

Principles of Boarding

September 2023



WYCOMBE
ABBEY

Boarding is central to the life of Wycombe Abbey. Our ethos is one of full boarding and we seek to offer the advantages this provides to our Day boarding pupils. It is this which enables us to provide an outstanding education in its broadest sense. Boarding underpins the school's policies, organisation and development; it is the essence of the School and the key to its ongoing success.

Our boarding principles are based on our core Christian beliefs. Each member of the community is treated as an individual, and with respect, by other pupils and by staff. Although living together, staff and pupils acknowledge the right of each other to privacy. All pupils should be able to develop physically, spiritually, morally and socially and be able to work, play and relax free from bullying. There is equality of opportunity and respect for all. Each pupil has the right to grow intellectually in an atmosphere of encouragement, challenge and fun. Strong partnerships with parents are seen as an indispensable part of the support and development of the pupils.

As we are an all-girls boarding school, pupils can learn free from the added pressures of the immediate presence of boys, although we welcome their inclusion into wider school life.

Our principles of boarding are designed to support our school aims and values:

- To develop an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect which encourages service to the community and to others.
- To provide conditions for study in an atmosphere which seeks both excellence and balance
- To provide a range of activities and opportunities that will assist in the personal, social and cultural development of each boarder, allowing each individual to develop their individual talents and skills
- To provide accommodation that is comfortable and suited to the needs of boarders, and which provides adequate levels of privacy within a supportive community
- To develop boarders' responsibility for self, for others and for the environment allowing them to contribute to the needs and welfare of their House, School and wider community with dynamism and innovation
- For boarders to feel able to turn to members of staff to share the good things in their lives, as well as seeking advice, counsel and support during times of difficulty
- To create an atmosphere of trust in which positive relationships thrive and where bullying and disharmony would struggle to develop through the creation of a tolerant and open community
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of all, by providing an environment that is, as far as possible, free from unacceptable hazards and dangers
- To communicate frequently with parents: success as well as failure, good news as well as bad.

Community Rules

Wycombe Abbey is a happy, thriving community where pupils adhere to high standards of behaviour and show respect for one another and their environment. Wycombe Abbey aims to help every girl to learn to take responsibility for her own actions and to recognise the importance of certain rules designed to protect both the individual and the community.

The following community rules exist to give clarity to our expectations, we know and trust that pupils understand that they are expected to follow the spirit of these rules. The Boarding Principles apply to all age groups and at all times when the pupil is at School, representing the School or wearing School uniform, travelling to and from School or associated with the School at any time.

At the heart of boarding life is learning to show respect for the individual and the community. All pupils should demonstrate consideration for the health, safety and emotional and physical well-being of everyone within the community and due regard to the rights of others and their property. Where a pupil falls below this standard the school looks to investigate and respond in an efficient, sensitive and appropriate manner.

As a School we wish to encourage positive behaviour and self-discipline. Our aim is to reward effort as well as achievement and to promote good behaviour. To this end departments have a reward system, and the School a commendation system. Good news and achievements are read out in School Meetings and Mark Readings as well as in House Order whilst teachers, staff and Houses encourage good behaviour through praise and positive feedback. Departments, Houses and extra-curricular all have a responsibility to maintain positive relations within the School and ensure an orderly and constructive environment exists for all and where necessary staff have clear guidance on appropriate sanctions to support this aim.

Behaviour within our community should enable the Headmistress to carry out her responsibilities and to ensure, as far as possible, that every pupil is able to benefit from and make her full contribution to the life of the School. We believe that good relations, good manners and a secure learning environment play a crucial part in the development of intellectually curious pupils, who are motivated to become life-long learners. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to make the most of the wide-ranging learning opportunities made available. Both inside the classroom and beyond we aim to teach trust, encouragement and mutual respect for everyone. We believe this will encourage the positive contribution that an individual can make to the life of a school or any other community and we encourage constructive suggestions from all members of the community. We develop qualities of teamwork and leadership through our extensive programme of co-curricular activities and also through life in our boarding community. Pupils are aware of the importance of working with their teachers and School staff to best ensure their future success and the importance of honest academic practice and working to the best of their abilities.

Pupils are aware that we expect them to be ready to learn and to participate in School activities and that they should be proud of the high standards that are set for them. The School aims to set out clear guidance of our expectations of pupils on issues such as standards of dress, boarding routines, punctuality and behaviour in Chapel. Pupils are aware that these must be adhered to and understand why sanctions may be imposed for inconsiderate behaviour. Every pupil has various members of staff whom they can turn to for guidance and to seek clarity if needed.

We are fortunate to occupy a beautiful site and some splendid buildings and our community rules extend to each aspect of life at Wycombe Abbey. We expect everyone to take due care of our

environment, demonstrating to it the respect that it deserves and to use common sense in behaving safely and appropriately in relation to the pupils' surroundings. We expect pupils to behave at all times in a manner that reflects the best interests of the whole community.

