



ROKEBY SCHOOL

Independent day school for boys aged 4-13



FUTURE SCHOOL GUIDANCE

Finding the right senior school for your son



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INTRODUCTION

Our intention at Rokeby School is to ensure that all of our boys receive a well-rounded education, covering their childhood from 4 to 13 years old. As they enter adolescence, they are finally ready to move to a senior school and benefit from the challenges they will face. We want the boys to love learning at Rokeby, and for that love of learning to continue wherever they go. We want them to graduate from us with a broad range of skills covering all areas, and also specific abilities which they have honed over their time here. We also want them to be well-rounded, motivated and confident individuals who know how to deport themselves, how to take on new opportunities and how to work well with others.

For us, all of this is encapsulated in the term 'preparatory schooling'. The actual preparation for the next phase of education should largely be in place as boys, and their parents, face the inevitable challenges of applications, pre-tests and interviews, as well as the final year of preparation for their school of choice.

However, choosing a school, though crucial, can be bewildering. Some parents already have a school in mind from an early stage, perhaps they were educated there, or have discovered a school's ethos which has resonance with their own values. However, most do not begin thinking about it until their son approaches 7 or 8 years old, and some may not consider it until much later.

As a preparatory school we are keen to act as an advisor to you and to offer guidance and support in the process. We maintain good relationships with a range of senior schools and ensure that we keep up to date with their Admissions processes and programme of visits. We also learn about your son as he progresses through Rokeby. We get to know him, build a profile of his performance over time and have assessment data and regular updates from teaching staff on his abilities, attainment levels and the challenges he may be facing.

Therefore, we are able to offer you guidance and work hard to ensure that we prepare boys for the admissions requirements at all levels. We are available to advise, to suggest suitable and attainable schools and also to guide you away from seeking schools whose educational environment would not suit your son, or whose entry requirements are not at the right level for him.

We are proud of our success in preparing boys for the 'best fit' school for them, and we want this to be as stress-free and smooth a process as possible for them and for you as parents. We hope that you find the experience as stimulating and rewarding, as we do.

A BRIEF GUIDE

At Rokeby School we do learn a lot about your son over the years, and want to guide you to the right schools. Here are some factors I have found that parents need to consider:

1. Your son will not be the same at 13 as he is now. He will have the same character, but his needs and expectations will change. He might even say eventually (even if he does not mean it) that he wants to spend time away from his loving parents and live in a boarding school for several weeks at a time before coming home to visit. At 13 he will be more able to travel on various modes of transport. He may actually enjoy the independence!
2. Your son is acutely aware of his skills and abilities. He knows his ability relative to others as well (even if we do not tell him). He should also know if a school is within his reach and what it might offer him: take him with you to visit but remember who is in charge.
3. The independent senior schools we feed to are all impressive and have success in educating children to high levels.
4. If your son feels a sense of 'fit' with a school and experiences the right balance of challenge and support, he will thrive. That is the best educational environment for him. If he has been squeezed in via tutoring and general 'pumping and cramming' he may deflate and lose motivation later on.
5. If he thrives he will be motivated and will succeed. He will also experience happiness and you will know it.
6. The traits you see in formation in your son now will not disappear. If your son loves certain sports, arts or music, if he is academically-minded or an all-rounder, that is what he will be when he is older. Where that will lead as he becomes an adult is anyone's guess, but the right 'fit' school for him is essential.
7. The only unhappy stories that we have heard are where a boy was forced, via coaching or just sheer pressure, into the wrong school for him. There are many success stories told about the coached boy gaining a coveted place at a senior school, some may be true, others are apocryphal. Most senior schools are geared up to 'filtering out' boys who have been prepared in this way and constantly request that we do not over-prepare candidates. If a boy does achieve entry by being coached such that he just secures a place, he will probably need to maintain that level of intensity for the next five years.
8. Almost all boys seem to be fine with single-sex schools as long as they have a good social life inside and outside school.
9. Many boys will cope perfectly well with co-education and most such senior schools are well-equipped to manage the mixing of the sexes.
10. Whatever else you do, see as many schools as you can. Most of us are far better at taking judgements for our own and our children's future from first-hand experience. The footwork is essential and repeat visits are often necessary. Also be aware that a lack-lustre tour guide (child or adult) is not necessarily the reflection of a bad school!
11. Please listen to us. Even if, on occasion, you don't like what you hear, we have your son's long-term interests at heart. We may not always be spot-on, but we are rarely way off-beam! In his time at Rokeby, your son will have been taught by a large number of teachers who will all contribute to the big picture.

