

The Elms Academy

Parent Handbook 2025-26

‘Bringing out the very best in everyone’



The Elms Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

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Welcome from the Principal

At The Elms Academy, our motto is something we strive to live up to each and every day – both for our students and as staff. We seek to bring out the best in every student and give them the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to excel in today's world.

Choosing a secondary school for your child is one of the most important decisions a parent makes so we are delighted you have chosen The Elms Academy.

We know our partnership with you is key to your child's success, so we are committed to building a strong relationship with you based on mutual respect, care and understanding.

At The Elms Academy we endeavour to bring out the very best in everyone. Our mission is to enable each of our students to grow into confident young adults who go on to lead happy and fulfilled lives. We seek to open the doors to a world of opportunity so that our young people have the freedom to choose their future, whatever their ambitions may be.

We do this by ensuring students gain everything they need during their time in school to succeed at the highest levels. Our three values – integrity, ambition and determination – are embedded across every aspect of school life. We deliver a rigorous academic curriculum, with expert, supportive teaching, so that students achieve the best qualifications possible.

Importantly, we also value what we call 'education with character'; one that challenges, inspires and excites students and provides a rich variety of experiences and opportunities outside of the classroom. This helps to build vital life skills and nurture a deep love of learning in our young people.

The Elms Academy is your school too and as we are truly an open school, you are very welcome to come for a visit anytime during the school day. You will see calm, focussed lessons and safe, happy children.

We look forward to seeing you soon.



Amy Welch
Principal



Key Staff

Principal:	Ms A. Welch
Executive Principal:	Mr L. Wilson
Vice Principal	Mr J. Lynes
Assistant Principal (Key Stage 3):	Mr T. Aung
SENDCo:	Ms. S. Nathanson
Head of Year 7:	Ms N. Paine
Attendance officer:	Ms E. Rahimi
Safeguarding lead:	Ms A. Paturaud

Year 7 Tutors

7A - Ms O. Petri
7S - Ms E. Beacom
7P - Mr J. Brennan
7I - Ms S. Hasan
7R - Mr C. Gallagher
7E - Ms R. Stacey



Vision and Values

OUR VISION

We are unapologetically ambitious for every child, no matter what their background, prior attainment or needs. Our vision is to bring out the very best in every student and give them the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to succeed in today's world.

The Elms Academy fosters **integrity, ambition, and determination** so that students make healthy, wise and principled choices that lead to happy and fulfilled lives.

OUR VALUES

At The Elms Academy our values reflect who we are and are at the heart of everything we do. They drive our academic curriculum and the effort and attitudes we expect from our students.

Integrity – we always do the right thing, even if no one is watching

We lead by example every day and treat others as we would want to be treated. This means always making the right choices, even if that is not the easy option.

Ambition – we can achieve anything we set our minds to

We have confidence in our abilities and know we can succeed in all our goals if we remain focused and put the work in. This means having high expectations of ourselves and being courageous in our everyday decisions rather than taking the easy route.

Determination – we never give up

We believe in 100% effort (focus and hard work), every day, and go the extra mile in everything we do. This means always trying our hardest even when it is difficult because we thrive when challenged and learn the most from our mistakes.

Uniform

<u>Branded uniform items</u> <i>These items can only be bought from School Uniform Direct:</i>	<u>Other uniform items</u> <i>These items can be bought at any suitable retailer:</i>
Blazer	Open-neck blouse (Girls)
Jumper (optional)	Shirt (Boys)
Tie (boys)	Socks / tights (black or Elms grey)
Skirt	Shoes (formal)
Trousers	Headscarf (black or Elms grey)
The Elms Academy rucksack	Coat
PE Polo Shirt	White PE Socks
PE Shorts	PE Trainers
PE sweatshirt (optional)	
PE tracksuit bottoms (optional)	



Uniform

Uniform at the Academy is very important to us. We have very high standards for the way in which our uniform is worn. We want our students to wear The Elms Academy uniform with pride.

Please read the guidance carefully. We would recommend checking with us before purchasing an item if you are unsure if it is compliant with our Uniform Policy.

School shoes

Shoes must be formal, black and of a material that can be polished. Students cannot wear boots or trainers.



Coats and outerwear

Students' coats should be dark in colour and practical outerwear to protect against cold weather. Students cannot wear hoodies, fashion jackets or sportswear at all inside the school site.



Uniform

Belts

Belts should be black and functional. Belts with large fashion buckles or patterns are not permitted.



