

BOARDING POLICY

1 General rationale

This policy seeks to outline the unique contribution made by the boarding ethos of New Hall School to the achievement of the Mission & Ethos Statement and the Aims of the School.

1.1 Aims

The aims are:

- to make boarding life a rich experience, where the growth and development of the individual is fostered in a secure and happy environment
- to promote community living, where relationships are based on the gospel values of care, trust and respect
- to ensure that students from different traditions are encouraged to fulfil their personal potential through a tangible experience of Christian community
- to promote growth in independence and maturity in preparation for meeting confidently the challenges of the wider world

1.2 Objectives

The objectives are:

- to provide a context for young people to support and encourage each other in their journey towards personal fulfilment and independence, for example by providing a structural framework for living together, by setting up structures for increasing responsibilities and freedoms, mentoring through one-to-one relationships and conflict resolutions
- to ensure a safe and secure environment, where students are offered care, support and challenge from adults trained and experienced in pastoral care, for example, through the Health & Safety Policy and accompanying risk assessments, instigating necessary security measures
- to facilitate opportunities for personal and spiritual development, for example through night and morning prayer, confirmation, liturgies (Sunday Mass), by providing a forum for the discussion of personal goals, by the provision of social activities
- to encourage recognition, appreciation and celebration of the richness of human diversity, for example through cultural celebrations offering a diverse range of activities. Raising the awareness of others to festivals and occasions specific to groups of students
- to create a community where all are welcome and the uniqueness and self-esteem of each individual is nurtured, for example, through recognition of individual achievements commensurate with the personal potential of students and through daily one-to-one contact with students

2 Guidance for staff

All staff have a common law duty of care to the students in the School; essentially this is a pastoral role. These guidelines are to support professional behaviour amongst house and academic staff in the execution of their responsibilities. Much of this information is to be found elsewhere in the Staff Handbook.

It is imperative that clear lines of communication exist between staff. In particular, de-briefing should take place on the changeover of duty personnel in the house situation and between Heads of Year, house staff and Tutors. It is essential that each house has a daily working document/diary where events/issues can be logged and viewed by all staff members of the house. The Houses also use ORAH as a boarding management system which provides this functionality. Any log should be kept securely as it may include sensitive material. It is monitored regularly by the Director of Boarding and/or Heads of Division.

Staff need to be aware that the security and happiness of each student is paramount. In order to accomplish this, staff ought to ensure:

2.1 Each student's dignity and entitlement to privacy are respected

This includes recognising the student's right to personal space. Staff are advised not to enter a student's bedroom unless the student is present and permission is granted. This guideline applies also to the toilet and bathroom areas. Staff should not enter without knocking and indicating their presence. Only in exceptional circumstances, such as a medical emergency, should staff enter any of these areas without student permission. In such cases, the presence of another adult is desirable.

If staff are required to search a student's room, which should only take place if a serious disciplinary offence is suspected, it must be performed according to the *Searching a Student Policy* and guidelines recommended by the BSA. All houses should have copies of this document and all boarding staff should be aware of its contents.

2.2 The operation of an open-door policy to students is encouraged

Staff need to be aware of the risks related to one-to-one student/staff situations. Staff are reminded that a one-to-one conversation behind closed doors is to be avoided. Should such a conversation be necessary, it should be conducted in a setting which offers privacy but also is observable by others, e.g. a room with a window onto a public area. Staff are advised for their own protection not to entertain students in their private accommodation.

2.3 Confidentiality cannot be promised

Staff must be sensitive to the student and, as appropriate, tell the student the name/s of the person/s who will be informed and the reason for this action. All such matters must be recorded on the safeguarding section of MyConcern.

If a case of abuse is suspected or known to have happened, the DSL must be contacted immediately and a written report submitted via My Concern. Staff are reminded that it is imperative that no leading questions or judgements are made during this interview with the student. For further information see the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

2.4 House staff relationships with students must be appropriate

These relationships noticeably differ from the relationships between students and their subject teachers. It is recognised that by the very nature of the situation, staff tend to be at greater ease with the students. Therefore, staff need to guard against actions which can be misinterpreted, e.g. the use of sarcasm. Staff are required to act as professionals at all times.

