

Boarding Handbook

A Guide for Parents and Staff. A key welfare document in relation to
National Minimum Standards

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* Also covered by the relevant whole school policies.

Introduction to Boarding at Dorset House

This boarding handbook has been compiled to help pupils, parents and staff to understand how boarding operates within Dorset House, along with its practicalities, policies and procedures. It should be read in conjunction with the *Boarding Pupil Handbook*, given to each new Boarder. It has been written to demonstrate compliance with the *National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools* (updated September 2022) and the *Independent Schools Standards Regulations* inspected under the Integrated Inspection Framework.

History of boarding at Dorset House

Dorset House is proud to be the oldest private prep school in West Sussex and indeed, one of the oldest in the country and we can trace our roots back to the 18th century. The school moved to its current site on the banks of the River Arun, in West Sussex – right in the heart of the South Downs National Park over 50 years ago and children can enjoy the wonderful setting with boarding and dining in The Manor. At the same time as offering co-education in 2009 the boarding setup changed to offer ‘Flexi’ boarding (details of which can be found on p.5)

Boarding Principles and Practice at Dorset House

The school motto of ‘Be The Best You Can Be’ extends to ‘Be The Best Boarder You Can Be’ (NMS 1, NMS 15) . We try to engender a ‘home away from home’ feeling with a relaxed, friendly atmosphere that allows for open communication. We strive to achieve mutual respect between all involved in boarding, both boarders and staff (NMS 3) . We hope that boarding at Dorset House provides an environment where boarders can feel relaxed, happy and supported. Quite simply, we aim to make boarding an experience from which many happy memories can be taken.

The ethos of the school is one of inclusion and support for boarders. We are very proud of the high-quality pastoral care given to all pupils at Dorset House. Pastoral care is provided by the Housemaster, House Tutors and Night Matron, who themselves are an integral part of the school community. This provision hinges on the excellent working relationships established between staff and pupils to make each pupil feel supported, encouraged and known in an atmosphere of tolerance, openness and trust.

Boarders are an integral part of the way that the school works and therefore the Head of Boarding is a member of the School Council to ensure the perspective of a boarder is represented.

Boarding ethos

A sense of community is of immense value to children and to their families and it stems from our desire to understand and care for the whole child, and we hope that boarding at Dorset House is seen as an extension to family life. We aim to meet the individual needs, foster the aptitudes and nurture the growth of each child in order to create an environment whereby they have the opportunity ‘Be The Best They Can Be’. In line with the whole school aims and ethos, we offer activities for pupils which complement and develop their academic life, and which enhance and add quality to the co-curricular provision. Boarders have access to facilities and opportunities to explore their interests and enthusiasms, be it sporting, cultural or the Arts.

We believe that emotional and social well-being and growth, self-esteem and confidence are of prime importance. We provide an environment where the differences between pupils are celebrated and where the aim is to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged (NMS 3) . Personal pastoral care and positive staff/pupil relationships provide the support and care to nurture and enhance this.

Welfare Policies and Procedures

The following whole school policies are equally relevant to flexi-boarding at Dorset House School:

- Anti-Bullying
- Behaviour and Discipline
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Complaints
- Curriculum
- Fire Safety
- First Aid and Administration of Medicine
- Health and Safety
- Learning Development
- PSHE
- Recruitment and Selection
- Supervision of Pupils

All these policies are available on the school website (dorsethouseschool.com) in the 'Key Information' tab.

Matrons maintain a file for each boarder recording details of their medical history, drug reactions and allergies, on-going conditions, record of medical treatments and medications administered. Welfare and other information specific to each boarder are also recorded in their medical file. Information on allergies and on-going medication is made available to all staff.

Between them, the boarding staff is very experienced and all staff receive regular training in Child Protection ([NMS 2](#)). A nightly debrief is held and a log is kept of the evening's events to ensure continuity and clear communication. Any pastoral concerns are also shared with Form-Tutors and Laura Hutchings, the Deputy Head & DSL. Regular meetings are also held.

The School's Safeguarding Document, which includes the Child Protection Policy provides the details and sets out the guidelines that staff must follow. All staff have read this policy and received training.

Staff working in the boarding house are recruited in line with school recruitment and vetting policies. ([NMS 19.1](#)) For further information please refer to the school's Recruitment and Selection Policy.

