HARROW
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL
DUBAI



# A CUSTOMS GUIDE FOR FOUNDING PARENTS AND PUPILS

HARROW INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL DUBAI



# A Customs Guide for Founding Parents and Pupils

## A Welcome from the Head Master

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to Harrow International School Dubai.

You are joining a new school, but one that stands within a long and distinguished tradition. For many generations, Harrow has been known for scholarship, character, leadership, service and fellowship. At Harrow Dubai, we will draw upon that inheritance as we establish a school community of our own.

To be a founding pupil is a particular privilege. You will be among the first pupils to wear the Harrow Dubai uniform, the first to gather in Speech Room Assembly, the first to receive Send Ups, the first to take part in House events, the first to sing together, and the first to help shape the customs of the school.

This matters. The standards we set at the beginning will be remembered. The way we greet one another, the way we learn, the way we treat others, the way we care for our campus and the way we represent the school will all help to establish what Harrow Dubai becomes.

You do not need to know everything on your first day. There will be many people to help you: your Beaks, your Housemaster, your House staff, the Custos, the school nurse, the school counsellor, the senior staff and many other adults in school. You should ask when you are unsure, try hard when something is difficult, and remember that kindness, courtesy and honesty matter every day.

I hope you will take pride in being a founding pupil of Harrow Dubai. I hope you will make friends, discover new interests, work with care, enjoy your school life and contribute well to the community around you.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Simon O'Connor
Head Master

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## Introduction

This handbook is intended to help pupils and parents understand some of the language, routines and customs that will shape daily life at Harrow Dubai.

It is not a full set of school rules or policies. Those are set out elsewhere. This handbook is an introduction to the culture of the school: how pupils will be welcomed, how they will learn, how they will be expected to conduct themselves, and how the shared customs of Harrow Dubai will begin to take root.

Some of what follows will become familiar very quickly. Other customs will develop as the school grows. In the opening year, our aim is to establish a school that is calm, purposeful, courteous and proud of its Harrow identity.

Parents have an important part to play in this. The customs of the school will be taught carefully to pupils, but they will be strengthened when home and school speak with consistency.

## 1. Joining Harrow Dubai

Starting at a new school is an important moment. It is natural to feel excited, curious and perhaps a little nervous. At Harrow Dubai, pupils will be helped to settle in carefully.

During the first days, pupils will spend time with their class teachers and Beaks, learn the layout of the school, practise the Harrow Greeting, attend their first assemblies, understand lunch and break routines, and begin to learn about their Houses.

They will also begin to learn:

- where their classroom is;
- who their Beaks are;
- which House they belong to;
- who their Housemaster is;
- where to go for break and lunch;
- how Speech Room Assembly works;
- how to wear School Dress correctly;
- how to greet adults and visitors;
- what to do if they are unsure;
- who they can speak to if they need help.

Pupils will not be expected to remember everything at once. The first days are for learning the school, meeting people and beginning to understand the routines and customs of Harrow Dubai.

Older pupils have an important responsibility. They should set a good example for younger pupils, help them feel welcome, and show through their conduct what it means to be a founding pupil.

The aim is that every pupil feels known, safe and ready to take part in the life of the school.



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## 2. Being a Founding Pupil

To be a founding pupil of Harrow Dubai is both a privilege and a responsibility.

Founding pupils help to set the tone for the school. They are the first to learn its customs and the first to show how those customs should be lived.

A founding pupil should:

- take pride in the school;
- try hard in lessons and activities;
- speak courteously;
- welcome others;
- look after the campus;
- show kindness to younger pupils;
- represent the school well;
- tell the truth;
- learn from mistakes;
- contribute to the life of the school.

These are not small things. They are the habits from which good schools are built.

Many pupils will join Harrow Dubai in future years. They will look to the founding pupils to understand what kind of school this is. That is why the first year matters so much.

## 3. The Harrow Values

Harrow Dubai is guided by the Harrow Values:

- Courage
- Honour
- Humility
- Fellowship

These Values should be seen in ordinary school life.

Courage means trying hard, attempting what is difficult and continuing when something is not easy.
Honour means telling the truth, keeping your word, taking responsibility and doing what is right.

Humility means listening carefully, accepting help, learning from mistakes and understanding that everyone still has more to learn.

Fellowship means being kind, welcoming others, working well together and helping people feel that they belong.
Pupils will hear these Values spoken about often. They are not only words for assemblies or displays. They should guide how pupils learn, how they play, how they speak and how they treat other people.

