

Saint  
John's  

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college school

A Handbook for Boarders  
and their Families  
2023-2024

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# Introduction

In the school's Ethos and Aims and the Manual for Pastoral Staff, the Head states:

'At St John's College School we aim to foster the aptitudes and nurture the growth of each child to enable them to become their best selves in the fullest sense. Respect for children, faith in children and an ability to see the world through their eyes informs our teaching and our care.

We believe that emotional and social well-being, self-awareness and confidence are inextricably linked with academic progress. This emotional well-being arises from a deep connection with others, which is nurtured through our care for children. If we care about children, we will wish to notice and respond to a need, spot and develop a talent, discover and resolve an unhappiness. If we evidence this care, children will feel secure and valued, and will value themselves and others. We see school as an extension of family life and aim to know, understand and care for the families from which our children come and to work with families in each child's best interests.'

The Boarding House exists within the framework of the School as a whole and is run according to this ethos and to bring a sense of community to the boarders.

Boarding at St John's is based on the principle that the House should act as an extension of the child's family. The House has a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere which provides a happy and structured environment for boarders and their families.

The Head of Boarding is responsible to the Head for the care and welfare of all Boarders. A wide range of resident and non-resident staff also play crucial parts in the lives of boarders and their families. This is a task which we take on with enthusiasm. We try to be tolerant and forgiving and at the same time to provide a structure and sense of purpose to boarders and their families.

Parents are always welcome to visit your children. You may have a specific reason for coming or you may simply wish to spend some time with them. Perhaps you will want to take your child out for the evening (if so, please arrange this in advance with the Head of Boarding). Whenever you visit, it is important that you let the boarding house staff know that you are on site and sign your child out with the senior member of staff on duty. Please note that, other than at the beginning and end of term, parents are not permitted upstairs in the boarding house.

St John's is a warm, open and friendly school. We all very much hope you will feel part of the excitement, enjoyment and sense of purpose that prevails amongst the boarding community here.

## Whitfield House

Whitfield House was renovated in 2011 and is exquisite in both design and comfort.

The Boarding House is situated two buildings down from Senior House at 69 Grange Road. It accommodates up to 40 boys and girls co-educationally. In addition to the dormitories and the common rooms, the children have access to all the facilities of Senior House, including the Library, Music school, Computer rooms, Indoor Swimming Pool, Sports Hall, Playing fields, Tennis Courts, and play areas. Once the school day is over, the school's facilities become very much the boarders' own.

Older boarders are allowed to walk between Whitfield House and Senior House, provided that they are not on their own – the travel time by foot is 30 seconds and does not involve crossing roads. Staff are always available to accompany younger boarders between sites, as necessary.

Within the House itself, there are two main areas for socialising: the Kitchen and the Recreation Room. There is also a Library which is a designated 'quiet' space. Boys and girls mix freely within the House although washing facilities are separated and there is no inter-visiting between boys' and girls' bedrooms.

The House is both a house and a home. When you visit, you will find a House which feels like the type of home those of us with children recognise. There are children laughing, games being played. There are lost slippers and children who need a comforting smile and reassurance. Above all, there are people who are interested in the children and their families.

## The Staff

The Head of Boarding is responsible to the Head for the day to day running of the House and the welfare of the boarders. The Head of Boarding lives within the Boarding House and is assisted by other members of staff some of whom are also resident. The Head lives in the neighbouring house.

The resident boarding staff are supported by a number of 'day' staff who undertake duties within the House on weekday evenings and at weekends. When all the boarders are present, there will usually be four members of staff on duty. The balance of male and female staff is carefully planned and the children always have access to a wide range of adults. Overall, the Boarding House is staffed by a warm, caring, committed and friendly group of people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of interests, who all have a common interest in providing the most appropriate and supportive atmosphere within which your child as a boarder will grow and develop.

Members of the Boarding Staff can be contacted by parents at their published school email addresses. It is very helpful if any communication could also be copied to the Head of Boarding. Members of staff can also be contacted by telephone.

