

# ST HUGH'S SCHOOL



## BOARDING HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS

Dear Parents

This handbook is intended as a guide for you to receive an insight into how boarding at St. Hugh's operates. It outlines our aims and ethos within the boarding house including policies that we adhere to. It describes the procedures in order to apply for your son / daughter to board, the daily routine of a boarder and what they can expect during their stay at St. Hugh's.

Hopefully it will help answer some of your questions, however it is appreciated that you may have many more. We recognise that in order for boarding to work properly for your son / daughter there must be a trinity of understanding, communication and trust between staff, pupil and parent. Please feel free to contact us at the school if we can be of any more help and we hope that we can provide a positive and enriching experience for your son / daughter while they are entrusted in our care.

Gilbert & Natasha Watson  
Houseparents

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# BOARDING INFORMATION

Houseparents	Mr Gilbert Watson Mrs Natasha Watson
Head Matron	Mrs Jan Allen
Assistant Matron:	Mrs Denise Pargeter
Resident Matron:	Mrs. Julie Husband
Assistant House staff:	Mr Chris Thomson Miss Eloise Chamier Mr and Mrs Avery
Headmaster:	Mr Andrew Nott
Headmaster's Personal Assistant:	Mrs Alison Castillo-Bernaus
School Address -	Carswell Manor Faringdon Oxfordshire SN7 8PT
Telephone – Office (daytime) & Houseparents (evening)	01367 870700 01367 870712
Day Room	01367 870715
Telephone - pupils	No incoming line. Pupils have open and exclusive access to a boarders' telephone and can make calls using a phone card purchased from the Bursar. Parents can contact pupils <u>in an emergency</u> or arrange to speak to them, through the Houseparents.
Fax	01367 870376
Houseparents' email	boarding@st-hughs.co.uk
School Email	office@st-hughs.co.uk

## **Aims and Ethos of the School Community**

The aims and ethos of the school community are set out clearly in the current edition of the school prospectus. The prospectus is issued to staff, prospective parents, parents and through them pupils. It has been endorsed by the governors and is the definitive document to which all that wish to know more about the school are directed.

St Hugh's as a school has evolved and adapted over the many years since it first moved to Carswell Manor in 1945. No longer is it a single sex boarding school for boys, today it is a flourishing co-educational school for some 270 pupils. Whilst there is still a central core of boarding pupils the vast majority are day pupils.

In keeping with national trends and general decline in the number of pupils choosing to board, there has also been a change in parental expectations towards boarding.

Whilst the emphasis has shifted from full boarding towards weekly boarding many pupils / parents are opting for flexi-boarding as an introduction to boarding school life.

This approach allows pupils to select any number of nights to board on a regular or one-off basis. For those who encounter unexpected work commitments or other difficulties, it is reassuring to know that their children can be looked after in familiar surroundings even at short notice where space is available.

# **Aims and Ethos of the Boarding Community**

In boarding we aim to provide each child with an environment in which he / she can flourish, develop and fulfil their potential whilst staying away from home.

The health, safety and well-being of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in the school. All children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability, ensuring a secure and stable environment exists. They have a right to be safe in school and the school follows a specific child protection policy.

We are committed to creating and maintaining an environment that discourages bullying and deal constructively with any instances that may occur following the whole school anti-bullying policy.

We aim to promote an open and trusting ethos ensuring each child's right to privacy, dignity, independence and individuality. Each child must be treated fairly and we aim to encourage children to learn to exercise a degree of freedom in a responsible way which develops behaviour traits of courtesy, honesty, care, co-operation and building positive relationships between each other. We follow the whole school behaviour and discipline policy, which is designed to support the way in which all members of the school live and work together.

We cannot and should not replace the child's parents and we hope that parents feel part of the boarding process. We are committed to ensure that the children have the opportunity to achieve the highest standards and enjoy their boarding time and that neither the children or parents have complaints. However, the school has procedures in place in case there are any complaints following a specific complaints policy.

Parents can also lodge complaints with OFSTED on 08456 404040 which is the government's regulatory body responsible for regulation, inspection and enforcement for boarding schools. Their address is Ofsted Complaints department, National Business Unit, Royal Exchange buildings, St. Anne's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA or email them at [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Children's letters and phone calls, both incoming and outgoing, are completely without censor, and child's tuck box and personal cupboard space are totally private and must not be entered unless the child is present and you have the agreement of the child and the houseparents.

