? Small classes, personal mentoring and daily live teaching mean every student at Sophia is known by name, understood as an individual, and challenged to exceed what they believed possible.

Wellbeing is the foundation, not the finish.

Children learn best when they feel safe, understood and genuinely well. Mental health, mindfulness and belonging are woven into the school day, and our enrichment programme is built to help every student discover their talents and grow the passions that make school worth turning up for.

One standard for all.

We hold every student to the same high expectations and offer every student the same exceptional teaching; whether they join us from a professional sports academy, an international family on the move, or a classroom that failed them. Talent and potential do not depend on postcode or circumstance. Neither does our provision.

A global classroom.

Our students learn alongside peers from around the world every day. Intercultural connection and inclusivity is not an enrichment activity at Sophia; it is the fabric of the school. Grounded in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, our curriculum gives learning meaning and purpose; asking students not only to understand the world, but to take responsibility for it.

Learning by doing, together.

Engagement and collaboration sit at the heart of how we teach within our connected, cameras-on community. Project-Based Learning runs through our curriculum, enrichment and character development shape opportunities to connect knowledge to real problems and real audiences, and develop the creativity, independence and teamwork that examinations alone cannot measure.

Technology with integrity.

We build the safe, ethical and effective use of digital technologies and AI into our students' daily work — not as a novelty, but as preparation for the world they will lead. Our students learn to use powerful tools critically, responsibly and well.

Character before credentials.

Qualifications open doors; character determines what happens when you walk through them. We deliberately develop resilience, integrity, curiosity and leadership in every student, because we believe they are *learners today and leaders tomorrow*.

Our Aims

At Sophia High School, we aim to:

1. **Deliver academic excellence** through the English National Curriculum, taught live every day by fully qualified British-curriculum teachers in market-leading small classes, from Early Years and Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 5.
2. **Put every student first**, ensuring each child is known, safe, supported and challenged — with wellbeing and belonging treated as the foundation of achievement, not an afterthought.
3. **Remove the compromise** between education and life — enabling elite athletes, performers, globally mobile families and students for whom mainstream school has not worked to access an outstanding British education, wherever they are.

4. **Champion mental health, wellbeing and personal flourishing** as the ground on which everything else is built — investing in pastoral care, mindfulness and personal goal-setting, and running an enrichment programme designed to help every student discover their talents, develop their passions and find genuine joy in learning.
5. **Give learning meaning and purpose** through Project-Based Learning, Enrichment and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, so that students connect what they learn to the world they will inherit and shape.
6. **Build a global classroom** in which students collaborate daily across cultures and continents, developing the global citizenship, empathy and perspective that the next generation of leaders will need.
7. **Prepare students for a digital future** through the safe, ethical and effective use of technology and AI, developing critical, confident and responsible digital citizens.
8. **Develop character deliberately** — resilience, independence, integrity, creativity and leadership — so that every Sophia student leaves us not only qualified, but ready: learners today, leaders tomorrow.

Our Team

All details and contact information for our team can be found on the [Sophia High School website](#).
You may also email us at Admissions@sophiahigh.school

NAME	ROLE	EMAIL
Melissa McBride	CEO / Co-Founder	ceo@sophiahigh.school
Vanessa Temple	Director of Education	vanessa.temple@sophiahigh.school
Gary Webster	Director of Upper School	gary.webster@sophiahigh.school
Nicole Pelletier	Director of Inclusive Learning and Alternative Provision / Deputy DSL / Secondary Teacher	nicki.pelletier@sophiahigh.school
Chris Barnes	Head of Student Success, PEX and Transitions / Secondary Teacher	chris.barnes@shophiahigh.school
Beth Haresnape	Deputy Head Pastoral, Behaviour and Wellbeing / Secondary Teacher	beth.haresnape@sophiahigh.school
Katy Todd	Designated Safeguarding Lead/Additional Learning Needs Coordinator / Primary Teacher	katy.todd@sophiahigh.school
Holly McKenna	Lead Student Mentoring / Secondary Teacher	holly.mckenna@sophiahigh.school
Youssef Elhana	Head of Student Enrichment and Leadership / Secondary Teacher	youssef.elhana@sophiahigh.school
Sophie Kalinauckas	Primary Leader of Learning / Primary Teacher	sophie.kalinauckas@sophiahigh.school
Ben Hazell	KS3 Leader of Learning / PBL Lead and Teacher / Primary/Secondary Teacher	ben.hazell@sophiahigh.school
Laura Roberts	AQA Unit Award Coordinator / Head of Science / Secondary Teacher	laura.roberts@sophiahigh.school