Parents are asked to support this language at home. When school and home use the same language of values, pupils are helped to understand that these expectations are part of who they are becoming, not simply what they do at school.



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## 4. Harrow Words You Will Hear

Harrow has its own language. Some words may be new at first, but pupils will soon become familiar with them. Some of these words come directly from Harrow in the UK. They connect Harrow Dubai to the wider Harrow family, but they will be introduced gradually and naturally. Pupils are not expected to know them all before they arrive.

- Beaks

The traditional Harrow word for teachers.

- Bill / Call Over

A formal roll call. At Harrow Dubai, Bill may be used at formal House or whole-school occasions, including Speech Day.

- Bill Book

A small book that provides essential information about the School and the term's calendar. At Harrow Dubai, the Bill Book will help pupils, parents and staff understand key dates, routines, customs and expectations.

- Copy

A formal academic distinction. At Harrow Dubai, Copies will be adapted carefully and age-appropriately, recognising sustained effort, academic excellence and genuine contribution.

- Customs

The shared habits, routines and expectations of Harrow Dubai.

- Custos

A Harrow word used at Harrow Dubai. The Custos helps pupils understand the customs and routines of the school.

- Ducker

The Harrow word for the swimming pool.

- Eccer

The Harrow word for games, sport or physical activity.

- Forty Years On

The principal School Song of Harrow. At Harrow Dubai, pupils will begin to learn Forty Years On as part of their connection to Harrow and the wider Harrow family.

- Head Master's Send Up

A high distinction for work or contribution brought personally to the Head Master.

- House

The smaller community within the school to which every pupil belongs.

- House Songs

Songs sung within or by Houses. At Harrow Dubai, House Songs will help build House identity and shared pride.

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- Long Ducker

A Harrow charitable tradition, originally associated with a sponsored run. At Harrow Dubai, Long Ducker will be adapted as an age-appropriate community event linked to participation, service, charitable giving and fellowship.

- Prep

Work completed beyond the classroom, when this is appropriate for a pupil's age.

- Prize Giving

The formal end-of-year recognition of pupil achievement and contribution. Selected prizes will be awarded.

- School Dress

The formal school uniform.

- School Songs

A distinctive part of Harrow life. School Songs help create a shared sense of memory, identity and fellowship.

- Send Up

A piece of very good work, or a formal recognition of excellent effort, progress, curiosity or achievement.

- Skew

A referral from a Beak to the Housemaster to inform him of poor work, behaviour or another concern. It remains the responsibility of the Beak who gives the Skew to set and manage any required sanction or academic follow-up.

- Speech Day

A major formal occasion in the Harrow year. At Harrow Dubai, Speech Day will include Bill, with pupils gathered formally by House, followed by speeches and a celebration of the life and direction of the school. It may also include sporting events and tea.

- Speech Room Assembly

The formal gathering of the school, led by the Head Master or senior staff.

- Trials

Internal School examinations. At Harrow Dubai, Trials will develop as pupils move into the older year groups and as the school's assessment structures grow.

These words are part of Harrow life. Pupils do not need to know them all before they arrive, but they should listen for them and begin to use them with confidence.



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## 5. The Harrow Greeting

At Harrow Dubai, pupils greet others with courtesy.

The Harrow Greeting is simple, but important. When pupils meet an adult, a visitor or another member of the school community, they should acknowledge them clearly and respectfully.

If pupils know the person's name, they should use it.

For example:

"Good morning, Mr O'Connor."
"Good morning, Mrs Khan."
If they do not know the person's name, they may say:
"Good morning, Sir."
or
"Good morning."
They may also say:
"Welcome to Harrow Dubai."

The Harrow Greeting is not a performance. It is a simple act of acknowledgement and respect. It helps pupils learn that courtesy should be visible in ordinary moments.

The Harrow Greeting is not only for senior staff or visitors. Pupils should show courtesy to everyone who helps the school to run well: Beaks, nurses, office staff, cleaners, security staff, catering staff, drivers, maintenance staff and visitors.

No member of the community should feel invisible.

## 6.School Dress and Appearance

Uniform is an important part of belonging to Harrow Dubai. It gives pupils a shared identity and reminds them that they represent the school.

At Harrow Dubai, formal uniform may be called School Dress.

Pupils should wear School Dress correctly and with pride. Clothes should be clean and tidy. Shoes should be clean. Hair should be neat. Sports kit should be worn only when required for PE, sport or another activity.

The purpose of School Dress is not display. It is a sign of neatness, dignity and respect for the school.