All staff with unsupervised access to boarders have an enhanced DBS check. ([NMS19.4](#))

Missing boarder procedure (NMS 20.6).

A register is taken twice every evening (at supper and when returning to boarding house for bed) to make sure that every boarder is accounted for. If at any stage a boarder is found to be unexpectedly missing, the following procedures will be applied (as stated in Supervision Policy):

- Checks will be made by the member of staff of duty
- The pupil's friends will be consulted without causing alarm.
- If the pupil remains unaccounted for, the Headmaster/Housemaster will be alerted.
- A search of the school grounds will be co-ordinated by the Housemaster and boarding staff
- The Head will decide when to inform the parents of the missing child.
- On the Head's command inform the police.
- Police will require details such as age, address, height, distinguishing features and clothing. A photograph should also be provided.

'Flexi' Boarding

'Flexi' boarding is as it sounds, it is designed to be flexible and suit your family and your child. 'Flexi' boarders stay with us between one and four evenings (Mon-Thurs) each, and every week. From experience we find that the consistency of children staying on their chosen boarding nights is important for the group dynamic and helps with the sense of community. It is for this reason that we do not have children staying on the odd night here or there. There of course may be an important occasion where a child might not board, such as a family celebration, and we ask for you to let us know as soon as you can. The notice period is 72 hours, otherwise charges will still apply.

Dorset House offers a wide a varied selection of additional activities and our children have long days and busy lives considering their young age. For this reason, following the holidays, it is our policy not to offer boarding on the first night of term in order to allow children to adjust to the fast pace of life back at school.

Whilst boarding for one night is common in the beginning, as children get older we try and encourage two consecutive nights so that students really feel involved in the boarding way of life and properly prepare themselves for their next school. This also discourages the 'sleepover' mentality that can sometimes occur.

A waiting list for beds is kept by the Housemaster. The allocation of beds is reviewed every term and the Housemaster will write three weeks prior to the end of each term, asking for confirmation of the nights on which you would like your child / children to board the following term, with a response required by the end of the penultimate week of term. We will only consider firm commitments - an expression of interest will not enable you to 'reserve' a place. During this two-week period we will not accept any new boarders for the current term.

By the end of term places will be allocated as follows:

1. Priority will be given to current boarders for the existing nights on which they board.
2. Priority will also be given to current boarders for any additional nights (other than in mixed year group dorms – see point 4 below).
3. Within a year group, if there is insufficient capacity to meet all demands, places will be given to current boarders in order of response and then to new boarders in order of response
4. For Years 5 and 6, who share dormitories, priority will be given to Year 6 (current or new) over Year 5.

You can, of course, request a place for the next term prior to the start of this process. The principles above will, however, still apply and so we will only be able to confirm arrangements to all parents at the end of term.

Prior to the last three weeks of term, you can, subject to a place being available, add a night or start as a new boarder for the current term at any time. We will simply allocate the places according to when we receive the request.

Boarding Staff

Dorset House has a dedicated boarding staff team including:

- *Mr and Mrs Marconi* – Director of Music/Housemaster and formally Reception Teacher/House Parent/Night Matron. They live in the Manor. Mr Marconi is in charge of Boarding and oversees all staff and Boarding activities over the course of the week. (Mrs Marconi will still aid, along with Mrs Lamb, with induction of new Night Matrons and shadow in the first weeks as necessary). [\(NMS 20.2 & 20.7\)](#)
- *Mrs Burton-Haigh* – House tutor (Head of Maths & Director of Studies) is responsible for supervising boarding on a Monday.
- *Miss Sam Rippington* – House tutor (Girls Games teacher) is responsible for supervising Boarding on a Thursday night.
- *Dr. Wintel* – House tutor (Geography and Sport) is responsible for supervising boarding on a Monday and Thursday. He lives onsite.
- *Mr Manley* – House Tutor (Sport), is responsible for supervising boarding on a Wednesday & Thursday. He lives onsite.
- *Matrons* – Mrs Lamb is responsible for all boarders' health concerns during the day.
- Miss Powell-Davies, the resident Night Matron [\(NMS 20.7\)](#) is on hand for any boarder with health concerns at night. All matrons have Paediatric First Aid qualifications along with Mrs Marconi. Mr Marconi also has a First Aid qualification.
- *Gap Students* – Dorset House is lucky to have two gap students who are very involved in boarding and who are resident in the Manor. We also have assistance three nights a week from a local university student.