Hair

Students cannot wear make-up, nail polish, false nails, false eyelashes or any hair dye. Large hairbands and hair accessories are not allowed.



Jewellery

Students can wear a pair of earrings in the ear lobes, silver or gold and no more than 5mm diameter. They can wear a wristwatch. No other jewellery is permitted.



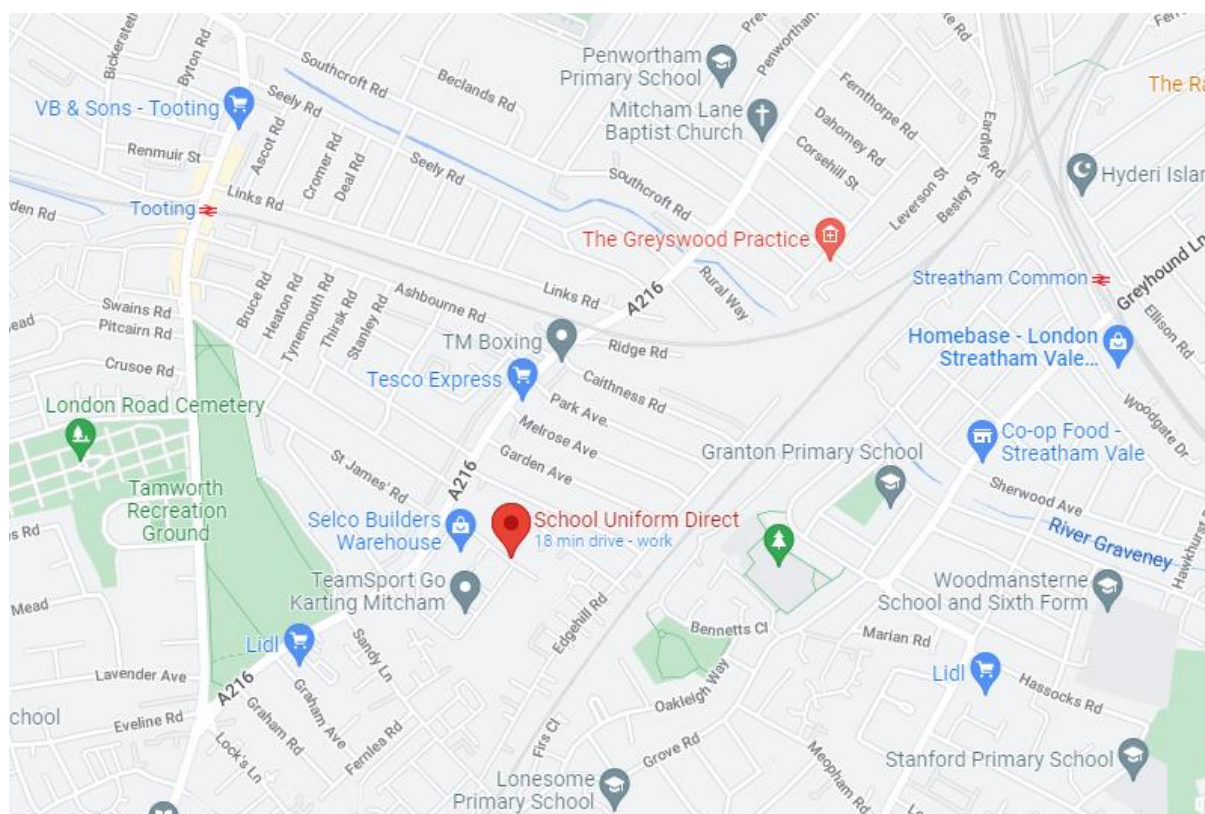
Uniform

The branded items of our school uniform can be purchased from School Uniform Direct either in the store or online.

School Uniform Direct

Mitcham Industrial Estate
Streatham Road
CR4 2AP

www.schooluniformdirect.co.uk



Inside The Elms Academy School Bag

Students at The Elms Academy should carry with them, every day, a branded “The Elms Academy” rucksack containing the following:

1) Pencil Case

- Clear pencil case
- Black and red pens
- Pencils
- Highlighter
- White board pen
- Glue stick
- Eraser
- Ruler
- Pencil sharpener
- Scientific calculator (must be Casio FX)



2) Water bottle

3) The Elms Academy Planner

4) Subject books



Smartphones and Valuables

At The Elms Academy smartphones are not permitted on the school site. Any phones that are seen or heard will be confiscated for one week, and parents will be required to collect them in person.

