



**Boarding Management Handbook**

**2018/2019**

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*(in line with the National Minimum Standards  
for Boarding Schools)*

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## **Introduction**

In order to meet the School's aims, the boarding staff, supported by strong governance and management, strive to deliver an uncompromising, first class, professional service to all members of the community at all times, based on sound policies and practices, good understanding of the children and their circumstances, excellent communication and record keeping, and an outstanding safeguarding culture.

The notes which follow are designed to support all boarding staff in achieving this. For clarity and consistency, they are written in line with the Boarding School National Minimum Standards published by the Department for Education, in force from April 2015, although, of course, we endeavour to go beyond the minimum standards prescribed.

This document is intended to be a handy reference guide, giving boarding staff easy access to the most useful and frequently needed information. However, it must be read in conjunction with other Moira House documents such as handbooks, policies, documents, protocols and guidelines, job descriptions, duty rotas and the School Calendar.

## **1. Statement of Boarding Principles and Practice**

The core aim of the School is to prepare girls to lead a full and worthwhile life in the wider world as well-rounded, confident, and balanced members of their communities and to seek the full development of the whole person in a respectful and responsible environment.

As part of this we wish to ensure that a high-quality boarding experience remains at the heart of the School and that girls from many different cultures and nationalities are received into the community.

In order to provide this we aim to:

- ensure that at all times we provide an environment where girls are safe and feel safe;
- develop and practise systems which engender a sense of well-being, raise self-esteem, promote resilience and encourage mutual support;
- give a wealth and quality of educational experiences which cannot be bettered elsewhere;
- produce balanced and informed young adults who are well-equipped to cope with, enjoy and contribute to the outside world in a meaningful, compassionate and enduring fashion
- demonstrate awareness of, and to celebrate, diversity
- value individuals and encourage individual talents
- provide a wide range of enrichment opportunities
- provide support and advice
- encourage students to take responsibility for their actions or lack of actions
- encourage confidence and independence

Moira House places great emphasis on catering for the needs of each pupil. Just as important for each individual is the ability to get on well with other people and be tolerant and understanding of the needs of others. The aim of our Houses is to care for and nurture our pupils in a manner which helps them to excel at what they do, but also enables them

to learn the social skills and gives them the sense of community and responsibility which will equip them well for the rest of their lives.

At Moira House, we aim to create a safe, secure and happy boarding environment with an atmosphere which is homely and yet purposeful. Individuals are encouraged to excel in their own pursuits, to take increasing responsibility for themselves during their time at Moira House and, as they become older, to take on a certain amount of responsibility for others too. Our community is one where other people are treated with respect, sensitivity and consideration. We hope that our pupils will leave having gained the experience and confidence to be thoroughly independent and to act with an integrity which is tempered by a powerful awareness of the needs and sensitivities of other people in order to get the best out of themselves and those around them.

Staff are visible, interacting with the girls and purposeful in their approach to the Houses' running and progress. Staff are self-reflective both individually and collectively, and are always seeking new ways to improve.

## **2. Boarders' Induction and Support**

### **Introduction**

A really good induction process which is carefully planned, thought through and carried out rigorously, involving the whole House, is vital to the successful settling-in and happiness of new boarders. Induction is also used as a great team-building, spirit-lifting, community cohesion, values-establishing exercise for the rest of the House. Induction starts the very first time that a girl and her parents encounter the School - even before she is enrolled. This means attention to detail and awareness of how we are putting ourselves across is required when touring, meeting, and communicating with prospective customers. Families will have formed an impression of the School, its staff and pupils, and undoubtedly the House itself, long before the first day of the School year when the new boarder arrives.

### **Start of the year**

The beginning of a new School Year is a very busy time in the House and its organisation must be planned carefully. There is plenty happening and plenty of people to help. All boarding staff must organise themselves as a team to ensure that the preparation is as required.

Before new girls arrive, they should have received and returned the joining pack. The Housemistress sends them a letter of introducing herself - the letter will include the relevant House Handbook. Staff should aim to be accessible and communicative to new starters before they arrive as this helps the girls feel welcome.

On the first day, the Housemistress in charge of the House must spend a few minutes with each family individually. All the boarding staff should be smartly dressed (as per the staff dress code), well-informed, smiling and should be available to meet and help pupils and their families. Staff and senior pupils being around the House to talk to parents who are waiting, offer refreshments and generally make everyone feel welcome, demonstrates that the House is well-organised, friendly, caring and a great place for parents to leave their daughter. Parents, who may have travelled far to drop their daughter off, have possibly only a few minutes to feel confident that they are leaving her in safe hands. It is

crucial that the time they spend in the House that day is a thoroughly reassuring experience.

### **Gaining confidence**

New parents need to be given sufficient time individually to ask any questions, discuss any key issues there might be, feel reassured and give any information that the House needs from them. These conversations are not all the same, but they are an opportunity to find out as much as we possibly can, while at the same time answering questions and allaying fears. It is an opportunity to allow the parents to gain confidence in the House and in the School, so it is important to be sympathetic, understanding, knowledgeable and efficient. Listening and recording what fears and anxieties new parents and students have, helps build communication bridges that can be expanded on throughout the year.

### **Inducting the pupils**

There is a limit to what new pupils can assimilate straight away and it is important to drip feed them useful information over a period of several days, to help them to get properly started and settled. Giving too much detail at once is likely to overwhelm some of them. The Houses' information booklets, produced by each house, sent out to pupils before they arrive, are useful. The information booklet is designed to help girls understand all they need to know about the house before they arrive, and to help them understand the basic House rules and procedures. A formal House-based buddy system is set up for the first few weeks to make sure no-one gets lost, metaphorically as well as literally. 'Buddies' in each House need clear instructions, guidance, monitoring and support.

When new pupils arrive into an established year group, ( i.e. when they join the School other than at the beginning of the academic year), then the best way of settling them in is to allocate them to a helpful person in their year, preferably from the same dormitory or room, who follows a similar programme. The 'old hand' should stay close by the newcomer for the first few days or so and guide them through the daily routine: meetings, assemblies, meals, what to do and where to go in break, activities, prep, evening routines, etc.

The objective is for each new boarder to feel that they are a safe, valued, listened to and a happy member of the community as soon as possible. In addition to the School-wide programme, small-scale, informal, in-House events, such as games, mini-competitions, barbecues, trips and parties, are important in giving this sense of secure belonging, enjoyment and worthwhile participation. Announcing good news, condemning poor behaviour, celebrating success and good citizenship together is always a wise use of time.

