



Ridgeway Academy

'Everybody can achieve'

2018

School information
2026/2027

RIDGEWAY

RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY RELATIONSHIPS

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Demonstrating improved outcomes at KS4 and KS5

Key Staff

Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher

Mrs S Mitcherson
Mr R Found
Mrs L Hyde
Mrs S Merrigan

Assistant Headteacher
Assistant Headteacher
School Operations Manager
Chair of Governors

Mr S Cove
Mrs E Kemp
Mrs M Day/Miss T Brown
Mrs L Tillet

The School

'Everybody can achieve'

Ridgeway Academy has over 900 students and is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school based in Welwyn Garden City. In September 2018, the school joined the Alban Academies Trust (AAT) and was renamed Ridgeway Academy. The AAT merged with another Hertfordshire Trust and became the Ambition Education Trust (AET) in September 2024.

The school retains its strong sense of community which the students describe as 'a school with a big heart'. Its motto 'Everybody can achieve' is founded on hard work and sustained effort with a focus on learning and the importance of the relationship between family, student, and school. We aspire to be an exceptional school in every regard.

School Admissions

Hertfordshire Local Authority manages the transfer and entry to Ridgeway Academy.

You will have received 'Moving on' information; this outlines the Local Authority admissions policy and gives advice and information on finding the right school for your child. If you have decided that you would like your child to come to Ridgeway Academy you will need to complete a Secondary Transfer Form naming the school as your preference. Step by step guidance on filling in this form and how to apply online is given in the 'Moving on' information.

Our annual Open Evening takes place on **Thursday 10th September 2026** from 5.00pm until 7.30pm where prospective students and their parents/carers are welcome to come and visit Ridgeway Academy and meet our students and staff. The Headteacher will speak at 5.15pm and 6.15pm. We very much look forward to meeting you on the 10th September.

Open Morning Tours

We will be holding a series of Open Morning Tours where prospective students and their parents/carers can visit Ridgeway Academy to see the school in operation.

Our Open Morning tours start at 9.00am and are hosted between **Monday 14th September** and **Friday 25th September 2026**. Appointments must be booked in advance by either booking on our website or via email at **admin@ridgeway.aetrust.uk**

The Curriculum

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum so all our students can achieve their full potential. This is constantly reviewed and updated so it is relevant to the needs of our students.



Key Stage 3 (Year 7 - 9)

We offer a wide range of curriculum subjects in line with the National Curriculum. We place significant emphasis on the development of students as rounded individuals and all students follow a programme of study including Philosophy and Ethics and Personal Development which includes religious education, career guidance, personal, social and health education. In Key Stage 3 all students will develop into effective and confident learners which leads them to undertake further study at Key Stage 4.

In Key Stage 3 students study:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| • Computer Science | • Personal Development |
| • Dance | • PE |
| • Drama | • Philosophy & Ethics |
| • English | • Science |
| • Spanish | • Technology |
| • Geography | (Food, Graphic Design, |
| • History | Product Design, Textiles) |
| • Mathematics | • Visual Arts |
| • Music | |

In Year 7, some students will have additional literacy and numeracy teaching to support their progress in these important curriculum areas.

Key Stage 4 (Year 10 - 11)

At Key Stage 4 students continue to receive a broad and balanced curriculum leading to GCSE or vocational Level 2 equivalent qualifications. Students have the opportunity to select from a wide range of optional courses as well as completing statutory subjects.

Compulsory subjects:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- PE (Core)
- Personal Development
- Science (Combined or Triple)
- Core Philosophy

Additional Key Stage 4 subjects:

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| • Fine Art | • Drama | • Media studies |
| • 3D Art & Design | • Music | • Sociology |
| • Textiles | • Spanish | • Health & Social Care |
| • Physical Education | • Geography | |
| • Business Studies | • History | |
| • Computer Science | • Philosophy and Ethics | |
| • Dance | | |

Key Stage 5 (Year 12 - 13)

Ridgeway Academy is part of the thriving Welwyn and Hatfield Sixth Form Consortium and this enables us to offer a wide range of Level 3 courses. The Sixth form centre is central in the school building providing independent study space for students. The student leadership team within 6th form provides mentoring and student voice activities for the whole school.