12. Universities want impressive entry qualifications. They also want well-rounded individuals who are comfortable in their own skin and show something different. As do future employers who are increasingly interested in the 'soft skills' not just the hard-nosed acumen. We have all seen and rejected 'wannabes'. It is much harder to reject genuine 'class' and that comes from within. A well-educated, well-nourished, well-rounded person is always a winner and will take all setbacks as challenges, all uncertainties as opportunities and all experiences as a chance to advance. Please forgive me for teaching grandmothers to suck eggs, as applicable!

Rokeby has a long history of supporting parents in making the right choice of senior school for their son. We are a partnership. I know that we can work together for the best interest of your son.

With best wishes for the journey.

Jason Peck
Headmaster

CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A SCHOOL

Please refer to our comprehensive Senior Schools Guide (available on the school website) for further information on individual schools. The Guide is updated annually and all information is correct at the time of publishing.

When visiting a selection of schools, you may find the following guidelines helpful.

Firstly, do you want: day, boarding, co-educational, single-sex, a school which siblings could attend?

Guidelines: (including a 'gut feeling')

1. **Suitability** for your son – is it a natural move from Rokeby; does it feel right; will your son thrive there?
2. **Character and ethos** – are the children happy; do the staff interact well with pupils?
3. **Academic** reputation, breadth and balance (e.g. Maths, Sciences, Arts, Modern Languages, Music, Computing, D.T.), GCSE, 'A' level and/or IB results, universities entered, league tables?
4. **Sporting** record, opportunities, trips
5. **Arts** facilities and offer, including peripatetic activities
6. **Nature** of discipline
7. **Size** – does the school cater for individual needs? Consider the pastoral reputation and support of those with additional needs and the very able.
8. The **fabric** and facilities of the school, including school development and investment
9. **International** connections, exchanges etc.
10. **Parental** involvement.
11. **Extra-curricular** activities
12. **Value added** aspects, the school's reputation and profile in the outside world.
13. **Admissions** process – does the nature of the assessment suit your son? Consider the fees, bursaries and scholarships.
14. **Logistics** – including location, transport links and term dates

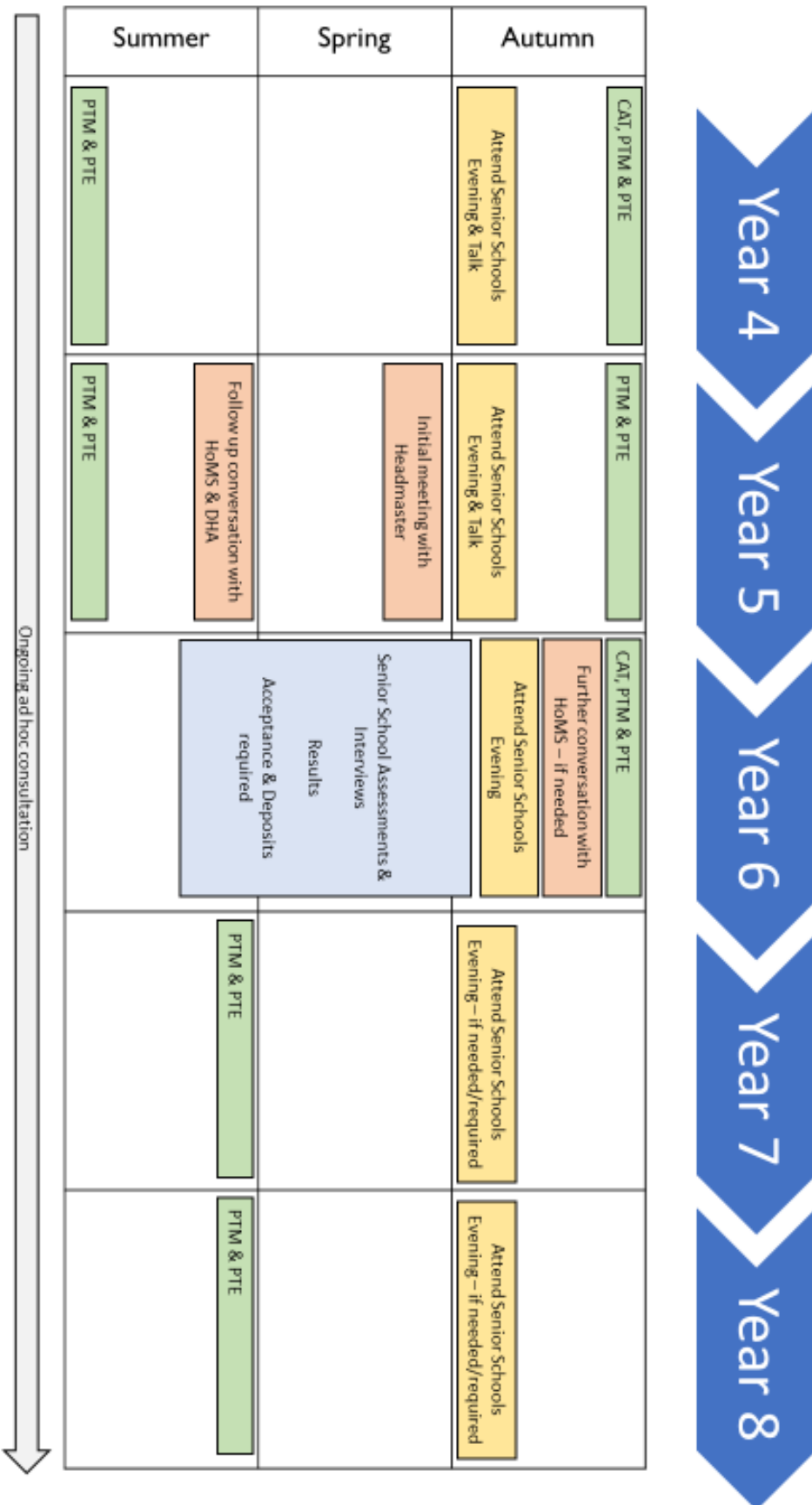
Advice from parents:

