

Bourne Mansion and St. Joseph's Hall stand over the future home of the Harrow International School New York in Oakdale, Long Island. *Photographer: José A. Alvarado Jr./Bloomberg*

Wealth | Spending & Earning

Harrow Pitches \$75,000 Boarding School to NYC, International Parents

Harrow International School New York, an outpost of the historic British academy, will open a co-ed campus on Long Island in September.

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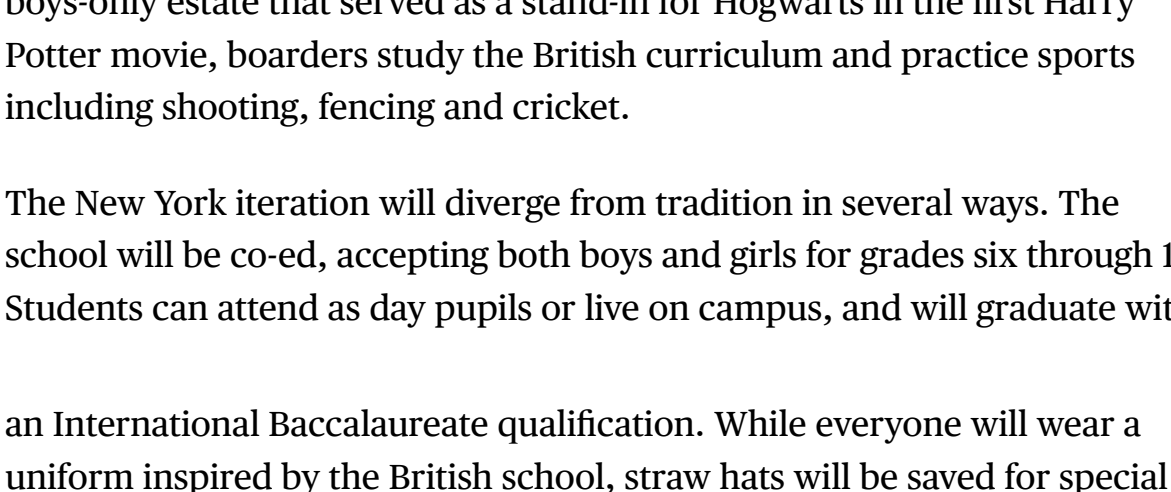
As some British boarding schools make efforts to recruit students from New York, one of the country's oldest and most vaunted institutions is taking a bigger leap.

Harrow School, the 453-year old academy known for educating Winston Churchill and for its students' distinctive straw boater hats, will open a New York-based offshoot in September.

Harrow International School New York, about 50 miles east of Manhattan on Long Island, is betting on the brand recognition and academic reputation of its namesake to lure parents willing to pay up to \$75,000 for year of tuition and boarding.

It's doing so at a tricky time for American private schools, particularly those in New York, where competition is fierce and costs are sky high. Ambitions that international students will eventually make up most of its admissions could also get caught up in President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown. And while the school leans heavily into the Harrow branding, it's owned by Amity Education Group, an Indian family foundation.

"Plenty of international schools in New York City have opened and closed over the last 25 years," said Emily Glickman, an education consultant in Manhattan. "However, legacy counts, and established schools like Harrow are reassuring," she said.

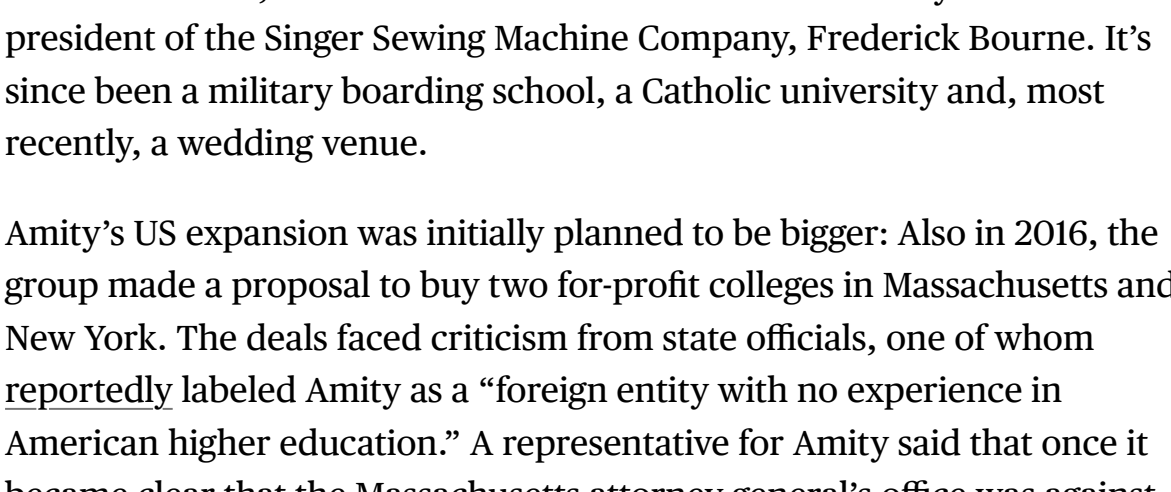


Harrow International School New York will open in September. *Photographer: José A. Alvarado Jr./Bloomberg*