Pupils should also look after their belongings. Bags, water bottles, hats, books and items of uniform should be named clearly. If a pupil loses something, they should tell an adult. If a pupil finds something that belongs to someone else, they should hand it in.

Parents are asked to support the school by ensuring that pupils arrive each day correctly dressed and properly equipped. A founding pupil should take care of what is their own and respect what belongs to others.





## 7. Lessons, Books and Learning

Learning is the central purpose of school life.

At Harrow Dubai, pupils are expected to listen carefully, think deeply, ask thoughtful questions and complete work with care. They should try their best, even when something is difficult. They should take pride in the presentation of their work and be ready to improve it.

Pupils should ask when they are unsure. Asking a good question is not a weakness; it is part of learning well.
Exercise books will be central to learning at Harrow Dubai. The principal output of pupils' work will be completed in exercise books, unless a Beak has given a specific instruction otherwise. Pupils should take pride in their books. Written work should be set out carefully, completed neatly and improved where necessary.

The development of clear handwriting and a fluent cursive script matters. Handwriting helps pupils think, organise ideas, develop accuracy and communicate with clarity.

Pupils should also work honestly. They must not copy another person's work or pretend that someone else's work is their own. Honour matters in learning.

Reading will be important at Harrow Dubai. Pupils should read regularly, listen to stories, talk about books and be willing to discover new ideas.

As pupils grow older, they may be given Prep. Prep is work completed beyond the classroom. It helps pupils develop independence, organisation and good habits of learning. Prep should be completed carefully and honestly.

For younger pupils, home learning will remain age-appropriate and will often include reading, conversation, practice or simple tasks.

## 8. Speech Room Assembly

Speech Room Assembly is one of the formal gatherings of the school.

It is a time when pupils and staff come together to listen, reflect, sing, celebrate achievement and hear from the Head Master or senior staff. It helps remind pupils that they are part of one school community.

Speech Room Assembly may include:

- an address from the Head Master or another senior member of staff;
- music or singing;
- recognition of Send Ups;
- celebration of achievement;
- reflection on the Harrow Values;
- important school announcements.

Pupils should enter and leave calmly. They should sit properly, listen carefully and take part in the right spirit.
Speech Room Assembly is not simply a meeting. It is one of the ways in which the life and character of the school are strengthened.

Parents should understand that Speech Room Assembly will be one of the regular ways in which the school's values, standards and sense of community are developed.



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## 9. Standing as a Mark of Courtesy

At Harrow Dubai, pupils may be asked to stand when the Head Master, a member of the Senior Leadership Team, or a visitor enters a formal learning space or assembly setting.

This should be done calmly and naturally.

Standing is a mark of courtesy. It shows respect, attentiveness and good order. This custom is not about rank or distance between adults and pupils. It is a simple way of teaching attentiveness, courtesy and respect for formal moments in school life.

Beaks will help pupils learn when this custom applies. When asked to sit, pupils should sit quietly and return their attention to the lesson, assembly or activity.

## 10. Bill and Formal Gatherings

Bill, also known as Call Over, is a formal roll call.

At Harrow Dubai, Bill may be used at formal House or whole-school occasions, including Speech Day. Pupils will learn how to gather properly, listen carefully and answer clearly when required.

Bill is not simply about checking attendance. It is a visible expression of belonging, order and community. When pupils gather by House for Bill, they are reminded that they belong both to their House and to the wider school.

Where Bill is used, it should be conducted with calm, order and dignity.

## 11. Send Ups, Copies and Skews

A Send Up is a special recognition for work, effort, progress or curiosity.

A Beak may give a Send Up when a pupil has done something that deserves particular notice. This might be a strong piece of writing, careful mathematical thinking, an excellent question, a thoughtful idea, real improvement, or sustained effort.

A Send Up is not intended to replace ordinary praise or classroom encouragement. It is a more formal recognition of work, effort or thinking that deserves particular notice.

A Head Master's Send Up is a higher distinction. It is awarded when a pupil's work or contribution should be brought personally to the Head Master.

If a pupil receives a Head Master's Send Up, they may be invited to bring their work to the Head Master, discuss it and have the achievement recorded.

A Copy is a further academic distinction. At Harrow Dubai, Copies will be adapted carefully and age-appropriately, recognising sustained effort, academic excellence and genuine contribution.

A Skew is a referral from a Beak to the Housemaster to inform him of poor work, behaviour or another concern. The Housemaster may provide pastoral oversight, notice patterns or support the pupil where appropriate. It remains the responsibility of the Beak who gives the Skew to set and manage any required sanction, correction or academic follow-up.