## Staff Communication with the Day School

Liaison with staff in the day school is important. In many cases, a member of the boarding staff will be a child's day school tutor. In others, the day school tutor may be on duty in the House. In any case, there is formal and informal contact between the boarding staff and the children's teachers on a regular basis, with regard to work and life in general.

## Staff Communication with Home

Parents will always be informed of any matters of concern and should feel free to let us know of any concerns either they or their child may have.

Parents are always welcome to visit their child and the level of informal communication between staff and

parents is therefore naturally high. The Head of Boarding will contact the parents of new boarders regularly over the first few weeks to reassure that all is well and to resolve any queries or concerns. The Head of Boarding is always willing to meet with parents informally or by appointment for a private discussion.

For those parents who are unable to visit frequently, special arrangements for communication can be made as appropriate, using email, Skype or regular phone calls to ensure that parents are kept fully informed of their child's progress and welfare.

## Children's Communication with Home

Children may communicate with their parents using the two private phone booths situated within the Boarding House. Mobile Phones may not be used in the Boarding House. Some children prefer to use email and they have supervised access to this facility within the school's computer rooms. The Boarding House also has a mobile phone on which the boarders can access FaceTime to communicate with their families.

If, when parents visit, they wish to speak privately with their child, the Library will be made available for this.

## Pupil Voice - Boarding House Meetings, Committee and Surveys

In addition to the opportunities for informal communication between children and adults in the Boarding House, tutor meetings of staff and children take place within the routines of the Day School.

Children's views about their lives as boarders are sought during Boarding House meetings, Committee Meetings and Surveys. These are led by the Head of Boarding or Deputy Houseparent. The Committee is designed to give the children an opportunity to discuss any issues relating to their lives as boarders, to put their ideas forward for consideration and to raise any worries they may have.

There are also regular meetings, throughout the term, which deal with Boarding House routines, Staying Safe Issues and Anti-bullying talks. These sometimes happen at, or just after, meal times. Children are invited to contribute to the agenda for meetings and minutes are taken and displayed on the noticeboard in the Boarding House.

Boarder surveys are normally conducted biannually to give the children the opportunity to express their views with regard to their lives as boarders.

## Getting Started

Getting used to boarding takes a little time and new boarders are given special consideration and care initially and this continues for as long as is necessary.

When a new boarder arrives, everyone within the House will be helping her or him to settle. An established boarder will be asked to guide the new boarder through the daily routines. In addition to this, the Head of Boarding meets with new boarders during their first week to answer any questions which may have come up and to find out how they've settled in. At the first half term, parents of new Boarders may be invited in to chat about how things are going. Clearly, boarders can talk to anyone at any stage and they do not have to wait for fixed appointments. The same goes for parents.

There is a 'Buddy System' in the House whereby the youngest boarders in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Forms are 'buddied' with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Form boarders, in order to form friendships and to give the younger boarders another person to turn to with questions. Buddies sit together for one breakfast during the week and occasionally at Supper.

# Routines

## Eating

Food is very important to all of us and particularly to growing children. There is always a careful line to be drawn between 'snacking' and eating a proper balanced meal and the Catering staff together with the Boarding staff, who eat with the Boarders, are aware of this. Food is provided at the following times:

7:00am	Breakfast	Tea, fruit juice, cereals, toast, butter, spreads, fruit, a cooked breakfast.
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All boarders come to breakfast at 7:00am. It is seen as a relaxed and quiet time when we can all look forward to the day ahead. It is also a chance for staff to give routine notices and for a rendition of Happy Birthday on a boarder's birthday. At the end of breakfast, boarders leave to complete half an hour's prep or music practice, before starting the school day.

