

## BARNARDISTON HALL PREP SCHOOL BOARDING STAFF HANDBOOK

### Introduction

Barnardiston Hall is a co-educational independent school for day children and full time boarding for pupils from both the UK and Overseas. It also offers casual boarding.

We currently host children from England, China, Columbia, France, Italy, Hong Kong, Spain, Russia and Taiwan. The international nature of our boarding is something we celebrate and it adds very positively to our life here. In addition to individual boarders, we host various groups for immersion courses throughout the year.

Our boarders help to create a truly integrated and international community within our School, encouraging pupils to appreciate the cultures of others and to extend their knowledge of the wider world.

### Boarding Principles

#### General

- Through the communication of shared principles and values, we aim to develop the whole person.
- All adults are role models and must remember this on all occasions. *The children look to us as parents who are there to guide them and we have a duty to present ourselves as firm and fair whilst building trusting friendly relationships.*
- We are a school which thrives on the individual care of our pupils and delivering a 'family' feel to boarding.

#### Being on Duty

It is realised that varied situations will need different approaches throughout the course of the year depending on the number of children we have on site at any one time. It is also evident that approaches will need to be adjusted depending on the age of the child. However, the following bullet points cover common factors and identify the principles of ensuring the correct standards of duty of care are in place. Conduct of the Boarding House follows the stipulations of National Minimum Standards for Boarding, the ISI framework and the principles of Children Act Guidance, for example: 'The maintenance of good discipline is paramount for the growth, welfare and development of pupils... success in producing a well-disciplined atmosphere will depend on the complex interaction of a wide range of factors and will be rooted in the overall ethos of the school.'

- Being on duty is a pro-active task. It is realised that you cannot be everywhere at once. However, it is equally important to realise that being in one place all of the time is neither proactive nor effective. Visiting all areas of the School where children are is a crucial part of being on duty.
- In being proactive, staff should always be 'approachable' when on duty. There should not be any times when staff discourage boarders from talking to them unless dealing with a particular behavioural issue and it would be inappropriate. Marking books or attending to any other administrative tasks does not take precedence over being 'available' for the pupils.
- The pupils should feel as if they are in a familiar and friendly environment which does not feel a million miles away from home. Developing and building relationships is key to what we do at Barnardiston. It is also important to recognise that some members of staff might be better at dealing with particular pupils. It is all about understanding the individual and

making sure that children view you as a trusted adult who can help them work through any difficulties or indeed just share a smile and a laugh with them.

- Always remember where the line is. We are here in an adult capacity to help support and encourage whilst also being responsible for discipline. We can have friendly relationships but the children are not to be treated as friends.

## Staffing

### General

The family-run school epitomises the importance of creating a family-friendly environment.

### Residential Members of Staff

#### Teachers

Colonel Boulter (Headmaster) has over 25 years of boarding experience. Most recently, Mr and Mrs Cooper (Head of Boarding and House Mistress) along with their 8 and 6 year-old children joined Barnardiston to help provide a continuous family environment, with both of them taking an active role in the Boarding House. Also, Mr Michael Jacques (Latin and Marketing) has joined the Team, bringing with him particular experience with foreign pupils.

**Gap Students** - are here to support the pupils in whatever way they are asked. They do two duty evenings a week, possibly three when required, and they work approximately every other weekend. When possible, it will be timetabled that the Gap students work one weekend in three but they should not assume that this is the case.

It is important that the Gap students are treated as full members of staff by the children and this begins by all members of staff addressing one another as Mrs Clifton, Mr Cooper or Colonel Boulter when the children are with us. It is important to remember that, as with the other adults, they are role models for the children so they should ensure that their standards of dress, table manners and general behaviour are as high as possible.

#### Non-residential staff

Non-Residential Boarding Staff play a key part in taking care of the children, performing evening and weekend duties accordingly.

**Matron** - Mrs Clifton, the Matron, has been working at the School for over 20 years and she is very well placed to deliver high quality pastoral care utilising the experience she has gained. Her role is to ensure that the children have everything they require in order to be ready for school (uniform and supplies). Matron also provides a 'motherly' figure within the House to whom children can go for support about anything from illness to worries about friendships. Matron liaises closely with the Head of Boarding to ensure that the children are given the best possible care. She is also an advocate of all children whilst ensuring they are following School Rules.