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Tyler Wilson	Esports Lead / EDDSL / Primary/Secondary Teacher	tyler.wilson@sophiahigh.school
Eunene Geldenhuys	Head of Mathematics / Secondary Teacher	eunene.geldenhuys@sophiahigh.school
Stephanie Quineones	Head of Houses / Secondary Teacher	stephanie.quinones@sophiahigh.school
Irene Pagano	Head of MFL / Primary Teacher	irene.pagano@sophiahigh.school
James Tubman	Secondary Teacher	james.tubman@sophiahigh.school
Gabrielle Samuels	Secondary Teacher	gabrielle.samuels@sophiahigh.school
Sophie Howard	Secondary Teacher	sophie.howard@sophiahigh.school
Hafsa Bhatti	Primary Teacher	hafsa.bhatti@sophiahigh.school
Erin Robinson	Primary / Secondary Teacher	erin.robinson@sophiahigh.school
Mary Crowley	Secondary Teacher	mary.crowley@sophiahigh.school
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Christine Williams	Secondary Teacher	christine.williams@sophiahigh.school
Camilla Marchant	Secondary Teacher	camilla.marchant@sophiahigh.school
Kerrie Moss	Secondary Teacher	kerrie.moss@sophiahigh.school
Mamoon Rashid	Secondary Teacher	mamoon.rashid@sophiahigh.school
Helen McGilloway	Wellbeing and Mental Health	helen.mcgilloway@sophiahigh.school
Victor Giano	Developer in Residence	victor@sophiahigh.school
Daisy McKenna	Learning Support Assistant	daisy.mckenna@sophiahigh.school

If you wish to book an appointment to meet with any of our team individually, you may do so via the booking page on Athena.

Curriculum Guides

All Curriculum Guides can be found in the Google Parent Classroom and on our website.

This includes:

- Foundation Programme
- Primary School
- Secondary School
- IGCSE and IA Level

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you have a concern about the safety or wellbeing of a student, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. Contact details for the DSL and Deputy DSL can be found on the School website and within the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Attendance

The school's working hours are 8:00 am - 4:00 pm Monday to Friday.

Term dates can be found on our website.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled lessons and mentoring sessions unless absent for an approved reason. The School aims for attendance of 95% or above. Parents should notify the School as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend. Further information can be found in the Attendance and Children Absent from Education Policy.

Policies

All Policies can be found on the [Sophia High School website](#).

This includes:

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Access Control Policy
- Admissions and Inclusion Policy
- Additional Learning Needs & Inclusion Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy
- Attendance & Children Absent from Education Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- British and International Values Policy
- Future Learning Careers and Guidance Policy
- Child on Child Abuse
- Code of Ethics
- Complaints Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Digital Safety & Acceptable Use Policy
- EAL Policy

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- ESD-GCED Curriculum Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- More Able and Talented Policy
- Online Learning Policy
- Online Learning Privacy & Cookies Policy
- Online Safeguarding Policy
- Parent Student General Privacy & Cookies Policy
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- PSHE-RSHE-Mental Wellbeing Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure
- School Uniform Policy
- Scholarship Statement
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Youth Produced Imagery Policy

Technology

All technology specifications for laptops, headphones etc. should be confirmed with the admissions team prior to the first day. Students must have a desktop/laptop computer to access the wider learning tools which are used at Sophia High School.

Parents / Students must sign annually the following:

- Student Ergonomic Checklist
- Audio/Visual Agreement
- AI and Digital Tools Consent Form
- Student Digital Agreement

Parent Calendar

Term dates can be found on Athena.

All events are shown on the Parent Calendar on Athena.

Daily Schedule

Your child's timetable can be found on Athena.

Any changes will be indicated there after discussion with staff regarding personal considerations or health needs. Please check regularly for 'special days' such as PBL collapsed curriculum days which are scheduled each term.

Behaviour

All students are required to sign an annual Digital Agreement which states clearly the expectations for behaviour in our online learning environment. Our Behaviour Policy can be found on our website. We are aware that there may be a period of transition for students as they learn online, and so our Head of Student Success will work closely with families as you join our online learning community.