Children, like adults, need to express their fears and emotions. The resident staff and the team of matrons are the listening ears and/or the shoulders to cry on. We expect and maintain high standards of politeness and awareness of others, in order to maintain a happy and enjoyable environment for all to thrive.

## **Tutor System**

All boarders can approach any member of staff at any time in order to share the good things in their lives, as well as seeking advice, counselling or support during times of difficulty.

In addition to the houseparents and matrons, all weekly boarding pupils have a member of staff who acts as their personal tutor. Pupils can list the names of three preferred staff and the headmaster allocates one of these staff as the tutor at the start of the academic year.

Regular meetings with personal tutors help to develop the pupils from all perspectives, socially, academically and personally. Problems can be shared, targets can be set and review and guidance constructed.

## **Boarding Duties**

To foster the feeling of responsibility all weekly boarders are required to undertake boarding duties. These are organised by the houseparents and posted on the notice board.

Duties include:            tidying of common rooms,  
                                  setting up and clearing of snacks,  
                                  newspapers to the library

## **Boarding Pupils' Reports**

At the end of the Autumn and Summer terms a report is written on the strengths and weaknesses of those pupils who have been weekly boarders. All the house staff have an input into the report and the final report is written by the houseparents.

# Applications to Board

## Weekly boarding

Parents wishing to reserve a weekly boarding place should apply in writing to the houseparents. Upon approval by the headmaster and if the space is available, parents are then informed of the weekly place for their child.

Parents are then contacted by the houseparents who will provide all the necessary information about their son / daughter becoming a weekly boarder. In addition to this the houseparents will arrange a meeting with the son / daughter to talk through about becoming a weekly boarder. For many pupils who have already experienced boarding on a flexi basis this meeting is just to smooth over the transition from flexi to weekly, talking through the changes. For those who become a weekly boarder having not boarded much or at all before, this meeting is an important time to go through procedures and to try and answer questions and put aside any worries that the pupils may have.

In addition to this the houseparents will constantly review and guide the boarders throughout their time as weekly boarders, monitoring progress and ensuring a happy time is had. Communication with the parents of boarders is maintained through email, telephone, parents evenings and arranged meetings as well as formal reports being written in the Autumn and Summer term about their son / daughter's progress.

## **Flexi boarding**

Parents wishing to book regular nights or one-off nights **ideally should** complete a boarding application form obtainable from the day room which will be passed directly to the Houseparents. The Houseparents will either contact the parents by phone, email or letter to confirm whether a place is available. The application form can then be kept on file within the pupil's records.

In practice parents often request boarding places by a variety of other methods which are all acceptable even though the application form method is preferred. These methods include email to the Houseparents ([boarding@st-hughs.co.uk](mailto:boarding@st-hughs.co.uk)), via letter, speaking directly to the Houseparents or telephoning the school with their request which is then passed on.

It is not however acceptable that parents ask their children to make verbal requests as so often these requests are not accurate. In these cases, the Houseparents would ask the children to get their parents to call in, write the request down or phone the parents themselves.

Priority is always given to weekly boarders and to those staying regularly on several nights each week and it may be that space is therefore limited for those wishing to stay on only one night each week or on an occasional basis.

Information regarding what pupils will need to bring with them when boarding is sent out to parents or relayed by conversation with the houseparents. When a pupil boards for the first time the houseparents like to meet the pupil beforehand to talk through any questions or worries that the pupil may have. In addition to this the pupil is assigned two 'buddy' pupils – one the same age preferably and one senior pupil who will look after them as well as staff during the evening to ensure they have an enjoyable experience.

## **Boarding Register**

At the start of the term the Houseparents produce a loose-leaf register with every day of the term. These daily records are split into boys and girls boarding lists and have the date, dormitory number and number of allocated spaces for that dormitory.

**All requests to board or not to board on any given day must be and can only be authorised by the Houseparents or when on duty the assistant Housemaster.**

As with all administrative systems, people can upset the process by leaving verbal messages that they are taking pupils out of school early, etc. It is vital that if a boarding pupil is **not** boarding or is off site, that the houseparents authorise this so that records can be amended, and that the boarder signs out following the correct signing out procedures.