10:10am	Break	Milk, fresh fruit, baguettes with a variety of fillings.
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12.50pm	Lunch	Lunch is taken with all day staff and pupils. The cafeteria system offers a choice of hot dishes, a vegetarian hot dish, a choice of vegetables, cold meat and salad bar, a choice of puddings, fresh fruit, cheeses, squash and water.
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4:10pm	Afternoon Tea	Tea, cakes/biscuits. Hot snack for choristers going to chapel during Winter months.
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6:00pm	Supper	A hot dish, a selection of salad and fresh fruit, bread and butter
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Supper is a meal for boarders and day boarders only, shared with the boarding staff. At the end of the meal, notices are given out and plans for the evenings' activities are announced.

The boarders also have bedtime snacks during the week (toast, cereal, milk) which they love and ensure that all children are full when they go to bed.

The School operates a strict 'NUT FREE' policy as we have a number of children with potentially fatal nut allergies. Boarders and their parents are asked to bear this in mind if bringing in food from outside the school.

## Health

The Boarding House is the children's home and we care for the children based on this principle. We recognise that illness whether acute or chronic can be an unsettling time for children and their families and we do our utmost to look after the children in a warm and safe manner.

### Managing Health on a Daily Basis

The School Nurse is on site from 8am to administer prescribed medications and review any health concerns that have arisen overnight. Our School Nurse is a Nurse Practitioner who is able to assess and decide if a child needs to see the GP.

### GP Services

We ask that boarders register as patients with a surgery within a short distance of the school, where they can be seen as NHS patients as required. If your child needs to see the GP, the School Nurse will be in touch with you to discuss this. The School Nurse will liaise with the surgery to arrange a suitable appointment for them. The School is happy to provide transport and chaperones for GP appointments but recognises that parents may wish to take their own child to see the GP.

## **Medication**

If medication is prescribed for your child then this should be discussed with the School Nurse who will ensure that it is administered correctly. The School Nurse and Boarding House staff will arrange repeat prescriptions as required.

We keep the routine medication in the Boarding House that you would expect to find in any home: Paracetamol, Ibuprofen and Piriton that can be administered when a child is unwell. Boarding House staff will administer this to a child who is unwell according to School policy.

- If parents would like us to administer non-prescribed medications to their child such as cough medicine or regular anti-histamines, then please:
- Bring in suitable medication for your child's age
- Leave it in its original packaging
- Clearly mark it with your child's name

Chorister and Probationer Medical Needs

Dr Flinn from Huntingdon Road Surgery provides medical care and support for the College Choir.

## **Mornings**

Boarders are responsible for the making of their beds after which they congregate downstairs in Whitfield House just before 7am before walking up to Senior House for breakfast. Once boarders have finished breakfast, they complete thirty minutes of music practice or prep prior to the start of the school day at 8.05.

School bags and sports kits do not come back to Whitfield House but stay in school overnight.

Music Practice

Boarders' music practice takes place each day after breakfast in the Music School. Each child has a practice room and a daily time allocated by the Director of Music, who is also responsible, along with other members of the department, for the supervision of music practice. While the Boarding House staff and the Music Department work closely together to ensure regular, high quality practice, it is also something that requires personal commitment and encourages the children to take responsibility for their own progress. There is a system for checking that music practice is carried out effectively and for providing help to those requiring it. Some boarders may have additional or alternative music practice times after the end of the school day, depending on their needs.

## **After School**

After-School Activities

Having finished their tea, the boarders are encouraged to take part in the school's extensive after school activities programme, as published in the termly school calendar. These activities take place at the end of the school day and conclude by approximately 5.30pm.

Children who are not taking part in a specific club will have free time during which they can use any of the school's facilities providing they are not in use by others and appropriate supervision is available. Alternatively, they may simply wish to have some time playing with friends, reading a book or relaxing in Whitfield House, which is fully staffed at such times.

After supper, there are evening activities exclusively for the boarders. We try to tailor the activities to the particular interests and wishes of the children involved on any given evening. All the activities offered are available to boys and girls. Afternoon and evening activities include DT and craft activities, use of the school swimming pool, computer room and Library, games on the field such as rounders, tennis, football, frisbee or touch rugby and games in the Hall such as basketball or dodge-ball.

