



**RATHDOWN SENIOR SCHOOL**  
Dublin, Ireland  
International Students' Programme

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# *A hundred thousand welcomes*

Or as they say in Irish... Céad Míle Fáilte. Welcome to Rathdown School, a modern and caring 21st-century learning environment that focuses on educating and nurturing young women as they develop into confident, well-balanced adults, both academically and personally.

As a combined day and boarding school, Rathdown School offers a uniquely friendly atmosphere and caring environment where international students are completely integrated into all aspects of school life, sharing their classes, extra-curricular activities and leisure time with students from Ireland and a range of other countries, while at the same time benefitting from the extensive support structures and tailored courses specifically designed for them.

Academically, students will be following a programme and curriculum recognised by the OECD as being of a particularly high standard and superior to that of the UK, especially in the areas of Science, Mathematics and literacy and offering a very wide choice of subjects. In coming to school in Ireland, our international students have the opportunity to explore the history, traditions, music and landscape of one of the world's oldest, most renowned cultures, a culture famous the world over for its hospitality and openness.

So please read on ... and see what Rathdown School has to offer.



*“Giving our children the very best education possible was our number one priority. Rathdown came out on top for so many reasons.”*

First Year Parent - Germany





## *A word from our principal*

As Principal of Rathdown School, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our community. Everyone here at Rathdown School is committed to providing each and every student with an education of the highest standard so that students develop the skills and character to do well in examinations and, more importantly, to become life-long learners who are successful, responsible and active citizens of the global community.

Ranked as one of the top schools in Ireland, we offer an extensive range of subjects and an international programme that is tailored to each individual student's needs. We pride ourselves on small classroom sizes and a pupil-to-teacher ratio that allows for optimal learning. Our highly-qualified staff is dedicated to providing each student with a holistic learning experience.

More than just an academic programme, our international programme is also social and cultural. The variety of student nationalities promotes an awareness of cultural diversity in a community where mutual understanding and respect prevail. Special trips and activities ensure that international students are integrated into the Irish culture. By taking advantage of our first-class facilities and boarding opportunities, students become close friends, quickly.

We are focused on ensuring that students have a happy, positive and memorable experience here at Rathdown School.

I look forward to welcoming you.

**Anne Dowling, Principal**



*“When I visited the school before signing up I had the impression that Rathdown is very caring and has a friendly atmosphere. This impression has been confirmed in every way.”*

Corina Rohlfs (First Year Parent) - Germany



# *First class facilities*

Celebrating our 40th anniversary, Rathdown School has benefitted from an extensive on-going investment programme, with superb facilities for all our students.

Music is embedded in our culture with regular musical performances. Our purpose-built Music Centre with its auditorium, music technology lab and soundproof practice rooms offers state-of-the-art facilities and the option of one-to-one tuition in virtually every musical instrument.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is at the heart of modern education and our students benefit from the way ICT is central to the teaching methodology. The school has modern computer rooms and a Design & Communications Graphics laboratory, and iPads are extensively used in the classroom. The Library is run by a full time dedicated Librarian, and offers a wide range of ICT facilities.

Sport is a key aspect of school life. We offer a wide range of sports, of which hockey, tennis, athletics, basketball and cricket are but a few. A fully-equipped sports hall, astroturf floodlit hockey, tennis courts, 200m running track and a tartan cricket crease are among the range of facilities. There are also activities focusing on health and fitness, such as dance classes, pilates and yoga.



*“I will never forget my time here. I learnt so much and experienced so many new things.”*

Isabelle Andree (Sixth Year Student) - Germany



# *The boarding experience*

Living together with their classmates in a warm, friendly and welcoming environment is what makes the boarding experience the heart of an international student's stay at Rathdown. Fellow students become family and Rathdown becomes a 'home-away-from-home'.

We have two boarding houses: Hillcourt House and Innismore House. Under the supervision of our Head of Boarding Ms. Frieda Burke – the students share their living spaces and leisure activities, learn about each other's cultures and make friends they will keep for evermore.

They also have the assistance and support of our International Co-ordinator, Madame Laval. Appointed in 2010, Mme. Laval acts as a full-time liaison between the girls and their parents and guardians to ensure that their experience in Rathdown School is free from stress or worries and she is contactable by email at any time to deal with any individual concerns. In addition, as all students are fully integrated into the school curriculum, friendships will also be formed with day students, and our international students are encouraged to visit and stay with their Irish friends where appropriate.