The boarders' register is taken each evening before supper by the houseparents or the assistant housemaster. Pupils either assemble in the front hall or in the dining room where the register is taken.

## **Boarders Signing Out Procedure**

If a weekly boarder is leaving the school premises for any reason (other than a school trip or match) they must sign out in the red folder in the day room, having sought permission from a Houseparent beforehand.

This system also applies to any flexi boarder who was due to be boarding that day.

On Saturdays (or Fridays if exeat weekends), all weekly boarders must sign out with the Houseparents when a parent has arrived to collect them after lessons.

It is essential that all boarders cooperate with these systems so that the Houseparents know exactly which boarders are on the premises and which are off site.

## Boarding Pupils' Daily Routine

7.15 a.m.	Matrons wake boarders
7.50 a.m.	Assemble in the front hall for breakfast
7.50 a.m.	Breakfast in dining room – daily notices given out
8.40 a.m.	School begins: registration in form rooms

The routine of pupils in the Middle and Upper School varies, but the standard school day ends at 4.30 p.m. for all pupils.

4.30 - 5.30 p.m.	Supervised clubs, activities and free time	
5.35 p.m.	Supper bell rings. Pupils meet Houseparents in the front hall	
5.40 p.m.	Role call before the start of supper taken by Houseparents, notices given out	
	Supper supervised by Houseparents	
6.30 p.m.	Supervised Year 8 prep - Maths rooms	
	Supervised Year 5/6/7 prep - Geography/History room	
7.00 p.m.	Prep ends for junior pupils on all days and reading rest for all pupils on Wednesday	
7.30 p.m.	Prep ends for years 5, 6 and 7 and year 8 on a Friday	
7.30 - 8.30 p.m.	Sports hall activities	
	Art / ICT activities	
	Other activities / free time	
7.45 - 8.15 p.m.	Snacks in the dining room	
7.45 p.m.	Prep ends for year 8 (except Wednesday – 7.00pm, Friday 7.30pm)	
8.20 p.m.	Year 5, 6 bedtime	Lights out 8.45 p.m.
8.30 p.m.	Year 7 bedtime	Lights out 9.00 p.m.
8.45 p.m.	Year 8 bedtime	Lights out 9.15 p.m.

Bedtimes may be extended by 15 minutes during the summer term.

Pupils under supervision are free to play outside after prep when the evenings are light. During the winter period pupils should not remain outside when it is dark unless they are taking part in an organised and supervised activity.

All pupils should be in the main school building by 8.30 p.m. in the winter / spring.

## **Breakfast**

The matrons on morning duty wake the boarders at 7.15 a.m. and supervise pupils' getting ready before breakfast, including ensuring their dorms are left tidy.

Pupils assemble downstairs in the front hall when they are ready. They have access to the daily newspapers and the library. Some pupils will have morning duties which may include tidying the common room before breakfast. The system of duties is shared amongst the boarders using a rota system.

At 7.50a.m. the Houseparents will ask the boarders to enter the dining room and sit down. Any messages will be given out at this time. After this a pupil will be selected to say grace.

A variety of cereals followed by a cooked breakfast is available daily, however occasionally a continental breakfast is served as an alternative.

Tables will go up for breakfast on rotation and at the end of breakfast pupils will clear their tables before leaving. Having left the dining rooms, pupils go back upstairs to brush their teeth and get themselves ready before they go to their form forms. All pupils must be in their form rooms ready for registration at 8.40 a.m.

## **End of school day – 4.30p.m. – 5.30 p.m. – Activities / Free time**

The school's clubs programme operates between 4.30 and 5.30 p.m. every day of the week. All weekly boarding pupils are required to take part in at least 2 activities which the house staff help them to select at the beginning of every term. Boarding pupils may choose to do more and are encouraged to follow a variety of pursuits.

A list of the activities that boarding pupils choose to take part in is compiled by the Houseparents. One copy is issued to the day room and a second is kept for reference with the boarding register in the porch. This helps in the case of trying to locate pupils at short notice.

If a boarder is not attending a club during this time they must report to the boarding house at 4.30 p.m. and change into longbounds (normal clothes). They should then leave their dormitories and then the remaining time until 5.30 p.m. is effectively their free time. This can be used in the common room, the library, upstairs table football table, music rooms, ICT (when supervised), sports hall (when supervised) or another arranged activity having received permission by the houseparents / MoD. In the summer the boarders are allowed to play up on the top fields and if supervised within the woods.

