



BLACKHEATH
PREP



ELTHAM COLLEGE



Announcing the
Eltham College
Family of Schools



A family of schools

As heads of two of the area's leading independent schools, we are delighted to announce that in September 2023 we are merging to become one family of schools.

This change provides an exciting opportunity to cement the schools' already close ties through a more formal partnership.

While each school will retain its distinct individual identity, we will build on our shared educational vision, ethos and values to the benefit of both communities.

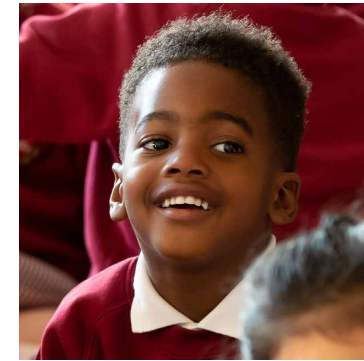
From our existing positions of strength, our larger family will be in an excellent position to prepare for the future and to ensure our schools continue to thrive.



Alex Matthews
Head, Blackheath Prep



Guy Sanderson
Headmaster, Eltham College



Pupils

Pupils are at the heart of our decision to merge and they will continue to enjoy exceptional teaching, outstanding pastoral care and fantastic facilities. Now, we have an opportunity to enhance these further within a larger family of schools, and we have already begun to look for opportunities to share our facilities and expertise for their benefit.

This may include giving our pupils access to the first-class sporting facilities and coaching at Eltham College, and opportunities to experience some of the extra-curricular activities, trips and enrichment offered there. We will co-ordinate any arrangements to take pupils to Eltham College in a way that does not disrupt families.



On a day-to-day basis, life for pupils will remain largely unchanged, with the same routines, subjects and number of form groups, along with the clubs, activities and special events like sports day and productions which they love. The uniform will remain the same.

Teaching and learning

We are proud of our reputation for educational excellence, founded on a stretching academic curriculum and an enriching programme of music, sport, art and outdoor education that we now have an opportunity to develop.

Our ongoing curriculum review will build on these principles, nurturing pupils' curiosity and love of learning, as well as their resilience and skills, so they are equipped for 21st century life and able to build happy and successful futures.

We are ambitious for all our pupils and within our new family of schools we will continue to support each child to aim high and achieve their very best.



Governance and leadership

The success of our schools would not be possible without the strong governance and leadership we enjoy. Alex Matthews will continue as Head of Blackheath Prep, with the school's Senior Leadership Team remaining in post.

While continuing as Headmaster of Eltham College, Guy Sanderson will assume leadership of our new family of schools. James Martin, current deputy at Eltham College, will become Senior Deputy there, with Vikki Meier continuing as Head of Eltham College Junior School. Governance groups will reflect and support this approach.

Investment

We are fortunate that our schools are both in good financial health and our decision to merge comes from a position of strength. The capital investment projects we have discussed, including the replacement of the Jubilee Building and Sports Pavilion, will go ahead – subject to the usual planning consents. These are important and long-planned for developments that will bring enormous benefit to the Blackheath Prep community and we remain committed to them. This will enable us to maximise our current site, but we have no plans to expand in size.

Fees, scholarships and bursaries

The fees we have confirmed for the next academic year will remain in place for 2023/4. For future years, the combined governing board will conduct the usual annual fee review, prioritising quality and value for money for parents, as happens now. Annual fees will continue to be communicated to parents before the Easter break. Furthermore, we remain committed to offering means-tested bursaries to ensure the widest possible access to our schools. Existing scholarship and bursary arrangements for current pupils, and the terms and conditions of these awards, will be unchanged.





Admissions

Reflecting that we are now one family of schools, we are pleased to confirm a new 'priority places' process for Blackheath Prep families selecting Eltham College for their child's senior school, which we hope will ease some of the anxieties families tell us are associated with the 11+.

From September, Blackheath Prep pupils will be able to sit an early test at the start of Year 6 for a priority place and academic scholarship at Eltham College. Successful pupils will then be offered an early place at Eltham College, not available to any other feeder school, enabling them to withdraw from the 11+ cycle. In the summer term of Year 6, they will join their peers from Eltham College Junior School in attending special lessons at Eltham College.



Pupils who do not qualify for a priority place at Eltham College will be given excellent guidance and support to prepare for 11+ exams for other senior schools. They may still sit the external 11+ exam for Eltham College in January of Year 6, should they wish.

Being part of our new family of schools has many benefits for pupils seeking to join Eltham College – guaranteeing them a place, subject to them meeting the admissions criteria. However, we recognise that parents may wish to consider a range of options and there is no pressure on families to send their children to Eltham College.

If parents wish to keep their options open and explore the idea of a place at Eltham College at the same time as other schools, they may of course do so. In this case, pupils will not be eligible for a priority place, though may sit Eltham College's 11+ exam and scholarship assessments in January of Year 6, alongside candidates from other schools.

Alternatively, pupils who do not wish to consider Eltham College will still be fully supported to apply for their chosen schools.

We would be delighted to answer any questions you may have about the decision to merge or the new Eltham College Family of Schools – please get in touch by contacting the Head's EA, Nikki Baddick, at nikki.baddick@blackheathprep.co.uk





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