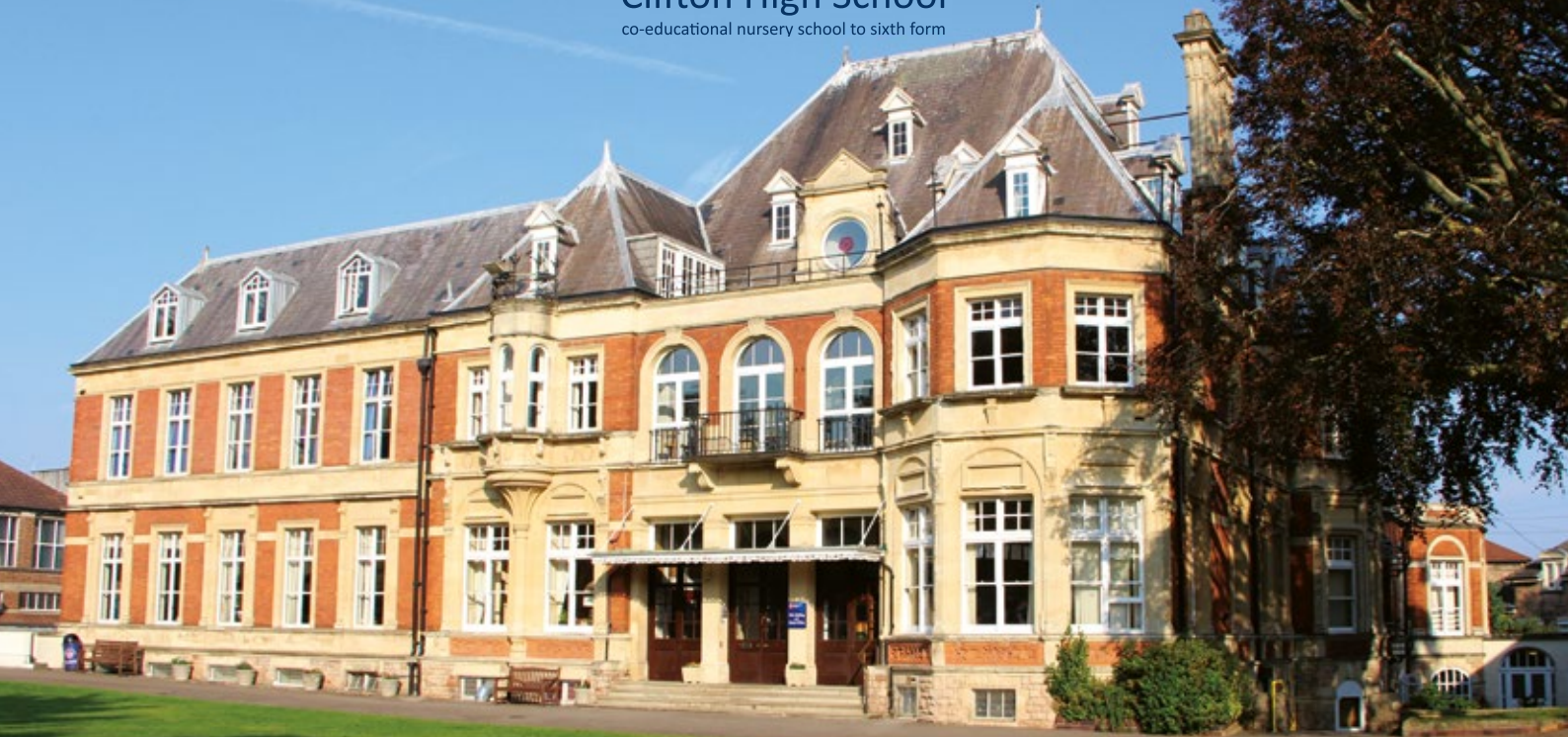




# Clifton High School

co-educational nursery school to sixth form



**Working at Clifton High School**  
History, Culture and Expectations



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“Our philosophy at Clifton High School is simple. Provide an environment that fosters curiosity, creativity and confidence, deliver first class teaching that inspires and challenges, and celebrate each child for who they are and what they do.”