## Supper

All boarding pupils assemble in the front hall when the bell rings at 5.35 p.m. The register for pupils boarding that night is taken by the Houseparents and any notices for that evening given out.

House staff sit with the boarders during the evening meals. This allows a good opportunity to touch base with the boarders on how their school day has gone. The House staff encourage good table manners and also keep an eye on individuals appetites and healthy eating.

Once everyone on their table has finished eating, the pupils are able to go up for seconds, and then stack and have pudding.

All pupils are expected to help with the clearing of their tables and wiping them down. This is organised on a rota basis by the Houseparents and the lists posted on the notice board.

After supper has finished and tables have been cleared, pupils will leave to attend prep.

## Prep

All boarding pupils attend prep which occurs after supper. In addition to boarders there may be day pupils who are staying for prep.

Prep times vary for different ages and below shows the current timetable for all age groups.

	Year 8	Year 6 & 7	Year 4 & 5
Monday	6.30pm-7.45pm	6.30pm-7.30pm	6.30pm-7.00pm
Tuesday	6.30pm-7.45pm	6.30pm-7.30pm	6.30pm-7.00pm
Wednesday	Reading rest	Reading rest	Reading rest
Thursday	6.30pm-7.45pm	6.30pm-7.30pm	6.30pm-7.00pm
Friday	6.30pm-7.30pm	6.30pm-7.30pm	6.30pm-7.00pm

On a Wednesday the 6.30pm-7.00pm slot is used for either reading rest, musical instrument practice or if necessary catch up of work that has been missed.

## **Evening Activities / Free time**

Following prep there is recreation time during which there are a variety of options available to boarders such as;

Sports Hall activities – supervised by House staff and / or Duty staff

Table tennis and Table football

ICT and Art – supervised by Duty staff or Gap student

Music practice and Board games

Common room

Fields and woods – supervised by Duty staff (when light enough)

Swimming – supervised by two House staff / Duty Staff (when warm enough!)

Occasionally if boarders want to watch a specific TV programme then it can be put on in the lecture theatre or if there are special requests for other activities then they can normally be arranged.

## **Snacks**

At 7.45 p.m. - 8.15 p.m. from Monday to Thursday, boarding pupils may have snacks in the dining room.

This consists mainly of toast / jam / spreads or home-made cookies with a cold drink or hot chocolate. This is supervised by the houseparents and / or the matron on duty. Boarders have on a rota basis the responsibility of assisting in the setting up and clearing away of snacks as one of their duties.

During snack time boarders have the opportunity to get out and play board games in the dining room whilst enjoying their snacks.

## **Bedtimes**

The system of bedtimes differs depending on age. The simple principle being that the older the pupil the later the bedtime. Consideration must be given, however, to dormitories where there might be more than one age group. In this situation a single bedtime may be applied to minimise disturbance caused by other pupils entering the dorm as one group is settling down.

Years 4, 5 & 6: Upstairs at 8.20 p.m. lights out at 8.45 p.m.

Year 7: Upstairs at 8.30 p.m. lights out at 9.00 p.m.

Year 8: Upstairs at 8.45 p.m. lights out at 9.15 p.m.

During the summer term bedtimes may be extended by 15 minutes.

## **Organisation of Dormitories**

All the boarding accommodation is contained within the main school building. The building also contains the houseparents' flat and the matron's flat.

The boys and girls have dormitories on separate floors - the girls on the first floor and the boys on the second floor.

Dormitories are arranged by age as far as is possible and practical.

Each dormitory has a selected dormitory captain. The role of the dorm captain is to liaise with the staff if there are any problems or difficulties within the dormitory. The dormitory captains are selected by the houseparents on a half-termly basis. This ensures that many pupils have the chance to experience responsibility.

Those pupils who are weekly boarding are allocated a bed at the beginning of the school year and generally keep the same bed for the term. They can negotiate a mutual swap if they wish but must gain permission from the houseparents before moving. Pupils are free to decorate their dormitories with posters and other personal belongings that help them feel more at home. All decoration must be taken down at the end of the school year to allow for redecoration.

