

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

NEW OWNERSHIP

1. Why is this move necessary?

When the Sisters of St Martha amalgamated with the Sisters of Charity of St Jeanne Antide in 2015 it was part of the agreement that the Sisters would no longer continue to subsidise St Martha's School.

To secure the future of the School the Sisters approached a number of school operators, seeking a future proprietor with proven experience running schools with similar values to St Martha's.

Immensely proud of their legacy in the School and the area, the Sisters researched carefully the range of options available. After considerable analysis and reflection, the Sisters selected the future proprietors that they believed would enable the strongest future for the School, preserving its ethos and ensuring it thrives for generations to come.

2. Have you considered other options?

The Sisters looked at all possible options for the future, including closing the School.

All the options were considered with due care and attention. The Sisters strongly believe the School should continue and that the selected proprietors will provide the best opportunities for existing and future pupils.

3. Who are the new proprietors and how will the School be governed and run?

Matthew Burke will continue as Head of the School and, supported by the Senior Management Team, will be responsible for running the School day to day.

Matthew will be supported by a Board of Directors, working in a similar way to the current trustees and Board of governors. As one of the Directors, Toby Mullins, Executive Principal, will be the School's strategic and business lead.

Dr Colin Diggory is Chairman of the Board, supported by Toby Mullins as well as Emil Gigov as Directors. See the attached document 'About Mount House School' to read their full biographies.

Meeting on a monthly basis, the Board has deliberately been kept small in order to effectively support the day to day running of the School and to ensure that decision making is streamlined. Compared to a traditional governing body, the Board will be more closely involved in supporting the Head and Senior Management Team.

4. What are the roles of the Executive Principal and Head and how will they work together?

In many respects the role of Matthew Burke as Head will continue as now. He will retain responsibility for the day to day running of the School, especially the care of the pupils and staff, and routine contact with parents. He will work in very close harmony with the Executive Principal, Toby Mullins. Toby Mullins is a very experienced Head himself and will be fully available at all times to offer consultation and support to the Head and, through him, to his teaching and support staff colleagues. The Head and Executive Principal will work together on the continuing development of the School for the approval of the Board. The Head, will be responsible to the Executive Principal, who is a member of the Board. Matthew Burke will be invited to meetings of the Board to present the Head's report.

5. Why was this news not shared sooner?

The Sisters were committed to taking time to find the right team to take on the School; a team with proven experience and a deep commitment, in tune with the underlying values and ethos of St Martha's.

The Sisters are pleased to have reached this agreement with the new team of Mount House School, who have the right experience and vision. Now the period of due diligence is complete they are delighted to be able to share the news.

6. What guarantees are there that this a permanent and reliable solution for the School?

Albion Ventures, Mount House School's financial partner, is a long term investor in quality businesses with an increasing focus on supporting the independent education sector.

For example, they supported the long-term investment in the development of Radnor House Twickenham. They provided initial investment in 2010 and the new School opened in 2011 which, thanks to ongoing investment and development, now has 410 pupils.

In addition, Radnor House Sevenoaks, was acquired in 2015 and has since made a successful transition from a girls' school to coeducation and is now a thriving School with 300 pupils.

Albion Ventures' proven ability to provide capital investment will ensure that the School will thrive under the new ownership and remain a long term and much valued presence in the heart of the local community.

7. The funders are a venture capital investor; what does this mean for the stability of the School?

Founded over 20 years ago, Albion Ventures is a long term investor in quality businesses. Unlike many venture capital investors, Albion retains investments for the longer term. They ensure businesses are well funded, well run and achieve their goals.

At Mount House, Albion will be providing investment and strategic support to the Head and Directors to help the School achieve its future plans.

CHANGES TO THE SCHOOL'S OFFER

8. What other changes will be made – and why?

New name: As the School will no longer be under the ownership of the Sisters of St Martha and, indeed, the order itself no longer exists, a change in name was required as part of the transition in ownership. Mount House, as the historic name of the house on this site, was the obvious choice, linking the School's history with its future.