## Homework

'Prep' (homework) is done in one session before school and one session after supper, each of which lasts for 30 minutes. Older boarders may need to complete an hour of prep after supper, particularly at examination times or when they have preps to catch up. The children are divided into appropriate groups, each of which is supervised in a classroom by a member of the boarding staff who is available to help and guide them. Children may also have supervised access to the Library and the Computer rooms for any research or computer preps that are set.

Staff have access to a list of the subjects that have been set for Prep, each evening, and check that it is completed to an appropriate standard at the end of each session. Each child's prep is carefully monitored and staff provide support for those who need particular assistance. If boarders feel that they are falling behind, then they can speak with the Head of Boarding and be sure that he will be able to help in a supportive and appropriate manner. The liaison between Boarding and Teaching staff at St John's is excellent and if a boarder is struggling, appropriate support or provision is immediately put in place.

## Sleeping

Getting enough sleep is very important, particularly when life is as active as it is at St John's. Bedtimes and lights out times have been planned to allow children as much free time as possible, balanced with appropriate rest. After lights out there should be no noise. If children have difficulty sleeping, they should talk to a member of staff and special arrangements can be made, as appropriate.

All activities will finish in time for boarders to arrive at the house in good time to start the bed routine. Exceptions to this can be made by senior boarding house staff if it is felt that boarders would benefit from more time to unwind prior to bed. This might be the case following e.g. a concert, play or a late finish to the Chapel Routine for Choristers.

Children may not at any time enter the private accommodation of the resident staff. If they have a problem with getting to sleep, they have access to call points outside their dorms; these provide a direct line to the member of staff on overnight duty. If a child is up in the night, movement sensors are fitted throughout the house and these alert the member of staff on overnight duty so that an adult is always ready to help.

## General Weekday Routine

(This differs slightly for the Choir – please see the Chorister and Probationer Handbook for details)

6:40am	Wake up
7:00am	Breakfast
7:30am	Prep or Music Practice
8:05am	Boarders start their school day or continue with prep or music practice when required
8:35am	Registration, Assembly, Tutor time
9.05am	School
4.10pm	Afternoon Tea and registration
4.20pm	After School clubs
4.30pm	Boarding House Activities begin
6.00pm	Supper
6.30pm	Prep followed by evening activities

Form	2	3	4	5	6
8.00pm	Get clean				
8.15pm	Get reading	Get clean			
8.30pm	Get to sleep	Get reading	Get clean		
8.45pm		Get to sleep	Get reading	Get clean	
9.00pm			Get to sleep	Get reading	Get clean
9.15pm				Get to sleep	Get reading
9.30pm					Get to sleep

Bedtimes start 30 mins earlier on Monday & Wednesday



## Weekends

Boarders, except choristers, are free to leave at the end of the school day on Friday, returning in time for bed on Sunday evenings or Monday morning instead.

## Leave outs

'Leave outs' is the term we use for boarders going home or being taken out by parents. Choristers and Probationers may have commitments at weekends and other boarders may have sports coaching/tournaments. However, if/once they are free from commitments they may go home on any weekend. Boarders return to the Boarding House on Sunday evening, half an hour before bedtime or Monday morning before school commences.

Parents who wish to set up a standard arrangement for leave outs are asked to inform the Head of Boarding at the start of each term. Should a standard arrangement need to be changed, either on a temporary or permanent basis, parents should inform the Head of Boarding by email or in writing by Thursday lunchtime of the weekend in question.

For Chorister and probationer parents, leave out requests must be notified to the Head of Boarding by email or in writing by Tuesday lunchtime before the week in question. It is important that we know by this time so that we can arrange appropriate activities and catering for the weekend.

We operate a boarding system designed to meet the needs of families wherever possible. Parents may, of course, visit during the week and children may, by arrangement with the Head of Boarding, be taken out during the week.