This school stands firmly against the harm that smartphones pose to the well-being, mental health, and physical development of children.

We recommend the following types of mobile phone for parents who wish their child to carry a mobile phone on their journey to and from school: **Nokia 105, Samsung E1200 or Alcatel 10.16G**. Other phones may be recommended by the school in the future.

Students may not use their phone, earphones or electronic devices in school (including smart watches).

Students should not bring valuable items or large sums of cash into the Academy. Students are responsible for all items brought onto the Academy site.

Smartphones and social media: Key Risks for Teens

Smartphones and social media are a big part of teenage life—but they come with real risks. Here's what every parent should know:

Main Concerns:

- Mental health: Linked to anxiety, low mood, poor sleep, and low self-esteem—especially from constant comparisons online.
- Distraction: Heavy use can affect focus, learning, and sleep routines.
- Online safety: Risks include cyberbullying, grooming, and exposure to harmful content.
- Social skills: Too much screen time can reduce face-to-face interaction and emotional development.

What Helps:

- Delay purchasing a smartphone for your child
- Set clear, age-appropriate boundaries
- Encourage offline time and open conversations
- Stay involved—know the apps, set limits, and keep talking. Staying connected to your child is the best protection.



The Academy Day

Students are expected to be in school at 08:20. The dining hall is open for a free breakfast from 07:30 until 08:00.

08:20	Arrival
08.30 – 09:00	Form Time
09:00 – 09:45	Lesson 1
09:45 – 10:30	Lesson 2
10:30 – 11:15	Lesson 3
11:15 – 11:35	Break
11:35 – 12:20	Lesson 4
12:20 – 13:05	Lesson 5
13:05 – 13:45	Lunch
13:45 – 14:30	Lesson 6
14.30 – 15:15	Lesson 7
15:15 – 15:30	Form Time
15:30	Dismissal

KS3 Prep (Week 1 and Week 2 Only)

During the first two weeks of term, Year 7 will have Prep after school with their form tutors until 4:00pm each day. This is to help to support them to develop the independent learning skills needed for homework and to ensure they can log into all online homework platforms.

Enrichment

Enrichment is a vital part of school life at The Elms Academy. We offer a diverse range of activities to students across all year groups. Our committed staff invest their time and energy into running these programmes, and we actively encourage students to take part in both lunchtime and after-school sessions.

Enrichment also ties into our House System, with students earning points through inter-house competitions and sporting events.

Trips and Personal Development

In addition to our extra-curricular activities, we offer a wide variety of exciting trips throughout the academic year. These experiences are designed to enhance students' learning beyond the classroom and help them explore new perspectives.

Running alongside this is our comprehensive PSHE programme, which forms a key part of our commitment to character education. Through PSHE and enrichment, we equip our students with the confidence, resilience, and values they need to thrive—and provide opportunities for them to grow and broaden their horizons.

After-School Activities and Events

A wide range of extra-curricular clubs, trips, and competitive matches take place once the school day ends at 3:30pm. Participation in Enrichment is *compulsory* for all Year 7 to Year 9 students every Monday from 3.30pm to 4.30pm.



Attendance and Punctuality

We are a 100% school.

Students are expected to attend 100% of lessons and arrive to school on time, every day.

We know that students with over 5% absence rate are three times more likely to fail their English and Maths GCSEs.

Impact of missed days at school:

	80% attendance (20% absence)	90% attendance (10% absence)	95% attendance (5% absence)	100% attendance
Every week	7 lessons 315 minutes of learning	4 lessons 157 minutes of learning	1.75 lessons 61 minutes of learning	We are a 100% school and expect students to attend every day, on time
1 term (13 weeks)	91 lessons 3185 minutes of learning	46 lessons 1593 minutes of learning	23 lessons 797 minutes of learning	
1 year	273 lessons 9555 minutes of learning	137 lessons 4778 minutes of learning	68 lessons 2389 minutes of learning	



The Curriculum

Maths <i>6 lessons</i>	English <i>6 lessons</i>	Science <i>4 lessons</i>
History <i>3 lessons</i>	Geography <i>3 lessons</i>	Religious Education <i>3 lessons</i>
Modern Foreign Languages (Spanish, French or Mandarin Chinese) <i>3 lessons</i>	Music <i>2 lessons</i>	Physical Education <i>2 lessons</i>
Drama <i>1 lesson</i>	Art <i>1 lesson</i>	Food Technology <i>1 lesson</i>

Our Curriculum

All students at The Elms Academy study a broad and rigorous curriculum which prepares them for the best possible universities and careers.

