



Boarding Policy Incorporating Statement of Boarding Principles and Practice

Aim

Boarding at The Mount School York empowers each girl to unlock and fulfil her potential - academically, socially, culturally, emotionally and spiritually. At the heart of our boarding community are the strong guiding principles of our Quaker ethos, upon which our School is founded. We aim to provide a home from home experience in which girls can flourish in a safe and caring environment.

Overview

Our Boarding House, which is for girls aged 11-18, is organised vertically. The first floor is for Year 7 to Year 10 girls, and the second floor is for College and Year 11 girls. Boarders are spaciouly accommodated in shared bedrooms for typically three, and in some cases two girls, and rooming is designed to promote integration, cultural understanding and the development of friendships. Girls are consulted prior to rooms being allocated, with changes made when necessary. The House is structured to provide a nurturing environment in which every girl can grow and discover her best self.

The Boarding House has an experienced and qualified team of residential and non-residential staff, who work in partnership with parents and guardians, and liaise closely with academic staff. There are three members of staff who reside in the Boarding House overnight, and a further five members of staff resident in the wider School. When needed, the girls knock on the door of the member of staff on duty, and there is also an emergency duty phone contact number. House staff are a mixture of qualified teachers and support staff who provide both academic and pastoral support for the girls in our care.

Ethos and Statement of Boarding Principles

At the heart of our boarding community are the strong guiding principles of the Quaker ethos, upon which our School is founded. We endeavour to:

Challenge girls to think and live adventurously. Through robust challenge pupils develop the ability to question, debate, try new pursuits and take positive risks. Activities, both weekday and weekend, are offered which provide the opportunity for pupils to extend their interests, as well as step outside their comfort zone in a supportive and collaborative community.

Ensure girls respect and value every individual. To embrace difference and cultural diversity, and to have the courage to harness their unique selves is a tenet of boarding life. Pupils celebrate and take part in key religious festivals, including Ramadan and Lunar New Year, as well as Christian festivals, whether actively or through supporting their peers at these times.

Enable girls to have the freedom for everyone to flourish in a calm and caring community. A small group of boarders (with a member of the boarding team) attend weekly Meetings at Friargate on Sunday mornings. This is a time to reflect privately and grow spiritually in a collective silence, as well as engage with our community of Friends. Each boarder attends Friargate four times per term, and have the opportunity to go out for lunch afterwards. Pupils take pride in their shared responsibilities for the governance of the boarding community and are empathetic towards the needs of others.

Inspire girls to strive for personal excellence. Pupils are aspirational and relish autonomy in directing their study and free time, within a supportive academic environment. Boarders have access to all School facilities in our extensive grounds and are motivated to work hard and stretch and challenge both themselves and others.

Empower girls to make a positive contribution to our changing world. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility in all aspects of life in the House, from Boarding Council membership and recycling in Year 7 to chairing House meetings in College. Many girls volunteer for local charities and services. Starting small, boarders gain the skills and confidence needed to make a genuine difference to their world, and to take their place as the next generation of global thinkers.

Overseas Pupils

The Mount School has a number of boarders from a variety of countries. This diversity of languages and cultures gives the student body an international flavour, enlivening the School experience for all pupils. Some are British children of parents working abroad, while we also have many pupils for whom English is not their first language. Our aim is to maintain a healthy balance and mix of cultures for the continued benefit of all. In addition to permanent, full-time boarders, as well as weekly and flexi-boarders, each year we accept a number of visitors, usually girls from Europe who stay for a short period of time e.g. three weeks to one term to experience life in a British boarding school.

All overseas students are required to have an educational guardian in this country. Guardians are appointed by the parents and are expected to accommodate the girls should the School not be able to do so for any reason. This includes School holidays, illness, suspension, and in the unlikely event of the School being closed in an emergency. For further information please read the Guardianship Policy.

The English as an Alternative Language (EAL) Department embraces all overseas students from a wide variety of countries. We aim to provide teaching and support to ensure that all international students are fully integrated into the School. In School and Boarding, girls are encouraged to speak English in common areas, and with others to ensure that they utilise every opportunity to develop their verbal skills. Those in the UK for the whole or final part of their education aim to take GCSEs and A Levels, in addition to the EAL certificated courses. Those visiting the School for one year or part of a year aim to improve their English. Girls attend lessons with their year group, and are encouraged to join in as many extra-curricular activities as possible.

Student Voice

Student voice is important and valued by both students and staff. Boarders can communicate their thoughts and wishes in a number of ways. These include the Boarding Council, suggestion boxes, questionnaires, House Meetings, one-to-one meetings with House staff and via the College Leadership Team member for Boarding.

Behaviour

Positive behaviour is promoted in the House and boarders are encouraged to be role models for younger pupils. All pupils are trained in Girls on Board, an effective tool in empowering girls to navigate any friendship issues. The Boarding House follows the School's Behaviour Policy when dealing with rewards and sanctions. Any sanctions given by Boarding are recorded in the sanctions book which is held in the duty office. Any major sanctions are recorded and held centrally by the Deputy Principal.

Communication

Telephone and email are the primary methods of communication with parents and guardians. House staff have School email addresses so they can be contacted, and parents are given the whole boarding team email so they can communicate generic messages such as permissions. Emails containing sensitive and confidential information are recommended to be sent directly to Head of Boarding as appropriate.

Communication with day staff is done via Key Communications forms, emails and in staff meetings where issues are raised and discussed when appropriate.

Boarding staff meet regularly, both formally and informally to discuss current issues. The boarding diary is used to communicate generic information such as permission to attend a trip or to give a general overview of how things have been in the House during an evening.

In Admissions documents for parents and when boarders arrive, they are given a Boarding Handbook which outlines the expectations, rules and general information about how the Boarding House operates.

Child Protection

Child protection and safeguarding are of paramount importance in our Boarding setting. Boarding staff take part in regular safeguarding updates and work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Any concerns are reported to the DSL. The Head of Boarding is also a trained DDSL and delivers safeguarding training to pupils who take on peer mentoring roles. The Boarding House follows the School Safeguarding Policy which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Boarders have access to an Independent Listener, someone suitably separate from the School but still subject to DBS and safer recruitment checks. The purpose of the Independent Listener is for Boarders to be able to speak with someone independent of the School and if necessary, raise any concerns that they have, or feel are not being listened to. The Independent Listener can be contacted via telephone, which is displayed on posters in the Boarding House.

Complaints

Whilst complaints are rare, there may be times that boarders wish to discuss a concern that they have. This can be brought to Boarding staff in the first instance and will usually be resolved there and then. If this is not resolved, the matter can be brought to the attention of the Deputy Principal.

If there is still cause for concern or if the complaint is about Boarding staff, this can be brought to the Deputy Principal and/or the Principal. A copy of the complaints procedure is displayed in the House and is also in the Boarding Handbook.

Search, Screening and Confiscation

The Boarding House follows the DfE guidelines for searching, screening and confiscation and this is outlined in the School's Search, Screening and Confiscation Policy, which should be read in conjunction with this policy.