



School House Handbook

For Boarders

2009/10



Dear School House Boarder,

This booklet is intended as a guide for new and existing boarders. It tells you a little about the School House staff and life in boarding, including the daily routine in the House. We can't include everything but there is a blank page at the back for you to add your own notes if you want to.

We hope you will find your experience as a boarder busy, enjoyable and fun and we are sure you will make lots of friends here. Remember though, if there is anything bothering you, however big or small, do talk to someone: there will always be someone willing to help.

Philip and Sally O'Connor
House Parents

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Our Aims in School House

Below are some statements that outline the main aims of the boarding house. These aims can be achieved if staff and pupils work together. We want to create a safe, enjoyable and happy place within which to live.

- We aim to provide each child with an environment in which he/she can flourish, develop and fulfill his/her potential whilst staying away from home.
- The health, safety and wellbeing of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in the house and the school.
- All children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. We aim to ensure that a secure and stable environment exists for them.
- We are committed to creating and maintaining an environment that discourages bullying. We will deal constructively with any instances that may occur.
- We aim to promote an open and trusting ethos ensuring each child's right to privacy, dignity, independence and individuality.
- Children, like adults, need to express their fears and emotions. The resident and visiting staff are the shoulders to cry on, the listening ears and, at times, the wall to bang the head upon.
- We expect and maintain high standards of politeness and awareness of others but we should be aware of the tensions in a close community and treat the occasional outburst in this light.
- The staff like to hear boarders' views on boarding life and it is always possible to pass on your views informally in conversation to the House staff, though there are also formal opportunities each half of term through the House Meetings, which are a chance for staff and boarders to share views and ideas.

Staff

There are a number of people you will come across in the boarding house. They are:

The House Parents

Mr and Mrs O'Connor are the House Parents and they live in a flat in School House. They are in charge, having overall responsibility for the boarders, the staff, the house routines and every aspect of boarding life. William and Lucy are their children and Rio is the family dog. Mr O'Connor teaches Chemistry in Forms 7 & 8 and throughout Senior School.

Resident Matron

Miss Luz-Mendez lives in a flat in School House between the girls' wing and the younger boys' dormitory. She looks after the boarders, making sure everyone is well cared for in body and mind - and that their socks have no holes in them! She can be contacted at night for any medical emergencies.

House Tutor

Mr Buckingham lives in a flat above School House and he carries out supervisory duties in Senior School boarding as well as in School House. He also teaches Games and PE in Junior and Senior Schools.

Gap Tutor

Each year (January to December) we have a school leaver from the other side of the world (usually from New Zealand, Australia or South Africa) who spends a year working at St Edmund's before going to university. They are young but they are members of staff and their job is to help entertain and look after the boarders. The gap tutor lives in a flat on the top floor of School House.

A typical day boarding at School House

7.00am WAKE UP TIME

You will be woken up so that you can get ready for your day ahead. You will need to get washed and dressed into school uniform before meeting everyone else in the T.V. room at 7.20am.

7.30am BREAKFAST

Cereals, toast, tea, hot chocolate and cooked breakfast are all ready to get you going for a full day ahead.

7.50am GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

Make sure that your area is neat and tidy and that you have everything for the day ahead.

8.10am HOUSE MEETING

There is a short time together in the TV room. Notices are given followed by an opportunity to reflect quietly.

8.20am OFF TO SCHOOL

A last chance to make sure you have everything and away you go to school. Remember that in school enthusiasm is everything.

DURING THE DAY

During the day you should not go back upstairs to the dormitories unless it is absolutely necessary. If you have to, you **must** get permission from one of the boarding staff before you do so.

4.20pm LESSONS FINISH – CLUBS AND FREE TIME BEGIN

When you have finished all your lessons, you can choose to attend one of the numerous clubs available which usually last until 5.30pm. You should do at least two clubs a week but you can do more. Clubs are really wide ranging and you're bound to find something you like. If you want to find out more about the clubs available do ask any of the House staff or the teachers at school.

5.30pm DINNER

We all meet in the TV room no later than 5.30pm so that we can all go down to dinner together. After a long day supper is a great time to see everyone, have a really good chat and get fuelled up for the rest of the evening. It's important to eat well and healthy so NO TUCK AFTER 5pm.

6.00pm PREP

Time to knuckle down to prep and get that work done. Make sure you work quietly otherwise you might find prep lasting longer than you expected!