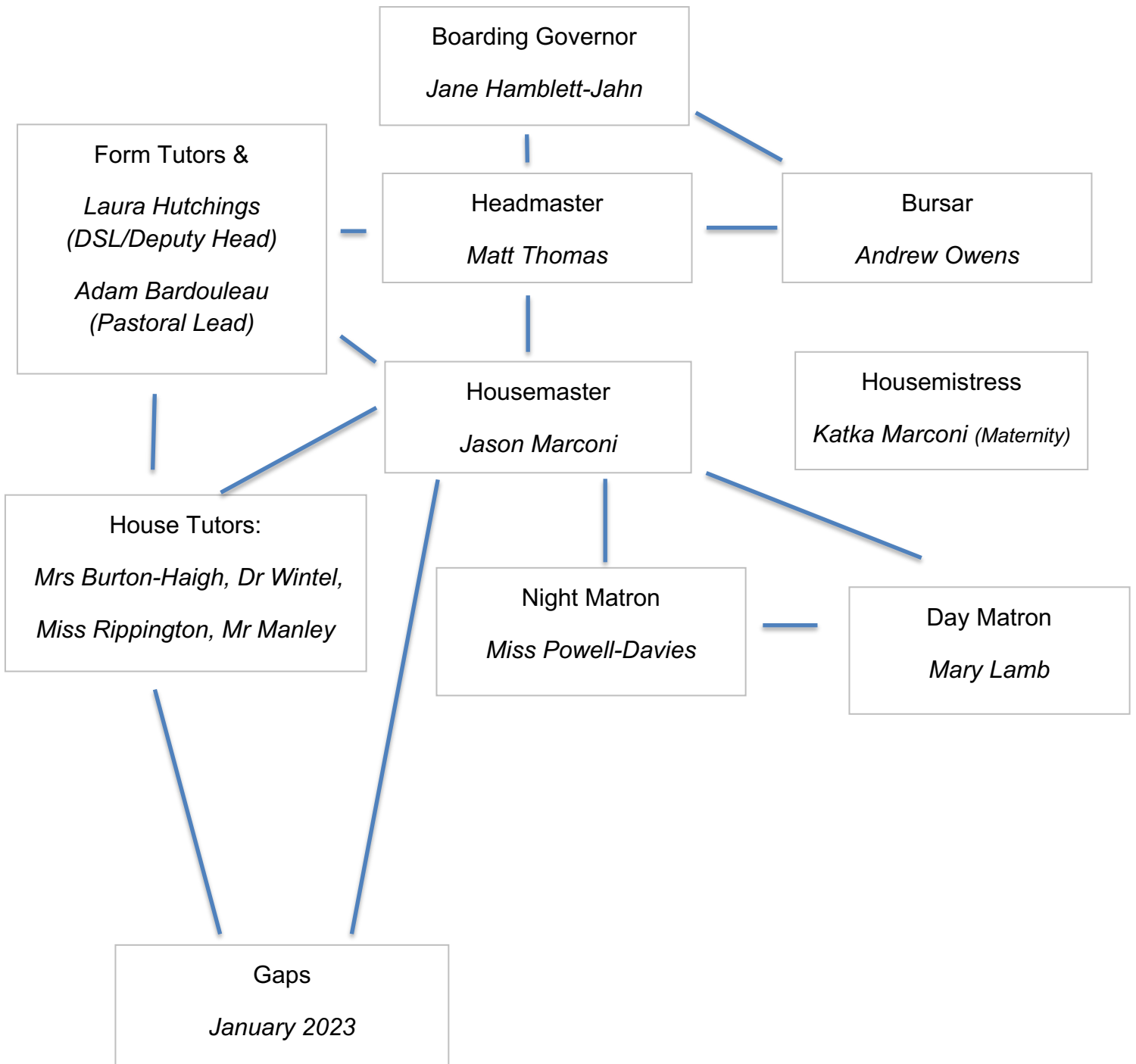
Jane Hamblett-Jahn is also our dedicated Boarding Governor. She is Director of Boarding at Brighton College.

