



Aims, Principles and Practice of Boarding at St Paul's

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This policy is available on the Handbook page of the School Intranet and policies page of the School website and can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required. We want all parents to know and understand the contents of our Aims and Principles of Boarding at St Paul's, however we understand this can be challenging for those for whom English is not their first language. This document is available on the School Website in English and Chinese and can be translated, on request, into any other language. Such requests can be made by email to policyquery@stpaulsschool.org.uk.

Our Aims and Principles

To provide a home that enables boarders to flourish at St Paul's. St Paul's boarding is a small community at the heart of the larger day school. We aim to offer a safe and supportive, kindly and unassuming home to our boarders, guiding and helping them as they look to fulfil their ambitions and potential, whether they are full boarders or staying with us for shorter periods.

To prepare boarders for their futures. We aim to prepare our gifted students for their futures. We aim to guide them toward living independently: to organise their time, to take their own well-being seriously, to build positive, respectful and rewarding relationships with others; to be thoughtful and decisive and a warm contributor to their families, friends and communities; and in support of this, to develop the School's most valued traits of kindness, respect, humility, integrity and resilience.

To provide outstanding pastoral care. We also aim to provide outstanding pastoral care for all of our boarders, as the foundation to all other aims. We regard the welfare of the children in our care

as absolutely paramount: it is at the heart of all our actions. We recognise that children living away from home can be vulnerable, and require thoughtful and attentive adult care. We take this responsibility seriously and regard it as a privilege to help you raise your children, aiming to safeguard and support them with outstanding pastoral care throughout their time with us.

School House, West House and St Paul's School are diverse and tolerant communities, holding these aims for all of our pupils, whatever their background or need.

Our Practice

The policies and principles that underpin our boarding provision will be available to you in full when your son begins at St Paul's. All have been created in line with the Department for Education's key statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and the *National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools*, with further reference to the recommendations of the Richmond and London Child Safeguarding Boards.

What follows here is an at-a-glance outline of the principles and the ethos that inform our care for your sons.

School House, West House and the House Staff

School House is the main boarding house for full and weekly boarders at St Paul's. It is home to up to 43 boarders. West House is the flexi boarding house at St Paul's. It has 11 rooms for recurring and one-off stays of varying lengths.

School House and West House are overseen by the resident Housemaster, Dr Shammass who is assisted by our matrons Ms Dannreuther and Ms McGovern. In School House he is supported a Deputy Housemaster, Mr Vickers, and four boarding tutors, Mr Chase, Rev Knox, Mr Mahmoud and Ms Turner. In West House he is supported by four boarding tutors, Mr Boydell, Dr Gane, Ms Milanova and Mr Murray. The School Chaplain, Rev Knox is also a member of the boarding team. On any given night there is a School House Duty Master and a West House Duty Master living in School House and West House. For daily administrative information, please contact the School House Duty Master on 07771 620903 or the West House Duty Master 07787 881 662. Dr Shammass is also available if you wish to discuss any matter with him, however big or small. His email address is cnyas@stpaulsschool.org.uk and number is 0208 746 5379. We are an open and friendly House, and parental communications are encouraged throughout the year.

Pastoral Care and Safeguarding

We recognise the challenges that boarders can face at a top independent school (arriving at a new school, or country; the pressures that accompany the desire for elite performance, and of teenage life in general) and also the vulnerability of children living away from home. School House and West House are both small houses, and we grow to know our boarders swiftly and well. Our provision is underpinned by a high level of staff experience and training, and includes:

- The availability of multiple adults for boarders to talk to (including nurses, counsellors, and adults independent of boarding) and ways to put forward their views;
- A helpful, welcoming and on-going induction for all new boarders;
- Clear and sensible rules and systems to ensure the House is a kindly and welcoming community, in which each boy feels comfortable and confident.

At all times the House Staff will be kindly, alert, decisive and sensible in their care of boarders. All House Staff are highly trained in safeguarding and child protection. We pride ourselves on the strength of the relationships we build, the example we set, the pastoral care we provide, and the way our boarders flourish at St Paul's and beyond.