Extra-Curricular Life

We encourage all our students to take advantage of the array of extra-curricular enrichment activities available in recognition of their role in supporting the growth of self-confidence, skills, qualities and attributes in our students. The main programme of activities includes:

- An extensive programme of **educational visits**, offered through our curriculum and by our Heads of Department, to support our students in learning outside of the classroom. These range from culture based museum and heritage site visits to theatre performances and opportunities to see elite performers in action. Modern Foreign Languages offer a cultural visit to Spain, where students can practise their speaking and listening skills and embed themselves in the culture. As part of our annual enrichment week, we also offer year group residential trips for Years 7, 8 and 9.
- A comprehensive timetable of **extra-curricular clubs** is published every term, creating opportunities for students to develop their specific passions in the areas of sport, music, drama, dance, art, design, computing, reading, creative writing and many more.
- Out of school activities such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE) and a Camps International Expedition develop teamwork, communication and leadership skills.
- Our **House system** provides the structure through which form groups are encouraged to participate in the wider life of the school. Organised into six Houses: Anderson, Hawking, Lytton, Mandela, Turing and Parks - each with a House Captain. Events are run throughout the year in a spirit of healthy competition.
- A wide range of **Student Leadership** opportunities exist across the school, to enable our students to take on positions of responsibility and to develop healthy relationships between students, staff and the wider community. Leadership opportunities include: sports leaders, House Captains, anti-bullying ambassadors, reading buddies, transition buddies and school prefects.

Character Education

At Ridgeway Academy we are committed to the delivery of Character Education for all students through an active promotion of our school values of Respect, Responsibility and Relationships.

We seek to enable our students to develop their character through a programme of explicit teaching within our classroom curriculum, staff modeling of positive behaviours, rewarding students who display positive behaviours, and encouraging wider learning outside of the classroom through our trips and enrichment activities.

Academic Support

We are committed to working with parents/carers in partnership so that all our students make maximum progress in their learning.

A key part of this partnership is providing parents/carers with accurate and regular feedback about their child's progress which is achieved by:

- **Progress Reports**
- **Parents' Evenings**
- **Key Stage Information Evenings**

Additionally, we hold annual Consultation meetings for parents/carers of students with SEND at which parents/carers, students and members of the SEND team discuss and agree strategies for implementation to accelerate student progress.

One of the strategies used to achieve the best outcomes for students is effective data tracking and intervention. This requires targets for students to be set in some subjects.

We set all students challenging targets each year which will support them in aiming for ambitious outcomes.

Students should be aware of their targets for each subject and progress towards them will be shown on the reports that are sent home.

Recognising Achievement

Recognising and rewarding achievement is central to our philosophy for success and supports our core values of respect, responsibility and relationships. We have a powerful system of rewards to encourage positive attitudes to work and learning. The system develops as students progress through the school and we expect all students to be fully involved in receiving the various rewards for their endeavours.

Throughout the year students receive achievement points for excellent work which contributes towards various levels of awards presented to students. We monitor attendance closely and special prizes are given to students with exceptional attendance.

At the end of each term there is an assembly to celebrate our successes where students receive recognition for their achievements. There is also a formal awards evening which is held for students to receive their examination certificates and other prestigious awards.

Blended Learning

All students joining in year 7 are expected to have a Ridgeway Chromebook to support learning within the classroom. Further information can be found on our website.

Home Based Learning

All students are expected to complete regular Home Based Learning, to support their studies. All Home Based Learning is set via the online platform: Google Classroom. Assignments will be uploaded with supporting materials which parents can view through Google Guardians. Students may be required to upload their Home Based Learning onto Google Classroom assignment submission in order to receive feedback or complete using an online platform.

In KS3, students can expect to have one piece of home based learning a week from English, Maths and Science set on their online platform, a piece of home based learning from all other subjects will be set as required.

In KS4, students can expect to have at least one piece of home based learning a week from all subjects they take, excluding PDE, Core PE and Core Philosophy.

Public Examinations

It is school policy that all Year 11, 12 and 13 students are entered for GCSE, Vocational and A Level for all subjects in which they have followed a course. The only exceptions to this are where the school believes that a student will not achieve a pass because they have failed to complete a compulsory element of the course. In these rare circumstances parents/carers will always be informed of the decision to withdraw an entry.

Meeting the needs of all students

It is Ridgeway Academy's belief that all students should be catered for according to their needs. Students of all abilities may, at some time, need extra support or encouragement with particular aspects of their work. At transition, information received from Primary Schools is carefully noted and baseline testing and screening on entry ensures that we identify students with additional learning needs. More able students are also identified early by data analysis and teacher recommendations. Departments are aware of the more able students and plan for their provision, including extension tasks within their schemes of work.

We have a dedicated Learning Support Team of Teaching Assistants and Higher Level Teaching Assistants led by our SENDCO and Deputy SENDCO. They work with our students both in the classroom and in small groups to support, give guidance and challenge throughout their time in school. This enables students to experience a curriculum which is challenging and accessible. The diversity of skills within the team ensures we are able to support specific learning difficulties, for example, dyslexia. Our staff play an important pastoral role within the school; they provide essential support for all students. This is especially important for students transferring from Primary School and mentoring our older students as they approach their final exams.