7.00pm ACTIVITIES / FREE TIME

Prep finishes at 6.30pm for Forms 4 and 5 and at 7.00pm for Forms 6, 7 and 8. Then you have free time before you go up to bed. During this time you can practise your instruments or just relax in the common room. Some people like to use their skateboards or rollerblades. In the summer you could go swimming or just play under supervision in the school grounds. If you want to do something specific then let one of the staff know and we might be able to arrange it for you. You can control, through your suggestions, what you do in this time.

We might organise trips out to the cinema, to laser quest or bowling or you may go out for a walk. Alternatively we may have a special night in or simply spend time in the sports hall, ICT suite or Art room. You are welcome to make suggestions (put it in the suggestion box) on what you might like to do and we can try and arrange it for you.

7.25pm – 7.45pm SNACKS

If you are still feeling hungry you can come and have a snack before going up to bed. These include hot toast, jam and the best of all – HOT CHOCOLATE. You might decide to bring some of your own special snacks like Pot Noodles or similar.

7.45pm – 8.45pm GETTING READY FOR BEDTIME

At 7.45pm Forms 4 to 6 get ready for bedtime. Years 7 and 8 go up at 8.45pm.

When you go up to bed you will have a shower, get changed into pyjamas, hang up your uniform and tidy your space. Make sure you help the staff and do what they ask you to do.

LIGHTS OUT

Lights will go out at different times depending on your age:

Forms 4 to 6 at 8.30pm

Forms 7 and 8 at 9.15pm

When your lights are out it is important that you do your best to go to sleep and to let others sleep. If you cannot sleep straight away, stay quiet and calm because if you talk you will disturb others who can sleep. It is important that everyone gets a good night's sleep, as you need all your energy to be on top form the next day.

MATRON

If you feel really unwell during the night then you go and see Matron, who will look after you. Do not worry about doing this as Matron is there to help you through the night.

At the weekend

On **Saturday mornings** boarders in Forms 6 to 8 attend Saturday morning lessons and pupils in Forms 4 and 5 enjoy an activity at school or off-site supervised by one of the Lower School teachers.

On **Saturday afternoons** boarders can have free time to play together and relax at the house, and there is often a trip to the town with a member of staff.

On **Saturday evening** there is usually a film in the House Parents' flat or in the TV room. This film will go on a bit later than normal bedtime so you also get to stay up later. It's great fun and everyone brings popcorn, sweets and settles down in their pyjamas, dressing gown and slippers to an enjoyable film.

On **Sundays** boarders can rest, relax and play. There are also trips into town or further afield.

Where will I sleep?

You will be allocated a bed in one of the dormitories depending on your age and whether you are a boy or a girl. We try where possible to keep you with other boarders of the same age. Boarders, including weekly boarders, can bring their own duvet covers and pillow cases, which can be any colour or design. This makes it feel more like home for you. You can also decorate the area around your bed with posters, photos or anything personal to make it feel more like home.

Food

You will never go hungry, as there is always food available. There is:

BREAKFAST – cereals, toast, hot tea and a cooked breakfast

LUNCH – whilst at school there will be a cooked school lunch

SUPPER – another cooked meal or a salad choice if you prefer

SNACKS – before bedtime: yummy hot chocolate, toast, jams or your favourite snacks

FRUIT – there is always fresh fruit available for you to help yourself

Tuck

You will have a tuck box, where you can store your favourite snacks or sweets. After school you can have one or two things, so long as you don't spoil your dinner.

Will I have duties to do?

To foster a sense of responsibility all weekly and full boarders are required to undertake 'kitchen duties'. These are organised by Mr O'Connor and posted on the kitchen cupboard.

Other ways in which you can help and gain credit for the Best Boarder of the Term might be to:

- Make sure TV and activity rooms are tidy in the morning
- Help staff to set up and clear away snacks
- Keep your dormitory space tidy
- Clothes should be hung up and not left lying around
- Keep yourself looking smart

Duties are not supposed to be a chore but instead a way we all live together to ensure a better place for all.

What is the Best Boarder of the Term?

Being helpful, kind, smart and positive around School House will get spotted and rewarded with points. At the end of every term, the points are added up and chocolate prizes awarded to everybody. The top three get the most! In addition the Best Boarder gets to choose a treat for the whole House to enjoy – this is usually a fun trip.

