

PENNTHORPE + Hurst

NURSERY PRE-PREP PREP



A new partnership



Welcome from the Chairs of Governors

As the Chairs of Governors of Hurstpierpoint College and Pennthorpe School, we are delighted to be joining together in a new and exciting partnership. As our sector faces new challenges, we believe that we will be stronger together. Our partnership will enable Pennthorpe to grow and develop, whilst providing a route for greater numbers of Pennthorpe pupils to continue their educational journey at Hurst.

Pennthorpe and Hurst share the same values and vision that chime strongly with each other. We both want the children in our schools to be the very best they can be, with exceptional teaching and learning combined with huge opportunities outside the classroom. As such, there will be no major change to the identity and ethos of Pennthorpe.

We know how deeply invested pupils, parents, staff, governors and alumni are in both schools, and we are mindful that there will be many questions. This brief booklet aims to cover the key areas of interest for all stakeholders, but if you have any specific questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with Jon Marler (the newly appointed Head of School at Pennthorpe) or Dominic Mott (the Head of College at Hurst) who will be happy to talk you through these exciting changes.

We are delighted to be working together and look forward to the months and years ahead.



Richard Sharkey
Chair of Governors,
Pennthorpe School



Karen Mack
Chair of Governors,
Hurstpierpoint College

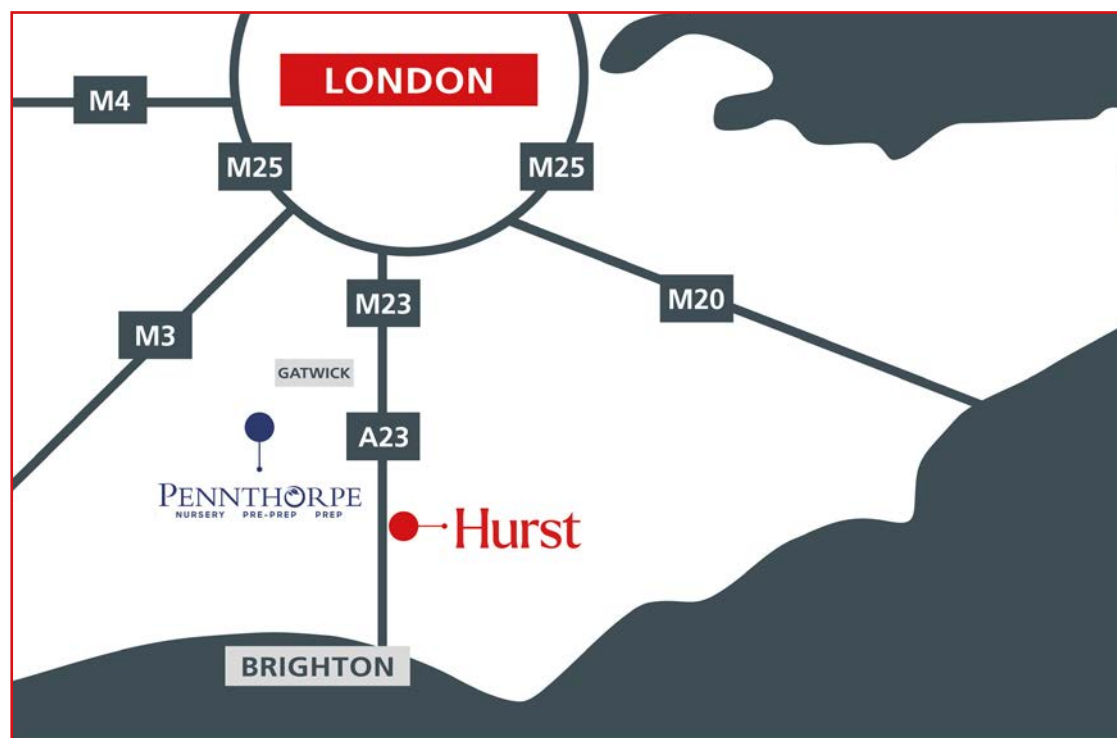


About Hurstpierpoint College and Pennthorpe School

Hurst was founded in 1849 by Nathaniel Woodard, and since 1995 has been a fully co-educational school. In recent years the school has grown into a thriving co-ed boarding and day school educating over 1300 children from the ages of 4 to 18. The majority of these pupils are in the Senior School, but Hurst also has almost 200 pupils in the Junior Prep School (JPS, comprising Reception through to Year 6) and nearly 200 more in the Senior Prep School (SPS, which consists of Year 7 and Year 8). The Senior School caters for day, weekly and flexi boarders, and provides a dynamic and innovative curriculum that stretches pupils both in and out of the classroom.