Core subjects include English, Mathematics, Science and Religious Education. Alongside these core subjects, at Key Stage 3, students study the humanities subjects, geography and history, at least one modern foreign language such as Mandarin, Spanish or French and then the creative arts which include drama, art and music. Physical Education is varied and diverse, ranging from athletics to cricket to badminton, and we often invite in specialist coaches in such as Harlequins Rugby.

Extra-curricular clubs take place weekly and include activities such as singing, yoga, Save the Planet and football.

At Key Stage 4, students follow an academic pathway suited to their ability and future educational choices. These pathways vary in whether students study the separate sciences of Biology, Chemistry and Physics and gain a GCSE for each Science, or combined sciences in which students attain two GCSEs. The pathways also vary in whether students study a language. However, all students are entitled to take a GCSE in a home language, for example Polish or Farsi. We also offer quality Level Two BTEC courses as alternatives to some of our GCSE subjects for students who are suited to more vocational courses, more coursework rather than exams and more computer-based learning.

The Curriculum

Homework

All homework tasks are displayed on Show My Homework, a website that we use to ensure students can stay organised and independent. Parents/carers can also log in to view tasks. Homework is completed mostly online. Students can attend homework club if they need any support. Students will always have seven days to complete a task. Therefore, students are expected to ask for help in advance of the deadline if they get stuck. A list of homework websites can be found on at the back of this handbook.

Assessment

Students sit formal examinations twice a year, in January and June. The results of these examinations are published biannually in The Elms Academy rank order—a memorable day in the school calendar when students discover their placement within the year group. These assessments, along with the feedback provided, are vital for tracking your child’s academic progress, recognising achievements, and identifying areas for improvement.

The Grammar Stream

Students who achieve academic performance within the top 30 of their year group are awarded a place in our prestigious Grammar Stream. This pathway offers a more challenging curriculum, including the study of two languages and participation in a wide range of academic extracurricular activities. Placement in the Grammar Stream is dynamic and may change following the January or June assessment cycles, depending on how students perform in relation to their peers.



The House System



The Elms Academy is proud of its vibrant House System, which plays a central role in school life.

Students are placed into one of four houses and participate in a wide range of activities, including competitions, sporting events, and charity fundraising. This system is designed to encourage students to expand their learning across subjects such as art, sport, drama, and core academic areas.

More than just a programme, the House System is a cornerstone of our vision for community and character. It fosters a sense of responsibility and togetherness by mixing students from all year groups in vertically integrated houses. It also provides a framework through which every student is both challenged and supported to strive for personal excellence and to contribute to the success of others.

In their first term, students attend a memorable Sorting Ceremony where they discover their house and receive their house badge—something they will wear with pride throughout their five years at the Academy.



The House System

Our houses

- **Thornton** – Named after *Henry Thornton*, born in Clapham South in 1750. A founder of the Clapham Sect of evangelical reformers, he was a leading campaigner for the abolition of the slave trade.
- **Archer** – Named after *John Archer*, who moved to Battersea as a child and, in 1913, became the first Black Mayor in London when elected Mayor of Battersea.
- **Szabo** – Named after *Violette Szabo*, born in Paris in 1921 but raised in Stockwell. A volunteer during WWII, she became the first British woman awarded the George Cross posthumously in 1946 for her exceptional bravery.
- **Jones** – Named after *Claudia Jones*, born in Trinidad in 1915. A civil rights activist and journalist, she settled in London and founded the Brixton-based *West Indian Gazette*, giving voice to the Black British community.

Earning house points

- House points are awarded for merits, excellent attendance and behaviour, and consistent homework completion.
- Twice-weekly lunchtime competitions offer students a fun opportunity to contribute to their house and build friendships.
- *Drop Down Days* are special off-timetable events—including Sports Day—where students compete in teams to earn house points and celebrate community spirit.

Student Leadership

The House System offers a range of leadership opportunities for students in every year group.

- Each house is represented by student leaders who work collaboratively to support their peers and contribute to their house's success in the annual House Trophy competition.
- These house representatives may also be selected for *Elms Future Leaders*—a student council committed to shaping school life through discussion, initiative, and advocacy for positive change.

Health, Nutrition and Food

At The Elms Academy, we believe that students learn best when they are healthy, well-nourished and properly hydrated.

