



**HARWICH AND DOVERCOURT
HIGH SCHOOL**



**WELCOME TO
HDHS**

PROSPECTUS

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Harwich and Dovercourt High School is a member of Sigma Trust. The Sigma Trust is a local partnership of academies in North East Essex. Sigma was formally established in September 2016 and has grown to become the largest multi-academy trust working solely within Essex. The Trust consists of eight secondary schools and four primary schools all within North East Essex.



Our Mission

To be 'Greater Than The Sum Of Its Parts' is the mission statement for Sigma Trust. We believe we are stronger and more successful working together than we would be as separate institutions. The mission for each academy within Sigma Trust is to ensure that no child is left behind. Education should foster in its learners a curiosity to discover who they are and what they are capable of, together with developing the resilience for them to test the boundaries of their abilities, and build the skills necessary to face the future with confidence.

Our Vision

Our vision is to ensure that all of our academies are at least 'Good' with strong and improving outcomes and are able to demonstrate outstanding provision.

Our Values The Sigma Trust values the following attributes:

Integrity: be honest, transparent, trustworthy and true to your beliefs.

Passion: be positive and enthusiastic about what you are trying to achieve.

Aspiration: aim for your best and set high, realistic goals.

Resilience: never give up and strive to improve.

Accountability: take responsibility for your words, thoughts and actions.

Respect: for yourself, your environment and other people.

A message from the Executive Headteacher

Parents have a pivotal role to play in the success of Harwich & Dovercourt High School. We are very committed to developing and maintaining the partnership between home and school.

We want students to feel secure at HDHS from day one. This is why we hold Induction Days for all new Year 7 students in June prior to their start in September. Our processes mean that transition from primary to secondary school runs very smoothly.

The details in this prospectus should give you a flavour of Harwich & Dovercourt High School, but more details are also available on our website www.hdhs.school. I would strongly recommend that you visit the school during our open evening on Thursday 1st October 2026 to enable you to see the school in action.

With your support, we will give your child the confidence and skills to be successful.

Mr Simon Essex
Executive Headteacher



July 2026

Our Vision, Values and Ethos

HDHS is driven by opportunity. We seek to empower students to take the opportunities offered every day in order to make their adult life the most fulfilling one possible.

We are a body of professionals whose actions everyday demonstrate the compassion and care we have for our students.

HDHS students matter. Our aim is for each and every one of them to know, understand and believe that.

HDHS is rich in its roots in the town, having been in existence since 1958. It has been a long journey to become the school we are today and everyone in the building is dedicated to seeing that journey continue, always seeking ways to maximise the life chances of every young person, ensuring any inequalities are levelled.

The opportunity is here. Our students matter.



BE KIND

We show respect, empathy
and care for everyone
in our school community.



BE READY

We come prepared,
on time and ready
to learn every day.



BE RESPONSIBLE

We take ownership of
our actions and make
positive choices.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Admission Arrangements for 2027/2028 for entry into Year Seven

For full details about our admission arrangements please visit our website at www.hdhs.school. The key elements of our policy are outlined below:

Harwich & Dovercourt High School has a PAN of 224 for entry into Year 7 for 2027/28.

All children who have an EHCP that names the Academy will be provided with a place.

If the number of applications exceeds the PAN, the oversubscription criteria (below) will be used to determine which applicants will be provided with a place.



1. Looked after children and previously looked after children
2. Children with a sibling attending the Academy who will still be on roll at the date of admission
3. Children who reside within the Priority Admission Area.
4. Children who attend the following schools:
 - All Saints CofE VA Primary School, Harwich
 - All Saints CofE VA Primary School, Great Oakley
 - Chase Lane Primary School
 - Harwich Community Primary School and Nursery
 - Mayflower Primary School
 - St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
 - Spring Meadow Primary School
 - St Michael's CofE Primary Academy, Ramsey
 - Wix and Wrabness Primary School
5. Children of staff at Harwich & Dovercourt High School who have been employed for two or more years at the time of the application or are recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
6. Any other applicants. Within each of the above criteria, proximity of the home to the Academy will be taken into consideration, with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority. (Straight-line distance between home and the Academy will be used as a tie breaker with those living closest to the Academy having highest priority.) 5

School Life



Attendance & Punctuality

We believe that regular attendance and punctuality are essential to every student's academic progress, personal development and wellbeing. An electronic register is taken each morning and at the start of every lesson. This enables us to monitor attendance and punctuality closely and allows our Attendance Team to make first-day contact with parents and carers where a student is absent without explanation.

Our aim is to ensure that every student achieves the best possible attendance. This is a shared responsibility, and we value the support of parents and carers in helping us achieve this. We ask that students are only kept at home when they are genuinely too unwell to manage a full day at school. Support will be offered to students and families if attendance begins to drop. We encourage all students to strive for excellent attendance and recognise their achievements throughout the year. A range of prizes, recognition, and rewards are presented weekly, half term, and yearly to celebrate individual students and tutor groups who demonstrate outstanding attendance and punctuality.