Pennthorpe School was founded in 1930 in Rudgwick, West Sussex, serving as a thriving boys' boarding and day prep school feeding pupils to schools across the country. Pennthorpe introduced girls in 1977 and phased out its boarding provision to become a day school in 1995. It has a rich tradition of academic excellence coupled with a passion for outdoor education, sport, music and drama. Pennthorpe pupils go on to study at many of the top senior schools in the south east of England, with Hurst increasingly becoming the destination of choice.

Both schools are registered charities, whose articles provide for the provision of education for public benefit. Additionally, Hurstpierpoint College is an incorporated member of the Woodard Corporation, which educates over 30,000 children across the UK.





Hurst

PENNTHORPE – PART OF THE HURST FAMILY OF SCHOOLS

The Nature of the Partnership

The wording of the legal documentation which outlines the nature of the partnership between the two schools confirms that Hurstpierpoint College and Pennthorpe School have entered into “a formal collaboration to secure the long-term viability and flourishing of Pennthorpe School, ensuring strong academic provision, robust safeguarding, financial sustainability and high-quality leadership”.

The intention is to create a partnership leading to acquisition, rather than a merger. Pennthorpe (technically Pennthorpe School Trust Limited) will continue as a separate charitable entity for the duration of the collaboration.

Hurst will provide oversight, strategic leadership and operational guidance to Pennthorpe. In particular, a restructured Pennthorpe senior team will report directly to the Head of College at Hurst.

For the purposes of marketing and branding, Pennthorpe will adopt the designation “Pennthorpe – Part of the Hurst Family of Schools”.

Pennthorpe and Hurst’s governing bodies and their legal advisors have scrutinised the legal framework which aligns the two schools. They have satisfied themselves that there are suitable protections and safeguards to ensure the long term success of both parties as standalone entities, as well as establishing a clear framework for the future partnership. The leadership teams are excited about the project ahead and have already done a considerable amount of work behind the scenes to prepare for a smooth and successful transition and integration.





Opportunities and Benefits

The leadership teams of both schools will support each other to develop an exciting and sustainable vision and strategy for the years ahead. The Head of College at Hurst will work with the senior executive and governors at Pennthorpe to develop a strategic plan for the future, leveraging the experience and expertise that Hurst has built in recent years with the successful growth of the Hurst Education Trust (HET). Central to this plan will be pupil recruitment and retention to ensure that Pennthorpe flourishes for decades to come.

Staff at Hurst and Pennthorpe will benefit in working together to continue to deliver an exceptional educational experience, both in and out of the classroom. Pennthorpe staff will be supported by regular INSET and CPD training updates, in addition to support for their own professional development to improve best practice. This includes the opportunity for close collaboration on teaching and learning with specialist teachers within the HET which has extensive experience and expertise in the primary age sphere. The staff at Pennthorpe will have opportunities to engage in Hurst's award-winning teacher training (Teach Hurst) and professional development (Lead Hurst) programmes.

Both the pupils and the staff will also benefit from the co-curricular opportunities at Hurst and the wide range of trips and experiences that the school offers, with considerable potential for combined activities, events, festivals and tournaments that leverage the facilities at both schools to the mutual benefit of the children at Pennthorpe and at Hurst.

The partnership with Hurst will also give current and prospective parents confidence that the future of Pennthorpe is secure. As Pennthorpe pupil numbers grow over the coming years, the school will be able to invest in the campus and staff, whilst looking further ahead into the future with the school's strategic planning.

From a Hurst perspective, the relationship should also help to secure the pipeline of pupils joining the College. Pennthorpe is a key feeder prep school, and under the new arrangement we would expect a significant rise in the number of children applying for a place at Hurst. In an increasingly competitive and uncertain marketplace, this confidence should suit all parties.

Governance and Finance

How will Pennthorpe be governed?

Pennthorpe will continue to operate as its own school, with its own Governing Body and charitable status within Pennthorpe School Trust Limited. There is no significant change to Pennthorpe's day-to-day running or its identity as a separate school.

As the partnership develops, there will be closer collaboration between Pennthorpe and Hurst, including some shared experience at governor level. This will strengthen oversight and support good practice, while ensuring that Pennthorpe retains its own character, values and governance.

For families, this means continuity, stability and the benefit of additional support behind the scenes, without any significant change to the way the school is governed on a day-to-day basis.

What are the financial implications for Hurst?

This is a partnership, not a merger. Pennthorpe and Hurst will remain separate schools, with separate finances. Pennthorpe will operate as a subsidiary of Hurstpierpoint College.

As part of the partnership, arrangements are being put in place to provide reassurance to Pennthorpe's lenders and stakeholders, helping the school to operate with confidence and stability. Pennthorpe will continue to manage its own finances and meet its own financial commitments.