All staff have had an enhanced DBS check. [\(NMS 19\)](#). The school carries out a full range of safer recruitment checks.

There is always an adequate number of staff with the boarders from after tea until bedtime. After supper the boarders participate together in an activity/activities which is fully supervised by staff. [\(NMS 20.3\)](#) [\(NMS 20.4\)](#)

Gap students are not left in charge of large groups of boarders, though discretion is used to allow for small groups to be supervised.

Staffing Structure:



In the rare and unlikely event that a boarder needs to be taken to St Richard's Hospital, an emergency rota is in place to ensure boarders have adequate supervision levels.

Senior boarding staff have considerable boarding experience and have undertaken appropriate training. (NMS 2.2)

The safety of all boarders and pastoral staff is paramount. Well tested drills to deal with illness, fire and allegations or complaints are in place and covered by the relevant policies.

There is a full and varied range of activities for the flexi-boarders available from 6.30pm – 7.30pm. These activities make full use of the school's sports, music & IT facilities and are supervised by members of staff. (NMS 18.1) Boarders are supervised in all their activities. No high risk activities are offered but all our activities and outings are risk assessed. In addition to on-site activities the flexi-boarders may have the opportunity to partake in off-site activities. Risk Assessments forms are completed in accordance with the school's Health & Safety Policy. (NMS 18.2)

It is the policy of the school that boarders do not stay in school during the holidays and weekends.

Flexi-boarders can contribute to improving the boarding provision and to its future development through the termly boarding meetings (NMS 13.1). Surveys also provide opportunities to comment on the boarding provision. There is also a suggestion/complaints box in the library.

The school has appointed an independent listener Marie-Claire Arrowsmith, whom children can contact confidentially via the red boxes in the Manor. Details of Childline (0800 1111) and the Children's Commissioner (0207 783 8330) are placed in the boarding house (including where they have access to a phone).

New Boarders

Although boarding feels second nature to those of us who have lived and worked in it for some time, we appreciate that it can be an intimidating experience for the younger or first time boarder. We encourage all boarders, new or experienced, to approach us when they are homesick or have concerns so that we can share our experience and offer our support.

Before new boarders start they are given a copy of the 'DH Boarding Guide' – a child friendly booklet that details routines, expectations and includes pictures of staff. All new boarders are also allocated a boarding 'buddy'. The 'buddy' is a more experienced boarder who can offer support, guidance and practical advice to the new boarder. The Year 8 'Head of Boarding' also has a part to play in helping new boarders settle in. The Housemaster is also responsible for checking in with new children to make them feel welcome. Boarding staff will also be in regular contact with the parents of new boarders in the first few weeks to give updates and address any concerns that may arise. (NMS 11.1) The induction process also includes a fire safety talk and children are walked through the various exits in the Manor. (NMS 10*)

Communication

From/With the School

Parents will always be kept informed of any matters of concern and parents are encouraged to contact the school with any worries that either they or their child may have. Parents are always welcome to visit their child and there is a high level of informal communication between staff and parents.

Should you wish to make a formal complaint the school has a complaints procedure, details of which can be found on the website ([NMS 14.1](#)), however we encourage parents to come and discuss any concern with the Housemaster in the first instance.

Contacting your Child

Boarders have access to a phone each evening and call home as frequently as they wish. ([NMS 12](#)) Equally parents should feel free to call the boarding house on 01798 831456 to speak to their child, bearing in mind the timings for bed (see page 14). Y7&8 pupils, who tend to board more frequently, have regular access to emails via their tablets (all DH emails are first initial followed by surname@dorsethouseschool.com)

Keeping in Touch with School Life

The school website www.dorsethouseschool.com is an invaluable source of information and gives parents direct access to all that is going on at the school. The 'Two Weeks Ahead' mail out is sent every Friday and provides further details of events that are in the school calendar.

The Fabric of the Boarding House

Accommodation ([NMS 4](#))

All boarding accommodation is situated within the Manor at the heart of the school. As a 12th Century building it is undoubtedly one of the most striking boarding houses offered at any prep school. There are three boys' dormitories (Year 5&6, Year 7 and Year 8) on the first floor of the Manor and two girls' dormitories on the second floor (Year 5&6 and Year 7&8). The girls' dormitories and the boys' dormitories are located on separate floors. The staircases are alarmed to ensure segregation at night.