Assignments, Marking and Feedback

All work will be marked and given appropriate feedback by teachers once assignments have been handed in. Assignment schedules can be found in the Google Classroom. Our Marking and Feedback Policy can be found on our website.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity, including use of AI, is always a focus at Sophia High School. We expect our students to use tools to support and enhance their learning, not to replace the process of learning. Details of expectations and sanctions for unethical use of digital tools can be found in our Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found on our website.

Parent Meetings

These will be scheduled with the Form Tutor every week / every other week to allow you to have regular and clear communication regarding both academic and pastoral development.

All subject teachers are available for personal consultation through the booking system on Athena if you wish to have more specific information regarding your child's progress.

Support Services

We are proud to offer a range of support services for our families.

These can be arranged through the academic team and should be discussed first with your Form Tutor. With approval, 1-to-1 sessions can be arranged directly through Admissions. This is a series of 10 x 30 minute sessions with a specialist teacher.

We also offer a wide range of counseling services through our support team and via Linden, our partner in supporting students and families online.

Digital Safety

Supervision of Breakout Rooms and Collaborative Online Learning

Breakout rooms are an integral part of the school's delivery model, enabling paired and small-group collaborative work in line with the pedagogy of the Online Learning Policy. The school's approach to safeguarding within breakout rooms follows the principles of Keeping Children Safe in Education: supervision that is reasonable, proportionate and appropriate to the setting, rather than continuous surveillance of every pupil interaction — the same standard that applies to group work, corridors and shared spaces in a physical school.

The following controls apply whenever breakout rooms are in use: ·

- The class teacher retains host control of the whole session at all times, remains present in the lesson throughout, and moves between breakout rooms on an unannounced basis, as a teacher would circulate between groups in a physical classroom.
- The class teacher retains the ability to recall all students immediately to the main classroom where this is necessary for safeguarding, behaviour management or teaching purposes.

Where safeguarding, behaviour or welfare concerns arise, staff may close breakout rooms immediately, return students to the main classroom and take any further action necessary in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Behaviour Policy.

Breakout groups are kept deliberately small, consistent with the school's small-group model.

- Every pupil retains an immediate exit at all times: any pupil may leave a breakout room and return to the main room, or leave the lesson entirely, at any moment. Pupils learn from home, with a parent or carer contactable as set out in the Online Learning Policy.
- All pupils are taught, and sign an age-appropriate Digital Safety Agreement committing to, the expectation that they report immediately to an adult anything that makes them uncomfortable, in a breakout room or anywhere else online. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying expectations apply in breakout rooms exactly as they do in the main classroom and in a physical school.
- Concerns raised about conduct in breakout rooms — by a pupil, parent or member of staff — are followed up promptly under the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Behaviour Policy, and grouping arrangements may be adjusted while any concern is looked into.
- Structured weekly parent contact provides a regular, reliable route through which concerns about peer interactions are surfaced and acted upon.

The school keeps its arrangements for breakout rooms and collaborative learning under continuous review as part of its safeguarding risk assessment, annual policy review cycle and in response to emerging safeguarding risks, technological developments and updates to statutory guidance.

Accreditations

[UK Department for Education Accredited.](#)

[OFSTED Report](#)

[COBIS Accredited](#)

[ISA Member](#)

[Leadership Skills Foundation Trailblazer Centre:](#)

Pearson Edexcel Academic Qualifications Virtual Centre Number: 97351

AQA Unit Award Verified Centre

Useful Links

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SHS Open House video catalogue

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWITux-EYxVIODxPVJ4dW2es8kuRLcU1u>

SHS Parent/Guardian Google Classroom Tutorial

<https://youtu.be/fydq5nkibhw>

Student Look Books 2025/2026

<https://sophiahigh.school/flipbooks/autumn2025v5/>

<https://sophiahigh.school/flipbooks/2025-2026/Spring20252026/>

<https://sophiahigh.school/flipbooks/2025-2026/summer2026v2/>

Full information about Privacy & Security with Google for Education can be found at

https://edu.google.com/intl/en_uk/why-google/privacy-security/

Complaints

Our Complaints Policy and Procedures, including Data Protection Complaints and Subject Access Requests, can be found on our website.

If you have a Data Protection concern or Subject Access Request you may choose to use this direct [LINK](#) on our website to register your complaint.

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