

## AIMS AND ETHOS

d'Overbroeck's is an 11-18 co-educational independent school. Our overriding aim is to enable all of our students, throughout the age and ability range, to achieve to the best of their potential, both academically and personally.

d'Overbroeck's is a single school, made up of three parts which are based in different buildings: Years 7-11, the Sixth Form and the International School. Although the day-to-day *modus operandi* on all three sites is designed to be attuned to the particular age group and student cohort, the same overall aims and ethos apply throughout the school. These are rooted in a number of principles:

- We aim to maintain a lively, close-knit yet relatively liberal community in which students 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 students 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 excellence in teaching, learning and pastoral care, all of which to be maximally attuned to the differing needs of individual students.
- We believe in breadth of education and aim to provide a versatile and flexible curriculum supplemented by a rich variety of extra-curricular activities.
- We aim to enable our students, through the taught curriculum and through extra-curricular activities, to become independent learners and to develop the academic, evaluative, communication and social skills that will equip them for success in higher education and beyond.
- 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 in the International School. We are thus able to create a learning environment in which students are stimulated to participate actively and staff are able to focus on the needs of every student.
- We are proud of the results that our students, across the ability range, have achieved in public examinations in recent years and are keen to maintain our record of excellence in this area.
- d'Overbroeck's is a selective school, though we aim to be not narrowly selective. We are naturally keen to draw very able students, but equally happy to admit students whose ability is closer to the average. Success means helping each and every one of our students to achieve to the best of his or her ability.
- The original founder of d'Overbroeck's, Malcolm van Biervliet, never wanted to play a hands-on role in senior management, 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. He was an

inspirational teacher, and he led by example. To this day, 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 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 sections of the school.
- We aim to maintain as much tolerance and flexibility as we possibly can in every area of school life. We value individuality and aim to foster respect for others paying particular attention, among other things, to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. 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.
- We value frequent and open communication with parents and aim to create the sense of an active partnership in which parents feel involved and well informed.
- In essence, our goal 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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