## Induction Checklist for boarders

Boarder's name: \_\_\_\_\_ : Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Boarder's signature \_\_\_\_\_

	Action	Tick	Notes
1	I have met my Housemistress		
2	I have met my personal tutor		
3	I have met the Head of Boarding and Welfare		
4	I have met my roommates		
5	I have met my mentor / buddy		
6	I have met the House Prefects		
7	I have got my activities sorted out		
8	Around School I know where to find toilets		
9	Around School I know where to find drinking water		
10	I know about Health and Safety in the House		
11	I know about Fire Safety in the House		
12	I have taken part in the House Fire evacuation drill		
13	I know how to get to the IT Room / Library		
14	I know how to get to the Dining Room		
15	I know how to get to the Sports Hall		
17	I know how to get to all my classrooms		
19	I have got my timetable		
20	I have got my School diary		
22	I have got my stationery		
23	I know who the Safeguarding Team are		
24	I know how to contact home easily		
25	I know who I can talk to if I have a problem		
26	If I want to talk to someone outside School. I know who to contact		
27	I have somewhere to lock my belongings safely		
28	I have handed in any valuable property: money, passport etc		
29	I know about the School Rules		
30	I know the House rules such as signing out/in, bedtimes, using the kitchen		
31	I have got my IT and School email log on details		
32	I know about different ways to spend my free time		
33	I know what to do if I feel unwell (including in the night)		
34	I know about e-Safety in School		
35	I know about bullying		
36	I know about the weekly House meetings		
37	I know when / how to get my clothes washed		
38	I know about changing my bedsheets and pillow case		
39	I know what to do if I am hungry		
42	I understand the daily routine		
43	I have somewhere to safe to go if I want to be quiet		
44	I know how to make a suggestion and express a concern		
45	I have been able to tell someone about any needs I have		
46	I know what to do if I lose something		

Form to be logged on PASS under the boarder's individual record

## **Support and pastoral care**

All boarders - new or not - need to feel that they are taken seriously and treated with sympathy and sensitivity by everyone in the House (both staff and girls). The House provides the structure which nurtures the individual, builds friendship and fosters a sense of self-worth and belonging in each girl.

Particular responsibility for each pupil is given to their personal tutor: each boarder is allocated a personal tutor from the academic staff. It is important for boarding staff to keep personal tutors informed and involved in their tutee's boarding experience as much as possible. In addition to the personal tutor, there are also a number of trained staff in the School who can provide guidance, e.g. Head of Section, boarding staff, teachers, the Chaplaincy team, the Nurse, the Safeguarding Team. New pupils must quickly get to know who those people are. In the boarding houses boarders need to have a 1-to-1 informal chat with a member of the boarding staff at least once a week to check in and support their needs in the houses.

### **Rooming**

Placing pupils in the right rooms is very important. It is well worth the investment of time, consideration and consultation with the House staff team. On the whole it works best if pupils share with the people they get on with but who are not their 'best friends'; it is also important to keep the younger and older children separate slightly. Once they are happy where they are roomed, this feeling of well-being tends to spread throughout the rest of their school life. The language of communication in each room is English although we must be understanding of girls whose first language is not English and their need to speak their mother tongue.

When drawing up room lists we need to be fair to all parties. Girls generally move rooms at the beginning of every term. Girls should know that an empty bed in a room may become occupied during the course of a term. Girls should not normally be given double rooms as a single. The rooms are redistributed each term ensuring that favoured and less favoured rooms are shared out fairly. When possible we place girls with girls of their choosing although this is not always possible.

Inevitably, at times, there will be complaints and requests for changes. These must always be listened to carefully, investigated and reflected upon by the boarding staff; the decision will be made by the Housemistress in charge of the House. It is not good practice to have a culture of rapid and frequent changes in a House - that is unsettling.

It is useful to ask room requests for following terms / years to be handed in to the Housemistress by the individual pupils. It is wise never to promise that an individual will be in a particular room. Housemistresses can promise to try their best, but to promise something specific can lead to difficulties if it proves impossible to keep all promises.

### **Independent listeners**

Each boarder must be aware of the people she can contact directly, outside the boarding and teaching staff of the school, about personal problems or concerns. Boarders must know who these people are and how to contact them. This information must be given to each girl individually but also publicised on notice boards and in handbooks.

## **Boarders' Health and Wellbeing**

### **Medical policies**

All House staff must be entirely familiar with the School's policies relating to boarders' Health and Wellbeing and guidance on health issues (e.g. dealing with asthma, epilepsy, self-harm, counselling referrals).

On Admission to the School parents are required to complete a comprehensive medical form, make any relevant disclosures regarding their child's health and sign a consent form. These are received and reviewed by the Head of Boarding who will draw attention to any matters of which House staff need to be aware and organise for special arrangements to be made and training to take place when required.

### **Medication**

Medication given wrongly or taken unsupervised can lead to serious problems. All staff who might have to give medicines must have undergone specific training on their storage, security, recording and dispensing and act in accordance with the School's 'Administration of Medicines' Policy. All boarding staff must complete an administration of medicines course with the Head of Boarding and a first aid course. House staff must be aware of all the medical needs of the pupils in the House which may give rise to an emergency (e.g. asthma, allergies, epilepsy, diabetes and haemophilia).

The Children Act 1989 provides that a person who has care of a child may do what is reasonable in all the circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare. This includes, in extreme circumstances, authorising emergency medical treatment where advised by a qualified medical person. However, every effort should be made to contact the parents first. The School's Medical Form requires parents to give consent in advance.

### **Feeling unwell**

If pupils are unwell outside of school time, their first port of call would normally be the Housemistress in their House. If boarders are taken ill in the night they need to know that they can get help from one of the residential members of staff in the House. There is a sick bay in the school where those who are ill normally stay until they get better, attended to by the resident staff in school House boarding.

The school administrator records in PASS/3SYS each morning and lunch time which pupils are unfit to attend School, and which are fit enough to attend lessons but are 'off games'. Any pupil who is unfit for School on a particular day must remain in the sick bay and is supervised by a member of staff allocated at the time.

The house staff can arrange for girls to see a doctor, dentist, optician and physiotherapist although these appointments would normally be arranged by parents/carers during the holidays. Parents are encouraged to accompany pupils to appointments, but if this is not possible a member of the boarding staff will accompany them. Parents may be charged for transport. Staff will inform parents of the visit and outcome. The School does not provide its own dental service but has access to private dentists locally, like other dentists

in the area they do not take on new NHS patients, and they submit accounts for their services, which are charged at current professional rates. Parents will have marked the medical form accordingly if they are happy for their daughter to visit the dentist should the need arise

### **Medical Emergencies**

There is a range of options, depending on the seriousness of the case:

- Dial 999 and summon the ambulance.
- Take the casualty to the A&E Department at the District General Hospital.
- Ring NHS 111

### **Dental Emergencies**

Ring 01323 840644 or 01323 449170 for emergency dental service.

### **Illness at home**

If a girl is kept away from school, the personal tutor is expected to be proactive in these circumstances, communicating frequently with the parents, checking that the academic staff are aware of the circumstances and making provision for work to be sent home and to be marked. Adequate records of contact with parents are kept on PASS/3 SYS.

Parents inform the School by email if their daughter has an operation, accident, severe illness, immunisation or special treatment during the holidays. This information may need to be supported by a report from the specialist concerned, including details of medicines and treatment recommended, if these are to continue. All instructions for treatment need to be in English. All labels on all medication need to be in English. Unless a boarder has direct permission from the Head of Boarding to self-medicate, medicines must never be kept anywhere other than in the secure medicine cupboard in the Medical Department.