Bullying

We want to provide a safe and happy home for all boarders and so are especially attentive to any possibility of bullying. We understand any boarder suffering bullying is particularly vulnerable, as they do not return home to their parents after School. Boarding therefore fully endorses the School's approach to bullying, set out in its Anti-Bullying policy: all forms of bullying are always unacceptable and we will do all we can to prevent it. We build on top of the School's main approach, which includes education through PSHE lessons, assemblies and tutor groups; great importance set through all lessons for kindness and respect; and clear avenues for support through tutors, Undermasters and counsellors. Through our boarding inductions and boarding education programmes, we guide boarders to be respectful of each other, and to understand what behaviours they should not have to tolerate. We proactively check in with all boarders each term to check in with them on a variety of topics – bullying of themselves or others will always be part of this conversation. All of our staff are highly alert to the possible signs that a boarder is struggling with bullying or unkindness. We always encourage all pupils to speak with a member of the House staff, their tutor, their Undermaster, the nurses, the DSL or anonymously via Whisper (posters are located around the House) regarding any and all cases of bullying. All incidences of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated on consultation with the Deputy Head Pastoral or Surmaster and we will seek to support victim and change the behaviour of the perpetrator with appropriate counselling support and other relevant internal and external services.

Inclusion

St Paul's seeks to foster a culture of inclusion in the Boarding House where diversity is valued and where every pupil finds belonging and welcome and a deep sense of community. Our aim is to ensure that all our pupils can celebrate and share who they are within our community and that no individual feels undermined or vulnerable on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, language or neurodiversity.

St Paul's boarding aims to meet the needs of all students, whether the need be religious, dietary, linguistic, cultural or a special educational need. It fully espouses the respective St Paul's School Policies.

Medical Care

Full details of the medical care your son will receive whilst at St Paul's can be found in the Boarding Medical Information Sheet. All House Staff are first aid trained, and will act, in effect, as parents

would, helping the boarders through minor illness or injury and, in the case of anything more serious, ensuring that your son swiftly receives appropriate medical care.

Boarders and Academic Tutors

All boarders at St Paul's belong to an academic tutor group, like all pupils at St Paul's. Your son's tutor group will be made up of pupils from all year groups and will be led by a member of the school's academic staff, or 'tutor'. This approach ensures boarders integrate swiftly into school life, and have multiple adults directly responsible for their care and to whom they can turn for help. House staff work together with tutors to help each boarder manage their academic demands and extra-curricular commitments. Generally speaking, the academic tutor will take the lead on all matters pertaining to academic progress and behaviour at school, while House staff will support the tutor in those areas, and lead on issues pertaining to pastoral care, and to boarding and personal matters. Parents should feel free to contact both the tutor and School House / West House (indeed, copying the Housemaster both to any email is often the best way). All pertinent information is swiftly shared between the House Master and tutor, and holistic care is provided to all boarders at all times.

Prep Time

Boarders complete two hours of prep each evening in the Kayton Library on Monday to Thursday, between 6.30pm and 8.30pm. Quiet in the House is between 6:30pm and 8.30pm on Sundays and provides time to complete outstanding homework, prepare for the week ahead and a social time with other boarders.

Mobile phones, laptops and tablets

Amid the huge distractions of messaging, social media and TV/films etc, we believe that teenagers need support to implement good device habits overnight to help them get enough sleep to perform at their best during a busy and tiring school week.

Boarders in 4th, 5th, 6th will be expected to hand in their all devices overnight on Sunday to Thursday nights. Boarders in L8th will be expected to hand in their mobile phones overnight on Sunday to Thursday nights. We may ask U8th boys to hand in devices on these nights in the event they are found to be using them late at night.

In the unlikely event an emergency arises and you need to urgently contact your son overnight, please do ring the Duty Master (School House - 07771 620 903 and West House 07787 881 662) who will be able to put you in touch with your son. Likewise, if your son needs to contact you overnight due to an emergency, he should contact the Duty Master and we will give him his phone to contact you.

Virtual tutoring / US university interviews / other sessions with an adult

All tutoring arranged by parents for boarders should take into consideration the safeguarding guidance issued to all parents regarding private tutoring, including both parental oversight. Further guidance is contained in the Boarding House Rules.

Extra-Curricular/Free Time Provision/House Trips

Boarders have free time every day between 4.15pm and 6.00pm; and then again from 8.30pm until their bedtimes. During these times, the School's sports and music facilities are available to boarders. Within both School House and West House, boarders have access to a large common room, with projection television, pool table, table tennis table, comfortable seating, board and card-games. In this free time, boarders also have some freedom to explore the local area, as long as appropriate permission from the Duty Master has been granted as per the Exeat Policy in the Boarding Rules.