Absence from School

Good attendance is directly linked to high achievement and a sense of belonging at school. When students attend regularly, they not only make better academic progress, but they also build strong friendships, develop routines, and gain confidence in their learning. All absences should be reported to school as early as possible on every day of absence. If we do not receive contact from you, one of our Attendance Team will be in touch during the school day.

Student Progress

Throughout the year, teachers will assess the progress your child is making in all of their subjects to ensure that they are making at least the expected progress needed at each point on their learning journey. These progress reviews take place regularly as students move through the school and begin in Year 7. Every term, teachers will also assess your child's attitude to learning in all the subjects they are studying. This information is then available to parents or carers so that you can see how well they are doing or where we might have to work together to help support your child further.

Homework

All students will be given homework regularly and we aim to make the homework meaningful, manageable and motivating. In Years 7-9 students will get weekly homework in Mathematics, English and Science. These will be mostly through online portals such as Sparx Maths, Reader and Science. In Years 10 & 11 GCSE students should be spending at least one to two hours each evening on homework / coursework tasks to develop their knowledge and understanding of their examination subjects. Time should also be given to reading about the subject wherever possible including revision for upcoming assessments and preparation for examinations.

THE CURRICULUM



At HDHS, we are ambitious for all our students.

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum that equips our students with the knowledge and skills needed for life in 21st Century 'Modern Britain'.

Curriculum at Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9)

All students follow a broad and balanced curriculum of English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Religious Education, French or German, ICT, Technology, Art, Music, Drama, PSHE, Careers and Citizenship. Each teaching group is set on ability, initially based on Key Stage 2 data. Teaching sets are reviewed on a regular basis throughout each academic year.

Curriculum at Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)

Our Key Stage 4 options process is guided, structured and supportive, helping students make confident and well-informed subject choices.

All students study a broad core curriculum alongside four option subjects, chosen within clear curriculum pathways. These pathways provide guidance that reflects individual strengths and readiness, supports academic breadth, and keeps future routes open.

Students and families are supported throughout Year 9 through assemblies, in-school guidance, Options Evening and Parents' Evening. Pathways are not labels and can be reviewed where appropriate.

Our aim is to ensure every student begins Key Stage 4 with a curriculum that supports success, wellbeing and confident progression beyond Year 11.



"A broad education gives students the foundations they need to succeed, whatever path they choose."

Extra Curricular Opportunities



AT HDHS we believe in nurturing the whole student, success and enjoyment is not just about examination performance, it is also about the breadth of experiences we provide, ensuring our students leave us able to make good adult decisions and having fulfilled their aspirations and potential. We are recognised for our quality Citizenship, Personal, Social and Health Education programmes.

Extra Curricular Clubs

We offer many sporting opportunities and a wide range of after-school clubs in many subject areas. In addition to this there have been numerous sporting fixtures and a wide range of after-school clubs, activities and lessons.

Trips & Visits

Over the past few years over 100 trips and visits have taken place, including our funded KS3 trip to London, curriculum visits, theatre trips, conferences, recreational activities, visits abroad, residential visits, geography field trips and a skiing trip to Austria.

Music Lessons

HDHS is able to offer Music instrumental lessons with a specialist Music teacher from Essex Music Services. These lessons are on a one to one basis, take place during the school day and last for 15 minutes each week. (You can, of course, double the payment for 30 minute lessons.) If you would like your child to attend music lessons then you must register them through Essex Music Services online. This enables Essex Music Services and schools to work effectively together to allocate students to the teachers that visit the schools. The current price for lessons per term is £85.50 for 10 lessons. If you are in receipt of Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, or Working Tax/Child Tax Credit then you can apply for tuition vouchers.



The School Day

A typical day begins at 8:35am, with students arriving to a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Our morning registration period provides an opportunity for students to connect with their form tutors and discuss any concerns or questions. In these registration sessions, students have a range of activities across the week, including a year group Assembly and PSHE sessions.

Lessons follow, each carefully planned to inspire curiosity and critical thinking. Each lesson is 60 minutes long. We understand the importance of breaks, and our students enjoy a break mid-morning, providing a chance to relax, socialise, and recharge.

Lunchtime is a social highlight, with a variety of options available across our food outlets and a number of clubs being available for students every day.

Our extensive grounds also offer the perfect space for outdoor activities. Extra-curricular activities are a cornerstone of our school, and students have the opportunity to explore their passions in areas such as sports, arts, music, and drama.