**Day Matrons.** Mrs Hart and Mrs Bavester are Day Matrons and support the boarders during the day as required.

**Teaching Staff Support.** We have two non-residential members of staff – Mrs Lucy Ecuyer and Miss Susan Wells – who work one night each week and one day every third weekend.

## **Support Staff**

In addition, Dr Caz Boulter and Mr Dave Boulter work two nights each week and every third weekend. Both have extensive experience of working in a boarding community with family members.

## **Approach**

It is very important that we adopt a different approach to boarding duties when compared with classroom management. Clearly, it is very important to make sure that rules are still followed but we should use our time with boarders to develop deeper relationships with them where possible.

## **Arrival, Rooms and Meals**

Some children will be brought to School by parents, others will fly in to various UK airports. All pupils will be met by a member of staff they know – usually Colonel Boulter, Mr Cooper, Mr Dodgson, Mrs Clifton or Mr Sampson at airports. They may be assisted by our GAPpers.

## **Passports/ID Cards/Pocket Money**

Passports, ID Cards and Pocket money are all handed in to the School Office on arrival at School. They are handed back to the pupils on departure for holidays/exeats/leaving.

## **Rooms**

Children are assigned to a variety of rooms, ranging from 3-bedded to 6-bedded dorms. The bedrooms are as homely as possible.

## **Routine**

### **Dining Room**

Timings are as follows:

Meal	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast	7.30am	7.30am	7.30am	7.30am	7.30am	Meal times differ. Cooked breakfast is offered on one of the days.	
Lunch	Depends on the year group children are in.						
Supper	6pm	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm	6.30pm		

All meals will be served in the dining hall and, when on duty, staff are expected to help serve the food. They may also be called upon at particularly busy times to offer an additional pair of hands even if not on duty. An important part of being a residential member of staff is also to seize the initiative; if it looks like help is required, it probably is, so staff should try and read the situation and act accordingly. During meal times, it is good practice for staff to sit with the children as a family would do around the dining table; it provides an informal and perfect opportunity to ask about how children's days have been. An informal discussion could also help identify a potentially more serious situation which they might be able to help with and, if necessary, they should communicate a potential problem to the Head of Boarding.

You will notice that times of meals do change at the weekend and the decision on breakfast timings will be taken the preceding evening by the Weekend Team and Colonel Boulter depending on numbers of children and trips.

## **Dining Room Set-Up**

The layout of the serving and dining area and the way tables are set will be covered with all residential staff at the beginning of term.

- 1 Table cloths need to be straight and, if the children have not ensured that this is the case, then please ask them to lay the table again, providing closer supervision and support if required. Tables should be laid in the same way each time. Staff will show the children how to lay the table in the first week of term with the older experienced boarders also helping to ensure the correct set-up.
- 2 Tables will have been laid the evening before with 4-6 children per table depending on the numbers in the Boarding House. The tables should be laid in the same way every evening unless there is a cooked breakfast when forks are required.
- 3 The serving hatch should also be set out according to the nature of the breakfast. For example, it might be sensible to move the tea and chocolate service to a trolley if there are multiple breakfast items and space is at a premium.
- 4 Clearing of tables. The serving hatch has rows of milk, butter, sugar, spoons for Staff to put away. Marmalades and tams are returned direct to storage area.
- 5 Tables should be wiped down once all children have left the table, ready for setting up for the next meal.
- 6 Any 'debris' under the tables needs to be swept up.

Grace is said at the end of the breakfast serving and before meals at all other times. The children are placed on tables, take into consideration friendships, age and mix of nationalities. When there is space in the dining room, children should sit in groups of 4 which allows space for adults to go and sit with them to interact as parents would with their children. This is especially important when we have short-term courses; where possible, we will mix these groups in with our full-time children, helping to ensure that English is spoken at all times.

## **Morning Routine - Monday to Friday**

Children are woken at 7am by the members of staff on duty. Staff then help children to be smart and ready for school with tidy bedrooms and beds made before they come downstairs for a 'smartness' check in the Front Hall prior to moving across to the Dining Room for breakfast. When the Boarding House is busy, a rolling breakfast which starts at 7.15am might be implemented. The children can then get ready as usual and are allowed to return to their rooms from 7.45am when Day Matrons will have come on duty.