It is not only our pupils who enjoy being part of Clifton High School; all employees, too, both in teaching and business support are proud to be part of our thriving, positive, forward thinking and unique community.

Clifton High School is a 3 – 18, independent, co-educational Diamond Edge Model School. As such, it has a unique position in the market – a very special community with a wide age range learning side by side in close proximity. As such, Clifton High School has its own distinct set of aims and expectations. This booklet aims to give insight into who we are; it will give clarity on what is expected of all staff who are employed at Clifton High School, and what those who are considering working here need to be aware of.

“The appointment of high calibre staff and managed performance ensures continuous development.”

ISI Inspection Report 2016



# History of the School

Clifton High School is a leading independent, selective, co-educational school set in the heart of Clifton, Bristol, educating boys and girls from Nursery School to Sixth Form.

Established in 1877 as a school for girls aged between 7 and 17, it lacked the financial foundations and legacies that many schools enjoy; therefore from its earliest days, Clifton High School has had to move with the times, be responsive to change and be dynamic in its approach. Just ten years following its founding, the School opened a preparatory class where boys were admitted. In 1994, boys joined the Junior School; during this period the School's onsite boarding provision was closed.

Following a period of uncertainty at the start of the 21st century, the School embarked upon its most ambitious period of change to date which transformed the School and secured its future. Under the leadership of its new and current Head, Dr Alison Neill, boys were welcomed into the Sixth Form in 2008 and into Years 7 to 11 in 2009. It became the first in the South West, and is the only school in Bristol, to introduce the Diamond Edge Model of education. From this time, the School has continued to grow and re-establish itself in the Bristol Schools' market as a fully co-educational, 3-18, selective independent school.

"I soon fell under the spell of a school which makes a unique and lasting impression on all its members..."

**Miss Catherine Burns,**  
Headmistress 1891 - 1908





Bristol has been cited as the happiest and wealthiest British city with the highest disposable income growth in the UK.

## Clifton High School's Position in the Market

With a flourishing and affluent population, the demand for independent education in Bristol is strong. However, the offering from the independent sector is highly competitive and as a school, we have learnt never to be complacent but to strive to keep competitive and ahead of the game. Clifton High School has a unique offering where extra-curricular activities and personal and social development are given emphasis alongside academic excellence. Our parents very much value this, indeed, it is an important reason why they choose us. Competition to attract pupils is high and as such we seek to appoint and retain staff of the highest calibre who act as ambassadors for the School and embrace and reinforce our ethos and values.

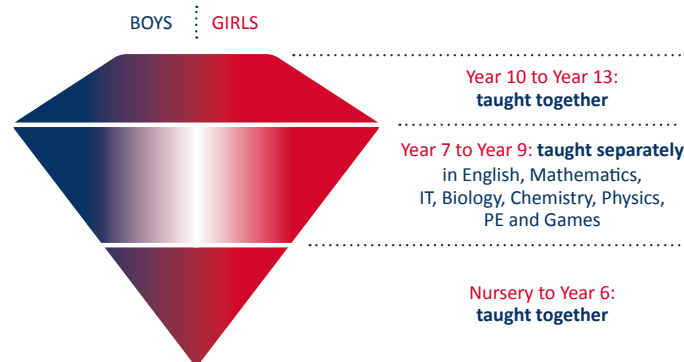
Although not an “International School”, Clifton High welcomes international pupils, embracing the cultural and social diversity they and their parents bring to our community. It is a sponsor for UK Visas and Immigration. For international students aged 16 or over whose parents are overseas, it offers a unique home boarding service where the student lives with a local family. Embracing the close link that Bristol has with France, Clifton High is one of the only schools in the area to offer a programme which allows French speaking pupils to follow both the French and English curricula concurrently.