In abiding by the community rules it is inherent on all pupils and staff to recognise that everyone has a right to feel secure and to be treated with respect at Wycombe Abbey, particularly the vulnerable. Harassment and bullying will not be tolerated. Our approach to bullying is set out in our Anti-Bullying Strategy and the School remains strongly committed to protecting each member of the community and promoting equal opportunities for all.

The School recognises that occasionally people will transgress the boundaries of accepted behaviour and will need reminding about the high expectations of the School. Appropriate sanctions are set out as a guide to help support staff in creating a culture of outstanding behaviour. We aim to apply sanctions fairly, in accordance with the procedures of natural justice, and, where appropriate, after due investigative action has taken place. Sanctions, some of which incur a permanent disciplinary record, include exclusion, requirement to leave, suspension, rustication, detention and 'gating', withdrawal of privileges, confiscation of property that is being used inappropriately or without consideration, target/uniform/report cards, reporting in at specified times, assistance with domestic tasks (such as collecting litter), or withdrawal from a lesson, School trip or team event. Disciplinary measures should be seen by everyone as a deterrent and above all it should be clear that any sanctions are applied fairly, consistently and are appropriate to the seriousness of the offence, therefore there is a clear scale of sanctions and a staged process of progressing through them. Any pupil who finds themselves in the company of others breaking School rules may find themselves sanctioned unless they make it clear that they are not complicit by either attempting to prevent the misdemeanour from taking place or disassociating themselves clearly from it.

To ensure the smooth running of the community, all pupils are reminded:

- To respect other pupils right to feel safe and secure. To only engage and communicate in an appropriate and kindly genteel manner, treating others with dignity, consideration and respect.
- To respect other pupils' need for privacy and personal space and to respect their rights to security of belongings and property.
- To respect other pupils' need for sleep by not using mobile devices, laptops or by talking after 'lights out'.
- To respect the property and environment of the School using all equipment in an appropriate and safe manner.
- To behave in a manner that befits their age (including but not limited to age restrictions on films, following Boarding House routines).
- To discuss with a Housemistress before engaging in recreational activities that could be considered dangerous such as the use of skateboards, roller-blades, scooters or similar whilst on the School site. (Helmets should be worn).
- To abide by the Responsible Use of Digital Devices policy and exercise all due caution in the use of digital technology.
- To ensure that they follow School guidance upon the availability and consumption of alcohol.
- To understand that smoking and the use of vaping equipment or their equivalent are not permitted in School.
- To not drive a motor vehicle in the School grounds unless accompanied by a driving instructor or with the permission of the School.

- To not accept lifts from anyone they do not know nor be driven by anyone without parental permission.
- To follow all the appropriate procedures regarding attendance, signing in and out of Houses and leave arrangements.
- Pupils are not permitted to order food to be delivered to School without permissions from relevant staff.
- In regard to personal relationships, to behave in a manner mindful of the nature of the community and those around you. Engaging in a sexual relationship whilst at school is forbidden.

The following are areas of specific guidance for pupils in regards to the community rules:

The Wycombe Abbey site

Pupils are fortunate to enjoy extensive and beautiful grounds in which to be educated. The School operates an Access to Site policy which requires all visitors to report to the Custodians or to the Main Entrance to sign in and wear a red lanyard badge whilst on the premises, and they will be escorted at all times.

Access to the site and to buildings are controlled through electronically locked gates and doors. Only current pupils, staff and residents should have access to key cards and/or wristbands that enable access. Pupils should report any concerns they have about access to the site to staff and should keep all codes confidential.

Whilst using the site pupils are expected to adhere to the following:

- Gain permission from their Housemistress in advance for any visitors to the School. Housemistresses will advise them of the procedures.
- Ensure that the Housemistress has all relevant information about the whereabouts and activities of all pupils.
- Follow the signing in and out procedures. Pupils must sign in as a visitor and introduce themselves to the duty staff when visiting other Houses.
- U11 pupils should walk in groups of three or more in the grounds.
- L14-UV should walk in pairs when away from the vicinity of school buildings or in the dark.
- Pupils should walk only on footpaths and grassed areas. There should be no walking or running on the roads.
- Pupils should remember to ensure that doors, gates and ground floor windows are shut.
- To avoid areas which are marked out of bounds, such as the lake and Estates Office/Compound.

Leaving the site

Details of when pupils have permission to visit High Wycombe are published in House.

Pupils understand that the School has a duty of care over them and must be able to locate their whereabouts at all times. Pupils may only leave the School premises with permission and signing out procedures must be followed.