## **Evening Routine**

All boarders will go to Prep Tea at 4.30pm where they will stay until 4.45pm prior to going to prep or an after-school club on a Tuesday or Thursday. All boarders must attend a club on Tuesday or Thursday.

*Children will get changed into their casual clothes at 5.30pm before returning to prep rooms. Duty Staff will cover both the landings whilst pupils are changing and the prep room for the remaining day pupils.*

After supper, children return to prep if they have more to complete. For free time before bed-time, there should be a member of staff in the marquee area, someone roaming outside and, when possible, someone should also be making sure children are practising instruments or doing additional reading.

### **Bed/Shower Timings**

<b>Forms</b>	<b>Upstairs for Showers</b>	<b>Lights Off</b>
I and II	8pm	8.30pm
III and IV	8.15pm	8.45pm
V	8.20pm	9pm
VI	8.45pm	9.15pm

During the Summer Term, these timings will be extended by 15 minutes.

Children can spend their free-time in a variety of ways (astro, indoor games, marquee, Front Hall). On a Wednesday evening, all children will go up at the same time and showers should have been taken when they get changed into casual clothes. This will be followed by a Tuck and Film Night with one or two film options.

### **Weekends**

#### **Meals**

During the weekend, we will provide the children with a cooked breakfast on either the Saturday or Sunday; the timing of this will be decided on the previous evening. If there is Saturday School, then clearly it will need to be early enough to allow Form VI children to attend. The Weekend Boarding Team is responsible for cooking breakfast and clearing up afterwards. Children enjoy the traditional English breakfast as well as pancakes and fresh fruit; the majority are also big fans of egg fried rice.

Lunches and Suppers are prepared by the Catering Team but you will need to support serving the food.

#### **Outings**

There is a varied programme of weekend activities and they are decided (with guidance!) by the children to a large extent. Occasionally, these are optional but generally all children attend the activity. Below is a list of the types of activities offered but new suggestions are welcome, especially if it is something or somewhere you have visited previously.

- 1) Trip to Bury St Edmunds (Cathedral, Abbey Gardens and shopping), Saffron Walden (maze and shopping), Haverhill (shopping) or Cambridge (colleges and shopping).
- 2) Swimming at Colchester, Chelmsford or Haverhill.
- 3) Cinema in Haverhill. Good value films are available on a Saturday morning as well as new releases.
- 4) Great Notley Park - extensive play park. Good physical activity.
- 5) Great Yarmouth - Pleasure Beach, Aquarium, arcades, sea.
- 6) Pleasurewood Hills - Theme Park
- 7) Bowling - Bury St Edmunds
- 8) Curve Motion - roller skating and soft play.
- 9) Duxford especially if we have visiting groups - Air Museum.

- 10) Walk around the airfield. Pupils might grumble when this is suggested but, once underway, they actually love it especially on a frosty morning when they can smash the 'puddles'!
- 11) Clip 'n' Climb, Cambridge
- 12) Cycling around Rutland Water (15 or 25 miles) or Grafton Water (10 miles).
- 13) Ski Slope, Ipswich
- 14) Ninja, Colchester
- 15) London – museums (Science, Natural History, British) or Tower, Riverboat trip and sightseeing / London Dungeon).
- 16) Thetford Forest. Forest Park. Cycling
- 17) Jump Street (trampolines) Colchester
- 18) Ickworth House and play-park
- 19) Windsor / Legoland
- 20) Laserquest, Cambridge

When the children are taken to Bury St Edmunds or Cambridge, we allow the older children a greater level of independence but this is on the proviso that they stay in groups of 3 at minimum. The older children may well want to include some of the younger children in their group but staff will decide if this is appropriate. Younger children will be accompanied by staff.

### **Whilst at Home/On-Site**

The children love having a bit of relaxation and like having the time to use all the facilities we have available in the Marquee, African Room and around the School such as table tennis, games consoles, soft play, chess, board-games, trampoline, bouncy castle and soft play area. They also really enjoy semi-organised games of man-hunt, football, cricket, hockey (for cricket and hockey they must wear PPE). The children should also be encouraged to practise their musical instrument. They can use the piano in the Main House and also the one in the Hall. If they ask, they can also use the drum kits around School if they are taking percussion lessons.