- Take the advice of the school – they really do know your son.
- Start early and let your thoughts evolve as your son develops.
- Strongly discourage extra tuition for entrance exams – if children need it they are going to the wrong school.
- Talk to other parents with older children who have been through the process.

COMMUNICATION AND PROTOCOL FOR PARENTS

Timing	For boys	For parents
Year 5 ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Reasoning lessons per week Atom Learning is introduced in Reasoning lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check individual school websites for information about Open Days Prepare a shortlist of schools – aspirational, achievable and prudent choices should feature
Year 5 Spring Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with member of staff, feedback sent to parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents will be invited to a meeting with Mr Peck to discuss senior school choices.
Year 5 Summer Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pre-test preparation pack is sent home in the final week of the summer term for revision during the summer. It includes a covering letter from the Heads of English and Maths and revision materials Standardised assessments are taken and internal school exams in all examined subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure you have registered with your chosen senior schools (keep informed of registration deadlines of your selected schools which all differ. If in doubt, check the individual school websites.) Attend the Parents Information Evening for further guidance on the preparation and examination process from Year 6 staff, Mr Taylor and Mrs Anderson. If you are unable to attend, an information pack will be sent to you and an alternative meeting can be arranged, if required.
Year 6 Autumn Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Booster Group focussing on study skills and exam preparation Common Pre-Test will be taken at Rokeby for some schools in November (e.g. St Paul's School, Westminster and Harrow) Weekly PSHE lessons to work on interview technique and study skills Interview by form teacher, senior member of staff and external member of staff October assessments in English, maths and reasoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete school survey with details of the schools you have registered for – if the school has any concerns they may contact you Parents Evening to discuss the November assessments Mr Peck and Mr Taylor are happy to meet parents if their plans have changed (see above)
Year 6 Spring Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional interview preparation for those boys called to academic interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-tests and interviews will begin for the majority of schools from January Email Mr Taylor regarding any offers you may have received Follow-up meetings to discuss results can be arranged with Mr Peck before the end of term
Thereafter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual Pupil Action Plans may be devised, where necessary Summer exam results may be fed back to Senior Schools if boys hold a waiting list place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process with some schools can be quite an extended one. For example, Epsom College can call boys to interview in the Autumn Term and St Paul's School interview until the Summer Term. Some schools do not start the entry process until Year 7, especially boarding schools. The process is constantly evolving: some boys are placed on waiting lists and their progress is reviewed after the Year 6 exams; some schools, such as Hampton, King's College School and St Paul's School, offer reassessments in Year 7 and 8