# Diamond Edge Model of Education

Clifton High School is the only school in Bristol, and was the first in the South West, to operate the Diamond Edge Model of education. Boys and girls learn differently as they move towards adolescence – it is well documented, for example, that boys are generally more spatially confident whereas girls of a similar age are more verbally confident. We firmly believe that for certain areas of learning, and therefore for certain subjects, boys and girls learn better in single sex groups, but for other areas, learning is enhanced by being taught together.

At Clifton High, the curriculum is tailor made to enhance and improve the learning outcomes for all: boys and girls are taught in co-educational classes until Year 7 then separately for many core subjects until Year 10 when they come back to study together for GCSE and then A level. We feel that this gives our boys and girls the best of both worlds, both academically and socially. It has proved a highly attractive offering in the Bristol market.







## Aims and Ethos

**For an experience to be at its most effective and beneficial, employees, parents and pupils alike must purposely select a school for its compatibility with their own personal philosophy and goals.**

Our aim at Clifton High School is to produce young people with the ability to think independently, who have a strong belief in themselves, confidence to pursue their ambitions and the resilience, flexibility and adaptability to succeed whatever life presents. Focus on the individual has guided the School's development over many years, whether it be in the introduction of the Diamond Edge Model of education, our continued commitment to small class sizes, the quality of our teaching and business staff, our academic rigour or in our outstanding pastoral care.



# ISI Inspection 2016

In February 2016, the School underwent a rigorous and thorough process of inspection with every aspect of the School scrutinised. The School is immensely proud of the Inspection's findings, with the inspectors recognising the distinct qualities, spirit and excellence of Clifton High. In particular, the Inspection provided us with quality assurance, validating our successful transformation into a fully co-educational school that realised individual brilliance. The final report, which can be read in full on our website, has set the bar very high and confirms the standards and expectations which we shall continue to drive forward.

"Pupils have belief in themselves, the confidence to pursue their ambitions, and the resilience, flexibility and adaptability to succeed in life."

ISI Inspection Report 2016

"The curriculum fulfils the school's aim of providing an inspiring and challenging environment that fosters curiosity, creativity and confidence, and hence contributes significantly to pupils' excellent personal development and achievement."

ISI Inspection Report 2016





# A Lifestyle Choice

**In whichever capacity you are employed, working in a selective, independent school is a lifestyle choice.**

For all staff, working at Clifton High School involves a commitment to the vision, culture and heart of the School, working with colleagues to ensure that the School fulfils its aims.

Clifton High School expects its staff to adhere to and demonstrate the School's values and required behaviours, setting the highest of standards. All employees are expected to understand the vision of the School and how their role can contribute to upholding this vision. There are numerous policies to guide and support staff, including a Staff Professional Code of Conduct and our Medium Term Strategy 2015 – 2019. In addition, the School is a member of the Society of Heads, a partnership which advises on and fosters good codes of practice and high professional standards, and provides a supportive network of fellow member independent schools.

In a school of this size, with its own particular set of dynamics, flexibility and adaptability of staff are essential. Furthermore, whilst focusing priority on excellence in the teaching and learning of our young people as well as on their personal development, staff, too are encouraged to learn new skills and to advance their own professional growth. The School encourages its young people to acquire skills and its staff must lead by being open to new skills and knowledge, too.





A photograph of four people (two women and two men) walking outdoors in front of a large, classical-style building. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The word "EXPECTATIONS" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image. A thin vertical line is visible in the center of the image, passing through the word.

# EXPECTATIONS



## The Expectation

We expect all staff who join us at Clifton High School to embrace our ethos as we continue on our journey. Our pupils are fun, inquisitive, enthusiastic and rewarding and staff are expected to share and champion our passion for bringing out the best in each and every one of them. Classes are small, giving staff the opportunity not only to strive to achieve the highest standards within it, but also to make a significant contribution beyond it. Academic success is important to us at Clifton High School but we measure success in many other ways, too. All staff enrich and strengthen the wider life of the school by undertaking duties and offering and supporting activities or clubs.