Founded in 1572 on the outskirts of London, Harrow has long been synonymous with the quintessential British boarding school experience. A boys-only estate that served as a stand-in for Hogwarts in the first Harry Potter movie, boarders study the British curriculum and practice sports including shooting, fencing and cricket.

The New York iteration will diverge from tradition in several ways. The school will be co-ed, accepting both boys and girls for grades six through 11. Students can attend as day pupils or live on campus, and will graduate with

an International Baccalaureate qualification. While everyone will wear a uniform inspired by the British school, straw hats will be saved for special occasions.



The former residence of the president of the Singer Sewing Machine Company will become Harrow's new campus in Oakdale, Long Island. *Photographer: José A. Alvarado Jr./Bloomberg*

The venture is Harrow's 13th overseas campus and its second franchise with Amity, a sprawling education foundation bankrolled by Indian entrepreneur Ashok Chauhan. Amity bought the New York campus in 2016 for more than \$22 million and is footing the bill for an estimated \$100 million in renovations and new construction.

The estate, which spans 170 acres of waterfront in Oakdale across the bay from Fire Island, was built near the turn of the 20th century for the then-president of the Singer Sewing Machine Company, Frederick Bourne. It's since been a military boarding school, a Catholic university and, most recently, a wedding venue.

Amity's US expansion was initially planned to be bigger: Also in 2016, the group made a proposal to buy two for-profit colleges in Massachusetts and New York. The deals faced criticism from state officials, one of whom reportedly labeled Amity as a "foreign entity with no experience in American higher education." A representative for Amity said that once it became clear that the Massachusetts attorney general's office was against the transaction, it voluntarily withdrew from the process.

On a rainy day in May, a trip to Harrow New York from Manhattan took more than two hours across three modes of transportation, from the subway to the Long Island Rail Road and finally an Uber ride. On campus, furniture had yet to be installed in classrooms, and a team of construction workers was applying acoustic spray that minimizes echoing to the ceiling of the brand-new gymnasium.

Before a tour through the facilities holding Harrow-branded umbrellas, principal Matthew Sipple described the process of setting up the school as "agonizingly exciting." He was brought on last November and keeps a counter ticking off the days until the first day of school on his desk.

The school only opened its admissions in February, after most private schools had already accepted applicants for the upcoming year, because leaders wanted it to have its charter before making any offers. It won't be certified to enroll visa holders until after it opens, so any international students won't arrive until winter 2026 at the earliest.

"We didn't want to launch the cart before the horse," said Sipple. "It's not about the finances – it's about creating a lasting legacy."

For now, Harrow New York is hoping to have about 80 enrollees by the end of its first year, Sipple said, though it expects to open with fewer and add kids as the year goes on. At full capacity, there's space for 350 boarding students and another 100 day students.

"We will build the programs around the students that we recruit," said Sipple of the first cohort. "They will be the lead in all the plays. They will be the captains."

They'll also get a discount on tuition: Every founding student will save \$20,000 per year for their first three years at Harrow New York.



A dorm inside Molloy Hall is styled with Harrow branding and traditional Harrow attire. *Photographer: José A. Alvarado Jr./Bloomberg*

Education consultants versed in the cutthroat world of elite New York school admissions say the market is notoriously hard to break into, with well-known options across the tri-state area. Even if a school builds out its inaugural group of students and earns the right reputation, staying open can be a struggle.