## Parental Permissions

There are a few activities for which we need specific written permission from parents, as follows:

- **Swimming.** If a boarder wishes to take part in supervised evening swims, parents must complete the relevant permission form. Staff supervising the swim will be acting 'in loco parentis' and will hold a current RLSS/ASA Rescue and Resuscitation certificate.
- **Cycling.** Boarders are allowed to cycle in Cambridge. They must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times and boarders must wear suitable high visibility clothing, cycle helmets and use bike lights when necessary. Form 5 and 6 boarders who live close to school are able to cycle home at weekends or for leave outs. Additional permission will be needed from parents in this instance.
- **Punting.** Boarders, when with their families or with an appropriately staffed 'House' outing, have access to Punting on the River Cam. Punts are available for hire from the Cripps Court Porters Lodge in St John's College.
- **Walking into Cambridge.** With parents' permission, boarders are allowed to walk into Cambridge. The following restrictions apply:
  - o Children in forms 5 and 6 may travel without a member of staff in groups of no less than three, at least one of whom is a 6th Former. They must stay together when in town.
  - o Children in Forms 4 and below must be accompanied by a member of staff.
  - o All pupil groups walking into Cambridge MUST follow a set route which takes them safely across the roads between the School and the town centre.

Each child going into town must have an emergency contact card, stored safely, which lists the contact number of the Kitchen in the Boarding House, where a member of staff will be to receive any calls, and the mobile number of the member of staff accompanying the children in town. Any child separated from their group should:

- stay in the shop or go to a nearby shop and ask a member of the shop staff to call one of the listed

telephone numbers

or

- only if nearby, go to the Porter's Lodge at St John's College

**All children have to sign in and out with a member of staff on duty whenever they leave or arrive back at Whitfield House.**

### **Out of School Activities**

There are occasions when boarders may undertake an out of school activity in the evenings that is not organised by the school, such as a music lesson or sports coaching. Parents must seek permission from the Head of Boarding for this to happen and also send written confirmation of the arrangements. The boarding house will not be able to arrange for travel to or from such activities.

## **Pocket Money**

Pocket Money for Boarders is charged on the school bill. The recommended amount is set by the Head of Boarding and is billed in advance. Any pocket money that is not spent by a boarder is then refunded onto the next school bill.

A pocket money account is held for each of the Boarders and they can check how much they have spent and how much they have left. Boarders are encouraged to plan their expenditure wisely and, as such, they are not permitted to become 'overdrawn'. Pocket money is used for spending on recreational trips. The House staff take an active interest in the sensible management of the Boarders' accounts and monitor spending very carefully whilst encouraging children to understand and learn financial independence and responsibility.

Any cash brought in (which should only be with the parents' prior knowledge) should be given to the Head of Boarding for safe keeping.

All routine House activities such as films and 'treats' are included within the general fee arrangements and are not charged against pocket money. Very occasionally, activities may be organised which incur large expenditure (i.e. a Go Karting trip, etc.) and parents' permission for this to be added to the fees' account will be sought prior to any such event.

## **Possessions and Technology**

Whilst boarders are welcome to bring personal items from home, they and their families are asked to bear in mind the following: Technology is an area that is in constant evolution and it is increasingly difficult to monitor and police a child's access to the World Wide Web. Unfortunately, the word 'Cyber-bullying' has become all too familiar and it is our concern for the safety and happiness of our boarders that has helped form our current policy on technology. Boarders are not permitted to access to Social Network sites, chat forums and text messaging services. Boarders are allowed to access the Internet and send and receive emails but this is always supervised and controlled by the school's Internet Security system. The children learn about all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying, during PSE lessons. We will constantly review our policy, just as the technology itself is constantly evolving.

- **Mobile phones, Smart Watches, Games consoles and Smart Notebooks (iPads etc.) should not be brought into the House.**
- Personal music players (MP3 players) are allowed. 3G/4G/5G enabled devices are not permitted. Kindle Readers, eBooks and MP3 players must be loaded with music or stories only; **videos, games and films are not allowed. Mobile phones without SIM cards may be used for listening to music.**
- Valuable jewellery and watches should not be brought into the House.

