

HIGH ACHIEVING & TALENTED STUDENTS (HATs)

Prior Park College

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| Policy Owner Deputy Head Academic | Applies to Prior Park College (PPC) | Superseded documents HATs Policy v1 |
| Associated documents Admissions Policy Scholarship Brochure Departmental Handbooks | Review frequency Every two years (unless the legislation/regulations update before this time) Implementation date | Legal Framework Part 1, Regulation 3 (ISI) |

This policy is reviewed annually, or more regularly as required, prior to approval by Trustees, where applicable.

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| Last reviewed by: | Deputy Head Academic (Mr Chris Gamble) |
| Date last reviewed: | 1 January 2022 |
| Approved by Trustees: | NA |
| Date last approved: | 12 January 2021 |
| Date for next approval: | January 2023 |

1. Introduction

Prior Park Schools (PPS) comprises three schools. Two of those schools, Prior Park College (PPC) and The Paragon School (TP) are incorporated in England as Prior Park Educational Trust Ltd. The third school, Prior Park School Gibraltar (PPSG), is incorporated in Gibraltar as Prior Park School Ltd. Both are companies limited by guarantee and registered charities.

2. Definitions

H.A.T.S. (High Achieving and Talented Students) may also be referred to as the “most able” by Ofsted and “higher attainers” by the Department for Education. Various schools have in the past used terms such as “High Prior Attainers”, or “Gifted”, or “Gifted and Talented”, or “High-Fliers” and “Exceptional” to describe this group.

Regardless of nomenclature, these are young people in our College who are clearly “more able” - in that they appear to progress significantly beyond their age-related expectations. This group also encompasses those young people who have the capacity to achieve the very highest levels.

When students enter the school in Lower 3 (Year 7) they sit entrance tests and MIDYIS tests that provide data to aid identification of HATS. There is also the opportunity for teacher nomination at any stage for a child who is deemed academically exceptional in several areas. Identification of such students is overseen by the Scholarship Coordinator and Deputy Head (Academic). Students are also able to apply for Academic Scholarships at 11+, 13+ and 16+. These are academic awards that carry a fee remittance of up to 10%¹ and are awarded according to the process detailed in the Admissions Policy. The Scholarship Coordinator maintains a central list of such HATS and scholars accessible to all staff. Informally in College parlance, the terms ‘HATS’ and ‘scholars’ are often used interchangeably.

We believe such students deserve equal consideration, time and resources devoted to their progress as might be allocated to those students who need extra help to remedy below-average attainment. In both cases, Prior Park College seeks not to teach to the average but to push to the potential of each individual.

To further that end the activities in section 2 are provided to offer opportunities to stretch and challenge the development of HATS and scholars. It is important to note that, while such activities will inevitably attract, and often involve *all* of our academic scholars, we try hard to avoid any sense of exclusiveness or superiority: scholars are encouraged to bring their friends along, and many of the activities in section 3 are also open to any student in college who might have a particular wish to attend.

¹ Dependent on other factors. Remittance is indicative and always remains at the Head’s discretion.

3. The HATs and Scholarship programme

3.1 Centrally organised activities

The following programme of activities represents the core of our central provision for HATS & scholars, overseen by the Scholarship Coordinator, which brings all HATS and academic scholars together to further their knowledge and extend their thinking. Other activities, essay competitions, talks, trips, and events are added to this programme throughout each academic year to create a rich and stretching experience for HATS & scholars.

Lower 3 and Form 3 Scholars' Meeting

Lower 3 and Form 3 Scholars meet at lunchtime once a fortnight run by the College Scholarship Coordinator to discuss topics of interest and to develop their powers of analysis and evaluation. Some of these meetings focus on the techniques and mental landscapes of academic scholarship - such as the way hobbies and interests can broaden our understanding of the world. Even at this initial age, scholars are encouraged to lead a discussion or to make presentations on their own activities and interests outside of school: it could be something as simple as sharing their enthusiasm for the latest series of fantasy-adventure novels, a passion for skateboarding, or the techniques and skills required for model-making. They are encouraged to work both collectively and individually on research projects, problem solving, quizzes and they are exposed to new subjects and academic ideas.