Parents are responsible for keeping the School informed of any changing circumstances or important matter affecting the girl, such as marital breakdown, violence within the family, learning difficulties, health and medical issues. In accordance with the School Nurses' and Doctor's professional Code of Conduct, medical information about pupils, regardless of their age, will remain confidential. However, in providing medical care for a girl, it is recognised that on occasions it may be necessary to liaise with parents or guardians, the Head of School, academic staff and House staff and that information, ideally with the pupil's prior consent, will be passed on as appropriate. With all matters the School Nurse will respect a pupil's confidence except on the very rare occasions when, having failed to persuade a girl to give consent to divulgence, the School Nurse considers it in the pupil's best interests, or necessary for the wider protection of the School community, to breach confidence and pass information to the relevant body. Sometimes the School can be caught in the middle of a conflict between the rights of the girl and the rights of the parent. Most commonly these situations relate to confidential medical information, counselling and family breakdown. As a general rule, the rights of the pupil take precedence when that is necessary in the interests of the girl's safety and educational and other welfare.

## Care Plans

For boarders with particular, chronic physical, mental or welfare needs individual care plans are written by the Head of boarding in consultation with the personal tutor, Head of Section, counsellor, boarding staff, Lead TA or parents as appropriate. All staff dealing with the named pupil must be aware of and act according to the care plan which should be reviewed and revised whenever circumstances change. In addition, access arrangements for boarders with significant physical disabilities are considered by the Lead TA.

## Staff Training

The Head of Boarding organises regular, relevant, up-to-date training for all boarding staff (teachers and House staff) on medical issues. The care of girls with particular medical needs are discussed by the relevant parties at the admissions stage (parents, School Nurse, Admissions) so that appropriate arrangements, such as specialist staff training, can be put in place before arrival. All staff training records must be passed on to Human Resources.

## 4. Contact with Parents / Carers

### Girls contacting home

Most boarders have their own mobile phone which they use as their primary means of getting in touch with family and friends at home. Boarders may contact their family and friends at any time, when they have free time (as long as it is before bedtime) and should be enabled to do so with ease. Access to email, Skype is available in the house. There is a house phone that can be used at any time to call home, and parents are advised to use this number when calling their daughter. There are shared PCs which can be used in the Library and ICT rooms. In the early days of the School year (or at times of upset) it is important to check that girls are able to get hold of their family without hindrance. This is reassuring for both parties. If a boarder is having trouble getting in touch with those at home by herself, then the House staff should intervene to help.

Bearing in mind that children can access almost anything, anywhere, from a smart phone (or tablet or laptop), largely unfiltered, if they choose to by-pass the school's system, for safeguarding reasons, as well as for general health and wellbeing (such as healthy sleeping patterns, privacy, good neighbourliness - to one's roommates), it is important for House staff to consider how boarders are using their mobile devices in their bedrooms, what information and connections they are accessing and to discuss this with the pupils and the House staff regularly. Housemistresses may take a number of measures to promote good habits and minimise anti-social behaviour, e.g. phones for boarders up to Year 10 are collected at bedtimes. It is important for all staff to have their 'ear to the ground' to know what is going on 'behind closed doors' and to do our best to ensure e-Safety at all levels. The School's e-Safety Officer is a very useful resource in this respect and should be regularly consulted for up-to-date information.

### Staff contacting home

When communicating with parents and guardians by email or telephone all House staff should be careful to maintain a tone of friendly professionalism at all times. The use of slang, informal grammar and punctuation, and over-familiarity are not appropriate. As emailing is a written, and therefore more permanent, form of communication, one must be particularly careful to write in a considered, polite and business-like manner. If in

doubt, do not send the email until the Head of Boarding and Welfare has checked it. It is worth remembering that it is very much encouraged to phone or email with good news. It is good practice for boarding staff to send a quick message to parents every now and then when there are small successes and tales of good deeds by the child to acknowledge and celebrate.

All communication (phone or email) must be recorded on PASS/3Sys immediately under each boarder's "Notes" in the "House" section.

### **Conflicts at home**

Sadly, it is not unusual for there to be conflict between a child's parents which spills over into school life. School has to be a haven of safety and stability for the child, where they can have peace and space to develop by getting on with their own affairs, establishing their own friends and accessing their own support mechanism. The House staff should avoid being drawn into unhappy family situations any more than is absolutely necessary to establish facts or assess risks. In general, if there is disagreement between parents, the Housemistress will report to and seek authorities from the parent with whom the child normally resides but the other parent almost always has parental rights as well and is entitled to be kept informed of progress and of welfare issues. Whatever the circumstances, if there are conflicting messages, the Housemistress should act responsibly in the way which she considers best promotes the safety and welfare of the girl. If in doubt consult the Head of Boarding and Welfare.

### **Visits from home**

It needs to be clear to parents that if family members or friends from home wish to visit boarders at School then parents must communicate the details to the Housemistress in advance. These visits should only take place in free-time (normally at weekends). Boarders are not allowed out of School on week nights (Sunday-Friday) unless on School business or with family. The House staff need to have access to telephone numbers and email addresses both for parents and for other relatives or friends from home who have the parents' permission to contact their daughter, visit them or take them; this information must be logged on PASS/3Sys for all management and boarding staff to access. Clear up to date records must be kept of the location of any girl who is with us on a school visa. This is a requirement by the UK Border Agency that we should know the whereabouts of any of our students whilst they are in the UK.

### **Birthdays**

Birthday celebrations must be handled with sensitivity and consistency. Going out for a meal with family or guardians and a small number of friends may be possible subject to sensible, detailed arrangements being made in advance and permissions sought from the Housemistress. Care should be taken to ensure birthdays are always acknowledged and celebrated in some way. Some girls will be showered with cakes, flowers, cards and presents and visits from home, others will not. It is the task of the personal tutor and House team to try to even out these differences - which reappear in many guises at various times - so that no one feels left out, under-valued and ignored.

## **Boarding Accommodation**

Working with the Operations, Maintenance, Housekeeping and Grounds Departments, the Housemistress must ensure that the accommodation is appropriately lit, heated, ventilated, and suitably furnished and adequately maintained. Rooms are to be used only for those boarders designated to use them and should be protected from access by others.

All areas of the House must be kept clean at all times. Bedding must be clean, suitable and sufficiently warm. Bed linen is professionally laundered weekly. Soft furnishings must be clean and maintained to a good standard. The Domestic Bursar in conjunction with the house staff, will monitor and record the laundering of bed linen, curtains, shower curtains and other similar items. It is important that boarders take care of their own House and its surrounding and keep their bedroom and bathroom areas tidy and in good order. The member of boarding staff on duty in the morning checks all rooms daily and takes action if they are not the expected standard. No items should be left on the floor except shoes and bags. If boarders notice anything in the House is damaged, not working or in need of repair, they should report it to the member of House staff on duty straightaway. Anything that is defective or broken must be reported without delay to Maintenance via email to head of maintenance, who will arrange for it to be repaired.

Whenever there is damage which has been caused other than through fair wear and tear, the name(s) of those responsible will be given to the Housemistress who will give them to the Finance Office via the Incident Report Form so that a suitable charge may be made. The Housemistress contacts the parents of those involved to forewarn them and enlist their support. Suggestions for improvements to the House and its fittings are always welcome; this can be suggested in the weekly house meetings.