How do I contact home and friends outside School House?

There is a telephone for you to use at any time and you can get phone cards from Matron. There are 2 direct lines for your parents to call you, just ask for the numbers.

You can also use the computers in the School House study for email communications, accessing the internet and so on. You may only use Facebook if you are 12 years old or older. The school IT suite is available sometimes too. Please be aware that the school ICT system is filtered to block unsuitable websites and there are regular checks made of pupils' internet use (it is possible to check the history of sites you have visited).

You can also write a letter and post it. If you need paper, envelopes, stamps etc just ask the staff and they will get them for you.

Mobile phones

You are allowed a mobile phone. We have some rules to make sure they are used properly.

What do I do if something is worrying me?

Sometimes things go wrong and you might want to talk about something that is bothering you. You might want to let off steam, complain about something or get some help with a problem.

At St Edmund's there is always someone you can talk to: remember that a problem shared is a problem halved.

So who can I talk to?

Basically anyone you want to, but below are some key people who will always be willing to help you. They will listen to you and you can tell them anything you want.

In the House:

- House Parents
- Matron
- House tutors

At school:

- Your **Form Tutor**, who is responsible for your welfare in school
- The **Senior Master** (Mr Hooley), who has responsibility for pastoral care in Upper School
- The **Head of Lower School** (Mrs Buckingham), who has responsibility for pastoral care in Lower School
- The **Girls' Housemistress** (Mrs Relf), who has responsibility specifically for girls' pastoral care in Upper School
- **Any other member of staff** you trust
- The **Master** (Mr Bacon)
- The **Second Master** (Mr Austen)
- The **Chaplain** (Mr Prance), who is interested in the care of all pupils. His telephone number is 459855.
- Sister Landsberger and the staff in the **Medical Centre**
- Your friends

At home:

- Don't forget you can talk to your parents or guardian. They can then contact the school if they think they need to.

There may be times when you feel you can't talk to those around you - this may be perfectly natural. There are people outside the school you can contact. Talk, telephone or write to any of the following:-

- The **School Doctor**, Dr G. Manson (tel 763377)
- Naomi, the **School Counsellor**. You can make an appointment to talk to her through the Chaplain.

- Mr Tom Witney, 16 Meadow Road, Harbledown, Canterbury (tel: 766215) – the school's **independent listener**, retired policeman and friend of the school.

You might want to let somebody know something without actually talking to anyone – You can always write it down and put it in the Suggestion Box which can then be dealt with.

What if I want to talk to someone who does not know me and who is not connected to the school?

We hope you will always be happy to talk or complain to someone in the school, however if you want to talk or complain to someone outside of the school there are lots of people designated to help you.

- **Kent County Council Social Services Department**, Brook House, Reeves Way, John Wilson Business Park, Whitstable, CT5 3SS (tel 598500).
- You can also call **Child Line** on 0800 111111 and talk to someone who will listen and try to help.
- **Ofsted** is an organisation that works with boarding schools to make sure everyone is looked after properly. You can call them on 08456 404040 and they will listen to any complaints you have. Alternatively, you can write to them at Ofsted Complaints Department, National Business Unit, Royal Exchange Buildings, St. Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA or email them at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT IN LIFE WE ALL HAVE PROBLEMS, BAD DAYS AND GOOD DAYS AND THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WE NEED HELP.

SHARING THESE PROBLEMS MAKE THEM EASIER TO DEAL WITH.

There is further information about dealing with worries and complaints in your pupils' prep diary (pages 14-15).

Complaints

What do I do if I want to make a complaint about something?

You may feel that talking to someone is not enough and that you need help sorting out a difficulty or problem at school. This may especially be the case where another pupil or a member of staff is causing the problem. It might mean *reporting* how you are being treated, or *making a complaint* about it. As we all live together you are entitled to your say and if you are not happy with something or are worried about something you should be able to talk about it.

In the first instance, you might want to make an informal complaint and this is best made to the House Parents (Mr or Mrs O'Connor) for boarding issues; or to your Form Tutor for issues at school. Of course you can also talk to your parents (or to any of the adults listed in the previous section on worries) and make the complaint through them. If the problem is still not resolved you can talk with the Second Master (Mr Austen) or the Master (Mr Bacon).