Students should be in school by 8.25am each morning. Breakfast is available every day in the school canteen from 8.15 until 8.30am. Students have one assembly per week:

The school day:	
8.15am	Students arrive at School
8.25am	Morning bell
8.30am to 8.35am	Form Line Up
8.35am to 8.55am	Registration / Assembly
8.55am to 9.55am	Period 1
9.55am to 10.00am	Movement Time
10.00am to 11.00am	Period 2
11.00am to 11.20am	Break
11.15am to 11.20am	Movement Time
11.20am to 12.20pm	Period 3
12.20pm to 12.25pm	Movement Time
12.25pm to 1.25pm	Period 4
1.25pm to 2.00pm	Lunch
2.00pm to 2.05pm	Movement Time
2.05pm to 3.05pm	Period 5
3.05pm to 3.10pm	Registration
3.15pm	Clubs & Activities / Detentions

We operate a line-up at 8:30 a ahead of form time. The school cannot accept responsibility for students after 4.00 pm, unless they are taking part in a supervised sport, drama, music, dance or curriculum activity.

Pastoral Care

In our experience, problems that arise can usually be dealt with most effectively through a discussion with your child's Form Tutor, who is best placed to resolve most difficulties. The Head of Year will also be able to help if you are concerned about any aspect of your child's education or their experience in school. However, when problems cannot be resolved in this way we would advise parents/carers to contact the member of the Senior Leadership Team who is linked to your child's year group.

Behaviour and Discipline

Any large community needs a set of clear, simple guidelines in order to ensure there is a calm and purposeful environment in which to work and learn. Ridgeway Academy's Code of Conduct is constructed around the 3 'Rs' of:

- **Respect**
- **Responsibility**
- **Relationships**

Ridgeway Academy does not tolerate bullying. Students are encouraged and expected to report all incidents and parents/carers can be assured that the school will deal with such incidents swiftly and effectively.

The school's Anti Bullying Policy is available on the school's website. Our Behaviour for Learning Policy sets out, in detail, how general discipline is maintained in the school. This is achieved principally through the pastoral curriculum and is firmly based on positive reinforcement; our rewards system further enhances this. Ridgeway Academy does not tolerate inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour and students are constantly reminded about the standards of behaviour expected. A copy of the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy is available on the school's website.

Philosophy, Ethics and Collective Worship

Assemblies are an important part of our school day providing an opportunity for students to reflect on a wide variety of moral, philosophical, religious and social issues. It is also an important time for the staff and students to gather as a community.

Philosophy and Ethics is a strong curriculum area at Ridgeway Academy. In line with statutory requirements, students at Key Stage 3 study aspects of the six major world faiths of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. In the course of their study we try to ensure that students are able to relate the beliefs and practices to areas of their own lives. For example, when studying Pilgrimage, we encourage students to reflect on journeys that have significance for them.

Some students at Key Stage 4 study GCSE Philosophy and Ethics, which involves a comprehensive study of Christianity and Islam. All students study Key Philosophy at KS4. Topics include attitudes to the media, abortion and social injustice. At Key Stage 5 A Level Philosophy and Ethics is offered as part of the Welwyn and Hatfield Sixth Form Consortium. Philosophy and Ethics is also taught as part of the Sixth Form Enrichment Programme.

It is very rare for a parent/carer to exercise their statutory right to withdraw their child(ren) from this valuable and rewarding experience. Where this is the case, however, parents/carers should contact the Headteacher in the first instance in order to discuss the type, quality and standard of work that they need to provide as an alternative.

Careers Advice and Guidance

All students from Year 7 have a formal careers programme which they follow in Personal Development lessons and through enrichment activities and visits. Students study a spiral curriculum which supports them at each important stage of their school career, from identifying skills and interests they have in Year 7 to specific information on University and Apprenticeships for Post 18 choices.

In addition, all students and their parents/carers meet with staff to discuss their options for GCSE and the implications of these choices for their Post-16 education, training or employment. These individual interviews are also conducted in Year 11 to support students with their Post-16 choices. We also work with Oaklands College to ensure students have a full understanding of the options they offer. All students and parents have access to the Unifrog platform which guides each student through their career pathway.

The school offers an individual support programme for students utilising the expertise of external careers advisors in Year 10 and 11. All students in Year 7, 8 and 9 have the opportunity to complete a work shadow day to prepare the students for Year 10, when the students undertake a week of aspirational/career experience. Local business, industry and service organisations are very supportive of the school and we are always able to place our students in worthwhile workplaces. Students speak highly of the careers provision at Ridgeway Academy and how it has supported them in securing their desired destinations.