We very much want every individual to feel part of a community where every member of staff, whether it be teaching, support, business, administration or otherwise, is interdependent and shares its common goal and set of understandings – that we are an educational institution with the health, safety, well-being and education of our young people at its core. We must remember, too, that the parents are our customers, making emotional and financial investments to send their children to us.



## Expectations of all Managers and Heads of Department at Clifton High School

Within the School, there are opportunities for positions within our management structure in both teaching and business support roles. The selection process for managerial positions encompasses particular criteria, but all Heads of Department as managers are expected to:

- Continuously and actively promote the School's vision, reinforcing the values and required behaviours of the School
- Take ownership and accountability for the delivery of the School's strategic objectives and outcomes
- Act as a positive role model within their team, fostering and promoting an environment of respectful, loyal and professional behaviours, leading as well as managing
- Ensure that their team is trained in, familiar with and uses school policies and procedures to enable them to maintain the integrity of the School
- Encourage a health and wellbeing plan for their team
- Be a critical friend, honest in appraisal to encourage personal development
- Foster an environment of self-accountability and responsibility for their own contributions and be happy to share this with others
- Develop productive working relationships between other colleagues and departments across the School
- Consider the financial impact of decisions, embracing opportunities for efficiencies to the benefit of the School



## Expectations of Senior Leaders and Leaders at Clifton High School

All members of Leadership are accountable and responsible for supporting the Head of School, Dr Alison Neill, in the day-to-day running of the School and the strategic planning for the School's future. Senior Leaders and Leaders will have embraced all the expectations of the Line Managers and Heads of Department, but will also:

- Create a compelling vision and strategic direction that generates excitement and commitment
- Strategically consider and analyse the economic impact of efficiency initiatives
- Make strategic decisions which are objectively and impartially based on the facts and understanding at that time, and are in the best interests of the School and its pupils
- Ensure appropriate frameworks, policies, procedures and training are in place to maintain the integrity of the School and its employees
- Sponsor ideas that move the business forward, showing creativity in identifying and exploiting opportunities



## Expectations of Governors

Clifton High School is fortunate to have Governors with a broad range of skills, knowledge and expertise, who give the Head, Senior Leadership and the School a high level of challenge and support. Our Council of Governors is responsible for determining the aims and overall conduct of the School. In conjunction with the Head and Senior Leadership they set the policies, plans and procedures which are designed to ensure the best possible education for the present and future pupils of the School. They are responsible for ensuring the proper control of the School's finances, and for ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements.

"The quality of Governance is excellent"

"Governors have steered the school's successful completion of the transition to a fully co-educational establishment"

ISI Inspection Report 2016





A photograph of a woman and two children working together on a project outdoors. The woman is on the left, leaning over a table, focused on her work. Two children, a boy and a girl, are on the right, also leaning over the table and working. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The word "REWARDS" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

# REWARDS



## The rewards for teaching staff at Clifton High School

The rewards are difficult to quantify but are based upon a genuine commitment to the education of young minds and to the upholding of the highest of standards in teaching and learning. You have a unique opportunity at Clifton High School to shape and touch young lives, a benefit which goes way beyond financial remuneration, to experience one of the most fulfilling of working experiences.

- You can expect a considerable amount from our pupils. They are willing, enthusiastic and inquisitive learners who want to trust and respect their teachers. They value being set clear boundaries and high expectations and rise to challenges you set, no matter how high, both in and out of the classroom
- At Clifton High School you will have the opportunity to work with colleagues who are equally passionate about their subject as you are about your own
- We positively encourage the sharing of good practice and the opportunity to observe excellence in order to learn and grow professionally. Excellent teachers = excellent learning experience
- You will have manageable sized groups to teach and be responsible for, giving you the chance, and the privilege, to know the pupils as individuals and therefore be more effective educators
- At Clifton High School we are fortunate to have extremely supportive and engaged parents







## The rewards for all employees at Clifton High School

Working at an independent school provides a rewarding working environment like no other. We work together with a shared focus of providing the best educational experience for the children and young people, with opportunities offered for your own professional development with time to self-evaluate and reflect.