The storage space in bedrooms is sufficient for essential items, a limited amount of casual and smart clothing, and school equipment. Boarders are not allowed to exceed the storage space provided which is perfectly adequate. All personal belongings need to fit in the wardrobe, drawers, desk area and book shelf provided. The School provides all the bedding needed for all girls but boarders may bring their own duvet cover if they prefer - as long as it can be machine washed. Any girl with excessive belongings may have some of them removed and placed in storage. This may incur a charge.

## **Plumbing and Electrical Emergencies**

During the working day / week, the Maintenance Department are able to deal with any pressing problems straight away. For emergencies at night or at the weekend which cannot be left until the morning, the on call security staff can be contacted on their duty mobile; the phone number is published on the weekly boarding rota.

## **6. Safety of Boarders**

All boarding staff must take reasonable steps to ensure that the House, its access ways and grounds are reasonably safe for the pupils, adults and visitors who will use them. A system of regular inspection is needed. Hazards and security problems should be identified and dealt with so far as is reasonable.

Boarding staff must assess the risk of all House activity and introduce measures to manage those risks where necessary, informing all staff and pupils and visitors as appropriate. The first step is to identify the hazards in and around the House via a House Risk Assessment,

then control the risks and improve safety by using measures which may be physical controls (e.g. non-slip mats) or behavioural modifications (e.g. 'no running in the House') and improving work practices (e.g. having the floors mopped when the pupils are in lessons). Moira House's Health and Safety Manager can give detailed advice and training on Health & Safety matters and carrying out the Risk Assessments. Girls and staff should be regularly reminded of the potential dangers in and around the House, drawing reference to the risk assessments, and this should be recorded in writing. Constant vigilance and information sharing by staff is important on this matter. The Health & Safety culture in the House will be excellent as long as it is given importance on a daily basis and is seen as relevant to the habits, architecture and practices of the House. For example, if girls are leaving hair straighteners switched on, sliding on the ice, buying fireworks, or not wearing sunscreen etc. then that particular matter should be raised at the next House Meeting. Similarly with staff leaving cleaning cupboards unlocked, standing on chairs to reach top shelves etc. House staff should also be aware of what to do in anticipation of a typical hazard arising unexpectedly such as a broken window, smell of gas, torn carpet, and snow storm.

The House staff should also be mindful of less obvious Health & Safety matters such as temperature, lighting and noise levels, ventilation, suitability of work stations and seating, cleanliness, disposal of waste, drinking water and food hygiene, enlisting expert help and advice if concerned. The Housemistress must also ensure that lawful visitors are kept reasonably safe while they are using the premises.

As part of their Health & Safety briefing to the House (boarders and staff), the Housemistress should also consider the risks presented to pupils as they move around the School, and advise accordingly in order to alert everyone to the potential dangers of the various routes commonly used by members of the School (e.g. steps, open windows), road crossing, minibus travel, encountering strangers, hazardous substances, electricity, glass windows and doors. The Housemistress must take this into account when giving guidance to the House.

These are the instructions given in writing to boarders themselves:

*Your safety whilst at School is of the utmost importance. There are many safety features and procedures in place around the campus and in the House. It is vital that you:*

- a) familiarise yourself with the lay out of your House and its surroundings*
- b) are aware of the dangers, safety features and procedures in your House via the information provided to you in House meetings, tutorials, assemblies, chapels and other formal situations*
- c) are aware of the danger, safety features and procedures around the School, paying particular attention to the roads, playground, stairs, mini bus car park, exterior staircases, wooded areas and strangers*
- d) follow safety instructions and the School rules carefully*
- e) report any dangers or concerns to a member of staff immediately*
- f) never leave the House without informing staff where you are going*
- g) never leave the School without specific permission*

## **7. Fire Precautions and Drills**

The school complies with the regulatory reform (Fire Safety) order 2005. All efforts are made to make the girls aware of fire risks and regular fire drills are carried out every term in boarding time.

Fire safety covers the steps that need to be taken to avoid fire at the School and the precautions required to protect people if there is a fire. All boarders and boarding staff must be aware of the emergency evacuation procedures from the House. It is the duty of the Housemistress to take general fire precautions to ensure the House is safe. These precautions include acting in accordance with a risk assessment undertaken by the Operations Team, implementing fire safety arrangements, reducing or eliminating the risks from dangerous substances, ensuring the premises are equipped with the appropriate fire detectors, alarms and firefighting equipment, keeping emergency routes and exits clear, ensuring procedures are in place and known to the House, such as evacuation procedures. The Operations team will maintain the premises, provide information and organise training for staff, thus assisting the Housemistress responsible. With regard to any activity that the House undertakes where there could be a fire implication, advice should be sought from the Health and Safety Manager. Emergency equipment is checked and tested by the Operations team.

It is vital to have a vibrant Fire Safety (i.e. prevention) culture in the House. For example, naked flames (candles, incense sticks) are not to be permitted under any circumstances. In-house electrical equipment must be checked (certain appliances may have to be prohibited) and specific instructions issued to prevent fires in House kitchens. All electrical items must comply with UK PAT standards. The only electrical items permitted to be used in bedrooms are laptops, mobile phones, hairdryers/straighteners and chargers. Rubbish must be correctly stored and regularly collected. Furniture must be made of suitably safe materials. Fire doors should be kept closed but not locked. Fire escapes must be effective and properly maintained. It is very important to practise their use with the whole House, particularly leaving from bedrooms at night in darkness. When room changes take place, evacuation routes may well change for individual boarders, therefore frequent drills are needed. Fire extinguishers are installed throughout the House. These must be kept intact in the designated location.

## **8. Provision for the Preparation of Food and Drinks**

It is compulsory for all boarders to attend all meals whilst in school unless they have permission to do otherwise. There is a wide choice of dishes available each meal time and the menus are published in advance on the School website. If pupils have any special dietary need then parents should have already informed the School. However, if a girl is having trouble finding suitable food then they need to let the School Nurse or House staff know so they can be guided into appropriate choices. If boarders need to miss regular meal times in the dining room due to other school commitments (e.g. dance, sports fixture, school trip) then an appropriate alternative must always be provided by the member whose care they are in at the time.

In addition to eating in the dining room, the kitchen provides daily and weekly provisions of milk, bread, fruit biscuits, etc. for the boarders' consumption. Boarders must have easy access to drinks and snacks and to the House kitchen in their free time - outside breakfast, lunch and supper times. Moira House supports healthy eating so takeaway meals are limited to Friday and Saturdays evenings through a sign-up sheet system, and all boarders are encouraged to try new foods. Regular themed nights in the school help facilitate this.

The House kitchen can be a dangerous area for those unfamiliar with preparing food, using knives, microwaves, kettles etc. House staff are all trained in Food Hygiene and must not assume that children will have basic cooking skills and check before allowing unsupervised access. House staff should also check that boarders know where to obtain fresh drinking water at all times (i.e. House, dining areas, sports hall). Sources of drinking water are

labelled throughout the School. Part of the House induction programme included a basic food Hygiene programme.

## **9. Boarders' Possessions**

It is important that all belongings are named and boarders are regularly reminded of this. Frequent guidance on taking care of their belongings and those of their peers (and how to do this), taking responsibility for their own things, and having clear guidelines on where, how and when items can and should be used is very important in the House in order to minimise loss and damage and to eradicate theft.