Remember, if you want to take a friend with you when you make a complaint or report a problem, this is absolutely fine.

If the matter is not settled by talking to staff or parents, you may want to make a **formal complaint**. You can do this by:

- **Writing to the Master** explaining your complaint (he will write your complaint in the Complaints Book, held by him. Later he will record in the book how he dealt with the complaint).
- You will receive a **note from the Master within two days** to say that he has read the complaint and is dealing with it.
- You will also be asked to **talk the matter through with the Master**. You may have a friend, a member of staff or your parents with you at this meeting.
- If, two days after this meeting, the matter is not being sorted out satisfactorily you may wish to contact the Headmaster (Mr Gladwin), whose office is next to the chapel (you can see him yourself or leave a note for him).

Alternatively if you want to get help from outside of the school you can contact Ofsted, an organisation that works with boarding schools to make sure everyone is looked after properly. You can call them on 08456 404040 and they will listen to any complaints you have. You can also write to them at:

Ofsted Complaints department,
National Business Unit,
Royal Exchange Buildings,
St. Ann's Square,
Manchester,
M2 7LA

or email them at: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Remember if you want to say something – people will listen and you will not be judged for doing so.

Bullying

It is important that everyone in the school feels safe and happy. Every pupil has the right to enjoy his or her learning and leisure time free from intimidation. No one should feel afraid to seek help if they are unhappy or notice someone else is upset. To stand by when someone else is being bullied is to support bullying. Everyone needs to take positive steps to make sure that St Edmund's is a happy and trusting school where bullying – of any sort – is not tolerated. Pupils should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying to a member of staff. Bullying will always be treated as a serious issue.

What is bullying?

Bullying has been defined as:

- The deliberate wish to hurt, frighten or threaten another.
- Intentionally causing hurt or unhappiness - physical, verbal or emotional - and that hurt being unprovoked and often repeated.

Actions that we consider to be bullying include:

- Taunting and **name-calling**, including the use of nicknames by staff or pupils if the recipient is not happy with the name.
- **Personal comments or sarcasm** (by staff or pupils) designed to belittle or make the victim look a fool.
- **Personal comments** regarding family, appearance, abilities, habits, religion or culture, sexual/sexist, sexual orientation, disability.
- **Intimidating behaviour** such as pushing, barging, queue jumping and a general disregard for the victim.
- The use of **electronic means** to cause hurt (i.e. cyber-bullying) e.g. social networking websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs, video, and email.
- **Possessions** being hidden or interfered with, even as a so-called joke or trick.
- Deliberate **interference in learning activities** with a view to diminishing progress.
- **Exclusion** from a group, **teasing** and generally putting down a person.
- **Physical violence** in all forms.
- Anything which attempts to make the victim **act against their own will** or better judgement.

What can you do?

If you spot bullying, you should take steps to stop it by doing one or more of these things;

- Tell a member of staff
- Tell an older pupil
- Point out, if you are brave enough, that such behaviour is unacceptable
- Speak to the person who is being bullied and be a friend to them. Let them know they can ask for help from an adult

- Be careful not to meet violence with violence. If you take the law into your own hands you may end up being the one in trouble.
- To tell on a bully is good for everyone – the victim, the bully and the whole school community.

DO NOT LET BULLYING GO UNNOTICED – DO NOT ACCEPT IT.

If you are being bullied you need to tell someone so you can get help. The people who can help are:

In the House:

- House Parents
- Matron
- House tutors

At school:

- Your **Form Tutor**
- The **Senior Master** (Mr Hooley)
- The **Head of Lower School** (Mrs Buckingham)
- The **Girls' Housemistress** (Mrs Relf)
- **Any other member of staff** you trust
- The **Master** (Mr Bacon)
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- The **Chaplain** (Mr Prance), who is interested in the care of all pupils. His telephone number is 459855.
- Sister Landsberger and the staff in the **Medical Centre**
- Your friends

At home:

- Don't forget you can talk to your parents or guardian. They can then contact the school if they think they need to.