The plan is for academic scholars in the Lower and Upper Sixth to take over leading these lunchtime meetings - allowing the older scholars the opportunity to present and lead discussions and allowing the younger students to experience the development of individual interests across the years through the college.

Lectures

Scholars gather together each term for a series of lectures, organised by the Scholarship Coordinator and designed to bring them into contact with the wider world beyond our college gates: In the current term, for example, we are privileged to be meeting with Professor Dima Damen. Professor Damen is a world-leading scientist working in the vitally important area of artificial Intelligence, computer vision and machine learning. These are fascinating areas of research and of course the subject of myriad Sci-Fi novels and Hollywood movies!

Professor Damen will be presenting on these topics and bringing along some of her hi-tech cutting-edge equipment - to allow some of our students to experience the problems and potential solutions in assessing how computers might learn to do things for themselves.

Another example from the current term was the visit on the 9th of December of "Chess Legend" James Sherwin who spoke in the John Wood Chapel on his extraordinary career in chess - from playing at the highest levels in the era of the hit Netflix T.V. series Queen's Gambit, to his friendship with Bobby Fisher, and other world chess champions such as Gary Kasparov and Judit Polgar.

In addition to such high-profile external speakers, the scholarship program works closely with the Director of Development to invite former pupils of the college to return and share with current students the various paths and interests they have developed since leaving Prior Park College. Recent such events have included a major seminar on the situation on Afghanistan with a panel consisting of:

- Harry Porteous (PPA 1995) Current Head of Risk Operations at Vocalink Mastercard. Harry previously conducted provincial reconstruction operations in Northern Afghanistan and combat operations in Helmand.

- John Gatt-Rutter (PPA 1989) Senior diplomat with the European Union. John was Formerly Head of Counterterrorism at the European External Action Service (2015-19) and former European Union Ambassador in the occupied Palestinian territory (2011-15).
- Pierre Makhlouf (PPA 1982) Pierre has worked in the field of Immigration and Asylum Law since 1989, becoming Assistant Director at Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID) in September 2007, a post now re-titled to Legal Director. He is responsible for the organisation's legal strategy for helping people apply to get out of immigration detention, as well as for its Article 8 Deportation Advice Project, and has led it in a number of interventions before the higher courts, including the Supreme Court. He is the co-convenor of the Immigration Law Practitioner Association's Working Group on Detention, Deportation and Criminal Offences.
- Chris Lennon (PPA 1964) Christopher has been working in the Insurance sector in the UK, South Africa and Afghanistan for over 50 years and as a claims specialist for over 30 years. At different points in his career, he has been a General Aviation Underwriter, Lloyd's Broker and both an independent claims adjuster with CILA firms and Claims Manager for an Insurer, specializing in Professional Indemnity and Financial risks. After joining the first and only Commercial insurer established in Kabul in 2008 by local interests, Insurance Corporation of Afghanistan, in 2012 as Head of Claims, he was based in the city until 2018 and remains a UK-based consultant to the company, in the same role. Christopher is passionate about Afghanistan and its people. He spoke to the Sixth form about life in Kabul a few years ago.

Another example was a recent free Sixth Form Philosophy online seminar in conjunction with the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution which took as its title the phrase from Simone De Beauvoir, 'One is not born a woman, one becomes one'. This session examined the metaphysical, moral and political dimensions of gender.

The Oxford Trip

Each year the College aims to organise a trip for HATS & scholars, traditionally referred to as 'The Oxford Trip'.

This year, for example, the College has organised a Scholars Day in Oxford which will take place on Thursday the 17th of March 2022. We will be leaving Bath at 8.30pm by coach, visiting the Oxford University Natural History Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum in the morning, having lunch, then visiting Magdalen College for a tour, followed by the Ashmolean Museum in the afternoon.