CONSULTATION AND GUIDANCE



PREPARATION, ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK



	Summer	Spring	Autumn			
	<p>Reports</p> <p>Parents Evening</p> <p>Written assessments in Maths, English & Science</p>	<p>Parents Evening</p> <p>Written assessments in all except Maths, English & Reasoning</p>	<p>Assessments in Maths & English</p> <p>Parents Evening</p>	<p>Mock ISEB CPT</p> <p>ISEB CPT</p> <p>Assessments in Maths, English & Reasoning</p>	<p>Parents Evening (Eng & Mat)</p> <p>Senior School Exams</p>	<p>Reports Examined</p> <p>Written assessments in all subjects</p> <p>Parents Evening</p> <p>PFGs Examined</p>
	<p>Reports</p> <p>Parents Evening (Eng & Mat)</p> <p>Written assessments in Maths, English & Reasoning</p>	<p>PFGs Examined</p> <p>Written assessments in all subjects</p> <p>Senior School Exams continue for some</p>	<p>Assessments in Maths, English & Reasoning</p> <p>PFGs Examined</p>	<p>PFGs Examined</p>	<p>Reports Examined</p> <p>Written assessments in all subjects</p> <p>Parents Evening</p> <p>PFGs Examined</p>	<p>Reports Examined</p> <p>Written assessments in all subjects</p> <p>Parents Evening</p> <p>PFGs Examined</p>
	<p>Reports</p>	<p>Reports</p>	<p>Assessments in Maths & English</p> <p>Parents Evening</p> <p>PFGs Examined</p>	<p>PFGs Examined</p>	<p>Reports Examined</p> <p>Written assessments in all subjects</p> <p>Parents Evening</p> <p>PFGs Examined</p>	<p>Reports Examined</p> <p>Written assessments in all subjects</p> <p>Parents Evening</p> <p>PFGs Examined</p>

YEAR 6 EXAMPLE TIMELINE



September	October	November	December	January	February
<div style="background-color: #FFD700; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Senior Schools Exhibition</div> <div style="background-color: #90EE90; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Final School Visits</div> <div style="background-color: #FF8C00; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Registration Deadlines</div> <div style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 2px;">Practice Interviews</div>	<div style="background-color: #90EE90; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Final School Visits</div> <div style="background-color: #FF8C00; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">Registration Deadlines</div> <div style="background-color: #6495ED; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">ISEB CPT Familiarisation</div> <div style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 2px;">Practice Interviews</div>	<div style="background-color: #6495ED; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 2px;">ISEB CPT Mock</div> <div style="background-color: #6495ED; padding: 2px;">ISEB CPT</div> <div style="background-color: #A9A9A9; padding: 2px; margin-top: 20px;">Senior School Assessments</div>	<div style="background-color: #A9A9A9; padding: 2px; margin-top: 20px;">Senior School Assessments</div>	<div style="background-color: #A9A9A9; padding: 2px; margin-top: 20px;">Senior School Assessments & Interviews</div>	<div style="background-color: #A9A9A9; padding: 2px; margin-top: 20px;">Main offer phase</div>

Ongoing ad hoc consultation

Please note that this is only an example. Some registration deadlines happen before September, some interviews take place before any exams and sometimes offer come out much later. Please always ensure you check senior school websites for exact dates and timings.

ENTRY PROCESSES

A range of entry procedures exist, varying from pre-selection tests in Year 6 or 7 to the traditional Common Entrance route in June of Year 8. For day schools, pre-tests tend to be held either during the latter stages of the autumn term or early in the spring term of Year 6. Some schools sit the ISEB Common Pre-Test, more information can be found here: <http://www.iseb.co.uk/Parents/What-are-the-Common-Pre-Tests>. The ISEB CPT is normally held during the third week of November and is administered here at Rokeby. Most schools also tend to interview boys and some will invite boys for a second round of assessments, also.

All routes involve close liaison between parents and senior staff in selecting and preparing for appropriate schools. A range of schools are usually visited with a first choice ultimately being made. We recommend you apply for a healthy range of schools, including realistic and potential reserve options, similar to the university-entry process. It is important that you choose schools which you would be happy for your son to attend. You will need to declare your final choice of school by the end of February in Year 8.

These will depend upon:

- the emerging talents of each boy as he moves through the Middle School
- performance data from exams and other standardised testing
- parental aspirations
- the Headmaster's and staff's advice

Following assessment at this stage, an offer of a place might be made, unconditional or conditional on continued good performance and a satisfactory reference from the headmaster. For a small few schools, offers are conditional on a certain standard being achieved at Common Entrance which would be deemed attainable and suitable for their ability based on their performance in the pre-test.