- You will enjoy considerable support for your professional development. All staff have Line Managers to support, guide and advise for a successful career at the School
- We support a collaborative approach between teaching staff, parents, children and business support staff which means the best available opportunity for growth and learning for both adults and children
- The School sets great store by its approach to equality and diversity. All staff, pupils, visitors, job applicants and suppliers are treated equally and with respect
- There are many tangible benefits to working here, for example a high quality daily lunch, refreshments throughout the working day and generous holidays. You will have access to a pension scheme and school fee remission where applicable
- You will be encouraged to self-evaluate through an evolving performance management process. As role models for our young people, you are encouraged to show a planned and focussed career development
- You will work in a beautiful environment set in handsome buildings in the heart of Clifton
- We are proud to have been awarded the Green Flag status for our approach to eco issues



# Opportunities to Embrace

An independent, selective school provides a unique working environment, but comes with its own particular set of opportunities which all employees are expected to embrace.

- Although we currently have no pupils below the national average, we do have pupils who find certain subjects more challenging than others. We expect teachers to enable each and every child and young person to realise his or her own individual brilliance
- For teachers working in a customer-first environment, work inevitably extends beyond the school day, although it is only in exceptional circumstances that you will be required to communicate with parents on school matters beyond 6pm, unless at a parents evening. During term time, hours may be long, meetings may be called without much prior notice, tight deadlines are unavoidable, parents may be demanding, pupils challenging and pressures on your time a constant
- It is of the utmost importance and for your protection, that in a friendly and open school such as ours, boundaries are not overstepped. Professional relationships between parents, pupils and staff must be upheld at all times
- Many of our employees have children at the School; it is important that relationships are kept to professional levels when dealing both with your child's teachers and your child's friends and their parents
- In this age of social media and social networking, all employees must remember, for their own protection, the need at all times to make carefully judged and appropriate use of such means of communication. Our children are extremely astute, and an inappropriate facebook page could leave our employees extremely vulnerable and indeed liable to complaint from parents
- In today's world where people lead busy, fast paced lives, it is easy to become self-focused. At Clifton High School we encourage you to focus outwardly and to give to others. This is the nature of working in a school environment, whether it be in teaching or business support. As a role model, the focus is on others rather than on self

- Teaching and working in a school environment is the one career path that young people witness first hand over and over again – from the way you dress to the manner in which you address your colleagues and young people, you are setting an example. An ability to maintain a professional approach in every single one of your interactions is essential
- It is important that the School has access to business support staff at all times; therefore, all holiday leave must be taken during school holiday period





# Clifton High School Rose

Employees can refer to the Clifton High School Rose petals to prioritise and reflect during the performance management process





## To Conclude

We frequently receive comments on how special and warm a place this is. Parents in particular refer to the excellent relationships between staff and pupils – relaxed yet respectful – but will also recognise that we are at the same time a dynamic and forward-looking establishment. Visitors will quickly note how full of enthusiasm and productivity the classrooms, corridors and social areas are as they walk around the School, and praise the mutually respectful and positive interactions across the School. Please visit our website to have a full flavour of what our children and young people achieve. We have available to all staff, both new and current, a 'Professional Code of Conduct' which covers all aspects from dress code to appellation of parents and colleagues, and from communication to conduct outside work. Together with the 'Human Resources Staff Handbook', this should give you detailed guidelines as to expectations, and the support available to you for a successful career at the High School.

With my best wishes,

*Alison Neill*

Dr Alison M Neill Head of School







# Clifton High School

co-educational nursery school to sixth form



The Diamond Edge Model



Realising Individual Brilliance

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