



Statement of Boarding Principles and Practice

Boarding at Westonbirt School – the general structure of pastoral care

Westonbirt School has a long history of boarding and believes that the community atmosphere of the school is greatly enhanced by the presence of boarders. Boarding is offered to those pupils (from the UK or overseas) who wish to either full board, weekly board or flexi board. Boarders are an integral part of life at Westonbirt; they represent the heart of the school. There are three houses; each house has a dedicated live in Housemistress, an Assistant Housemistress or Housemaster and a team of associated tutors, whose pastoral work is essential to maintain the smooth running of the boarding community and to enhance the quality of life of the pupils whilst they are in school. Boarding at Westonbirt School is overseen by the Head of Boarding and Deputy Head (Pastoral), Mrs Bradbury.

Importantly, when a pupil boards at Westonbirt School, they don't just join a House, they become part of an extended family. You will feel a sense of belonging and know that you are accepted as an individual; problems will be shared and triumphs celebrated. Living and working within a caring community provides a safe training ground within which to develop critical life-skills, such as the importance of communication, consideration and compromise; lessons that cannot be taught as effectively in the classroom.

Boarding at Westonbirt School

Boarding at Westonbirt aims to provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the welfare of each individual and encourages their all-round development. It is a place where every pupil feels comfortable and accepted and where each individual is encouraged to discover and reach their full potential. The Houses are central to this ethos and are places where pupils feel secure and are properly looked after by well qualified and experienced staff.

Through boarding, pupils receive an enhanced education, which offers greater access to school facilities and a wide variety of activities. Boarders form a cooperative, tolerant and purposeful community where valuable skills such as leadership and teamwork are developed.



Our aim is for every pupil to develop the confidence, independence and self-awareness needed to enable them to play an active and positive part in an ever-changing world. Through a great sense of community spirit, they develop a deeper cultural awareness and a greater respect for others. Their social skills develop and improve quickly, enabling each of them to gain friends for life.

Aims

- To encourage, challenge and value each individual; promoting honesty, openness, tolerance and understanding.
- To maintain a happy, disciplined and structured environment and to promote dignity, equality and respect.
- To cultivate self-confidence, independence and responsibility, with pupils being encouraged to always think about others.
- To support the growth, development and needs of the whole person.

In Boarding we promote these aims by:

- Producing an open and trusting ethos in which each boarder feels able to approach any other member of the community, staff or pupil, confident in the knowledge they will be treated and respected as an individual.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of each boarder, by providing an environment that is safe and secure.
- Providing accommodation that is suited to the needs of boarders, according to age and maturity, that provides adequate levels of comfort and privacy.
- Providing a stimulating, enriching and forward-thinking environment for all pupils, where achievement, enterprise, creativity and leadership are nurtured and developed.
- Providing pupils with the opportunities and structure in which to develop their own moral, spiritual and social values.
- Providing a range of activities, hobbies and opportunities related to age and maturity that will assist in the personal, social and cultural development of each boarder.
- Providing opportunities for leadership and responsibility within the boarding house.

In order to achieve our aims, we provide:

- Appropriate staffing levels in all boarding houses, comprising a Housemistress, Assistant Housemistress and Tutors, with regular pastoral INSET and meetings of House teams to promote and ensure an understanding of topics relevant to the pupils under their care.
- An extensive range of extra-curricular, weekend and House activities.
- Clear and effective policies and procedures for Academic and Pastoral matters, Health and Safety concerns and Safeguarding and Child Welfare issues.
- A wide range of opportunities for pupils to adopt leadership roles, at all levels, within the school and to contribute to the development of policy and change at House and school level.
- Age-appropriate, well-equipped living and sleeping accommodation.
- Effective communication systems, including wireless internet, to enable pupils to maintain regular contact with parents, guardians and extended families.
- High quality medical, welfare and administrative support systems.
- Efficient methods for reporting and addressing maintenance matters.
- High quality catering services and access to drinking water at all times, with an opportunity for boarders to input directly with the school's service over food issues, implementing changes where feasible/desirable.
- A carefully planned and managed induction procedure, with close monitoring of systems to ensure continuity of care as appropriate.
- A broad and balanced curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, with particularly close monitoring of EAL.

Facilities and Opportunities

The boarding houses are upgraded and developed on a rolling programme. All houses have their own separate recreation spaces, kitchens, and bathrooms. The boarding staff provide an extensive programme of activities for the boarders during evenings and weekends and boarders have access to the impressive sports and recreation facilities within the main school campus. Boarders also regularly enjoy cultural activities such as celebrations of the Chinese New Year as well as for example, organise and attend their own quiz nights, or arrange trips out for meals, entertainment or shopping. The Cotswolds naturally lend themselves to the outdoors and as a community, we certainly make the most of the activities available in this county, particularly at the weekends. Boarders can also participate in a flourishing D of E programme and will be supported to attend any other extracurricular activity they would usually attend at home.



Welfare

Pupils are provided with three very good meals each day when boarding and the sixth form also have access to the information environment of the school's café. Drinks and snacks are also readily available in all of the houses, at break times and any help can always be sought through: class tutors, Heads of Year and Key Stage leads, as well as through the medical team in the Health Centre. Spiritual guidance is provided by the Chaplain. We have our own counsellor as well as a listener. Overseas pupils also have access to EFL lessons during the week. At Westonbirt School we also pay much attention to the 'pupil voice' through house meetings, committees, surveys and regular feedback.

Our Boarding Team

All our boarding staff live within the boarding houses and also teach at Westonbirt School. They help to provide a sense of community in a homely environment and are there to personally support you and give you the guidance you require right through until you leave Sixth Form.

Our boarding house staff are all trained in first-aid and work alongside our school nurses to provide day-to-day medical requirements.