Boarders' bedding and towels are washed by the laundry team weekly. Boarders in Years 5-11 have their possessions washed weekly by the laundry team, Years 12 & 13 boarders use the house laundry which helps girls become with their preparation for university life. Any girl who struggles with this can request for her laundry to be sent to the main school laundry, but this will need agreement for the Housemistress. Items of clothing not suitable for machine washing and drying should not be brought to School unless parents wish to pay for them to be dry cleaned (such as uniform jackets, suits and skirts, and winter coats). As storage space for clothes is most likely to be much more limited than at home, boarders should be advised to plan carefully before packing and setting off for School. Boarding staff should ensure that girls' uniforms are washed / dry cleaned regularly.

Essential School equipment (such as stationery) can be obtained at the local shops which are open every week day and within a suitable walking distance also from the boarding Tuck shop run by the girls.

Boarders' pocket money is to be handed in to the Housemistress at the beginning of each term. No boarder should have cash over £20 and everything is kept in the school safe. Pocket money will be given out when requested, with the remainder (if any collected in after trips) returned to Finance.

Valuable items of any kind (jewellery, watches, and personal items) should not be brought to school unless (as in the case of cameras for example) they are needed for study. Under no circumstances should girls leave cash in their rooms unattended.

For the safe and private storage of personal items, each boarder is provided with a small, lockable cupboard or safe. If, for any reason, boarders do have to have valuable items at school these should be immediately handed in to the Housemistress or House staff who will record their receipt of the item and secure it in the House Office.

It is expected that, with the exception of those pupils who are travelling overseas, all trunks, cases and possessions will be removed at the end of each term. When clothing and other possessions are left at School during the holidays, it is done entirely at the owner's risk. Those items which are left at School must be placed in the allocated 'trunk rooms' belonging to the House which will be kept locked. The school does not promise to provide such storage but we will always do our best to accommodate.

## **Guidance on dealing with lost items and theft**

Pre-emptive measures: the surest method of dealing with loss and theft in a House is to have a culture of looking after oneself, one's belongings, and that of one's Housemates i.e. to value everyone and everything. This must be led by all staff and prefects and ingrained into the words and actions of all those in the House. Time spent on cultivating these habits, reiterating personal responsibility and accountability, reinforcing / praising / rewarding helpful behaviour and condemning poor acts, big and small, is time saved further on the line. So...

- Establish responsibility for personal security (i.e. common sense) and sound House routines, looking after your own and others' property
- Encourage pupils to take care of their belongings; name all items; report losses immediately
- Keeping common areas and bedrooms orderly
- Decide on and enforce rules on visiting others' bedrooms
- Using staff to ensure order, check names
- Give advice on borrowing and lending (it's okay to say 'No')
- Regular, frequent and timely reminders to pupils re not receiving cash; leaving cash around; use of lockers; use of House safe; bringing valuables to school - don't unless absolutely necessary; handing valuables in to Housemistress
- Make sure serial numbers are recorded somewhere
- Use House Prefects to monitor behaviour in this regard

When a pupil reports an item lost

- Investigate fully
- Make a note of all the details and record (using the Report a Loss or Theft form)
- Ensure a thorough and prompt search takes place (involve owner, roommates, friends, matron, cleaning staff, tutors, other Houses if appropriate etc.)
- Advertise the loss to the House / School, use photos
- Interview witnesses / roommates if appropriate
- Invite pupils to have their lockers / rooms searched following the Search Policy
- Enlist the help of senior pupils to provide 'intelligence' and advice
- Log all information on PASS/3Sys
- Inform parents if appropriate
- Discuss with Head of Boarding and Welfare for other options including contacting the police

## **10. Activities and Free Time**

There is a broad range of activities which boarders can pursue in their free time in addition to the compulsory ones done by all pupils during the School day. The House also has its own programme of trips and activities arranged by the Housemistress or weekend duty staff. Many of these incur minimal extra charges for parents but House staff must be careful to inform parents in advance if a charge above £35 charge is to be made - it is better to spend a couple of minutes phoning or emailing parents to check, if unsure.

Junior boarders (up to and including year 9) must take the weekend trip for which they will be charged.

House staff must be careful to monitor each girl's 'workload' to ensure they are not taking

on too many commitments. Typically pupils who are involved in a lot of drama, dances, sport and/ or music will be those most under pressure so attention needs to be given to ensure they are eating, sleeping, relaxing and socialising adequately and keeping up with their regular School work.

## **11. Child Protection**

The School ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and this is clearly laid out in the Safeguarding Policy. Many of the other School's documents, practices and systems (personal tutoring, Health & Safety, School rules, prefects' training, staff induction, to name but a few) dovetail together with the aim of forming a coherent and effective safeguarding culture throughout the School.

We are all working to support the School in its aim to maintain a safe environment in which children can learn, develop, be encouraged to talk and are listened to and where children are equipped with the skills needed to keep themselves safe. All staff are trained to guide and support pupils who express a need for help. House staff must ensure that the safeguarding and welfare policies are being effective in practice and that boarders are able to express their needs and access help freely. To this end, it is important to establish and maintain an open, honest, transparent, inclusive and supportive culture between pupils, staff and pupils and staff in the House.

The Housemistress has a statutory power to do what is reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting a child's welfare. She is the person to whom parental authority has been delegated by the parents via the Head of School. The Housemistress has powers to act as would a reasonably careful parent. The legal duty is to safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupils by means of a clear and appropriate regime, good order, discipline and pastoral care, reporting to and accepting instructions from the Head and parents as necessary

### **Dealing with the media**

At times the School might be in the news for potentially negative reasons concerning the private matters of the family of a pupil. All enquiries from the media must be passed to the Head of School, the Head of School's PA or the Deputy Head of School. If obliged to make a comment House staff should politely decline saying: "For reasons you will understand, it is not the policy of the School to discuss the private concerns of school children or their families outside the School."

## **12. Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships**

A happy and productive boarding life is based on good relationships with everyone around (roommates, housemates, House staff and cleaning staff for example). The ability to behave with consideration for others at all times is an absolutely vital ingredient of a harmonious existence in any community. This requires inclusiveness, tolerance and simple respect for others. The School rules (which Housemistresses go through with boarders) are designed with this in mind. House staff should take every opportunity to acknowledge, expose, celebrate and reinforce positive behaviour exhibited by individuals or groups, no matter how small. In a House there are numerous opportunities, in a myriad of different contexts throughout the day for this - from picking up somebody's dropped book to winning the Inter-House netball Competition. Inconsiderate behaviour, which includes bullying, is never acceptable. A culture of kindness (especially notably towards younger, less

confident members) must pervade throughout the House. Likewise the School rewards good behaviour and applies sanctions, where necessary.

All House staff must be fully aware of the School's policies and procedures regarding discipline, sanctions and rewards. Any punishment must be moderate, not motivated by bad temper and be such as the parent of the child might expect. If punishment is necessary it is best if it happens quickly, does not go on for too long, is administered and carried out in a good natured way. Ongoing punishments, or things that hang around until, for example, the following weekend, can rankle, cause resentment and spoil the atmosphere around the House. The Housemistress should monitor the situation in her own House to check that these policies are being applied consistently, reflecting the severity and circumstances of the event, and are fully in line with the culture and ethos of the School. The House staff's role is primarily a pastoral one. The atmosphere in a Boarding House needs to be as close as possible to that of home - relaxed yet disciplined. The aim is to correct inappropriate behaviour; punishment is not necessarily required. On most occasions a reminder or a telling off with an explanation is all that is needed. At other times, it is necessary to issue sanctions.