Our school day concludes at 3:00pm leaving ample time for homework, hobbies, and family time. We believe in creating a harmonious balance between academic achievement and personal well-being, ensuring that our students thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

Time of our school day

08:35 – 09:00 Tutor
09:00 – 10:00 Period 1
10:00 – 11:00 Period 2
11:00 – 11:20 Break
11:20 – 12:20 Period 3
12:20 – 13:20 Period 4
13:20 – 14:00 Lunch
14:00 – 15:00 Period 5

Pastoral Care



Pastoral System

The school prides itself on its comprehensive support system, which includes a dedicated safeguarding team to ensure the wellbeing and safety of every student. Additionally, each Year Group benefits from the focused attention of both a Head of Year and an Assistant Head of Year, who oversee the pastoral care of their students, providing guidance, support, and ensuring that every individual's needs are met. This commitment to student wellbeing sets the school apart as a nurturing environment for all.

Mental Health & Well Being

At HDHS, we recognise that mental health and well-being are fundamental to our students' success and happiness. We are dedicated to creating a supportive environment where every student feels valued and understood. By promoting positive mental health practices and providing access to resources, we empower our students to navigate challenges and build resilience. Through open dialogue, mindfulness activities, and a strong support network, we prioritise mental well-being, ensuring that our students can thrive both academically and personally. Together, we foster a community where mental health is celebrated and nurtured.

Equality & Diversity

At HDHS our vision explicitly outlines that we seek to develop our young people regardless of their background. It is our aim to make sure that all members of our community - students, teachers, support staff, parents, residents, volunteers - are empowered to be their best and authentic selves, so that we can foster truly mutually beneficial relationships that lead to the positive outcomes we seek in and out of the classroom.

All members of our community are given the space to listen and be heard. In our school, differences are not hidden, but highlighted and celebrated. We recognise that the work we do to promote an inclusive environment is not a passive process. Consequently, we work towards not simply being non-racist, but actively anti-racist.

We are vigilant against complacency and, as a result, continually seek to improve how we support our community as well as constructively challenging discrimination against age, faith, disability, race, gender and sexual orientation. Our goal is always to educate, not to condemn.



School Uniform

Uniform Policy

All students are expected to wear the school uniform. Parental cooperation is essential if we are to achieve an acceptable standard of appearance. School dress helps establish a sense of identity and saves students and parents from being caught up in the expense of the “extravagances of fashion”

Students must wear full school uniform:

- Black school trousers/knee length skirt (listed school skirt and trouser designs ONLY)
- Black socks, worn below the knee
- White shirt (to include a collar and a top button)
- School tie (Each Year 7 cohort has their own tie colour assigned to them when they start at HDHS)
- Black blazer (with school logo)
- Plain black sensible shoes or trainers (no coloured marking or decoration)
- Coat or jacket (no ‘hoodies’ or extra jumpers/cardigans to be worn in school)

Jewellery & Cosmetics

- Small discreet/professional earrings are allowed. One small discreet nose stud/ring is allowed all other facial piercings are not.
- Piercings may be required to be removed for practical lessons.
- Nails should be of a suitable length to fully participate in all activities safely.
- Make-up should be understated and subtle.

Hair styles

- Hair accessories should be suitable for students to participate in all activities safely.

Items of uniform and PE kit specific to Harwich & Dovercourt High School are available to buy via Anglia Sports and Schoolwear at: <http://www.yourschoolwear.co.uk>

Frequently Asked Questions



Q. How many form groups will there be?

There will be 8 form groups. In each form group there will be around 30 students.

Q. How many teaching groups will there be?

In the majority of non-practical, classroom-based subjects, there will be 6 teaching sets. Although the average size is 28 students, higher ability sets may have up to 31 or 32 students to create spaces in lower ability classes in order for additional support to be given. In practical subjects, such as PE, DT or the Arts, more teaching groups will be timetabled to create smaller class sizes that are appropriate to *the working spaces of the subject*.

Q. How will my child be assigned to a form group?

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will liaise with the Primary Schools and will then arrange students into form groups. We cannot guarantee your child will be placed with their friends.

Q. Who will look after my child? We have a Head of Year and Assistant Head of Year system for pastoral support. Therefore, there will be one Head of Year 7 and one Assistant Head of Year 7 looking after the pastoral and academic needs of your child. There will also be a form tutor who sees the form once a day. For students on the Special Educational Needs register, there will also be a SENCO and a team of key workers and Learning Support Assistants.

Q. Are there bullying issues at the school? Every school, from time to time, has to deal with some form of disagreements between students. We have a very effective pastoral team in our school, and the staff are very capable of dealing with these issues. If your son or daughter tells you about any issue, please communicate it to us via the form tutor, or the year team, depending on how serious the issue is. The earlier we know about the issue, the sooner we can deal with it. Every member of staff is sufficiently trained to log any safeguarding incidents or concerns, which are then elevated immediately to a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team.

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Published September 2026

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