If an offer is not made at this stage, *do not worry!* Senior schools are aware that boys develop at different rates and they welcome updated progress reports from Rokeby. Some schools offer additional assessments in Years 7 and 8 although these can be more competitive. Having said that, here at Rokeby, we have had great success in placing boys in fantastic schools who were unlucky not to receive an offer at the end of Year 6.

Offers, Waiting Lists and Rejections

Broadly, there are three possible outcomes at the end of this process:

1. An offer is made;
2. The pupil is placed on a waiting list; or
3. The application is rejected.

Offers (Conditional and Unconditional)

Some offers will be conditional upon further examination in Year 8, a 'conditional offer', whilst other offers are merely conditional upon a reference that the School will have to submit; an 'unconditional offer'. Please also note that this language is Rokeby's and each of the schools uses their own slightly different terminology, such as 'headmaster's list' and 'provisional offer', to mean either the same or different things!

Waiting Lists

Being on a waiting list can be tricky for all concerned, and it can mean different things at different schools and last for very different periods of time. 11+ offers, made in Year 6, 13+ offers made in Year 8, and waiting list places at the same entry points will have imminent expiry dates, usually around two weeks after receipt. Pre-test offers differ widely, with reconsideration of waiting lists often not taking place until Year 8. We will always encourage timely decision making by parents with offers so that those on waiting lists might discover final decisions in a timely fashion. That said, waiting lists tend not to move until close to the deadlines. Furthermore, waiting list offers differ at every school, with some offering the very realistic possibility of transitioning into an actual offer, while others are unlikely to result in an offer of a place due to the popularity of the school.

Rejection

Not receiving offers is difficult for all concerned, especially when this may have been the consequence of weaker than normal performance in a particular part of the assessment process. Needless to say, our primary focus in such circumstances is the boy and we will look out for and support him as required. We will also guide and support the parents, identifying alternative options if necessary. This may involve a period of waiting until there is clarity about other processes.

Process Coordination (or lack thereof!)

Please also note that some independent senior schools deliberately coordinate their Year 6 assessment processes (both 11+ and pre-test) with each other and with the national cycle for grammar and maintained schools meaning that parents know all of the results at the same time. However, other senior independent schools do not do this and hence parents may be required to make decisions about certain school offers before they know the results from all of the schools to which they have applied. Therefore, please pay careful attention to each communication that you receive to make sure you are clear on deadlines and other requirements.

PREPARATION PROCESS

General

- The curriculum in English and Maths covers skills and knowledge essential to these subjects.
- From Year 1, boys in every year take annual standardised tests to measure their progress in English and Maths. In Years 4 and 6 boys take the Cognitive Ability Test in addition to English and Maths.
- In Year 3, boys have an informal introduction to verbal and non-verbal reasoning, led by their form tutor. This is continued in Year 4 with greater use of text book resources.

Year 5

English

The National Curriculum is followed. Boys are also taught how to cope with a range of question types in comprehension exercises, with the greatest emphasis being placed on questions that require pupils to infer meaning. Their technical ability with sentence and paragraph construction and story planning are also key elements of this year. Boys are introduced to ISEB papers during the course of the year.

Maths

The National Curriculum is followed and the boys are also introduced to the 11+ papers set by the ISEB. There is also a greater emphasis placed on problem solving skills and using and applying the Maths they have acquired in order to prepare the ground for pre-tests in Year 6.

Interviews

- Over the course of the year each boy is interviewed by a senior member of staff.
- The Headmaster gets to know all boys in Year 5 over the course of the year.

Reasoning

- The boys have two reasoning lessons a week, one covers verbal and the other covers non-verbal reasoning. Most pre-tests will have one or both of these components.
- Boys are subscribed to the Atom Learning website, an on-line package, with practice tests each in English, Maths and reasoning. During the years, boys are introduced to these tests and assigned a log-in.

A pre-test preparation pack is sent home in the Summer term, with the boys for practice (optional) during the Summer holiday. It includes English, Maths and Reasoning resources.

Year 6

English

We continue to follow the National Curriculum in English as it is a comprehensive system that allows us to judge every aspect of a child's ability in English. Comprehension exercises become more difficult, and boys have to complete a number of 11+ papers, set by ISEB. In the first term, in particular, we try to remove all lapses of grammar and punctuation evident in a boy's work whilst at the same time guiding him towards a more sophisticated style of writing.

Maths

The National Curriculum is also followed in this year and this helps us to identify which level each boy is working towards. The boys will continue with the preparation started in Year 5 and even more emphasis is placed upon the problem solving and using and applying concepts introduced previously. The boys will also have more of an opportunity to focus on the sample papers provided by the senior schools and will continue to look at past 11+ papers.