If Parents wish to take a pupil out for any reason they must ensure they have discussed the matter with their child's Housemistress and that pupils are signed out in the appropriate manner.

Property

All pupils are responsible for looking after their own property in the correct manner and have a duty to respect the property of others. Theft or vandalism are serious disciplinary incidents and should be reported to school staff immediately.

Belongings should be with pupils or in the Year Group Hubs. Areas outside the main Abbey reception, dining room and Big School should be free of bags and possessions at all times.

Pupils must remember to place their property in an appropriate place whilst in Chapel, lunch or at any other times at which it is not in their personal possession.

These places include:

- their locker;
- in the room where the first lesson is to be held, or, before Science lessons, on hooks outside the labs;
- in the library;
- in Hubs;
- neatly placed on hooks or shelves;

Corridors, passageways, doorways and steps should be left clear of possessions at all times and possessions should be left in areas that are sheltered from wind or rain. Bags and possessions should be hung on pegs outside the Art rooms and laboratories. Belongings may be confiscated if they are left lying around.

Pupils are reminded that they should not have in their possession any items that are illegal, not accepted in School (e.g. tobacco products or alcohol) or is likely to cause offence. Where necessary the School may conduct a search in line with the School's Search policy.

Conduct and Demeanour

Pupils are expected to be polite, courteous and well-mannered at all times and in all areas of the School.

Pupils are to take all meals in the School dining rooms; Clarence pupils take breakfast and dinner in Clarence. Food and drink should be consumed only in the dining rooms, the courtyard café and appropriate places within the Boarding Houses. Pupils can drink water in hubs but other food and drinks should not be consumed in these areas. Pupils are not allowed to chew gum.

Pupils are not allowed to use mobile phones or any other electronic device in the Dining Room nor walk along the corridors using them, they can only be used in lessons as directed by their teacher. Pupils may use electronic devices in House Studies, Hubs and in libraries to listen to music.

Academic Behaviour

Pupils are aware that the highest standards of behaviour are expected in lessons.

Pupils are aware that their behaviour in class should demonstrate respect for others, a willingness to learn and a willingness to allow others to learn. Teachers are responsible for managing the behaviour of their classes.

Pupils are aware of the importance of applying themselves to the work set by staff both in class and as prep work and that help is available where a pupil is struggling with work that has been set.

Pupils are aware of the importance of prompt and punctual attendance at all lessons and activities. Pupils who know in advance that they will miss an individual or class lesson should inform their teacher

by email or in person. Unauthorised absence from lessons will be investigated and resolved appropriately.

Pupils are aware of the importance of completing all academic work with honesty and integrity. Plagiarism is a serious disciplinary incident. Pupils should always ensure that their work credits external sources appropriately using recognised referencing procedures and quotation marks. Evidence of plagiarism will be investigated and managed appropriately and in extremis can lead to the most serious disciplinary sanctions.

Adaptations and extraordinary circumstances

Pupils must adhere to any measures that the School adopts to maintain good order and safeguarding pupils and staff during extra-ordinary circumstances. Any adaptations and expectations will be communicated to pupils, parents and staff.

The School will not accept any unkindness towards others in relation to any circumstances that arise and pupils should behave in a manner that is considerate and sensitive towards all members of our community.

Pupils must respect the right of others to maintain their own private space and respect the personal choices of others (e.g. wearing facemasks in lessons).

Pupils must follow guidance measures in place and changes to the operation of normal routines and practices, such as, social distancing, one-way systems and movement around the site, the use of areas dedicated to particular year groups and/or houses.

Pupils should be aware that any measures that the School adopts will be kept under review and are liable to change depending upon circumstances.

Pupils must continue to work in line with the School's academic expectations and complete all work to the best of their ability whether learning onsite or learning remotely.

Summary of our Approach to Sanctions

We aim to apply sanctions fairly, in accordance with the procedures of natural justice, and, where appropriate, after due investigative action has taken place. Sanctions, some of which incur a permanent disciplinary record, include exclusion, requirement to leave, suspension, rustication, detention and 'gating', withdrawal of privileges, confiscation of property that is being used inappropriately or without consideration, target/ uniform/report cards, reporting in at specified times, assistance with domestic tasks (such as collecting litter), or withdrawal from a lesson, School trip or team event. The School will support pupils throughout any disciplinary process and where a pupil has additional needs which may affect behaviour this will be arranged through by either the House or the Learning Enhancement department.

Disciplinary measures should be seen by everyone as a deterrent and above all it should be clear that any sanctions are applied fairly, consistently and are appropriate to the seriousness of the offence, therefore there is a clear scale of sanctions and a staged process of progressing through them. Pupils in the company of others breaking School rules may be sanctioned unless it is clear that they are not complicit by either attempting to prevent the misdemeanour from taking place or disassociating themselves clearly from it.