Under the new ownership Mount House will retain its ethos and will welcome pupils from all religious backgrounds as well as those who are not religious, as St Martha's always has.

Transition to coeducation: A detailed process of research and evaluation confirmed that the schools market is changing both locally and nationally. Parents are increasingly seeking a coeducational school to meet the needs of them and their families. Mount House will begin the gradual transition to coeducation in September 2018 when boys will join the 1st Form and L6th initially, with boys joining in other years subsequently until the School becomes fully coeducational by 2022.

9. How will the School be affected by the change?

Mount House will become a family School where brothers and sisters can be educated together. It will provide more opportunities for girls and boys to grow up together in a controlled and balanced environment, ready for university and life beyond education.

The gradual move to coeducation will enable major curricular developments and increased subject choice at A-Level. There will also be significant investment in developing facilities and resources for teaching and learning to create a more dynamic learning environment.

However, the fundamental aims of the School will continue and the ethos and atmosphere of the School will remain unchanged. All pupils will be seen as unique and valued as individuals, and as part of a family. Their distinct talents will be discovered and nurtured within a friendly, supportive environment.

10. How will our daughters be affected by the change?

The table below explains the expected transition to coeducation (the presence of boys is indicated in blue).

Today	Sept 2017	Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Sept 2020	Sept 2021	Sept 2022
1 st Form						
2 nd Form						
3 rd Form						
4 th Form						
5 th Form						
L6						
U6						

The current expectation is that girls in the current the 5th Form, L6 and U6 will remain in single sex classes during the remainder of their time at the School. Boys are anticipated to join girls currently in 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Forms when they reach the Sixth Form.

11. What are the benefits of moving to coeducation?

Moving to coeducation will provide greater opportunities for all students through the provision of an enhanced curriculum, more sports and more available co-curricular activities.

A wider range of courses will be offered. The presence of both boys and girls, and the different perspectives they bring, will enhance the teaching and learning experiences.

In addition, the School plans to grow the Sixth Form, allowing for broader debate and discussion in class and a more stimulating learning environment for older pupils.

Pastorally and socially it is important that boys and girls are taught to mix and integrate whilst in a safe, structured environment with clear boundaries.

The move to coeducation will also enable the School to grow gradually over the years ahead, facilitating further investment in the thriving School community.

12. Do the new Directors have experience in running coeducational schools?

Yes, the attached document called 'About Mount House School' comprehensively details the Directors' relevant experience.

Toby Mullins has worked in coeducational schools for over 30 years, 20 of them as a Head. Dr Colin Diggory has led schools in the move to coeducation and very recently supported Radnor House, Sevenoaks in its successful move to coeducation.

In addition, the Head, Matthew Burke, has invaluable experience overseeing the move from girls-only to coeducation at Our Lady's Abingdon.

13. Will these changes affect the School's academic standards?

The current high standards, together with investment in and modernisation of teaching and learning resources, will ensure that academic standards continue to rise.

The aim is to enable all students to secure places at their chosen top universities and to be well prepared for the world of work.

14. Will these changes affect the School's pastoral standards?

Providing the highest standard of pastoral care is a well-established strength and will continue to be at the heart of how the School is run.

15. How will sports be affected by the move to coeducation?

The School is committed to delivering an exceptional curriculum both inside and outside the classroom. The School will continue to use its own facilities and provide access to the best facilities available in the local area for sports.

A new and exciting sports curriculum is in development and will bring together teams, including mixed teams where possible, for a broad range of sports.

A STRONG LONG TERM FUTURE

16. What are the aims for the future of the School?

Mount House School will become the leading small coeducational school in North London and Hertfordshire, providing an excellent, caring and well-rounded educational experience.

The School will support pupils to achieve excellent public examination results and prepare pupils for life after school, equipping them with the skills for success in whatever walk of life they choose to follow.

As can be seen from the aims set out in the attached document 'About Mount House School', the aim is to build on St Martha's long and much-valued history and to retain the ethos and atmosphere loved by past, current and future pupils and their parents.

