



ST PAUL'S SCHOOL  
Est. 1509

## Aims & Principles 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; such requests can be made by email to [policyquery@stpaulsschool.org.uk](mailto:policyquery@stpaulsschool.org.uk).**

## Our Aims

**To provide a home that enables boarders to flourish at St Paul's.** The boarding community at St Paul's is a small household 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.

**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.

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

## Our Principles and Practice

The policies and principles that underpin our boarding provision will be available to you in full on the School intranet when your son begins at St Paul's; the majority (including the School House Rules and the Boarding Complaints Procedure) are already available to you on the School's website. 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 and the House Staff**

School House is the one boarding house at St Paul's and it is situated within the main school complex on the banks of the river Thames. It is home to up to 35 boarders between the ages of 13 and 18.

The House is overseen by the Housemaster, Mr Tom Passmore. He is supported by five Assistant Housemasters, Mr Andy Ashworth-Jones, Dr Richard Baxter, Dr Tomi Herceg, Dr Alex Langley, Dr Camille Shammis and our resident Matron. The School Chaplain and Deputy Head Pastoral are also members of the House team. Two of the team will be on duty on any given night, and whoever is master on duty (the "Duty Master") will carry the house mobile (07771620903) which is the best way to contact the House with any urgent information. All of the House team also have access to the School House shared email address, [schoolhouse@stpaulsschool.org.uk](mailto:schoolhouse@stpaulsschool.org.uk), and this is the best way to share daily administrative information with the house. Mr Passmore will also be available to you if you wish to discuss any matter with him personally, however big or small. His email address is

[tjp@stpaulsschool.org.uk](mailto:tjp@stpaulsschool.org.uk) and number is 07921 666 617. We are an open and friendly House, and parental communications (and visits!) 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 is a small house, 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.

### **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. The tutor group will contain pupils from each year group, 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 two 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 performance and behaviour at school, and will report on academic progress, 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 (indeed, copying us both to any email is often the best way). All pertinent information is swiftly shared between House 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 School Library, Mon-Thurs, between 6.30pm and 8.30pm (and between 7.00pm and 8.30pm on a Sunday). Boarders who prove unable to work well independently may be asked to hand over any distracting devices for the duration of prep.

## **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 sports and music facilities are available to boarders. Within School 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 outlined below.

## **Weekends**

At weekends, boarders are able to stay away from School House if their parent has given permission via our Boardingware system (with at least 24 hours' notice; in practice, by Thursday night if planning to be away on a Friday night).

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 have little to do or seem to be ensconced in their rooms for excessive periods – we seek to ensure boarders use their free time in a balanced and enriching manner whilst recognising the need to rest and recharge during very busy terms.

Boarders who remain 'in' School House over the weekend will have the capacity to sign out of the House and leave the school site for periods. Such excursions will be guided by the Exeat Policy discussed below.

## **Living in London and the Exeat Policy**

The boarding community at St Paul's is very small and so in their free time we encourage our boarders to take full advantage of living in London. We will take the boarders on numerous trips that will explore this great city, but they also will be 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. It can be read in full within the School House Rules, but the basics are clear and sensible: boarders need permission from the Duty Master whenever they wish to leave the school site, for all but the most local of destinations. The Duty Master will confirm that the trip is appropriate, can be made

safely 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 Boardingware) 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 will have their privileges in this regard curtailed. If a pupil does not return to School House 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 any such extra activities incur 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 (usually an email to the organising staff member will suffice, or a scanned copy of a signed consent slip. 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. Certain events (a School society dinner, or an external lecture) may have alcohol available, and the permission slip offered might request consent for your son to be allowed to consume a small amount of alcohol in line with UK drinking laws (alcohol illegal for those under 18, apart from 16/17 yr olds who may consume a small amount of beer/wine/cider with a meal if that alcohol is purchased by a supervising adult). School House will generally grant consent along these lines, on the understanding that the boy concerned must behave with complete responsibility.

### **Alcohol and Other Substances**

The School and House rules detail our position. No alcohol, cigarettes or drugs are permitted in School House or on the School site. No boy in our care may drink alcohol except with the permission of the Duty Master, whose discretion will be exercised with due regard to national laws, School policy and holding the child's safety as paramount. In summary, boarders aged 18 and over will only be permitted to drink alcohol in moderation if the Duty Master agrees it can be accomplished responsibly and safely; those aged 16 or 17 will only be granted permission to consume a small amount of alcohol (beer or wine) when it is to be consumed with a meal and purchased by an approved supervising adult. No child under the age of 16 will be allowed to consume alcohol.

Drinking alcohol without the Duty Master's permission, or failing to behave responsibly when drinking alcohol, would be considered a serious breach of School rules and may lead to the application of formal school sanctions. Ongoing pastoral guidance and support will be offered to any boy who has difficulties with alcohol or other substances.

### **ICT and Computer Games**

School House espouses the principles of the St Paul's ICT and E-Safety policies and seeks to educate boarders about the healthy, balanced and productive use of electronic devices. Lower School Boarders will be asked to give in devices before bed time. 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 also operates a 'screens off' policy before bedtimes.

### **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 School House Rules & Supporting Information. 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 that pupils are working well during prep; to ensure boarders have turned in at their bedtimes; 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 School House 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.

### **Particular Needs**

School House seeks to support any boy 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 boy's academic tutor and

the School SEN Coordinator, and might include provision of supervised work space in School House, 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.

### **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 pupil's welfare if the parent is not, for instance by attending Parents' Evenings. We are very happy to meet with such guardians and encourage them to be actively involved.

### **Visiting School House**

When visiting School House during school hours, you must report to the main reception to receive a visitor badge. 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, only boarders' family members may proceed to the upper floors of the house, and then only when accompanied by their son or supervised by the Duty Master.

### **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.