There is no change to Hurst's finances, and no impact on Hurst families' fees or on the way Hurst operates. The partnership is designed to strengthen Pennthorpe while ensuring that both schools remain financially secure and independent.

Will there be any impact on fees at either school?

As mentioned above, there will be no impact on Hurst parents' fees as Pennthorpe will remain a separate school from a financial perspective. Equally, the fee structure at Pennthorpe will remain distinct from the fee structure at the Hurst Junior Prep School and Senior Prep School. In due course as part of prudential financial management we would expect Pennthorpe's policy on fee discounts to align with Hurst's approach. This includes the means-testing of any bursaries and a review of the staff fee remission. The new partnership will be good news for parents with children at both schools who will now be eligible for a sibling discount under the terms of the existing Hurst policy. This will be automatically calculated and your bills will be adjusted over the course of the Lent/Spring Term 2026.



Structural reform

Will there be any significant changes to Pennthorpe's current structure?

Not in the short term. In the medium term, Hurst and Pennthorpe will consult with parents and staff about any possible changes as we seek to establish the optimum size and shape of the school so that each and every year group is viable. We will also undertake regular pupil and parent surveys to monitor progress.

Will the leadership structure of the school change?

A restructured leadership team will see Jon Marler take over as the new Head of School at Pennthorpe. Jon is already well known to Pennthorpe pupils, parents and staff and knows the school incredibly well. Jon will report directly into the Head of College at Hurst, and he will also sit on the College's own leadership team in order to increase collaboration and engagement between the two schools. Members of Hurst's leadership team will provide a visible and reassuring presence at Pennthorpe, supporting the school's leadership team and pupils, and being on hand for parents when needed.

Pennthorpe's Bursar, Paul Flowerday, will continue in his role and report into Darren Carpenter who is the CFO at Hurst. Paul will provide financial oversight and brings a wealth of knowledge of how Pennthorpe operates commercially; he will contribute to the long term strategic planning of the school alongside the Hurst leadership team.

Will Pennthorpe retain its own motto, values and identity?

Yes. Pennthorpe will retain its own uniform, motto, values and identity. Although in marketing materials and external communications Hurst will be identified as its partner school, Pennthorpe pupils will continue to be proud of their individual identity whilst being with supported by Hurst in every way.

Will there be curriculum changes?

As part of the due diligence process, senior leaders and governors from Hurst visited Pennthorpe to review the quality of teaching and learning and came away hugely impressed by the standard of educational provision. There are therefore no plans to make sweeping changes to the curriculum.



Senior School options

The close relationship between the two schools will inevitably mean that Hurst becomes even more popular as a Senior School destination. However, that does not mean that Hurst is right for every pupil and Pennthorpe will continue to advise families on the best destination for their child. In order to facilitate the commute between Pennthorpe and Hurst, we will look to increase the regular bus service from Rudgwick to allow pupils and parents maximum flexibility and efficiency.

Will Pennthorpe pupils be guaranteed a place in the Senior School at Hurst?

There will be no hard-and-fast guarantee of a place at Hurst for pupils leaving Pennthorpe, but the close relationship between the two schools should give parents confidence that their child will receive a place at Hurst as long as they will thrive in the Senior School at Hurst. This arrangement will mirror the existing approach taken with regard to siblings.

Will Pennthorpe pupils be pressured into applying to Hurst for Senior School?

No. Although we would positively encourage pupils at the end of their Pennthorpe journey to apply to Hurst, the Head of School at Pennthorpe will be free to guide parents according to the needs of each child. Parents will of course maintain full agency over where they send their child to senior school, and no Pennthorpe pupil will be at a disadvantage should they choose to apply to a school other than Hurst.



How can I find out more?

There will be several opportunities for staff and parents to ask questions and discuss the implications of the partnership with key senior staff. These events will be designed to share information and enable everyone to understand the future plans for both schools. The Chairs of Governors and senior staff will be unpacking the partnership with staff at both schools in the first week of term. We invite any interested parents to attend one of the two meetings scheduled below:

Meeting	Date	Audience	Location
Pennthorpe parent meeting	Wednesday 7 January 7.00pm	Pennthorpe parents and families	Sports Hall at Pennthorpe
Hurst parent drop-in	Friday 9 January 5.00pm	Hurst parents and families	Conference Room at Hurst

If you have any questions before the start of the Spring Term, please email hurstpennthorpe@hppc.co.uk



In addition, senior leaders from Hurst will visit Pennthorpe on a regular basis to provide support to staff and be available to parents. The key personnel to be aware of are listed below and we encourage you to reach out to them if you have any questions.



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