- Valuable electronic equipment such as cameras, and speaker systems etc. should not be brought into the House.
- All items should be clearly named.
- Pinboards are provided for each boarder, and posters and other material for display may only be displayed on these boards. The Head of Boarding reserves the right to ask for items to be removed if he feels that they may cause offence.
- Stickers may not be put anywhere in the House.

Sports equipment, including balls of any description, should not be brought into the House. There are plenty available at school and we do not have sufficient storage for them in the children's dorms

### Television

As a rule, there should be sufficient activities organised in the House for the children such that they should rarely feel the necessity to be watching television. However, it is understood that there will be times when children may need 'down time' and may wish to relax in front of the television. In such circumstances staff will monitor both programme content and viewing time.

- The watching of television is generally not permitted before supper, unless the weather is so inclement that playing outside is not possible.
- Staff will ensure that television programmes are appropriate for the children viewing them and that DVDs and videos are age appropriate.

### IT Room

The IT room is available to children during prep times. Children do not have unsupervised access to this room or any other room where they may have computer access.

- Supervising members of staff actively supervise the children's use of the computers, circulating around the room to ensure that they are aware of what each child is doing.
- Children may use the IT room to access their school email account, having sought permission. No other email accounts may be used by the children.
- With the exception of approved educational websites, games may not be played during prep sessions in the IT room.

### Access to Information through Newspapers and Electronic Media

Boarders are encouraged to access media through the use of ICT and the television. In addition, the Boarding House may order copies of weekend papers for delivery to Whitfield House and also copies of the magazine 'The Week' and 'First News'.

### Use of Technology on School Trips out of the House

Mobile phones and games consoles may be taken on school trips, **subject to the approval of the member of staff running the trip**, and as long as they do not have access to the internet. If children wish to store their phones and/or consoles in the House for trips, they must be handed in to a member of staff and they will be kept safely and securely.

The use of personal games consoles on tours and trips is generally restricted to times of travel e.g. long coach journeys, flights and waiting at airports etc. Other than at these times, when they will be distributed to children by the staff, consoles tend to be kept by the supervising members of staff.

## Privacy

Children should be aware of the following important rules about privacy:

- Nobody should ever go through a child's personal items without the Head of Boarding's permission. If a member of staff needs to do so, this will only be done with the child and the Head of Boarding present. Such cases are very rare.
- Bedrooms are private areas. Children may not enter other people's bedrooms ('dorms') without permission from a member of house staff and may only remain while the person who issued the invitation remains there.
- Boys and girls are not allowed in each others' dorms.

## Clothing and Laundry

As part of developing a sense of personal worth and self-esteem, Boarders are asked to take pride in the way they dress and in the care of their uniform and 'casual' clothes.

There is a clothes' wash every day and bed linen is washed fortnightly. Boarders are encouraged, under supervision, to take responsibility for changing their own beds.

All clothing should be clearly named. Parents are asked to look carefully at the clothing list supplied and to follow its requirements.

If parents feel there is a need to provide more casual clothes than asked for in the clothing list (perhaps for a special event, party, etc.) they are asked to inform the Head of Boarding when the extra clothing is brought in.

The House staff help the boarders to maintain a respectable standard of dress and tidiness. Staff are available to help with personal organisation.

## If Things Go Wrong...

At St John's we are very fortunate in having a large number of adults to whom children and their families may turn if they feel something needs to be sorted out or if they have any suggestions. In the Boarding House, children's views are sought and respected with regard to any matters relating to their lives within the school, both informally through the day to day contact with individual staff or when notices are given out at mealtimes and more formally through discussion forums which are chaired by a member of the resident house staff.