17. Are further changes planned?

In addition to further modernising the curriculum so that it is more inspirational and challenging, and enhancing the School's sports provision, a number of positive changes are planned over the summer to benefit the pupils and staff, including:

- An IT infrastructure upgrade
- Improvements to the library and classrooms
- Investment in the music and drama facilities
- Updates to the dining room and catering provision
- Enhance the study carrels introduced into the Sixth Form study areas
- A new lunchtime cafe for parents and Sixth Formers

See the attached document 'About Mount House' for further details about the future investment plans.

18. Will the uniform change?

Uniform will be developed for boys, and any changes to the girls' uniform, out of a need to align the two, will be introduced for 2018. Any immediate changes required to uniform will be funded by the School.

19. What will Mount House's position be in the local market?

A small, caring and high achieving School where every pupil will be known, cherished and challenged and where each pupil is treated as an individual and inspired to aim high and exceed expectations.

Further information can be found in the attached document 'About Mount House School' as well as the new School's brand.

20. How many pupils will there be in the School and will class sizes change?

As the School moves to coeducation, we envisage that the School will grow to around 350 pupils by 2022. It will remain small enough to be personal, but large enough to provide life-changing opportunities to its pupils.

Class sizes will remain at an average size of 20 pupils and Sixth Form class sizes will be much smaller than that.

21. How can parents provide input?

Before any of the planned changes are introduced, parents will be invited to provide input. In addition, the Head and Executive Principal have an open door policy for any parents who have concerns they wish to discuss.

Although parents will not be invited to the Board, there will be structures to involve the parents and ensure excellent communications throughout the School.

22. How will staff be affected by the move?

All staff have been reassured that their jobs and positions are secure.

Staff will benefit from the investment in the School as well as the increased opportunities the new ownership and move to coeducation will bring, from curriculum changes through to extended training and development.

23. Will new facilities be developed?

Yes, as part of the substantial initial and on-going investment the School will receive significant funding for facilities. It will be equipped to become fully coeducational and, where required, existing facilities will be adapted to accommodate the boys.

24. Will this move have an impact on fees?

The Directors remain committed to offering value for money in providing high quality education. The fees will remain highly competitive with any school matching the same educational standards. Parents will continue to see outstanding value with the academic success of their children and also in the opportunities offered outside the classroom.

As is normal in all independent schools, fees will be reviewed annually and set at the appropriate level to ensure continued investment in the School and its staff.

25. Will bursaries or scholarships be available?

All existing arrangements will remain. Pupils currently in receipt of scholarships or bursaries will continue to receive them under the same conditions as have been applied to date.

Arrangements for new applicants will be reviewed annually.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

As a pupil, who can I talk to about the changes or any concerns I may have?

Matthew Burke, Head, and Toby Mullins, Executive Principal, will be happy to answer further questions you may have regarding the changes. Please contact them via your pastoral lead or tutor to make an appointment.

As a current parent, how can I find out more and to whom can I talk about the changes?

Matthew Burke, Head, and Toby Mullins, Executive Principal, will be happy to answer further questions you may have regarding the changes. The Chairman, Colin Diggory, and other Directors are also available at any time with reasonable notice. To make an appointment with any of the above, please contact them via the Headmaster's PA, Mrs Marianne Naismith, on headspa@saint-marthas.org.uk.

There will also be an opportunity to meet the new Board of Directors and to hear more about Mount House School on Monday 19th June at 7.30pm in the School Hall.

As a prospective parent who can I talk to and when can I visit?

Matthew Burke, Head, and Toby Mullins, Executive Principal, will be happy to answer further questions you may have regarding the changes or to meet with you to discuss the future plans for the School. Please contact them via the Headmaster's PA, Mrs Marianne Naismith, on headspa@saint-marthas.org.uk to make an appointment.

For families joining in September 2017 there will be an opportunity to meet the new Board of Directors at the School on Tuesday 20th June at 7:30 pm. To confirm attendance please email the Headmaster's PA, Mrs Marianne Naismith, on headspa@saint-marthas.org.uk.

There will be a School Open Day on Saturday 30th September at 10am and all prospective families are invited to attend to see the School and meet the Mount House School team.