Many of our children will also need some additional help with their reading and prep which has not been completed during the week, so time should always be put aside for this to take place. The best time is generally when Form VI are in Saturday School or during one of the mornings prior to an excursion.

Activities such as cooking are always very popular and, when the weather allows, snowball or water fights are great fun! Jewellery making, art and drawing cards are also possible.

The IT Room and mobile phones can, and should, be used but not over-much (see later).

### **Bed/Shower Timers**

Similar to Monday-Friday but may be adjusted to suit outings/evening activities (ie films)

### **Exeat Weekends / Half Term**

Two Exeat Weekends are planned each term. Our boarders who have parents resident in the country will generally leave on the Friday and return between 4-6pm on a Sunday. Our overseas boarders do not have to leave the School site and we look after those who stay as we would on any weekend. This is also the case for half-terms (although some will fly home). Colonel Boulter will make arrangements using Gap Students and other members of the School Community to staff these. Teaching staff will generally not be asked to help cover

## Mobile Phone Use

### **1. General**

Every full-time boarder will have a space in the phone locker with their name on. All phones must be collected before bed-time. Look out for children who might have two phones!

### **2. Mid-week**

The children are only allowed their phones after prep and supper have been completed. Some pupils will suggest that they need their phones earlier in the evening; please look at this on a case-by-case basis. The Hong Kong and Chinese children are also allowed to access their phones to make **phone calls only** during lunch time. The School Offices will ensure children can access the cabinet.

### **3. Weekends**

Some of our children would happily sit on their phones all day. As we know, this is not at all healthy and we ensure that this does not happen. The senior person on duty during the weekend needs to make the decision as to when phones are available for the children. Sometimes it might be appropriate for pupils to have phones available on outings; on other occasions, you might decide that it is not a good idea. Please aim to not let children have phones for more than 60 minutes at a time, with a maximum of twice a day.

## Fire Orders

We will have at least two practice fire drills a term for our boarders; these are in addition to the whole school fire drills. Within the first week of term, we will show the children where to assemble and have a drill the following day. When new pupils join us, this process will be repeated. The Boys Floor should be cleared by Mr Cooper assisted by Mr Addison, the male gap student, and the girls by Mrs Cooper, assisted by Miss Lawrence the female gap student. Mr Cooper will collect the fire books so that a register can be taken at the Assembly Point.

In the absence of Mr and Mrs Cooper, Colonel Boulter will clear the Boys' Floor and the senior residential member of staff the Girls' Floor.

**All staff must attend Fire Drills. This will be made clear to the visiting staff as well.**

## Personal Items

### **Storage**

Full-time boarders will be issued with a locker which they can access in their own time. They will also be able to store some tuck in there which they can supplement with snacks. No food or drink (except water) is allowed upstairs.

### **Tidiness of Dorms**

Parents also should have made sure that all clothes are labelled. However, where this is not the case, Matron will label clothing. Please also encourage and help the children to take ownership of the display boards in their rooms which should be personalised. The children will need to work hard to keep their drawers tidy and there will be regular inspections, with Matron over-seeing the general levels of tidiness with the help of Day Matrons.

### **Pocket Money**

Mrs Cooper will take charge of pocket money at the start of each term and this will be distributed to children on any occasion when they need cash. Members of staff on duty at the weekend will be in charge of giving the money out and Mrs Cooper will keep a check on the balance in the account for all boarders. Generally, immersion groups will have a leader who will hold their pocket money.

### **Visiting Groups**

Pupils on immersion courses generally have staff accompanying them and it is very important that we communicate our expectations to these members of staff whilst accepting that there will be some cultural differences which we should look to accommodate where possible. For example, it is very important to the visiting Columbian Group that they shower in the morning as opposed to our usual evening routine; this is fine and we can arrange this easily. Some of our children might also choose to shower in the morning. As long as they can do this and be on time, it is not a problem and actually helps manage 'bottle-necks' when lots of children need to shower at a particular time.

**The most important thing to remember is that you must ask questions if you are unsure about procedures, expectations or a particular course of action and we will help.**