Boarding accommodation has been recently refurbished and updated and is subsequently in good condition and is warm, ventilated and well lit. Regular risk assessments are carried out and any repairs that are needed are carried out as soon as practically possible ([NMS 4.1](#)).

Boarding accommodation is not used for any other purpose and no other members of the public are allowed into the boarding house unless accompanied by a member of staff. The Manor is secured and locked at night by duty staff and is protected by an intruder alarm set by the Housemaster. ([NMS 4.5](#))

Sleeping accommodation is suitably furnished and sufficient space is available for all boarders. Boarders may personalise their areas by bringing in items from home such as photos which may make the child more comfortable in the boarding house. Usually, the Boarding team discuss and allocate beds, but the children may make requests.

Boarders have adequate access to WCs and washing facilities for their own exclusive use that are clean and appropriately serviced. All pupils have access to changing facilities, with showers and toilets. Boarders have access to a good range of recreational areas both indoors and outside. The Library provides the children with an opportunity for relaxation if required. Boarders are not allowed in staff accommodation and are not allowed into other dormitories without the permission of the member of staff on duty.

The school has a surgery and boarders who are ill are normally sent home. In the event that they have to stay in school there are two isolated areas, with the relevant facilities, to accommodate for both boys and girls.

Boarders are expected to make their beds and keep their dormitories tidy, and there is a room check each morning and as an incentive there is a competition with a tuck reward for the tidiest group.

Boarders' privacy is respected at all times. Staff do not intrude while they are changing or showering.

Property

It is essential to the well-being of a boarding house that property is respected. Boarders are expected to safeguard their own property, take care of the school's property and not to take property which belongs to others.

Boarders are discouraged from having valuable personal possessions in school. Items such as Kindles are collected at bedtime for safe keeping until the morning. Pupils are not allowed to have money in school. [\(NMS 5.3\)](#)

Communal areas and Facilities

The Manor is situated within the larger grounds of Dorset House and boarding aims to make full use of all available facilities including the pitches, tennis courts, all weather pitch, swimming pool and barn. Within the main living area there is a library, a large selection of board and puzzle games and a TV. Due to the wide range of activities offered during boarding, the television is not normally used in the evening with the exception of Thursdays (normally in winter) which are historically film night where the whole boarding house comes together to watch a film and enjoy tuck. The boarders have access to the wider world through news on the TV in the morning and newspaper articles in the Wildbrooks teaching block. [\(NMS 18.4\)](#)

Clothing/Bedding

All clothing should be named with either indelible ink or name tags.

Duvet

Duvet cover

Pillow

Pillow case

Dressing gown

Slippers

Pyjamas

Toiletries and bag

Towel

1 complete change of school clothes.

Music/instrument for those that have lessons.

Children's clothes are laundered each evening and are handed in before they shower. Bedding is also laundered regularly throughout the course of the term. The laundry room is provisioned with a washing machine and tumble-dryer. (NMS 5.1) All belongings go home at the end of each term.

Fire Procedures (NMS 10)

All staff and boarders are made fully aware of the evacuation routes and a fire drill which take place each term. A fire risk assessment is in place and is reviewed annually. Emergency lighting, fire alarms and fire fighting equipment are maintained under contract. Fire alarms are tested weekly during term time. Fire drills are reviewed annually by the Bursar.

Health & Wellbeing

Boarders have access to the full range of medical services. The Matrons, (all of whom are qualified in paediatric first aid or first aid) deal with minor illnesses and first aid. Matrons maintain detailed records for all boarders of prescribed and 'over the counter' drugs and their administration.

Sick children have immediate access to a Matron (day or night), who will keep them under appropriate supervision until they are better and return to class or are collected by their parents/guardians. As Dorset House is a flexi boarding school, boarders are not required to be registered with a school doctor; it is expected that parents will be responsible for all their child's medical, dental and optical needs whilst boarding. (NMS 7.4)

If any boarder is ill or sick during boarding hours and it is deemed that they will benefit from being at home, their parents/guardians will be called usually no later than 10:30pm. Beyond this time, the child will stay in the surgery 'sick bay' if they are in need of isolation due to sickness and/or fever. They will be carefully monitored by the Matron. Their parents/guardians will be informed of their condition first thing in the morning which will usually be at 7am. The child may still need to go home or, if the symptoms have eased, the child can join in with the regular routine of the day.