Break & Lunchtime

A cashless canteen and catering pod, operated by Culinera, provides hot and cold meals and snacks before school and during their mid-morning and lunchtime breaks. Full details of the cashless system are issued to all parents/carers of new students. We provide indoor and outdoor spaces for students who bring packed lunches.

Health Education

We have a Sex and Relationships Policy in line with legislation. Our aim is to prepare students for the physical and emotional changes that they will undergo during their time at school and for the future. Sex and Relationships education is taught both by the Science Department and by Personal Development teachers. It is unusual for parents/carers to exercise their statutory right to withdraw their child from Sex and Relationships Education.

School Uniform

All students in Years 7 to 11 wear school uniform. The uniform is very smart and distinctive and encourages a sense of pride in Ridgeway Academy. A high standard of appearance is expected at all times as students are excellent ambassadors for the school. We ask that all items are clearly labelled with the student's name. A detailed uniform list is available on our website.

Students in the Sixth Form have a smart dress code which reflects their role as lead learners in the school and prepares them for the world of work.

Ridgeway School Policies

Attendance

We place a very high value on attendance and expect all students to attend the full school day. There is a clear link between student attendance and attainment – if a student is not in school they will not reach their full potential.

When it is necessary to withdraw students from education a letter must be sent to the Headteacher via the link on the website.

Please note that permission for holidays will not be granted and as such, will be noted as unauthorised absence.

Charging and Remissions Policy

The Ambition Education Trust recognises the value of the contribution that a wide range of additional activities can make towards a student's personal, social and educational development. The Ambition Education Trust reserves the right to make a charge in certain circumstances for activities organised by or on behalf of the school which includes:

- Residential activities
- Individual instrumental tuition
- Activities outside school hours
- Examination Fees

The full policy is available on the school website.

Complaints

Any parent/carer contacting the school with a complaint can be sure of an efficient and courteous response. The complaints procedure is available on the school website

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Ridgeway Academy is fully committed to equal opportunities for all and we strive to advance equality of opportunity for students, staff and others using the school facilities, ensuring that no individual is discriminated against or treated less favourably. The arrangement for the admission of students with disabilities is in line with Hertfordshire Schools Admissions Policy. (See 'Moving on booklet').

The Local Governing Body monitors the School's commitment to equality and accessibility and has a Single Equality Policy in place that ensures that the curriculum, facilities, information and procedures comply with statutory accessibility and equality requirements. The school's compliance with this policy is regularly reviewed by Governors.

Child Protection

At Ridgeway Academy we recognise that we have a duty of care for the welfare and safety of all students. We attempt to create an ethos in which students feel secure, valued, listened to and taken seriously. All staff employed by the school are subject to Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks. Supply staff employed on a daily basis are from agencies that carry out the same checks. Staff are trained by the Local Authority in how to recognise and report child protection issues to our Designated Senior Person (DSP).

We operate within a statutory framework set out by 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)'. This requires all schools to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse, which are established by the Herts Safeguarding Children Board. Our DSP for Child Protection, Mrs. S Merrigan, deals with all matters surrounding the safety of our students. We also have Deputy DSPs, Miss C Wesson and Heads of Year who support the DSP and work closely with the School Counsellors. The Child Protection Policy follows the Local Safeguarding Board's guidance and is reviewed annually.

Communications

It is very important to us that we work closely in partnership with parents and carers, and communication between home and school is key. We recognise however that it can often be difficult communicating with teachers because they have a very full timetable; and we recognise that parents and carers also have very busy lives. Modern communication methods can mean more efficient sharing of information, though this needs to be structured to ensure that it is manageable for staff whose primary responsibility is to teach young people.

All parents/carers and students are asked to sign the Home School Agreement/Partnership. This document sets out what parents/carers and students can expect from the school and details the responsibilities of both parents/carers and students. The intention of the partnership is to ensure that the basis for supportive relationships between home and school are established.

Furthermore, all parents/carers are asked to familiarise themselves with the Communications Policy, which can be accessed via the school website.

Demonstrating improved outcomes at KS4 and KS5

Students perform well in a range of subjects including students gaining grade 9s in a number of subjects at GCSE level. There are improving outcomes in many areas. Students have performed particularly well in English language, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Geography and the Arts. Post-16 students performed well in A-levels such as Further Maths, Law, Geography and Economics, with all students following their chosen paths included attending a range of universities and apprenticeships.



Ridgeway Academy

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A member of the Ambition Education Trust

Please note that the information given in this brochure was correct as at September 2025. It should not be assumed that there have been no subsequent changes before the start, or during, the academic year 2025/2026.