There may be times when a boarder feels unhappy about being away from home or about something which has happened to her or him. If this arises then the most important thing to stress is that they should seek out an adult with whom they feel they can discuss it. The Head of Boarding is always available to talk to children and their families if there are any concerns about general routines or about managing life as a boarder, most of which can be quickly resolved. The concerns may be of a more serious nature and of course, in such cases, the Head may be consulted.

The following guidelines for children are displayed in every child's dormitory and in public areas around the House:

**Is someone making you feel unhappy?  
Do you need to talk to an adult?  
Do you want to complain about something?**

If you are unhappy about any issue, or the way you are treated at school by another child or an adult, then you should speak to a grown-up who you feel you can trust.

You might choose to speak to:

- The Head of Boarding
- Deputy Housemistress
- House Parents
- Your Day School Tutor or Form Teacher
- The Head
- The Deputy Head
- The School Nurse
- The Gap Students
- Anyone in your safety circle

If the matter is embarrassing for you, or you would prefer to talk with someone outside the school you could contact:

<p><b>Independent Listener:</b> Sarah Upjohn 07593188450</p>	<p><b>ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate)</b> Tel: 020 7600 0100 Or by email: <a href="mailto:concerns@isi.net">concerns@isi.net</a> or by post: Independent Schools Inspectorate, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA.</p>
<p><b>Childline (NSPCC)</b> <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a> 0800 11 11</p>	<p><b>Office of the Children's Commissioner</b> 020 7783 8330 Or online at <a href="mailto:advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk">advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Cyber bullying help: <a href="http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk">www.thinkuknow.co.uk</a></p>	

## Parent voice – communication with the Boarding House

As is the nature of boarding at St John's, it is important that parents understand and feel that they are a valued part of the boarding community. In addition to the informal discussions and chats with Boarding Staff throughout the school year, parents' views are sought formally through the biannual Parents' Survey views and the formal meetings between parents and the Head of Boarding. Both the survey and the meetings offer parents the chance to voice suggestions or worries and these will then feed into the annual review of all boarding routines and documentation.

It is important to deal with any concerns before they escalate. It is better to communicate these to boarding staff in person rather than by email. Once parents have let us know of any worries, boarding staff will follow these up with Senior Managers and academic staff/pastoral staff at School. Parents will be informed by Boarding Staff that their concern has been discussed and also of any actions that will be put into place to address the situation.

## Governor for Boarding

At St John's, there are two distinct kinds of boarder: choristers/probationers and other boarders. It is important that the welfare of both groups of children is properly managed and the involvement of the governors is an important part of this process. A Governor for Boarding is appointed to communicate to the School's Governing Body a strong understanding of the welfare of all boarders when they are in school as boarders, or when they are in College performing their chorister duties. The role incorporates:

- Regular visits to the boarding house, to include:
  - Discussion with the boarding house Independent Listener
  - Discussion with groups of children
  - Discussion with groups of staff
- Additionally, the Governor for Boarding might be expected to:
- Receive and review with the Head of Boarding any surveys of children's or parents' views
- Review documentation as appropriate, including:
- Self-Evaluation Form for boarding
- Boarding development plan
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding compliance documentation
- Head of Boarding's report to Governors (prior to Governors' meeting)

## Complaints

Boarders are encouraged to voice both joys and worries and this takes place during forums which are held throughout the school year. If a boarder wishes to complain anonymously, then there is provision set up for this via the Suggestions box. Details of how to complain, and the options of who to complain to (above), are posted in all dorms and in the phone boxes and public areas.

All complaints are taken seriously and are dealt with by the Head of Boarding, in consultation with the Head and the Deputy Head. If parents wish to make a complaint they should contact the Head of Boarding and if the issue is still not solved, they should follow the procedures set out in the School's Complaints Policy which is available on the School's Website.

## Day Boarding (Whitfield Waiters)

The Day Boarding facility at St John's allows children in the 7 - 13 age group (1st Form upwards) to enjoy the facilities and staffing of the Boarding House between 4.10pm - 8.00pm on weekdays. Some children stay because it offers a structured environment within which they can complete their Prep. Others stay simply to enjoy the company of their friends, and a large number stay as a first stage towards boarding.

