

Winchester House School

Boarding Principles and Practices, 2021-2022

Version 1

Responsible Governor: n/a

Last reviewed: 20th August 2021 (SI)

Adopted by Governors: n/a

Next review due: 20th August 2022

Please refer to the bottom of Page 8 regarding changes to Boarding made due to the Covid 19 Pandemic - 29th August 2020 (SI)

Winchester House School Boarding Principles and Practices, 2021-2022

'The friendly atmosphere, house loyalty and excellent relationships are nurtured by dedicated staff, and the care for each individual boarder is exemplary. Parents who responded to the questionnaire are highly satisfied with the provision and care their children receive. The boarders' responses were equally enthusiastic in their appreciation of the boarding provision.' ISI, 2013

The aims of boarding are...

- To foster a family atmosphere in which:
 - the children enjoy boarding and so enthuse about it
 - traditional expectations of courtesy, honesty, kindness and fairness are promoted, while being able to fully relax
 - the children establish and develop good and valuable friendships with other boarders
 - there is an open and trusting ethos in which each boarder feels able to approach any other member of the boarding community (staff or pupil) confident that they will be treated and respected as an individual
- To provide a safe and homely environment
- Through those points above, to create an atmosphere in which it is very difficult for unkindness, teasing and bullying to develop
- To care for and nurture each boarder as an individual, based upon knowledge of his or her needs and circumstances at any given time, informed and supported by communication with home. Individual boarders will enjoy absolute equality of care and treatment as informed by the Equality Act, 2010 and the 'protected characteristics' covered therein.
- To foster each child's independence by encouraging each child, kindly, to make his or her own decisions and learn by his or her mistakes so they gain greater knowledge of, and confidence in, themselves.
- To promote boarders successfully taking on more responsibility for their own lives, growing their independence further as they get older.
- To help each individual boarder towards realising their potential, taking full advantage from a caring staff, fine facilities and a beautiful setting.
- To promote links and communication between the boarding and day elements of a boarder's school life, particularly with their tutor, and to support their academic progress in boarding time as appropriate.
- Through all of the above, to prepare boarders to get the most out of boarding at their next school.

Why consider boarding?

When it comes to our children's futures, it pays to be far-sighted. Most parents recognise that their child becoming a happily established boarder at Winchester House allows them to choose from a far wider range of potential senior schools. For some, this does not sufficiently offset their reservations about sending their child to board. For many others, however, the expanded choice is fundamental to future plans, greatly increasing the likelihood of finding 'just the right school' for their child to go on to. Others recognise the increased opportunities (both extra-curricular and in terms of 'life skills') that boarding affords their child.

One of our main aims in terms of boarding at Winchester House is therefore to prepare a child fully to make the most of boarding life at a senior school. This is best done by children being confidently and happily established as boarders before leaving us. It goes without saying that the more time they are boarding with us, the more time we can give such preparation. Weekly boarding is, therefore, available at any point from Year 3 onwards.

The National Trend

Over the last years, boarding nationally has undergone enormous changes. These have been led by parents who want to spend a significant amount of time with their children but who still value the benefits of a boarding education. At prep school level the young age of the children is an additional factor for parents considering the boarding option. At senior schools, the benefits of increasing independence for the developing teenager continue to marry with the well-established benefits of boarding. Yet even for many senior schools, Exeats are far more commonplace and even standard weekends are seen as an opportunity to pop home at some point for the increasing number of pupils local enough to do so.

In the prep school sector this has led to a more flexible model of boarding, which for many modern families can offer the best of all worlds. Consequently, there has actually been a small increase in the number of children boarding.

Boarding at Winchester House

Boarding at Winchester House should be good fun for all those involved and staff do all they can to make it so, with a wide range of activities for all which often bring children from both boarding houses together. Boarding at WHS combines the best elements of tradition with a caring, supportive atmosphere and house staff who invest a huge amount in the pastoral care of the children. We were delighted to receive an excellent write up in the 2013 ISI inspection, but will not be resting on our laurels!

Boarding is central to what makes WHS a *preparatory* school – it is all about giving the best possible preparation to children who might or will be boarding at their senior school and making the most of the wonderful opportunities this in turn provides. On the way, the children have great fun, enjoying all the activities and games, time for rest, establishing more and deeper friendships across year groups, becoming more independent and having a 'home from home' for however many nights they are with us.

Boarding remains firmly at the heart of Winchester House, as it has always done. It allows independence to grow and flourish, enabling a child to make the most of opportunities at senior school, and all this within a small, familiar and homely environment. Boarding enhances the benefits of other Winchester House strengths beyond the classroom, like the Learn to Lead, Games and

Creative Arts programmes. Consequently, it continues to be our belief that trial nights and even occasional boarding – while being well-suited to certain needs of a busy family – are only the means to an end. The full benefits of boarding at WHS come through weekly boarding.