All disciplinary matters and punishments must be recorded on PASS under "Add Event". Housemistresses should keep parents up-to-date and adequately informed of behavioural issues, even when dealt with in School and closed, so that parents can understand the issues, support the School and there are no surprises at a later date. Serious offences must, of course, be referred to the Head of Boarding and Welfare.

Corporal punishment which includes rough handling and physical abuse (pushing, pulling, prodding, hitting and shaking - whether or not the intention is punishment) is illegal.

### **Physical Restraint**

It is very rarely necessary to restrain a pupil physically. Under normal circumstances pupils should not be handled physically at all. Only if there is immediate danger either to the girl concerned or other(s), should any kind of restraint be used. The restraint used should be the minimum possible to achieve the purpose (e.g. holding an arm) and should only be applied when all other forms of persuasion have been tried. Any case of physical restraint should be noted on PASS and reported at once to the Head of Boarding and Welfare, together with the names of any witnesses.

### **Bullying**

The School takes great pride in its friendly atmosphere and the sympathy which all members of the School (both staff and pupils) show towards each other. This considerate behaviour is encouraged at all times. The School's objective is to promote and encourage the maintenance of a friendly atmosphere and to ensure that the boarders feel at home. Bullying is therefore viewed as one of the most serious, if not the most serious, form of anti-social behaviour. Our aim is to eradicate it in all its forms and, where it does exist, to deal with it promptly and effectively.

Bullying is not necessarily physical. It need not necessarily be carried out by older / bigger people on someone who is younger / smaller. It is perhaps best defined as the deliberate act of causing another person to be unhappy. It often takes the form of excluding or isolating an individual from a social group. Persistent name-calling is bullying. Bullying is often difficult to detect because many victims are too frightened or too worried to come

forward. Good, sensitive personal tutoring and house parenting should create an atmosphere and ethos in which such behaviour cannot flourish; enable the early detection of a problem, should it arise; allow any victim to feel that they can easily come forward and speak openly, having confidence in the system.

What to do if bullying is taking place:

- Take it seriously.
- Act immediately.
- See all those involved in carrying out the bullying straight away (this should be done one at a time) and write a report of what has happened on PASS/3Sys.
- Alert the Housemistress to discuss what action to take in line with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Reassure the victim (and inform his / her parents or guardian) that the matter has been dealt with and has now stopped. Encourage them to let you know if there are any further problems of any kind.
- Monitor the situation regularly.

The "No Blame Approach" can be very useful at an early stage where thoughtless, rather than deliberately nasty behaviour, is suspected, both in identifying what has been going on, and in dealing sensitively with the problem. It is effective in a large number of cases at bringing the possible bullying to a complete halt. This approach is particularly useful when a group of individuals is behaving unkindly towards their victim without perhaps having given proper thought or consideration to the effect of their behaviour on the recipient. All too often they can become carried away with the fun of being part of a (possibly) loud and boisterous social group and they may be blind to, or only partially aware of, the effect they are having on others. When the individuals in the group are made aware of the effect that they are having and the whole group then makes a conscious effort to stop, this method of persuasion is highly effective. Once the perpetrators acknowledge that they are now aware of their unkindness they can accept that a repetition would be deliberate bullying and expect severe disciplinary action to be taken.

## **Technology and E-Safety**

For both learning and leisure we support the use of pupils' personal laptops, iPads and netbooks on our school wireless network, providing filtered Internet access and access to our school email system and our VLE. Any questions around the use of laptops should be directed to the School's Network Manager or E-Safety Officer.

The School 'filters' Internet access, whilst also educating and working together with our pupils on e-Safety issues. We ask that pupils do not bring 3G Internet USB devices to school to access the Internet in an unfiltered manner. E-Safety is an area we take very seriously, understanding that it is only by a process of engaging with and educating our pupils, on both the positives and potential risks of the Internet and Communication tools (use of mobiles), that we can give them the confidence to use these and emerging technologies effectively and safely. The School's E-Safety Officer is extremely knowledgeable and useful in giving guidance to staff and pupils. House staff should be in regular communication with him regarding preventative e-safety measures.

As part of allowing access to the School's network, pupils must agree to the Acceptable Use of IT Policy which governs the use of and provides practical guidance on what is acceptable use of such technology. Copies of this policy are available on the school website. Breaches of this policy are taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with various school policies and or a student having their access to the school network revoked.

### **13. Management and Development of Boarding**

There is currently one boarding house, Boston which houses all boarders.

The Housemistresses report to the Head of Boarding and Welfare. There are weekly, minuted meetings between the Boarding Management Team including the Head of School and/or the Deputy Head of School. The boarding staff meet weekly to discuss children's welfare and any pastoral issues that have arisen; these meetings are minuted.

All those who are in a position of responsibility must be capable of carrying out their responsibilities competently. Implied in this is a duty to keep up-to-date with best practice and to undertake such training as may be necessary for that purpose. A comprehensive induction of new boarding staff takes place prior to the individual taking up their position as well as during the first year in post. This induction is tailored to the role and the House in which the new appointee is to work. On-going professional development opportunities are offered to all staff. These will often take the form of in-house INSET (mandatory and voluntary), coaching and mentoring, reading and research, as well as attending courses and seminars provided by external bodies when relevant. Details of the School's CPD programme are published by the Deputy Head of School. The Head of Boarding and Welfare welcomes suggestions from and conversations with individual staff about their particular interests and areas of their own boarding work which they wish to develop.

#### **Record keeping**

Life can be very hectic in a Boarding House; sound, accurate, up-to-date record keeping by all staff is an essential part of the job. The school management information system (PASS/3Sys) must be used extensively to record and retrieve data on individual pupils and House events. The minutes of all meetings with staff and parents and pupils must be carefully kept, circulated promptly and available to those concerned. The Housemistress can devise efficient administrative systems for the House team that allow work to be done more effectively so that things only have to be written once in order to be recorded and disseminated. It is a legal requirement to record all significant social and disciplinary matters, complaints and grievances, illnesses and accidents, medication dispensed, duty rotas and training, pocket money transactions and other issues. See DfE Boarding Schools NMS Appendix 2 'List of Records'. All House staff need to be aware of this and act accordingly. All record keeping must be done on PASS/3Sys.