Weekends

At weekends, boarders are able to stay away from School House if their parent has given permission via the Orah software. On these occasions, boarders must pass directly into the care of an adult over the age of 25 (and who is not a student), and must remain in their care at all times. If this is not possible, boarders should return to School House overnight.

School House is a relaxed place over weekends. Many boarders will be busily involved in School sport or other events; some others will have less to do, and so regular trips and activities are organised by the House Staff. All boarders who are 'in' over the weekend will be expected to attend any such outings that are organised. House staff will also organise small local activities for boarders who seem to be ensconced in their rooms for excessive periods.

Living in London and the Exeat Policy

The boarding community at St Paul's is very small and so in their free time we generally encourage our boarders to take full advantage of living in London. We take the boarders on numerous trips that will explore this great city, but they are also permitted a good, and age-appropriate degree of independence, whether to attend a lecture at a London university, volunteer at a local charity, visit a museum, have a meal with visiting family or just to go the local cinema with friends.

We aim to educate boarders about living safely in London, and their induction to boarding life will place particular emphasis on safety and safe travel. The Exeat Policy is the cornerstone of our approach. Full details are in the Boarding Rules, but the basics are clear and sensible: boarders need permission from the Duty Master whenever they wish to leave the school site. The Duty Master will confirm that the trip is appropriate and will set any ground rules necessary, taking into consideration elements such as the boy's age, maturity, the intended destination and time of day. Boarders must then sign the Exeat Book (on Orah) indicating their time of departure and their intended return time. They must also take their charged mobile telephone (which will contain the contact number of the Duty Master). If boarders are delayed at all on their journey they must communicate with the Duty Master and of course must call if they face any difficulties.

As any parent would, we expect an open, respectful and trustworthy response. Boarders not able to act appropriately during their excursion will have their privileges in this regard curtailed. If a pupil does not return to Boarding at the return time anticipated, every effort will be made to communicate with them and to ascertain their whereabouts, and unless the Duty Master is able to contact the pupil, or feel reassured as to the reason for their absence, the police will be informed in timely fashion. *Full details of our Missing Child Policy can be found on the intranet.* Safety warnings and advice are issued to all pupils throughout the year.

Consents, School Trips & Activities Outside School

There will be times throughout the year when the School seeks parental/guardian permission for a boy to attend a specific event or trip. In the case of boarders, House staff will be able to grant permissions for a number of routine events on your behalf – for instance, attendance at a university open day, a school-organised volunteering placement or a School trip or society event that bears no/minimal cost to you. However, where there is a significant additional cost to you, or where we feel uncertain that you would give permission, we will direct your son to obtain your written permission. Please copy us in should you grant any such permissions, so we will be aware of any upcoming excursions. We will also require your express written consent before we permit your son to attend activities out-of-school that will see them in the care of other adults – for instance, local faith groups, sports clubs or any volunteering that is not School-arranged.

Alcohol and Other Substances

No alcohol, cigarettes or drugs are permitted in Boarding or on the School site at any time. Boarders may not drink alcohol at any school organised event or trip, regardless of whether it is on or off site.

The School and House rules detail our position in full including circumstances where certain pupils, in line with UK laws, may be allowed to drink alcohol while on exeat; and appropriate sanctions and support offered to anyone who has difficulties with alcohol or other substances.

ICT and Computer Games

Boarding espouses the principles of the St Paul's ICT and E-Safety policies, and Acceptable Use Protocol, and seeks to educate boarders about the healthy, balanced and productive use of electronic devices. All boarders are bound by the Acceptable Usage Policy and WiFi traffic is managed as per the School's eSafety Policy. Boarders who are felt to be mismanaging their ICT – perhaps through excessive immersion in computer games, or the use of mobile phones after bedtime – may have their equipment removed by House Staff for certain periods to enable them to sleep and work properly, or perhaps be required to take advantage of other opportunities at weekends, to ensure their use of time is balanced. The House operates a 'screens off' policy before bedtimes and the WiFi turns off at lights out.

Parents are asked to be mindful of the phone contracts they purchase for their sons. It is our recommendation that data allowance is limited so that phones are not used as a high-powered route to bypass the School WiFi or to access inappropriate material. Pupils must be aware of their responsibility for any material on devices that are brought to school. Possession of pornography or violent content would be in breach of the School behaviour codes.