Interviews

Each boy is given at least 3 further interviews before their pre-test/senior school assessments: one by the Year 6 form tutors before half term, one by a senior member of staff and one by an external interviewer. Verbal feedback is given after each interview. Written feedback is emailed to parents. Questions may cover: character, personal experience, subject specific topics (including English and Maths), Sport, Music, extra-curricular, interests, news items, books, future schools and questions based around pictures and photographs.

Year 6 PSHEE

Study Skills for Year 6 will develop a bespoke programme, which includes elements from the PSHEE programme to specifically deal with examinations, stress and preparation, reasoning and interviews conducted by form tutors.

Year 7

- Boys taking entrance assessments in Year 7 e.g. Hampton School, will be interviewed by a member of staff. The Head of Year 7, plus form tutors of Year 7, are also available to interview.
- Any special requirements by senior schools will be organised and you will be made aware.
- Towards the end of Year 7, pupils are encouraged to begin to put together a Record of Achievement. This sets out their personal details, interests and achievements. The Record of Achievement is completed, with the help of the form tutor and Head of Year. They may be taken to interview, although this is not typically a senior school requirement.

Year 8

- Boys going to the few schools having their own entrance assessment in Year 8 e.g. Dulwich College, Emanuel School and Whitgift School, are thoroughly prepared, including practice questions from specimen papers.
- **'Mock' examinations** - examination practice is given informally throughout the year and once in January prior to the final Common Entrance papers.

Caring for your son

We are acutely aware that taking a range of pre-tests can be a daunting and stressful experience for young boys. We do our utmost to prepare the boys in a calm manner, trying to impress upon them that their happiness and well-being is paramount. There are a range of strategies in place throughout the Upper School to help boys manage the assessment they face. Some of these include:

- Stress management techniques within Study Skills and PSHEE
- Incorporation of mindfulness practices
- Mental health workshop for boys and parents
- Subject clinics
- Year 8 revision sessions

How can parents help?

- Make realistic choices and have confidence in the school, by listening to our advice.
- Be encouraging and supportive and try not to put too much pressure on your son.
- Monitor the amount of time your son spends working, compared to other more relaxing pursuits, thus ensuring the correct balance is maintained.
- Liaise closely with the school at all stages of the process; please let us know of dates for prospective visits and interviews as soon as you can.
- Be aware of your son's overall timetable to ensure that they are not overloaded!
- Prepare your son for a formal interview – read the newspaper; discuss current affairs; discuss the schools they've applied to and their merits; consider relevant questions that they could ask; practise formal conventions such as hand-shaking and making eye-contact.

TERMINOLOGY

There are several terms that you will hear throughout the transition process which might require explanation:

Pre-Test - a Year 6 or Year 7 assessment process that secures a place at senior school in Year 9. Some Pre-Tests have 2 stages, using the ISEB CPT as a screener.

ISEB Common Pre-Test (CPT) - a Year 6 or Year 7 computer-based test common to various senior schools. The tests in English, Maths, VR and NVR are taken here at Rokeby and results are used either alongside or as a screening test for a further stage of assessment by each senior school.

Pre-Test 2nd Stage - a Year 6 or Year 7 assessment process which usually takes place after the ISEB CPT. Each school operates a different process; some involve written exams and interviews; others interviews and other activities.

Pre-Selection - a Year 6 or Year 7 method of assessment used by some senior schools which prefer not to test the children, usually involving visits and interviews.

11+ - a Year 6 assessment process at each senior school to win a place at a senior school in Year 7, usually involving written assessments (perhaps with some online elements such as for Reasoning) and an interview (if invited).

13+ - a Year 8 assessment process that wins or confirms a place at senior school, either by a bespoke senior school assessment process, the ISEB Common Entrance examination, or a bespoke senior school scholarship examination.

Scholarship - a financial award made for excellence in a specific skill. See later in this guide for more detail.

Bursary - a means tested award to support a family with school fees.

(Un)Conditional - Pre-Test places are awarded conditionally or unconditionally depending upon the senior school. Conditional places usually depend upon a certain level of performance at Common Entrance or Scholarship. All Pre-Test offers are still conditional upon a confidential reference from Rokeby in Year 8.

Waiting List - most schools operate a waiting list for boys that have passed the assessment process but do not yet have a confirmed place at 11+ and / or 13+.