Staff must not leave computers logged on and unattended. This could lead to a breach of confidentiality and a failure to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## Induction of Boarding House Staff

All boarding staff must be competent in:

School's Employee Handbook, Staff Handbook and Health and Safety Handbook	
School's policies and documents	
Duty of Care	
Enhanced Safeguarding of Children	
Dealing with a Child Protection Issue	
Health and Safety Risk Assessment of the House	
Health and Safety Risk Assessment of the site for boarders moving around the school/village	
Locking up the House at night	
Fire Safety: evacuating the House	
Fire Safety: familiarity with the fire alarm system/panel	
Fire safety: aware of equipment and whether it is fit for purpose	
Lockdown	
The signing in/out procedure	
Knowing the whereabouts of children at all times	
Dealing with a crisis	
Missing Child Policy	
First Aid	
Administering medicines	
Dealing with a welfare matter (including medical issues)	
Dealing with a bullying incident	
Knowledge of Medical Policies	
Knowledge of Search Policy	
Knowledge of Complaints Policy	
Knowledge of Anti-Bullying Policy	
Knowledge of Behaviour and Physical Restraint) Policies	
Knowledge of Equal Opportunities Policy	
Knowledge of staff discipline, grievance and whistleblowing procedures	
How to deal with a complaint	
E-Safety procedures	
Communicating appropriately with parents	
House budgeting and finances	
Running the House webpage	
Marketing the House and Admissions	
Management of Prefects and Pupil Voice	
Performance Management of Staff	
Upkeep of the House fabric (maintenance reporting)	
Boarding Management Handbook and statutory compliance (NMS)	
Parent contract, Terms and Conditions	
Welfare system and care plans	

Name and signature of new member of staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and signature of staff inducting: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **14. Staff Recruitment and Checks on Other Adults**

Before advertising for any vacancy at the School (such as a position for boarding staff) approval must be sought from the Head of School and the process must be completed in line with the guidance from the Human Resources Department. The HR department advises on all matters of staff recruitment in order to ensure that proper safeguarding standards and employment law are adhered to.

The only people living in the House apart from the boarders are the resident House staff and their immediate families. All those living in the House aged 16 and over but not on the school roll have a valid DBS check and have signed an agreement to reside at the premises which lays out their obligations, rights and responsibilities. All persons visiting the House are supervised by the House staff. If parents or guardians wish to visit the House they must let the Housemistress know the arrangements in advance. Visitors to resident staff must be supervised at all times; if it is proposed that they are staying overnight then the Housemistress must be informed and the relevant form submitted to the Head of School well in advance to approve the overnight stay.

The School does not appoint guardians. Matters concerning guardians are made clear to parents in the 'Terms and Conditions' of Admission to the School.

## **15. Staffing and Supervision**

### **Roles**

All House staff must carry out their responsibilities as laid out in their job descriptions. A very flexible approach by all boarding staff is needed to meet the needs of the girls. Staff are appointed on the grounds that they have suitable experience for the roles they perform and the Head of Boarding and Welfare should ensure that they receive suitable training to keep them up-to-date with best practice as well as recent legislation and guidance. The Housemistress is responsible for the day to day management of the House, its staff and its pupils and the relationships between them and with parents. The House is a place of work and the Housemistress is expected, as would a responsible employer, to ensure her staff are clear what is expected of them, having the wherewithal to complete their duties safely and effectively. Consulting as necessary, the Housemistress should be vigilant for staff showing signs of stress or inability to cope or to be fair and consistent. Supporting students with welfare or behavioural issues can be stressful and challenging;

The Head of Boarding and Welfare completes the boarding duty rota before the start of each term, circulates it to all those involved and publishes it in the House. Please note that during the first and last week of every half-term the normal pattern of the duty rota is suspended to cater for girls' arrivals and departures; residential boarding staff are expected to be on site at all times to settle the girls into the House at the beginning of every half-term and to see them safely on their way at the end of every half-term. Boarding staff are expected to be prepared to work at any time to care for the boarders in times of emergency.

The Housemistress makes it clear in writing exactly what specific duties are expected of anyone on duty. She also has a system of monitoring that these are being correctly executed. Boarding staff share mealtimes with the boarders in the dining-room and establish routines to ensure that healthy eating is promoted for each, and happy civilised

mealtimes, where good manners are expected. In the case of the Housemistress, it is important for all concerned to understand what her role is in terms of responsibilities for supervision, registration, monitoring and discipline. Housemistresses, Pastoral Boarding Assistants and teaching staff do not normally have the same training, roles, skills or relationships with the pupils. This must be taken into account in directing the operations of the House.

At all times of day and night the whereabouts of each boarder must be known, each boarder must be the responsibility of a designated member duty staff on duty. It must be evidently clear to the boarder, the staff member and the school hierarchy who that staff member is, where that boarder is and how they can be located and contacted.

Residential members of boarding staff sleep in the House every night during term time, other than time off authorised by the Head of School. Moira House recognises that at times we will need emergency overnight cover for the houses should a situation arise. This could include a residential member of staff having to sleep in a different boarding house. The school also has a bank of trained, DBS checked people who are willing to step at the last minute.

### **Registration**

An online register of the House is taken in all Houses' Roll Call time (i.e. early morning House Meeting before leaving the House for breakfast, at supper time, during study and at the end of the day when all pupils are in house going to bed). Any pupils failing to register at any of those times must be located and safely accounted for immediately. If, after a careful check, they are not accounted for then the Missing Pupil Procedure should be followed.

### **Visiting**

Parents are allowed access to the House but are expected to let the Housemistress know of their visit. Any other member of the public entering the House must have the express permission of the Housemistress and be supervised. External maintenance staff must report to Operations team before entering a Boarding House or working on the exterior of the House and must carry identification and have a 'School Visitor ID' pass clearly displayed. All school staff with unsupervised access to girls have had a statutory police check prior to employment. This includes boarding staff family members older than 16. See also 'Visitor Policy'.

### **Security**

Boarding Houses can only be accessed by use of a key which is dedicated for the use of the individual member of staff to whom it is allocated. There is a strict code of conduct for the use of keys. Access gained to a building or room may only be by the owner of the key. Any losses must be reported immediately. Lockable doors must never be left ajar. Each boarding House also has an intruder alarm system which must be set each night, once all the House are accounted for, and disarmed at 'wake up' time. All windows giving access to boarders are fitted with restraints for both security and safety reasons. These must be checked regularly (at least once a week) to ensure they have not been tampered with. These checks must be recorded and retained.

## **Boarding House Intruder Alarm Guidelines**

1. The alarms should be set by the member of staff on duty in each House each night as soon as a bedtime register has been completed as is practicable i.e. normally sometime soon after 9.00pm.
2. The alarms should be disarmed at wake-up time each morning.
3. If the alarm is activated, the boarding staff on duty should immediately carry out a full roll call in the House Common Room.
4. Staff should attempt to ascertain how the alarm has been activated.
5. If there is evidence of outside intrusion the Police should be called immediately, followed by the Site Supervisor and the member of SMT on call.
6. If a pupil is missing and an initial search yields no-one, then the Missing Pupil Policy must be followed.
7. If all pupils are present, the incident should be logged on the Health and Safety area of the VLE.

## **Pupil Safety**

It is important to continually remind girls of security and their personal safety, of the School rules and guidelines, and to urge them to take sensible precautions to minimise danger and to avoid the sort of behaviour that attracts unwanted attention. This includes when they are moving about in the town at the weekend or on School trips. Concern for pupil welfare is paramount and each House should be continually reviewing and improving its procedures and practices in this regard.