Should a pupil need to be taken to St Richard's Hospital (in Chichester) by the Houseparent during the night we have a roster of emergency cover, where one member of staff is 'on call' and will remain in the Manor on duty until the Houseparent returns.

Any specific medications required by boarders should be handed in to the office where a form will be filled in by the parent. All medication is safely and securely stored. The matron will administer it according to the prescription. It is vital that each boarder has an up-to-date medical file and parents are asked to contact the school and inform them of any changes in medical circumstances. In addition the surgery contains a stock of 'basic' medication which can be administered as required. A detailed log is kept in the surgery of all illness and injury as well as any medications administered. (NMS 7.6)

Health education, both physical and mental, and promoting positive behaviour and wellbeing for pupils is covered as part of the PSHE provision and is reinforced amongst boarders at appropriate times. (NMS 7.1 & 15.1).

A record of any pastoral concerns is kept by the Housemaster and should issues arise these are discussed at staff meetings and boarding meetings. This spreadsheet is also shared with Form Tutors who are updated immediately should an entry be made about a pupil in their class to ensure clear communication between staff. Whilst the nature of the Boarding House dictates the configuration of dorms, staff carefully consider the allocation of beds based on the relationships of children. This is dynamic and changes can be made as appropriate

as we appreciate relationships can have their ups and downs, but our pastoral care and communication between staff is designed to mitigate these snags as early as possible. (NMS 4.1)

Protocol for Provision of Non-prescriptive Medication to Boarders

Every visit by a Boarder is logged in the Surgery book, whether or not specific treatment is administered. If a boarder complains of feeling unwell:

- Try to establish what the symptoms are and when they began.
- Take their temperature – between 35 and 37 degrees is regarded as normal.
- Note in the Surgery book the time, boarder's name, symptoms and any treatment administered, then initial the final column.
- When paracetamol is administered, the date, time, name, dosage and type should be recorded in the paracetamol register and initialled.

There are three possible outcomes to a Surgery visit:-

- The child will be treated and returned to class or normal activities.
- The child will remain under supervision until it is felt they are well enough to return to class or normal activities.
- OR The parents/guardians will be contacted and arrangements made for the child to be picked up from the school.

Children with Medical Special Needs

It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school if their child has any medical conditions or special needs (eg. Epilepsy, Asthma, diabetes), by means of the medical questionnaire. The Day Matron will then liaise with the parents/guardian and then advise the staff of any special measures or precautions that must be taken.

Boarders with special welfare needs (from needing emotional support to homesickness, personal stress and medical difficulties) are given support and encouragement as appropriate to their needs, with help being sought from outside services where necessary and with the involvement of parents.

All boarders are treated equally and in line with the school's equal opportunities policy. Minority groups and those who find it difficult to adjust to school or flexi-boarding life are offered support and encouragement. Children are supported where they have special needs (eg. dietary, cultural or religious). (NMS 6)

Staff contact parents about any concerns and the Childline and other relevant numbers are displayed widely throughout the school.

Timetables and other important information are widely displayed throughout the boarding house.

Parents appoint guardians, usually to cover short periods when the parents are out of the country or are indisposed. However, this is usually other family members in the county.

Eating

Food and nutrition are important to everyone and no more so than to growing children (NMS 8). All main meals are served in the dining room situated within the Manor building.

7.45 – 8.10am	Breakfast	Cooked breakfast, cereals, toast, fruit, yoghurts and fruit juice
10.30 – 11.00am	Break	Fruit, biscuits and water
1.00 – 1.30pm	Lunch	A homemade main course and desert are offered, as is a vegetarian option and salad.
4.00 – 4.20pm	Break	Fruit, cheese and biscuits, milk and water
6.00 – 6.30pm	Dinner	A homemade meal, pudding, squash, fruit and yoghurt offered
8.00 – 8.30pm	Buns	Cereal, bread and jams, hot chocolate, milk and water

Drinking water is always available to Boarders, and there is a water fountain in the library/common room. The dining accommodation is sufficient to meet the needs of boarders at all meal times. Boarders have sufficient time to enjoy their meals and to socialise. (NMS 6.3)

Tuck

Tuck is had on a Thursday evening. Each boarder is given 10p tuck per night they board with a choice from a variety of sweets.