Daily Lunch

We provide healthy and nutritious lunch options each day. All chicken and beef served is halal, and we offer a range of meat and vegetarian meals. Alternatively, students are welcome to bring a packed lunch from home.

Free Breakfast for All

To ensure every student starts the day ready to learn, we offer free bagels or cereal every morning between 07.30 and 08.15.

Lunch Cards

All students receive a lunch card, which can be topped up in two ways:

- Using cash at the top-up machines located in school
- Via the *School Gateway* app, which activates on your child's first day in September

You can find the link to download the app and a user guide on our website here:

<https://www.theelmsacademy.org.uk/parents/school-gateway>

Free School Meals

If your child received Free School Meals at primary school, you will need to re-apply when they join us. To apply, you will need:

- Your National Insurance number
- Your child's date of birth

Students eligible for Free School Meals are entitled to a hot meal or sandwich, plus a juice or pudding, each lunchtime.

Snacks and Drinks

All students are required to bring a refillable water bottle to school every day.

Extra snacks can be purchased using the lunch card, and you may set a spending limit via the *School Gateway* app.

Please note sweets, fizzy drinks, energy drinks and high-sugar juice drinks are not permitted. Any of these items will be confiscated and disposed of.

Staying Hydrated

We strongly encourage all students to bring a refillable water bottle to school each day. Staying hydrated is essential for focus, energy, and overall wellbeing throughout the school day.

Rewards and Behaviour

Rewards

We are committed to recognising and celebrating the behaviour and work habits that meet—or surpass—our high expectations. We place particular value on students who consistently embody our core values of *integrity*, *determination*, and *ambition*. Students receive merits throughout the school day in recognition of their positive contributions, effort, and character.

Merits can be awarded for

- Intelligent and considered response to questions
- Effort above and beyond expectation
- A high level of achievement in set work
- A remarkable piece of homework
- Assisting a peer in need
- Being a role model
- Helpful behaviour

Further rewards:

- Displaying your work
- Writing or telephoning home
- Gift vouchers
- Trips
- Special lunches with the Head of Year
- Postcards of Excellence
- Golden Postcards
- Merit certificates

Consequences of not meeting our expectations

We believe that every child has the right to an education free from disruption. At the same time, we are committed to helping students understand that poor behaviour, lack of respect, and insufficient effort can negatively impact not only their own progress but also the wider school community. Students are expected to uphold the high standards of The Elms Academy at all times. Those who fall short should be prepared to face the consequences of their actions through our *No Excuses* behaviour system.

Sanctions:

- Same day detention for lateness or lack of homework completion
- Phone calls/letters home to parents/carers
- Community service
- Learning in the Reflection Room
- Parent meetings
- Friday night detention for 2 hours
- Fixed term external exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

Behaviour is excellent here at The Elms Academy. Our students understand the value of high expectations and appreciate being able to work in classrooms where learning is not disrupted.

Term Dates 2025-26

Term 1 Wednesday 3 September - Friday 31 October

All Staff INSET	Monday and Tuesday, 1 & 2 September 2025
Start of Term	Wednesday 3 September
Autumn break	Monday 27 October 2025 - Friday 31 October 2025

Term 2 Monday 3 November – Friday 19 December 2025

Staff INSET	Monday 3 November & Friday 5 December
Christmas break	Monday 22 December 2025 – Friday 2 January 2026

Term 3 Monday 5 January - Friday 13 February

Staff INSET	Monday 5 January and Friday 23 January
Winter break	Monday 16 February - Friday 20 February

Term 4 Monday 23 February – Friday 27 March

Easter break	Monday 30 March – Friday 10 April 2026
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Term 5 Tuesday 13 April - Friday 22 May

Staff INSET	Monday 13 April
Bank Holiday	Monday 4 May
Spring break	Monday 25 May - Friday 29 May

Monday 1 June - Friday 17 July

Term 6

Staff INSET	Friday 3rd July 2026
Summer break	Monday 20 July – Monday 31 August 2026

*Dates are subject to change. Please check the web site termly for any changes.