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Send Ups and Copies should encourage pupils to value effort, thoughtfulness and genuine achievement. They are not only for pupils who find learning easy.

Skews should be used carefully, fairly and constructively. The aim is not humiliation, but correction, reflection and improvement.

## 12. Houses

Every pupil at Harrow Dubai belongs to a House.

A House is a smaller community within the school. It gives pupils opportunities to take part in activities, support others, contribute to school life and feel connected to pupils beyond their own class.

In the opening year, House life will be introduced carefully and simply. As the school grows, further House traditions and responsibilities may be added. In the first year, the emphasis will be on belonging, participation, encouragement and fellowship.

Pupils may take part in House gatherings, friendly competitions, reading, music, art, sport and service activities. Pupils should support their own House with pride and respect the other Houses. Winning is enjoyable, but how pupils take part matters more. A Harrow Dubai pupil should compete fairly, encourage others and accept results with good grace.

House life should help pupils understand Fellowship.

## 13. School Songs, Forty Years On and House Songs

Singing is a distinctive part of Harrow life. School Songs help create memory, identity and fellowship. They connect pupils across Houses, year groups and generations.

At Harrow Dubai, School Songs will be introduced carefully and age-appropriately through assemblies, House gatherings and special occasions. Pupils will begin to learn songs that connect them to the wider Harrow family and help establish the musical life of the school.

Forty Years On is the principal School Song of Harrow and one of the best-known expressions of Harrow's musical tradition. At Harrow Dubai, pupils will begin to learn Forty Years On as part of their connection to Harrow and the wider Harrow family.

House Songs will help build House identity and shared pride. In the opening year, this may begin simply, with pupils learning selected songs together before further House singing traditions develop.

School Songs are not only performances. They are part of belonging to the school. Pupils should learn them carefully and sing them with pride.



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## 14. Eccer, Ducker and Long Ducker

Physical activity, sport and games are an important part of school life.

At Harrow, Eccer is the word for games, sport or physical activity. At Harrow Dubai, pupils may hear this term used in relation to PE, games, sport and physical challenge.

Ducker is the Harrow word for the swimming pool.

Long Ducker is a Harrow charitable tradition, originally associated with a sponsored run. At Harrow Dubai, Long Ducker will be adapted as an age-appropriate community event linked to participation, service, charitable giving and fellowship.

Eccer helps pupils develop courage, teamwork, discipline, resilience, fairness and respect. Pupils should take part with energy and good spirit, support others, follow instructions and represent their House and school well.

## 15. Speech Day and Prize Giving

Ceremonial occasions are an important part of school life. They help a school reflect on its purpose, celebrate achievement and gather the community together.

Speech Day is a major formal occasion in the Harrow year and one of the principal ceremonial gatherings of the school community. At Harrow Dubai, Speech Day will include Bill, with pupils gathered formally by House, followed by speeches and a celebration of the life and direction of the school. In keeping with Harrow tradition, the occasion may also include sporting events and tea. Speech Day should have a sense of formality, pride and shared purpose.

Prize Giving is the formal end-of-year recognition of pupil achievement and contribution. At Harrow Dubai, Prize Giving will celebrate pupils who have distinguished themselves through academic work, effort, improvement, character, creativity, sport, service and commitment to the Harrow Values. Selected prizes will be awarded. Prize Giving should be deliberately selective and should recognise excellence and contribution in its fullest sense.

These occasions should remind pupils that achievement is broad. It includes scholarship, character, service, creativity, courage, contribution and fellowship.

## 16. Break, Lunch and Moving Around School

The way pupils move around school helps create the atmosphere of the school.

Pupils should walk calmly inside buildings, follow agreed routes, line up sensibly, enter rooms in good order and show consideration for younger pupils and adults.

At break, pupils should play safely and kindly. They should include others where possible and speak to an adult if something is wrong.



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## 16. Break, Lunch and Moving Around School

The dining hall is an important part of school life. At lunch, pupils should queue calmly, speak politely to catering staff, say please and thank you, sit sensibly, use cutlery properly, avoid waste and leave their table tidy.

Staff on duty will sit with pupils during meals. Their role is not only to supervise, but to encourage good conversation, help pupils develop proper dining habits, set the standard for conduct and ensure that mealtimes are calm, sociable and purposeful.

Mealtimes should be sociable and pleasant. They are also part of learning good manners and independence.

## 17. Looking After Our School

Harrow Dubai's campus has been created with great care. Pupils have a responsibility to look after it.

Pupils should keep classrooms tidy, respect displays, look after books and equipment, use outdoor spaces properly, put litter in bins and report damage or hazards to an adult.