The Means to the End Benefit

The opportunities and stages outlined below are carefully considered stepping stones towards a happy and fulfilling time as a weekly boarder for all children who wish to board in their senior years at WHS. They are intended to create stability in the senior years while allowing for a reasonable and flexible approach in the younger years.

Trial Boarding

Each term's programme of trial boarding nights for Years 3-7 is published in advance to promote uptake and invariably they are very popular. The interest in these at the younger end of the Upper School is most encouraging. Trial boarding nights are free of charge.

All places on trial boarding nights are booked via the relevant Houseparents.

Occasional Boarding

Occasional boarding means committing to a regular boarding slot each week.

Children in Years 3, 4 & 5 may board for one or more nights a week. If more than one night, then consecutive nights are strongly desirable where at all possible to help the stability of the boarding community. There is some flexibility if there is a clear reason for nights not being consecutive.

Children in Years 6 & 7 (for the first two terms of the latter): in these years – if they are not already doing so – the goal of helping the occasional boarder towards weekly boarding is the foremost concern. It is the School's recommendation and experience that in these years an occasional boarder should aim to do at least two nights a week. However, for particular reasons different children may require different approaches and houseparents and parents work together to this end. As above, it is strongly desirable that occasional boarding nights are consecutive.

Children in Year 8

Most Year 8 boarders will Weekly Board. However, for particular reasons different children may require different approaches and houseparents and parents work together to this end. However, the requirement for a Year 8 Boarder is a minimum of 3 nights with the aim of becoming a Weekly Boarder throughout the year. As above, it is strongly desirable that boarding nights are consecutive.

Sept 2021 – Weekly Boarding for Year 8 students was reviewed and from September 2021 a more flexible approach with Year 8 students being permitted to board for fewer nights than 3 was agreed.

Charges for occasional boarding reflect its role as a path towards weekly boarding, with costs reducing the more week nights that are booked. Charges per week for the 2020-2021 academic year are: £45.00 for one night; £86.00 for two nights; £125.00 for 3 nights.

“My child would love to board if he/she was with some friends...”

In the younger years of the Upper School especially, all that is holding some children (and their parents) back from trying occasional boarding is the concern that they won't be with any of their friends because they don't currently board either – so that the above phrase is remarkably common among parents of Year 3s, 4s and 5s. As a solution we ask parents to let the Head of Boarding

(Shelley Irvine) know that this is their position. She will then build a list and put parents in touch with one another so they can agree a potential approach to their children's occasional boarding.

Occasional Boarding Dates

The dates for the first and last nights of occasional boarding per term are published in the school calendar.

There will also be occasional boarding available during Expedition's Week for those pupils in the year groups not involved in expeditions, or whose expedition is yet to depart.

Occasional Boarding and Flexi Boarding

We appreciate that throughout the academic year it would be, for numerous reasons, beneficial to have your son or daughter boarding more nights than they are signed up to as an occasional boarder. In order to meet this demand for greater flexibility we are able to offer each child an additional three nights of 'flexi-boarding' that can be taken at any point during the school year while occasional boarding is running. These nights can be used in any combination to suit your needs for greater flexibility whilst maintaining the school's boarding ethos.

These nights will not replace the occasional boarding nights you have already opted for and instead be provided as an additional night. Each night will be charged at the school's current rate of £45.00 and can be booked through the relevant Houseparents.

Our ability to accept any requests for flexi-boarding throughout the academic year will be entirely dependent upon bed space available.

Occasional Boarding and Laundry

We will continue to store and launder all boarders' school clothing to ensure that it is clean and readily available. On your child's first occasional boarding night of the term we ask that you provide the following items mentioned below. These will then be stored in the relevant boarding houses and returned to your son/daughter at the end of term.

The following items may remain at school during term time and should be taken home at the end of term.

- 1 washbag (containing toothbrush, toothpaste, soap or shower gel, comb or brush.)
- 1 set of pyjamas
- 1 dressing gown or warm top (in case of a Fire Alarm)
- A set of home clothes
- Slippers
- A towel
- A reading book for quiet time
- Their favourite furry friend.

If you are a boy boarding for...

1 night	2, 3 or 4 nights
1 School shirt 1 pair of trousers 1 School jumper 1 pair of socks 1 pair of underwear	2 School shirts 1 pair of trousers 1 School jumper 2 pairs of socks 2 pairs of underwear

If you are a girl boarding for...