Sleep & Bedtimes

We strongly believe that good sleep is vital for any pupil at St Paul's to sustain the energy needed to perform to their best each day in what are very busy terms. Our bedtimes have been set with regard to those at boarding schools nationwide and boarders are expected to comply with them. Each year group's bed-times can be found in the Boarding Rules. The Duty Master will ensure that each boy turns in for the night. A boy who seeks to work late for a specific reason can ask the Duty Master for

an extension. Boarders seeking to work late with frequency will have to meet with the Housemaster to discuss and implement healthy working practices.

Privacy, Supervision, Security

We hope that boarders will swiftly feel at home in their rooms, and feel that they have private space in which to relax. There will be as a matter of course though times when House Staff will need to see into a pupil's room – perhaps to check each evening; to ensure boarders have turned in at their bedtimes; or to investigate a suspected breach of school or house rules. Staff will exercise discretion and sensitivity when seeking to enter a pupil's room, guided by school protocols. Access to the house by boarders or staff who are not members of Boarding is strictly controlled by a security fob access system. All boarders are provided with a key to a lockable drawer in their room for storage of valuables.

Advocacy Support

St Paul's will always look to understand the views and perspectives of young people directly. It may be however that in certain circumstances young people may need some support in expressing their views; these situations may include (but are not limited to) when they have a problem, want to make a complaint, or are subject to a disciplinary procedure. In such cases, and particularly for those with learning, physical and sensory disabilities as well as mental illness, pupils will have the option of having an advocate with them. The Advocate will not act as a proxy for them, rather empower them to make sure that their rights are respected and that their views and wishes are fully considered and reflected in decision making about their own lives. For most boarders, their advocate is likely to be a member of their family, their appointed Education Guardian or someone else close to them. Where such a person is not available boarders are able to contact Advocacy for All on 0345 310 1812 or referrals@advocacyforall.org.uk (either directly or through the Housemaster), who provide independent advocacy support.

Particular Needs

Boarding seeks to support any boarder with a disability, a specific learning disability, for whom English is an additional language or who has arrived from a different educational culture, amongst other particular needs. Our full approach is outlined in 'Boarders with Particular Needs', available on the intranet. The support offered will be discussed and planned with the boarder's academic tutor and the School's Head of Learning Support, and might include provision of supervised work space in Boarding, structured work routines, language discussion groups programmes or (for those with a physical disability) reasonable adjustments to rooming arrangements in the house. If your son has a particular need of an academic or other nature that you would like us to support him with, please be in touch.

Education Guardians

As per the School's Boarding Guardianship Policy, boarding parents who are not based in or near London are required to nominate a local guardian with whom their son can stay should the need arise, and who is available to discuss the child's welfare if the parent is not, for instance by attending Parents' Evenings. We will meet (via Zoom) all Guardians in advance of your son starting in School

House and we encourage them to be actively involved throughout your son's time at School. Please inform us as soon as guardian arrangements change so we can amend our records accordingly.

Family members visiting Boarding

When visiting School House and West House during school hours, family members must report to the main reception to receive a visitor badge and be accompanied at all times by a member of staff. Out of School hours – after 5.30pm, or at the weekend – you may proceed directly to School House. In either case, please ring the door-bell, introduce yourself to the Duty Master and sign the Visitors Book. To help ensure the privacy of the boarders, family members may proceed to the upper floors of the house for a brief time to drop off or collect belongings, and then only when accompanied by their son or supervised by the Duty Master. They should not enter any other boarder's room or use any washroom.

Contact with home

We encourage all boarders to keep in regular contact with family and friends amongst others. To facilitate this, all boarders have a mobile phone, a laptop/tablet and access to the School wifi which allows access to video messaging services such as Skype, Zoom amongst others. The majority of rooms are single rooms, and the double rooms are appropriately split allowing privacy. Calls may be made any time outside of lesson time, prep time and before lights out. Pupils should speak with the Duty Master if time differences necessitate a call during these times and the DM will be happy to allow this or facilitate with a device to contact home with. We can also arrange for a break out room should a pupil in a shared room need a more private space. In an emergency, pupils can access their phone overnight by coming to see the Duty Master. Parents should contact the Duty Master phone (SH 07771 620903. WH 07787 881 662) in an emergency, any time of day or night.

Finally...

If you have any queries at all about any aspect of boarding life at St Paul's, the Housemaster will be very happy to discuss these with you and would encourage you to be in touch, both now and throughout the year.