A founding pupil should understand that the school is being entrusted to them. The way pupils care for it in the first year will help set the standard for the future.

Looking after the school is a way of showing respect for everyone who learns and works there.

Parents can support this by helping pupils understand that care for property, books, uniform and shared spaces is part of belonging to the school.

## 18. Devices and Digital Conduct

Technology is used at Harrow Dubai to support learning and reference. It gives pupils access to appropriate resources, research, digital texts, educational platforms and carefully chosen tools that can strengthen understanding.

Devices do not replace the central importance of written work. The principal output of pupils' work will be completed in exercise books, unless a Beak has given a specific instruction otherwise. This reflects the importance Harrow Dubai places on careful presentation, clear handwriting and the development of a fluent cursive script.

Pupils should take pride in their exercise books. Written work should be set out carefully, completed neatly and improved where necessary.

Pupils must follow the school's rules for devices and digital conduct at all times.

Any learning device used on the school site must be registered on the school's Mobile Device Management system. Devices must be used only as instructed by Beaks.

Mobile phones are not permitted at school for pupils.





Smart personal devices are not permitted. This includes smart watches and other wearable devices with messaging, calling, camera, recording or internet capability.

Pupils must not access the internet through mobile data, VPNs or unapproved networks. Pupils must not record, photograph or film others without permission. Pupils must not send unkind, inappropriate or dishonest messages. Pupils must not attempt to bypass school systems.

Digital conduct is part of ordinary conduct. The same Values apply online as they do in person.

More detailed guidance on devices and digital learning will be provided separately.

## 19. Who Will Help Pupils

There are many adults at Harrow Dubai who can help pupils.

Pupils may speak to:

- their class teacher or form tutor;
- a Beak they trust;
- a House member of staff;
- their Housemaster;
- the Custos;
- the school nurse;
- the school counsellor;
- the Assistant Head Pastoral;
- a member of the safeguarding team;
- the Deputy Head;
- the Head Master;
- any trusted adult in school.

The Custos is one of the adults who will help pupils understand the customs and routines of Harrow Dubai. He is also someone pupils may speak to if they need guidance, reassurance or practical help during the school day.

If a pupil is worried, unhappy, unwell, unsure or feels unsafe, they should speak to an adult. Pupils should not keep a worry to themselves.

Adults in school will listen and help pupils find the right support. Safeguarding concerns will always be handled in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

## 20. Representing Harrow Dubai

Pupils represent Harrow Dubai whenever they wear the uniform, attend a school event, travel on a school bus, take part in a trip, welcome visitors, compete in a fixture or appear in public as a member of the school.

They should remember that their conduct reflects on themselves, their family, their House and their school.

Pupils should show respect for other schools, opponents, officials, visitors and members of the public. They should be gracious in victory and generous in defeat.



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A Harrow Dubai pupil should be known for courtesy, effort, kindness and self-control.

Parents can help by reinforcing the importance of representing the school well beyond the school gates.

## 21. If Pupils Make a Mistake

All pupils make mistakes. What matters is that they learn from them.

If pupils make a poor choice, they may be asked to reflect, apologise, repair harm, repeat work, miss a privilege or accept another appropriate consequence.

This is not intended to embarrass them. It is intended to help them understand what went wrong, take responsibility and make a better choice next time.

A Harrow Dubai pupil should be willing to tell the truth, accept guidance and put things right.

## 22. Parents and the Customs of Harrow Dubai

Parents have an important part to play in helping the customs of Harrow Dubai take root.

The school asks parents to support the expectations set out in this handbook, particularly in relation to courtesy, attendance, punctuality, School Dress, home reading, prep where appropriate, device expectations, care of exercise books and respectful communication.

The customs of the school will be taught carefully to pupils, but they will be strengthened when home and school speak with consistency. We are grateful for the support of parents in helping pupils understand that these expectations are not matters of formality alone, but part of belonging to Harrow Dubai.

As a founding school, the partnership between home and school will be especially important. The standards established in the first year will help shape the school for many years to come.

## Final Word

Pupils are joining Harrow Dubai at the beginning of its story.

Much will be new: the campus, the classrooms, the routines, the friendships and the customs. Very soon, however, these things will become familiar. They will become part of the ordinary life of the school.

The first year will be remembered. It will be remembered because founding pupils helped to establish the standards, habits and spirit of Harrow Dubai.

Pupils should take pride in that responsibility. They should work hard, be kind, speak truthfully, welcome others and look after their school.

This is how we will begin.