1 night	2, 3 or 4 nights
1 School shirt 1 skirt 1 School jumper 1 summer dress (Summer term and 1 st half term of Michaelmas term) 1 pair of socks 1 pair of underwear	2 School shirts 1 skirt 1 School jumper 2 summer dresses (Summer term and 1 st exeat of Michaelmas term) 2 pairs of socks 2 pairs of underwear

In order for this system to work efficiently we ask that all clothing and possessions are named. Any home clothes brought in to school must be machine washable, machine dryable and named, otherwise they may be lost.

Flexi Boarding

Flexi boarding is distinct from occasional boarding insofar as it occurs on a 'hotel' basis, on any evening when parents would like to book their child in and there is a bed free.

Flexi boarding is available to all occasional boarders (explained above). Flexi boarding bookings should be made through the relevant Houseparent.

Our ability to accept any requests for flexi-boarding throughout the academic year will be entirely dependent upon bed space available.

Priority for Bed Spaces

As boarding continues to be increasingly popular throughout the school year there is a need to establish an order of priority for bed spaces which reflects what the school is trying to achieve within boarding.

In order to avoid disappointment and misapprehensions parents should be aware that beds will be allocated in the following order of priority:

1. Existing weekly boarders.
2. Any pupil converting to weekly boarding at the start of the term.
3. Those opting for 4 nights of occasional boarding.
4. Those opting for 3 nights of occasional boarding.
5. Those opting for 2 nights of occasional boarding.
6. Those opting for 1 nights of occasional boarding.

So that the priority for bed spaces can be applied and any consequent issues resolved, all parents (with the exception of current weekly boarders) will be asked to notify the school during the booking window, which will end on the first Friday after half term. Allocation of bed spaces will begin after this Friday and places will be confirmed by email. It may be possible to accommodate any other requests for boarding thereafter, however this is entirely dependent upon space being available.

In order to provide an equal chance for all pupils to experience boarding, the school will be in contact two weeks before half-term to ask parents to submit their boarding preferences for the upcoming term. These sign-up periods will enable the above criteria to be applied fairly to all pupils across the school.

Should we find ourselves oversubscribed we will apply the above criteria on a first-come first-served basis. Once the closing date has passed, we will be in touch to confirm what nights your son/daughter will be boarding next term.

Booking Dates for Academic Year 2021-2022

The booking window dates for boarding requests are published in the school calendar.

Please confirm your booking via email with Mrs Hughes teresah@winchester-house.org copying in the relevant Houseparents.

Returns to School

It is compulsory for weekly boarders to return to school after Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays on the night preceding the day pupils' return. This helps to re-establish the boarding community and allows stories to be shared and news to be caught up on over hot chocolate and toast. On these return nights weekly boarders are not expected to return in school uniform.

Following a Half Term, boarders will return on the same day as the day pupils in school uniform.

Boarding and Academic Considerations

Winchester House has been guiding boarders successfully through the challenges of Common Entrance and Scholarship exams for generations. Parental concern as to how boarding will impact the academic progress of a child, however, is both common and natural.

Firstly, it is worth remembering that for many, our school day ends at 6.30pm and that prep is built in to the timetable. Consequently, all formal academic work for boarders happens within the extended day for day pupils. As regards those little pre-bedtime learning routines for tests, both boarding houses have quiet Study Rooms available to all year groups. These are naturally a great asset at exam times and allow boarders to do productive chunks of revision in the evening. Indeed, without a journey home to contend with, boarders can often fit in more 'down time' before any additional learning work than their day pupil friends.

Boarding staff are proactive in prompting and aiding learning work and in keeping Form Tutors abreast of anything from boarding hours that may affect a boarder the next day. Form Tutors, in turn, are proactive in notifying boarding staff if themes or recurring points feature in the reporting system or elsewhere and they may be able to help redress them in boarding time.

A child new to boarding may see a temporary 'blip' in his or her academic work and parents must not be unduly worried about this. It is rarely a sign of academic regression, but simply a natural effect of the general adjustments the child is having to make. Arguably, the earlier this 'blip' is encountered and conquered, the better.

Boarding after Common Entrance

Sometimes requests are received for a Year 8 day pupil to come in and board only once Common Entrance is out of the way. We feel that boarding only for these three or four weeks is contrary to the principles explained above. If a child is to board at their senior school, then this really is best prepared for over a more extended period of time. Consequently, it is not possible for Year 8s to join boarding post Common Entrance.

Queries, enquiries and requests

If booking a boarding place or notifying the school of a change of boarding status in keeping with what is outlined above, please would parents contact the relevant Houseparent in the first instance via email or (01280) 702483

For a chat about any other matters, including the consideration of particular circumstances, please would parents get in touch with Shelley Irvine on (01280) 702483 or shelley.irvine@winchester-house.org