

Statement of Boarding Principles and Practice

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WYCHWOOD
SCHOOL • OXFORD

Introduction

Wychwood School provides boarders with a secure, safe and happy community where they can learn effectively and enjoy relaxed social times with their friends, feeling that they are cared for but allowed the personal freedom to grow, mature and develop as individuals. A natural part of the process of maturing is the learning from mistakes made in social areas and in response to rules and guidelines imposed by adults: we hope that our boarding community is a place where such mistakes can be safely made so that pupils can grow in good judgement, tolerance, moral awareness and sensitivity towards others. Most importantly, when pupils board at Wychwood, they do not just join a school, they become part of an extended family. They have a sense of belonging and know that they are accepted as individuals; that triumphs will be celebrated and problems will be shared.

In such a small boarding school good relationships at all levels and ages are of paramount importance. Equally important is regard for the safety of the pupils, especially in a school in a city. We hope that our rules establish routines which ensure the pupils' safety and the security of the buildings at all times, but are also flexible enough to allow the boarders to take advantage of the benefits of living in Oxford. Thus, in the many areas involving the boarders' increasing freedom as they grow older, we try to make decisions similar to those of a sensible parent with a child growing up in Oxford.

The advantages of boarding at Wychwood are many:

- Learning how to utilise time effectively and manage commitments
- Gaining clear academic advantages, establishing good working habits in a structured environment which increases the possibility of raising of academic achievement
- Experiencing an array of extra-curricular activity which takes place outside of the school day
- Undergoing an ideal preparation for university life in a multi-cultural environment
- Supplying a safe training ground within which to develop critical life-skills such as the importance of communication, consideration and compromise, lessons which cannot be taught as effectively in the classroom.

Responsibilities

There are two houseparents and tutors who support the boarders and they are all responsible, alongside the teaching staff at the school.

Procedures

Here at Wychwood, we aim to:

- apply a holistic approach which ensures that we give special attention to the physical, academic, social and spiritual needs of our boarders
- recognise the benefits of our multi-cultural community and to foster in our students an understanding and respect for people of all races, faiths and nationalities, together with an awareness of the global challenges of life today
- create a warm and caring environment where pupils and staff can communicate with confidence knowing that they will be treated and valued as an individual
- foster an atmosphere where acceptance, honesty and trust are prevalent; that every boarder should have the right to security, to work, play and relax free from abuse and intimidation
- cultivate discipline in study by providing conditions conducive to learning, giving value to effort and positive encouragement
- balance academic output with an extra-curricular programme for sports and the arts as essential components for a full and rounded education
- protect pupils by creating a safe living environment, which is homely and welcoming and which balances carefully opportunities to share and an appropriate level of privacy
- foster the habits of a healthy lifestyle
- provide opportunities for the development of leadership qualities and self-responsibility as well as team work
- work in close and open partnership with parents and guardians in order to promote the welfare of each pupil

Targets

To achieve our aims, we provide:

- appropriate staffing levels in the two boarding houses comprising a Resident Housemistress, a resident teaching member of staff and at least one resident Gap
- a wide range of extra-curricular weekend activities to take advantage of the school's location in the city of Oxford and its proximity to London which embrace sport, the arts, culture and fun
- clear and effective policies and procedures for Academic and Pastoral matters, Health and Safety concerns and Safeguarding issues
- a wide range of opportunities for pupils to adopt leadership roles at all levels within the school and to contribute to the development school policies and changes
- Age-appropriate and homely living and sleeping accommodation and facilities
- Effective communication systems including wireless internet to enable students to maintain regular contact with parents, guardians and friends
- Medical, welfare and administrative support systems
- Quality catering services and access to drinking water at all times with an opportunity for boarders to input directly at boarding meetings Implementing changes where feasible

Induction for Boarders

NMS
2.1 On the first evening of every term there is a boarders' induction and refresher meeting for all new and returning boarders. Meeting. All rules and requirements are rehearsed and questions invited. All boarders have a buddy, preferably a day pupil to help them integrate into the life of the school during the day. All boarders have a designated friend within the boarding house who will guide them through the intricacies of boarding. Staff and gaps are available for informal questions on a daily basis and the reporting time in the evening is a particular focus for the staff to talk through the day and give any guidance needed.