Home School Agreement

The Elms Academy will:	As a parent/carer, I will:	As a student, I will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that every child can go to university • Have high expectations, set high standards and consistently enforce these through our 'No Excuses' behaviour policy • Provide a positive, safe and inspiring learning environment • Provide high-quality learning and excellent teaching • Provide homework which extends and consolidates your child's learning • Provide regular updates on your child's academic progress with clear guidance as to how to improve • Offer as many opportunities as possible to students to develop their confidence, skills and interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that my child attends every day on time, with no holidays in term time • Support my child to be an organised and independent learner who completes all homework set to the best of their ability • Attend all Parents' Evenings • Support the Academy with our 'No Excuses' behaviour policy and always support teachers for the benefit of my child • Check that my child has the correct uniform and equipment each day • Make sure that my child goes to bed and gets up in good time for every school day at the Academy • Monitor my child's use of phones, tablets and video games to safeguard my child and sustain healthy routines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an outstanding ambassador for The Elms Academy inside and outside school • Attend The Elms Academy every day in correct uniform, be on time and have the correct equipment • Follow The Elms Academy's 'No Excuses' behaviour policy at all times • Be polite and kind to everyone • Complete all classwork and homework to the best of my ability and take pride in it • Read as much as possible • Keep the school safe by never bringing banned items into school • Contribute to the house system by working hard and competing



Home School Communication

We use the **Arbor App** for all communication with parents / carers. It is a simple, smart app which allows parents to register their child for a club or trip, book parents evening slots and manage payments all from your phone. Parents can also use the app to check in on their child's attendance, behaviour and progress.

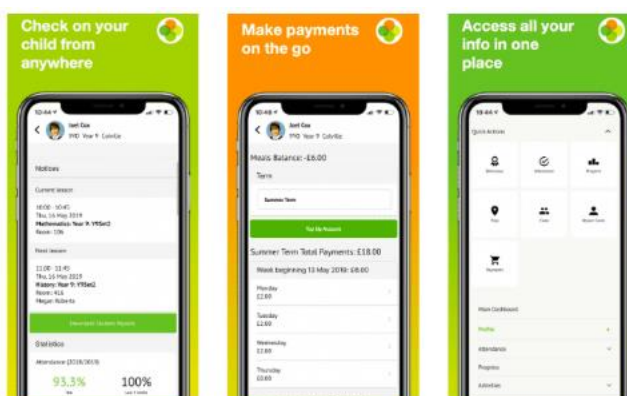
How will parents benefit?

- Check on your child from anywhere: You can check in on your children from anywhere - all you need is a phone.
- Access important information about your child in one place: See your child's attendance, behaviour and progress this week as well as for the year so far. You can also see upcoming homework and download reports for your child.
- Get updates from school via push notifications: Get notified when your school sends out a new message via the App.
- Make payments on the go: Manage tasks like payments and booking trips or parents' evenings.

How to get set up

1. Download the free Arbor App from the Apple Store or Google Play Store
2. Look for a welcome email in your inbox
3. Click on the link in the email to set up your password
4. Get started!

<https://www.theelmsacademy.org.uk/parents/arbor-app>



Useful Websites for Parents and Carers

Learning Platforms

- **Show My Homework:** Tracks and manages all homework in one place for students and families.
- **Bedrock:** Strengthens vocabulary through structured homework tasks.
- **Sparx Maths/Reader:** Weekly Maths homework and targeted revision topics.

If your child forgets their login details for a homework platform, they can stay behind at homework club or families can email the Head of Year for support

Wellbeing & Mental Health

- **Kooth:** A safe online space for young people to access mental wellbeing support and community.
- **Think U Know:** Offers online safety education, plus a reporting tool for concerning online behaviour.
- **Free 2 B LGBT:** Support for LGBTQ+ youth and their families.

In the first instance, please speak to a member of staff if you think your child needs support with their mental health

Healthcare Support

- **Evelina Chat Health & Parent Line:** Text-based healthcare advice for young people and parents.

Family & Community Support

- **Lambeth Early Help:** Practical help with family-related issues like housing and financial hardship.
- **Lambeth Larder:** Information hub for food banks and support charities in the area.
- **Gaia Centre Lambeth:** (Assuming from the context) Likely supports individuals experiencing gender-based violence or similar challenges.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of staff if your family needs support with keeping safe from harm.

The 'Parents' page of our website includes lots of useful information for parents and carers, including the term dates, paying for school meals, and links to download the Arbor Parent app.

<https://www.theelmsacademy.org.uk/parents>



Keep up to date with all the latest events and student success on our social media channels:

<https://www.instagram.com/theelmsacademy/>

<https://www.facebook.com/people/The-Elms-Academy/100085617767999/>

<https://x.com/TheElmsAcademy>



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