Day Boarders have access to all of the facilities available to boarders with the exception of boarders' bedrooms (dorms) which are not available for reasons of privacy. Parents are free to collect their child at any time prior to 8.00pm although we ask that when they do collect their child they should seek out a member of staff to say goodbye and sign out.

Parents may request that their child should Day Board on any weekday/s throughout the term. Preference is given to regular Day Boarders within the limited number of spaces available but the facility is also available to parents on an occasional basis (subject to numbers) and in cases of emergency.

Prior to taking a Day Boarding place, parents may wish to discuss the provision with a member of the resident staff who will be able to answer any questions.

For further information about Day Boarding, please contact the Senior House secretary or the Head of Boarding's Administrator, by email or by phone.

## Boarding Options

Although the majority of boarders at St John's are full boarders, the school is able to offer boarding options that can be tailored to meet the needs of families and pupils. With all boarding options, priority is given to children wishing to board for four or more nights per week.

### **Full Boarding**

Full boarding is for children who are with us from at least Monday to Friday night each week. Full boarding is charged per term and withdrawal from full boarding requires a half-term's notice.

### **Flexi-boarding**

Flexi-boarding enables pupils board for a minimum of one or two nights per week (consecutive nights are preferred). A flexi-boarding place is booked on a termly basis, for the same nights in each week. It allows a boarder to pursue regular out of school activities that end late (sporting or musical, for example) and is an excellent stepping stone to full boarding, either at St John's or at Senior School.

Parents are able to book flexi-boarding on a termly basis subject to availability (priority is naturally given to Full Boarders).

### **Temporary Weekly Boarding**

Occasional Weekly Boarding is useful for pupils who are considering becoming full boarders and would like to try it out, briefly, or for families who have a planned event/holiday and would like their children to be cared for in the boarding house for a week.

Weekly boarding runs from a Sunday evening through to 4.10pm on a Friday (or Saturday morning should a boarder wish to attend Saturday morning coaching) and is charged per week. The availability of Weekly Boarding depends upon the number of free beds available at any given time.

### **Temporary Night Boarding**

Occasional Night Boarding allows parents to book a single night stay for their child in advance. Availability, again, depends on there being free space in the Boarding House.

### **Sleepovers and Emergency Boarding**

Sleepovers are an opportunity for our current boarders to invite friends to stay, just as they would do when they are at home.

The boarding house will always offer emergency overnight boarding for pupils; when the unforeseen occurs, then pupils are welcome to stay the night and we are very happy to look after them and welcome them into our community. There is no charge for either sleepovers or for emergency boarding.

If you would like to know more about any of the boarding options detailed above, please contact the Head of Boarding.

## Admissions

Children aged 8 and above are admitted to the Boarding House. Admission to the Boarding House depends on there being a place available within the day school and as this is not often the case, the majority of boarders (with the exception of the Choristers) are children who convert from day schooling at St John's. Admission of current day pupils to the Boarding House is organised by the Head of Boarding. Admission of boarders new to the school is managed by the Registrar and Head's PA.

## Conclusion

There will undoubtedly be things that are not covered in this handbook and if this is the case then please do not hesitate to let us know.

The Boarding House at St John's is a wonderful place full of excitement, enjoyment and purpose shared by staff, children and their families. I am confident that we provide an environment within which boarders and their families can thrive.

As a Boarding House, we are lucky to be part of a magnificent School with a record of outstanding achievements and, as part of this, we aim equally to offer the very best care a boarder and his/her family could ask for.

I am always happy to speak to prospective boarders' parents to provide further information. The 'Handbook for Choristers, Probationers and their Families' covers the special arrangements and routines appropriate to them and should be read in conjunction with this Handbook.

Simon Kirk  
Acting Head of Boarding  
December 2023