*"I believe that part of her heart is still there and will stay there forever."*

Mrs Guemez, mother of Andrea Guemez (Second Year Student) - Mexico



# Life experiences

A great reason for choosing Rathdown as a location for study is the extensive opportunities this offers for getting to know the history, culture and traditions of another country. Our international students make Irish friends and immerse themselves in day-to-day life while our tailored programme offers many opportunities to ensure that our students' memories of Ireland will remain with them for evermore.

We offer a range of modules on aspects of Irish culture to ensure our international students learn about the richness of Irish history, folklore, traditions, music, landscape, food ... every aspect of what it means to live in Ireland. We encourage them to explore issues of cultural diversity by comparing their own cultures with that of Ireland and sharing their knowledge and experiences with their Irish friends.

Outside the curriculum, we organise trips to various local locations. Many of these are regular school trips open to entire classes where all students – national and international – have the opportunity to experience and learn about aspects of Irish culture and history. Every year our International Co-ordinator organises four weekend breaks for the international students where they can fully experience the variety of Irish culture.



*“We really enjoyed the trips for international students. It allowed us to see and learn all about Ireland as well as create bonds.”*

Daria Moleva (Third Year Student) - Russia



## *Educational opportunities*

Rathdown School has been consistently ranked as one of the top secondary schools in Ireland and provides an outstanding core and modular academic programme. We offer a wide range of subjects, with a particular focus on languages and sciences.\*

International students are fully integrated into the national curriculum set out by the Irish Department of Education and Skills for the majority of their timetable, following the same subjects, sitting the same classes, completing the same homework and tests and – where appropriate – sitting national exams at Junior and/or Leaving Certificate level (equivalent to GCSE and A-level respectively).

In addition, specifically-designed modules are provided to address particular needs and requirements, whether in language learning, cultural studies or wherever we perceive there to be a need for additional support or an opportunity to further enhance the students' experience.

\*The full list of subjects currently available is as follows (please note that this is subject to change): Languages: English, Irish, French, German, Spanish. Sciences: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Applied Mathematics, Agricultural Science. Other subjects: History, Geography, Art, Music, Business, Accounting, Economics, Home Economics, Design & Communication Graphics, Physical Education, Religion, CSPE (Civic, Social & Political Education), SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education). A wide range of additional subjects and modules is available as part of our Transition Year Programme; please consult Transition Year brochure for details.



*“She has enjoyed herself immensely and at the same time progressed academically. It has been a great learning experience. It has been great at all levels.”*

Ruth Cosgrove, mother of Naomi Moreno Cosgrove (Second Year Student) - Irish/Spanish



# Extra academic modules

Integration into the regular curriculum is a priority for all our international students but we also recognise that they have specific needs and interests distinct from their Irish counterparts. In addition to having a personal tutor to monitor their academic and social needs, they have access to a range of tailor-made additional classes, activities and courses.

## English Acquisition and Reinforcement

- Improving and reinforcing English language skills
- Focus on oral and aural skills, communication and conversation
- All classes taught by experienced ESL teachers
- Preparation for the Cambridge English examinations

## Cultural Studies

- Exposure to the wide range of cultural and historical traditions of Ireland
- Opportunity to share their own culture with their classmates
- Preparation of a written and audio-visual presentation

## Performance Module

- Planning, organising and staging a large-scale dramatic musical production
- Performance module where students take a leading role in a dramatic performance

## Tutorials

- Special tutorials to assist with homework and address individual concerns



*“The teachers at Rathdown are very helpful and explain when you don’t understand anything, they make you feel welcome.”*

Ana Paula (Fourth Year Student) - Mexico





## *More than just a school*

For international students, involvement in our extra-curricular activities offers another way to make friends, learn new skills and immerse themselves in the cultural life of their new home. We offer an array of sports, clubs, societies and activities of which our international students can avail in a non-academic atmosphere.

Apart from the traditional school sporting activities available, Horse-riding, Sailing and Golf are popular and are arranged through the school's association with Brennanstown Riding School and the Royal St. George Yacht Club. We are proud of our past pupils who have gone on to represent Ireland at the Olympic Games and other international events in sports as diverse as equestrian and downhill skiing and we provide special support in every way to those students who show a particular ability in any sporting area.

There are many other areas where students can develop their skills. The Model United Nations Club and the Rathdown Debating Club are examples of groups where international students can mix with Irish students from every year and practise their debating skills! Other groups that focus on raising awareness, fundraising or personal development include Amnesty International, Operation Smile, the Green Schools Committee, SUCH (Students Unite for Children's Health).



*"I am a junior boarder (P6). At weekends I go horseriding and I ride Robbie. He is a very nice horse and I have great fun on Saturday."*

Sophie King (Sixth Class) - England