Birthday Cakes

Birthday cakes (nut-free) can be brought into school from home and it is expected that this is shared amongst all the boarders that given evening. Staff and parents normally liaise to establish requirements.

Sleeping

Getting enough sleep is of great importance, especially when life is as active as it is at Dorset House. The boarding routine has been carefully structured to strike a balance between boarders having fun with their friends balanced against the need for a full night sleep that leaves them refreshed and ready for the next day.

Sanctions

Boarding at DH is a happy and harmonious environment, but there maybe times where a boarder is in breach of house procedures. Sanctions are issued by boarding staff and would be in line with any that might be issued within the school day (NMS 15.1). Should something be boarding specific, such as talking after lights out, then a typical sanction might be include sweeping the barn or tunnel. Should sanctions be necessary they are applied in the same way that a concerned parent might apply House rule at home – measured and in proportion with the behaviour of the pupil. The key is getting the pupils to understand that their actions have consequences. While unlikely, should a boarder’s behaviour have been very poor, in a one-off incident or over a period of time, they may be suspended from boarding for a period of time.

Weekday Routine

Morning Routine

7.00am	Wake up
7.20am	Music practice. Each child will have a dedicated room to practice in according to the instrument they play. The practice rota is created by the Music department.
7.20am	Those that do not play an instrument watch the news in the Library or walk the dogs.
7.40am	Breakfast
8.15	To Registration

Evening Routine

The evening routine following activities depends on the year group of the boarder and is as follows:

6.00 – 6.30pm	Dinner
6.30 – 6.45pm	Music practice
6.45 – 8.00pm	Activities/free time
7.45pm	Year 5/6 to Manor. Hand clothes in to matron, change into pyjamas and shower
8.00pm	Year 7/8 to Manor. Hand clothes into matron, change into pyjamas and shower
8.00 – 8.30pm	Buns
8.30pm	Year 5/6 to bed, lights out 8.45pm Duty children – tidy after buns
8.45pm	Year 7 to bed, lights out 9.00pm
9.00pm	Year 8 to bed, lights out 9.15pm

Evening Activities

Each evening after dinner boarders take part in an activity. These change on a daily basis and are selected by the boarders. Activities (dependent on time of year) include drama, manhunt, pottery, engineering, cricket, lacrosse, touch rugby, swimming, dodgeball, four square, table tennis, cooking, board games and many more. Children are made aware of areas that are out of bounds in accordance with school rules and suitable Risk Assessments are in place for any potentially hazardous activity undertaken. (NMS 18) In the winter Thursday movie nights are organised. Care is taken that age appropriate movies are shown, with two venues: the Library (Year 7&8) and Upper West dormitory (Year 5&6) both of which are properly supervised (Year 5&6 boys are accompanied upstairs only once all girls have showered and changed).

Boarding Prefects & Positions of Responsibility

The Head of Boarding is also a permanent member of the School Council so as to represent boarders' views. (NMS 21) They also have responsibilities such as helping with the induction of new boarders, organising the 'Buns' rota, distributing tuck and 'seconds' at breakfast. Also competitions, such as the pool competition, are organised by them.

Children are encouraged to take an active role in boarding and help to integrate new boarders or younger boarders to the boarding routine through the 'buddy' system. Each dormitory has an elected representative who can put forward the ideas and views of their peers – they meet once a term with the Head of Boarding who feeds back to the Housemaster. Younger children often take responsibility for taking the school dogs for a morning stroll before breakfast.

Boarders Views

Boarders have regular meetings with the Housemaster or boarding staff so to have a chance to air views about their experience. Minutes are kept and points actioned. A survey canvassing pupils' views also takes place in the Autumn term. There is also a confidential red box in the library/boarders' common room where children can make comments anonymously should they wish (NMS 13). Should a boarder feel strongly enough to make a complaint this would be taken in good faith. They can do so in writing to Mr Marconi following which a meeting would be organised to discuss the issue with the pupil/pupils and an independent person not involved in Boarding (for example, they may choose their Form Tutor or the Deputy Head). (NMS 14.2) .