Next year we hope to take our scholars to meet their M.P. and visit the Houses of Parliament. In the 2020-21 academic year, HATS & scholars enjoyed a tour of Bletchley Park, as part of a lecture series on codebreaking.

The Socrates Club

The Socrates Club was originally founded at Oxford University by C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, and now has branches at schools and universities around the world. It is intended to be an antidote to the traditional debating society - which was thought to encourage students to show off and try to win the debate rather than to explore the issue and seek the truth. By contrast The Socrates Club encourages open discussion of issues relating to Religion, Philosophy and Ethics. It facilitates opportunities for HATS & scholars to learn new facts, consider different perspectives, and accepts as laudable the fact that individuals may change their mind on an issue. Students propose the topics and lead the discussions each week. 'Membership' is earned by attending at least 2/3rd of meetings and leading at least 3 discussions.

For example, topics in the Michaelmas term 2021 have been:

- "Should we cancel cancel-culture? Or is it o.k. to be Woke?"

- “Is religion the cause or the cure of modern racism?”
- “Why are women paid less than men?”
- “Did China get it right with the 1 child policy?”
- “Do we really live in a Democracy - or is that just what the powerful want us to think?”
- “Should some bad teenage tweets cost people their career?”
- “Artificial Intelligence - are we sleepwalking into a surveillance society?”
- “The word Feminism shouldn’t exist: anyone who isn’t should just be called Sexist!”
- “Rugby, like boxing, is too dangerous to be allowed in schools.”
- “Art tells us truths that words cannot say.” (in the Art Department)
- “Education is over-rated as the key to success in life.”
- “No self-respecting atheist could celebrate Christmas.”

The Astronomical Society

Meets each week to explore the night sky and all matters relating to astronomy. To give an idea of the topics discussed, the current (Michaelmas 2021) term has included meetings led by an U5th scholar who introduced the topic of "Time Travel" and looking at "The Space Shuttle" led by another scholar.

We also regularly arrange opportunities for our students to enjoy online lectures, which included in Michaelmas 2021:

- *Supernovae by Dr Philip Wiseman, Southampton University*
- *How we study neutron stars by Dr Diego Alamarino, Southampton University*
- *The extreme physics of zombie stars by Professor Nils Andersson, Southampton University*
- *The Caroline Herschel Prize Lecture - Earth versus Sun: a Precarious Relationship in Space by Dr Jenny Carter, University of Leicester*
- [*The 2021 Jocelyn Bell Burnell Lecture: Reaching for the stars!*](#) By Dr Maggie Alderin-Pocock

The Chess Club

Building on the phenomenal popularity of the Netflix T.V. series The Queen’s Gambit, this club, as of Michaelmas 2021, has grown to embody a group of some 45 members and a full programme of meetings and competitions. The Chess Club also regularly organises Chess fixtures with other local schools and special Chess events, including talks and exhibition matches, most recently (Summer 2021) against International Master James Sherwin.

Film screenings

We regularly arrange special film screenings especially for HATS & scholars, and also the wider school community.

In the most recent academic year (21-22), our Upper Fifth students were treated to a special screening of ‘Francesco’, a profound global documentary about the current Pope. Afterwards students were able to ask questions of the Oscar-nominated director and producer, Evgeny Afineevksy, in person as he made a special trip into college to meet us.

3.2 Provision within academic departments

In addition to the centrally organised provision summarised in section 2, academic departments also organise their own provision for HATS & scholars, such as the House debating competition, Maths’ competitions, Olympiads in the Sciences, the MFL challenge, University of Bath Maths Masterclasses, Cicero Competitions, Catenians and Rotary Public Speaking.

Such activities are the responsibility of Heads of Department, in addition to their core responsibility for ensuring that their subject's regular curriculum and teaching is pitched to offer sufficient stretch and challenge to more able students.