2.5 The cultural diversity existing in any house is to be celebrated for its richness

Staff need to be sensitive to cultural issues and to create opportunities for students to share their experiences. Stereotypical comments are to be avoided.

2.6 British values are to be celebrated

Evidence of this can be seen through house voting systems, the boarding student council and student voice.

2.7 With regard to health and medical matters, there is a working partnership between the house and medical staff

The aim is to enable students to make important decisions which will affect their present and future health. Methods include careful handling of information and guidance of students in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Medication given must be recorded on the Medical Records System (MRS) clearly stating who, what and why. There is always a School Nurse or Healthcare Assistant available on call for advice if staff are in any doubt.

2.8 The house is a safe place for students

Staff supervision of the house is of primary importance. The house should not be left unattended and a member of staff should always be accessible in person in the Boarding House. To ensure student safety, staff must check that all ground floor windows and doors are locked at night and students are all registered and safely in their rooms. Visitors to the School who are not wearing badges must be challenged. Clear instructions on fire drill procedures must be given to students at the beginning of each academic year and regular drills are carried out each term. Students will also have the numbers of the House mobile, reception, the Independent Person, ChildLine and the Children's Commissioner for England available to them in their rooms.

2.9 Optional Exeats are monitored, recorded and permission sought where appropriate from parents/guardians

See Boarding Handbook.

2.10 Video Games, Visual/DVD material and access to the Internet must be closely monitored in terms of the age appropriateness of their material

See the Staff Handbook and *Policy for the Use of the Internet*.

Age categories as stated for films must be observed. Parental permission must be sought if there is any doubt. To ensure compliance with the BBFC guidelines, students are to be discouraged from bringing their own material into school. On occasions when this does occur, students must submit the films to staff to be judged on their appropriateness for viewing or to be stored for collection by parents.

3 Discipline procedures

Discipline should be seen to be fair and just. See *Behaviour Policy* for details.

Within the house situation, discipline should be characterised by mutual trust, respect and concern, if staff are to teach students to learn, to serve, to forgive and to care. All matters whereby breaches of the school rules have occurred must be recorded, signed and dated by the member of staff. The *Behaviour Policy* and *Code of Conduct* must be followed. The Houses have a set of rewards and sanctions that are available to every student in their rooms at the beginning of term and sent to parents and students before they arrive at the School.

3.1 Theft

The investigation of theft within a boarding house is a very sensitive issue and staff must be extremely security cautious in their actions (see *Staff Handbook, Section 8*). Accurate records

of conversations must be recorded, dated and signed. If it is deemed necessary to search a bedroom, the student and another adult must be present in the room. (See *Searching a Student Policy* and BSA guidance).

3.2 Sanctions

In order to ensure fairness and consistency, the Director of Boarding and relevant Head of Division should be informed of higher-level sanctions. All sanctions should be recorded on iSAMS.

- Staff confiscation of students' belongings, which are deemed to be in direct contravention of school rules, has to be recorded. The items should be stored safely and a collection time arranged with the student or parents.
- Students should be reminded at the beginning of term of our expectations of appropriate behaviour, especially with members of the opposite gender.
- Breaking exeat and being out of bounds are treated seriously as a breach of trust. Parents will be contacted and the students will have privileges withdrawn (e.g. gated during free time).
- As indicated in the Parent Handbook and Code of Conduct, the use of alcohol, cigarettes and e-cigarettes/vaping paraphernalia is against the School rules.
- The supply of illegal drugs is a most serious offence and will lead to permanent exclusion. The use of illegal drugs would normally lead to permanent exclusion.

3.3 Use of Restraint

Staff are reminded that the use of force to restrain students is to be avoided, except in an emergency situation. In such circumstances, it is absolutely essential to contact another member of staff and request immediate assistance. Staff must familiarise themselves with the School's *Restraint Policy*.