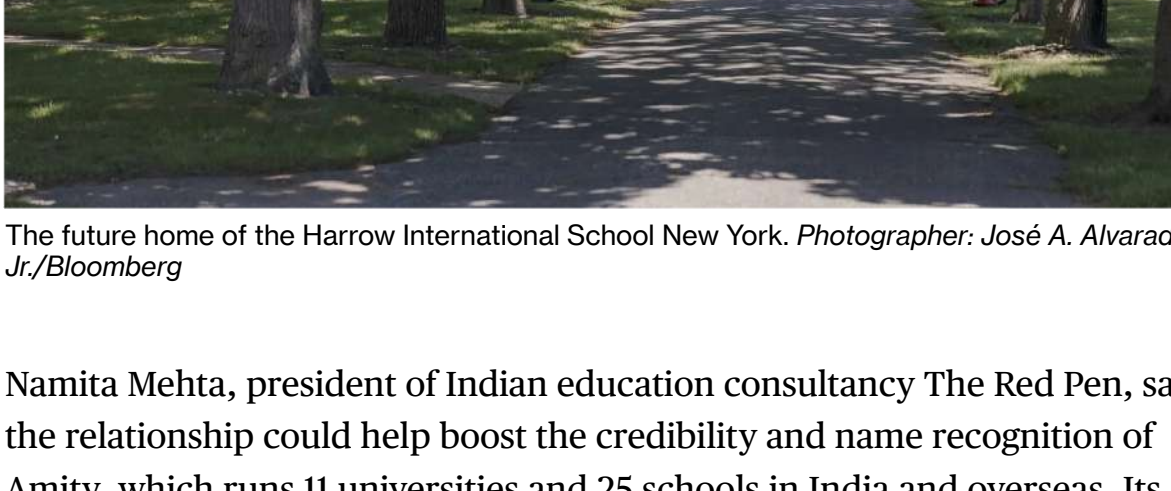
The market has also shifted since Amity first pitched the idea of a New York school to Harrow about six years ago. Then, New York appeared as a place for international students to adapt to a mixture of debt and cash on hand, said Aseem Chauhan, who serves as Amity's chancellor and chairman of Harrow New York.

But since a wave of wealthy families moved out of the city during the pandemic and school enrollments plunged, several niche schools in New York have closed.

That's ramped up competition for a dwindling pool of kids, prompting an arms race to build the biggest and best amenities, even as complaints around affordability abound. To fund the upgrades, schools are taking on increasing levels of debt, ultimately leading to the collapse of one almost 60-year-old Manhattan institution this spring.

In such a competitive environment, parents are prone to fall back on the names they recognize, said Glickman.

"British posh isn't necessarily a 21st century New Yorker's cup of tea," she said. "A lot of people are interested in established American brands – like Dalton, Trinity, Brearley, Collegiate – that they feel like are fully part of the landscape they're used to."



Harrow International School New York principal, Matthew Sipple. *Photographer: José A. Alvarado Jr./Bloomberg*

Harrow's staff say that Amity's backing will insulate its New York campus from the sector's challenges – at least financial ones – for long enough to build up its student body. The Chauhan family's business conglomerate spans plastics, pharmaceuticals and technology across India, and the education foundation is funded through a mixture of debt and cash on hand, said Aseem Chauhan, who serves as Amity's chancellor and chairman of Harrow New York.

"Education, in general, requires patience," he said in an interview. "It is not a normal business where you want an ROI return very quickly."

Harrow didn't disclose how much Amity is paying to license its name, but similar deals at Harrow-branded schools around the world net the charity that owns the school more than £5m (about \$6.7 million) a year, said Jennifer Cooper, a spokesperson for Harrow International Schools Ltd., in a statement.

That money is used in part to fund financial aid, a need that is growing in the UK since a value-added tax was imposed on private school tuition, adding about 20% onto the bill.

Harrow International Schools Ltd. will provide ongoing oversight of the New York school, visiting at least twice a year – a process it has refined over 25-plus years of partnership with Asia International School Ltd., which operates 11 schools in China, Thailand and Japan.

The future home of the Harrow International School New York. *Photographer: José A. Alvarado Jr./Bloomberg*

Namita Mehta, president of Indian education consultancy The Red Pen, says the relationship could help boost the credibility and name recognition of Amity, which runs 11 universities and 25 schools in India and overseas. Its flagship institution, Amity University, was ranked 49th out of 2,781 institutions that sought ranking by the Indian government in 2024.

So far, Harrow New York is getting interest from international applicants and Americans living outside New York, particularly in San Francisco, Sipple said. Its marketing efforts have included promotions on social media – such as joint Instagram posts with an account called "Moms of the Upper East Side" – in Ivy League magazines and in radio spots on NPR.

"There are families who are looking for an international school and an international environment," said the principal, Sipple. "We will be international through and through."

That could get trickier as the Trump administration hones in on student visas, including monitoring the social media accounts of applicants. Though the crackdown predominantly targets university students, all new student visa interviews were temporarily halted in May. Trump has also issued a travel ban that could impact foreign students from some countries.

Chauhan said the challenges facing international students haven't changed Amity's strategy.

"Hopefully these things are ironed out and the incredible opportunities for higher education and growth will come back," he said.