Outside the school you could contact:

- The **School Doctor**, Dr G. Manson (tel 763377)
- Naomi, the **School Counsellor**. You can make an appointment to talk to her through the Chaplain.
- Mr Tom Witney, 16 Meadow Road, Harbledown, Canterbury (tel: 766215) – the school's **independent listener**, retired policeman and friend of the school.
- **Kent County Council Social Services Department**, Brook House, Reeves Way, John Wilson Business Park, Whitstable, CT5 3SS (tel 598500).
- You can call **Child Line** on 0800 111111 and talk to someone who will listen to you.
- **Ofsted** is an organisation that works with boarding schools to make sure everyone is looked after properly. You can call them on 08456 404040.

You might want to put a note into the suggestion box passing on the information about what is happening.

HONESTY

'Honesty is the best policy'. It sure is and it is certainly true in any community and particularly within a school. In order for us to all get along with other and trust each other we must be HONEST.

We all want St Edmund's to be a place where we feel our possessions will be safe. To help this happen, we should all respect each other and each other's property.

DO NOT TAKE OR MOVE THINGS THAT DO NOT BELONG TO YOU.

It is against the school rules to meddle or play with other people's possessions without their permission, so do not 'borrow' them without asking.

It is everyone's duty to stop dishonesty and if you see anyone taking another person's possession without permission then you should report it to a member of staff.

We will all, at times, make mistakes, do something silly or get into trouble. The important thing is not to try and get out of it by dishonesty but instead be brave, accept you have done something wrong and own up. Be honest about it and take whatever consequences there are. No teacher likes to have to drag out situations because people are not telling the truth, but they DO admire bravery and honesty, especially in children who have done wrong and wish to put matters right.

BE TRUTHFUL, BE TRUSTWORTHY.

A LIST OF BOARDING RULES

Boarding rules exist for the efficient running of the boarding house and in order to ensure everyone is safe. Below is a list of some of these rules. The rules are common sense rules that encourage us all to be better people in the way we behave, get along with each other and keep us from harm.

A simple list of what to do and what not to do:

- Do not bring money into school during the day. Pocket money can be left for safe-keeping with Mr O'Connor at the start of each term
- Respect other people's property
- Keep yourself looking smart
- Be polite at all times, especially considerate to visitors
- Do not use bad language
- Be truthful – honesty is the best policy
- Bullying is not tolerated – ensure it is stopped; report it if you witness it
- Be friendly to each other and look after one another – remember especially the young boarder who boards for the first time, or those who for some reason feel sad or low - take care of them
- Know the out-of-bounds places and do not go there. In particular, you must not go into areas of Senior School accommodation; you may not go into the sports hall unsupervised; you must never enter the swimming pool compound without a member of staff; and you should not use the Junior School ICT suite without staff supervision; the Science Department and the Technology Department are out of bounds outside of lesson times.
- You must never cross the Whitstable Road (outside School House) without adult supervision, and you should never play beside the road. If ever you want to collect conkers, you should collect them from the horse chestnut tree by the tennis courts. You may only collect conkers from the staff car park tree (outside Junior School) under the supervision of an adult.
- You must stay on the school site at all times unless given permission to leave the boundaries of the school.

THE GOLDEN RULE - DO TO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD BE DONE BY

Boarders' Code of Conduct

When boarding you need to continue to follow the whole school code of conduct (as published in your prep diary), however there are some other important points which also form the boarders' code of conduct.

Clubs / Activities

- School House boarders should attend at least two after-school clubs a week.
- If you have signed up for a club make sure you attend.
- Make sure you ask for permission if you need to miss a club.

Free time

- Always stay within school bounds. The playground and the cage can be used. When on the climbing frame a member of staff needs to look after you. Anywhere else needs a member of staff to be with you. Always say where you are going.
- Respect school property and do not take what does not belong to you.

Meal times

- Meet in the TV room on time no later than 7.30am in the morning and 5.30pm in the evening, having first washed your hands.
- Talk quietly in the dining room and show good manners at the table.
- Eat well and clear your tray.
- Remember to say please and thank you to the catering staff.

Prep time

- Make sure you have your prep diary and it is filled in with details of preps set.
- Get your prep diary signed at the end of prep by the member of staff on duty.
- Bring a good book to read in case you finish your work early.

Tuck

- Not to be eaten after 5.00pm.
- Throw your litter in the bins provided and keep School House tidy.
- We do not allow chewing gum.

Dormitories

- Walk when going up and down the stairs to the dormitories.
- The dormitories are a quiet space – talk quietly and do not run around.
- Keep your bed area tidy and hang up your uniform.
- Stay quiet after lights out.

