

D'OVERBROECK'S COLLEGE

AIMS AND PHILOSOPHY

Though the day-to-day *modus operandi* in each of the three parts of the College is designed to be appropriate to the particular age group and student cohort, the same overall aims and philosophy apply throughout d'Overbroeck's. These are rooted in a number of principles:

- We aim to maintain a lively, close-knit yet relatively liberal community in which pupils feel engaged, happy and at ease with themselves and with their school environment; in which the relationships between staff and students are 'comfortable' and built more on mutual respect than on imposed formality; in which pupils are encouraged and stimulated to develop academically and personally, and to grow into themselves as confident, thoughtful and considerate people who are ready to move on to the next stage of their lives.
- We seek to maintain the highest standards of teaching, learning and pastoral care, all of which should be maximally attuned to the differing needs of individual students.
- The College's founder Malcolm van Biervliet never wanted to play a hands-on role in the senior management of the College, preferring instead to remain a full-time teacher and head of department. He did so for 30 years, from 1977 until his retirement in July 2007. Indeed the great majority of our senior staff choose to have a substantial teaching commitment. This reflects a deeply-held belief among the staff at d'Overbroeck's that teaching is the most important thing we do, and that our best and most experienced teachers should continue to teach as much as their other commitments allow them to.
- We teach in relatively small classes. Our maximum class size is generally 15 from Year 7 through to Year 11, and 10 in the Sixth Form and at the International Study Centre. Small classes enable us to take full account of individual needs and to ensure a high level of student participation.
- We aim to foster in students a growing sense of self-confidence, initiative and individual responsibility, and to keep rules to the minimum that we consider appropriate and necessary in each part of the school. Obviously this varies depending on the age group; and it is indeed in order to have the flexibility to differentiate in this way that we have wanted to retain distinct buildings for different parts of the school.
- We are proud of the results that our students, across the ability range, have achieved in public examinations in recent years and keen to maintain our record of excellence in this area.
- We aim to maintain as much tolerance and flexibility as we possibly can in every area of school life. We value individuality; and key to our thinking is the importance of giving students the space to be themselves and to grow and develop in a context in which they feel valued and secure.
- The College is selective, though not very narrowly so on academic grounds. We are naturally keen to draw very able students; but we are equally happy to admit pupils whose

ability is closer to the average. Success means helping each and every one of our pupils to achieve to the best of his or her ability, both academically and personally.

In essence, our aim is to make the educational experience as enjoyable, fulfilling, motivating and successful as we possibly can – for staff as well as students. Our objective for the future is to continue to develop and hone our academic, pastoral and extra-curricular provision; to continue to develop the links we have established with our local community; to remain abreast of development and change in the wider world of education; to retain a sense of freshness and readiness to continue to learn and to develop as a school; and to do this while retaining the essential elements of our distinctive ethos.

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Last reviewed June 2010