## **Bedding**

All weekly boarders are encouraged to bring their own duvets and pillow cases. This again helps to develop the feeling of home and personal space. Those pupils who do not bring their own duvets and pillow cases have them provided by the school (although there are not different togged school duvets for summer and winter).

## **Lights Out**

Lights are turned out by either the houseparents or the matron on duty.

After lights out pupils should remain quiet and try to sleep making sure they are mindful and respect each other.

## **Overnight Problems**

Should there be any overnight problems with pupils they can ring the resident matron's bell to gain her attention. If the matron feels it is necessary, she may contact the houseparents.

## **Medication**

Should a pupil require medication this should be dispensed by the matron on duty. All medication is recorded in the medication book.

## **Rewards and Sanctions**

The school has a system of **credits** in use during the school day.

In the boarding house there are rewards in the form of '**smiles and frowns**'. The smiley face stickers are awarded by all boarding staff and stuck up on a chart on the boarding notice board. Each person chooses a prize when they have achieved ten smiley faces.

A smiley face is awarded if the individual child has shown any form of commendable behaviour, generosity, kindness, helpfulness, good personal organisation, personal effort and general improvement in the boarding house.

As well as smiles, frowns can be given for poor and unacceptable behaviour. These are rarely given and are not put up on the chart but recorded by the Houseparents. A frown effectively 'deducts' a smile from that child's total, although nothing is removed from the chart.

## **Wednesday Night Boarding**

There is a different routine for Wednesday nights. Pupils have supper from 5.40 – 6.30pm and then boarding pupils have music practice in the music suite or reading rest in the library until 7.00pm.

Reading rest is supervised by the member of staff on duty and music practice is supervised by the houseparents or student.

During the term, various events take place on Wednesday evenings including concerts and talks by visiting speakers, which boarders will attend.

Outings or special events organised by the houseparents may be organised on Wednesdays as well. This might be ten pin bowling , ice skating, swimming , laser quest or a visit to the cinema. This is organised by the Houseparents.

## **Friday Night Boarding**

The Friday night routine is also slightly different in that prep finishes at 7.30 p.m. for all pupils and films are shown in the houseparents' flat at 7.45 p.m. and in the lecture theatre.

The Year 8 pupils are allowed to watch a 12 certificate film whereas all other pupils are required to watch a PG or U certificate. For this reason we have two films and although a Year 8 pupil may choose to watch the Year 6/7 film it is not allowed for the Year 6/7 pupil to watch the 12 certificate film. Sometimes if everyone wants to watch it only one film is chosen which is suitable for all pupils.

Pupils wishing to watch the films must change into pyjamas, dressing gowns and slippers before entering the film. Most pupils also bring a sensible amount of tuck.

It is also possible for pupils to opt not to watch the films and whenever possible there will also be a sports hall option for those who choose it. The Duty Staff will supervise this.

## **Boarders' Common Rooms**

There is one common room for the exclusive use of boarding pupils which is located next to the Houseparent's flat. Near to this common room is a tuck box area where weekly boarders keep their tuck. This area is exclusive for weekly boarders. There is also a cosy communal area for boarders on the landing outside the Houseparent's flat, and also a table football table for boarders use here.

The common room areas may only be used after 4.30 p.m. and is open for all ages. It is important that it is treated with respect and the privilege of using it may be restricted if it is abused.

In addition to the common room pupils have access to the sports hall, library, oak room, dining room and lecture theatre. Pupils can also use the computer room and art room with permission from the member of staff on duty, although internet access must be supervised.

In addition boarders may also enjoy quiet time in their dormitories.

## **Fire Drills**

In the event of fire it is the first duty of all staff to prevent injury or loss of life.

It is a requirement that a fire drill is carried out at least once every term. Pupils are briefed on the course of action that they should take in case of an evacuation and have a practice walk through at the start of the year. The walk through is followed up with an unannounced drill during the week. The drill times are varied, sometimes being after lights out or before the rising in the morning. The evacuation meeting point during boarding times is the far side of the gravel car park outside the Manor.

With the changing population who board during the week fire drills are arranged on different days each term to ensure that as many pupils as possible experience the drill.

## **House Staff Meetings**

Houseparents / matrons have a weekly meeting on a Friday morning in the day room. The week ahead is discussed and any concerns or problems aired. Minutes of these meetings are copied to the Headmaster and other House staff, as well as posted on the staff room notice board.