The Head of Boarding also is a permanent member of the School Council so to represent the view of Boarders' in the wider community of the school.

Technology and Media

Internet Access

Boarders do have access to computers and the internet but this is supervised and content is filtered by the school's internet security programme. (NMS 12) Boarders are not permitted access to use any social networking site or chat forum. Children are taught about internet safety and how to protect themselves from cyber bullying as part of their IT lessons and PSHE program. Boarders are not permitted to have their own personal devices which have cellular access to the internet. Y7&8 pupils leave their tablets to charge in Wildbrooks overnight, and usually they would not be used in boarding time. Pupils are also not given access to the school wi-fi network.

Mobile Phones/Music Players/ Kindles/E-readers

Mobile phones are not required in the boarding house as children have access to a phone. We do discourage children from bringing in highly valuable items such as MP3 players, but Kindles are common amongst boarders though these devices should also not have internet access or cameras. The original 'paper white' versions are encouraged rather than the 'Fire'. These devices are handed in at the end of the school day for safekeeping. (NMS 9.3)

Television

As previously mentioned, boarders do not generally request to watch television given the wide range of other activities on offer during boarding. Staff monitor both programme content and viewing time. All films watched as part of film night will be age appropriate for the audience. There is an additional 'snug' which is used by the younger children (Years 5&6) to cater to the tastes and ages of our pupils. The news is watched by children in the morning before breakfast to ensure they have access to local, national and world events and we also subscribe to a children's newspaper which is in the library. (NMS 18.5)

What If Things Go Wrong?

The boarding house has a large, dedicated set of staff so there are many people to whom children and their families can turn to if they have any worries or issues that need to be addressed or, any suggestions for improvements in the boarding house. Boarders' feedback is taken seriously and is actively sought during boarding meetings as well as noted informally during boarding evenings and the anonymous suggestions box. A daily boarding log is also kept which is a formal record of any events both positive and negative that have occurred in the boarding house. This log allows the boarding staff to get an overall feel of the mood within the house and identify any issues in order to resolve them early on.

Inevitably there will be times when a boarder feels unhappy about being away from home or with something that may have happened. We encourage all boarders who find themselves in this situation to find an adult whom they feel comfortable to discuss their concerns. The Housemaster and Housemistress are always available to talk to a child or their families regarding concerns about general routines or managing life as a boarder which can almost universally be quickly resolved. At night boarders are made away of where the Mr and Mrs Marconi and the Night Matron reside so if there are any issues they can be easily reached. [\(NMS 20.8\)](#)

However, if a concern is of a more serious nature, then the Headmaster will of course be involved. If you feel the need to make a complaint, please follow the procedure as laid out in our Complaints Policy. (Available on the school website or via the school office).

The following guidelines are clearly displayed in the communal boarding areas for boarders' information:

What should I do if I am worried or unhappy?

Don't worry help and someone to talk to is always available so don't always try and face the problem on your own. [\(NMS 11.3\)](#)

At school there are lots of people here to help:

- **Mr or Mrs Marconi**
- **Mr Thomas**
- **Ms Hutchings (Designated Safeguarding Lead)**
- **Any member of the boarding team**
- **Your Form Tutor**
- **Our Independent Listener – Marie-Claire Arrowsmith**
- **A member of staff**
- **A Gap Student**
- **A Friend**

What if I don't want to talk to someone at school? [\(NMS 11.4\)](#)

You can speak to our **Independent Listener, Marie-Claire Arrowsmith**. She can be reached via the confidential letterbox in the boarding house located as you leave the library to go to the surgery. These are checked regularly.

You could speak to **Childline** on 0800 1111 or the **Children's Commissioner** 0207 783 8330.

ABOVE ALL REMEMBER.....THERE ARE LOTS OF PEOPLE HERE TO HELP YOU, ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS ASK!

Conclusion

The boarding house at Dorset House is a wonderful and unique environment full of excitement, happiness and enjoyment shared by staff, boarders and their families. We are confident we provide a boarding experience in which each child can thrive and achieve their potential.

As a boarding school, we aim to offer the highest level of care that a boarder and their family could ask for. If you would like any further information or just an informal chat about boarding at Dorset House, please feel free to contact the Housemaster, Mr Marconi.

Jason Marconi
Housemaster