## **Weekends**

Weekly boarders and those on weekend leave may leave School on Friday after 5.15pm or on Saturday after school commitments or matches. Clearly the younger the girl, the more input they will need on how to use their free time - which after a busy 5 days at School week might seem rather a huge chunk of time to occupy by themselves. Weekends have a variety of house trips as well as free time for or general chilling out. We are mindful of the age of the boarders we accommodate, and try to keep all activities relevant and where possible family orientated and homely.

## **Terms dates and absence from School**

Term dates are published well in advance and are available on the School website. Pupils are expected to arrive and depart on time i.e. for end of terms 1pm - 5pm and for half terms 4pm - 6pm; and always return between 4pm and 9pm on the day before lessons re-start. Travel arrangements are the responsibility of parents. The travel arrangements of overseas pupils should be confirmed with the Pastoral Boarding Assistant on day duty well in advance of the holidays. The Pastoral Boarding Assistant can arrange taxi transfers, or transfers to and from the airport if parents require it. No boarder under the age of 16 is to travel to and from school unaccompanied at any time. If it is absolutely necessary to be absent from School for any reason then permission must be sought in advance from the Head of Section, by email. Boarding staff may not sanction absence and must be proactive in insisting pupils stick to the published arrival and departure times.

## **Passports and Visas**

Parents need to ensure that these are kept up-to-date. Those girls who travel abroad in the holidays should deposit passports with their Housemistress as soon as they arrive in School at the beginning of term. These need to be securely stored in the House safe - their collection having been recorded. As part of the admissions process the School's Admissions Office arranges all the necessary documentation for visas to be issued.

## **The Role of the Guardian**

The School requires that parents who are currently living outside the United Kingdom appoint an education guardian who can readily oversee their girl's arrangements when she is in this country. The role of guardian is often performed by a relation, but it may be successfully undertaken by any responsible and sensible adult who is trusted by parents. Young adults who are, perhaps, living in university or other student-type accommodation, are not able to perform the role adequately. Responsible guardianship services can be found through AEGIS, which is the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Pupils, [www.aegisuk.net](http://www.aegisuk.net).

The School expects parents to be responsible for the welfare of their children when they are staying with guardians. The School cannot arrange accommodation for pupils in holiday time or for weekend leave.

A guardian is a point of contact and reference for the pupil, the parents and house staff. They would usually attend Parents' Evenings and give advice to their boarders, ask questions of the teachers and be able to report back to parents. Guardians are usually able to oversee and/or give approval for weekend leave in consultation with the Housemistress. They are on the spot to help parents with holidays and travel arrangements and often have their charge(s) to stay with them during the short half-term holiday. They are available to give assistance in case of any emergency. On occasions when the child based overseas spends School holidays in this country, the guardian takes responsibility for the child for the duration of the holiday. It is important that all guardians are aware of the School's 'Terms and Conditions' for boarders.

## **Coping with difficult situations**

In the case of a very serious crisis involving death, serious injury or some other catastrophe there is an emergency procedure.

There is no blueprint for dealing with difficult situations in the House. By their very nature difficult situations differ from one another, so any guidelines must be applied with common sense and sensitivity. Communication, as ever, is the watchword. You must ask if you feel that you would like advice. Staff must always inform their line manager as soon as possible when any difficult circumstances arise.

In the wake of serious, unanticipated situations the first consideration is always safety, of pupils, other staff, member of the public and yourself. Ascertaining the location of all pupils, ensuring they are not in any danger and taking any immediate steps to care for anyone in need of treatment or support are the first things to do. Get some help yourself from a colleague and act, as far as possible, in a calm, professional, reassuring manner. Other staff and pupils may well take their lead from you, so it is important to remain composed no matter how shocked, angry or frightened you might feel.

When the consequences of the immediate issue have been resolved, the next thing to do is to gather reliable evidence about what has happened. This will usually mean sitting down individually with the pupils concerned to take a note of what they have to say. Pupils can be asked to write their own version of what has happened. Then a report will need to be logged on PASS/3Sys.

## **16. Equal Opportunities**

All children have the same rights.

It is the School's aim to provide equal opportunities for all boarders, regardless of their different ages, gender, cultures, backgrounds and abilities. Appropriate provision or exemption is made, where feasible and desired, for boarders with special dietary, dress or religious observance requirements or needs because of religious or cultural background. The most common circumstances are likely to be special dietary needs but you should also be aware of girls who might be fasting in our House and considerate to the demands put upon them during the day e.g. sport. Information regarding places of worship must be gathered from parents as soon as a boarder arrives in the House and arrangements must be made for the relevant place of worship to be attended by the boarder.

House staff should ensure that no-one experiences inappropriate discrimination, striving to be sensitive to the needs of each individual whilst being fair in the delivery of services, celebrating difference and working towards harmony across the House. ('Appropriate' discrimination would normally refer to age-dependent issues such as different bed times, entertainment, and degrees of freedom).

It is important to pay particular attention to girls (and parents) whose first language is not English to ensure they understand matters sufficiently well to allow them access to all elements of the School's provision. If staff become aware that a pupil is experiencing unfair discrimination or is excluded from benefiting in any way, there is a duty to bring it to the attention of the Housemistress so that adjustments can be made.

It is a particular strength of the School that our pupils come from such a wide variety of countries, cultures, races and faiths. Everyday contact with other pupils from such diverse backgrounds broadens our pupils' outlook on all issues, including religious issues.

## **17. Securing Boarders' Views**

The School values the opinions of its pupils and Houses must use the informal mechanisms in place in this respect as well as the more formal ones as they are a vital source of information. Suggestion boxes, focus groups, working suppers, tutorials, elections, and comments boards are further examples of different systems that Houses use to secure boarders' views. Weekly minuted house meetings are also essential to the smooth running of a house as well as informal times when boarders can come and talk to the house staff to allay any concerns or queries they have. All meetings are carried out in a way that asks boarders for their views rather than staff going through a list of issues.

## **18. Complaints**

### **Pupils**

All boarders must be encouraged to talk about anything bothering them and be aware of different ways of doing this and the various people they can go to (personal tutor, Housemistress, Head of Section, boarding staff, friends,). They must be informed of formal routes for expressing their views on day to day issues (see Section 17 above, Securing Boarders' Views) and aware of the 'independent listener' available to them and have been issued with the hand out in Section 2. Any member of staff may be approached at any time. It is important that complaints and worries are taken seriously. Concerns must be investigated and either refuted or dealt with appropriately in accordance with the Pupil Complaints Policy. All concerns must be recorded on PASS/3Sys. If any pupil makes a disclosure that a child's safety may be at risk, the School's Safeguarding procedures must be followed.

### **Parents**

Through prompt, accurate, clear and courteous communication and first class service we hope that all parents will be happy with the boarding provision which the School delivers. Inevitably at times there will be misunderstandings, mistakes and grievances. Sometimes the Housemistress, personal tutor or boarding staff will be the recipient of a concern or complaint. These may be initiated by a parent, guardian, agent or member of the public. They may be in writing or verbal. If sound relationships have already been built then these are often quickly dealt with and the matter resolved to everyone's satisfaction at an early stage. If not then the matter should be promptly passed on to the Head of Boarding and Welfare.

The Housemistress must keep a detailed record (including notes of meetings and discussions) on PASS/3SYS of any concerns or complaints made by pupils, parents, staff or others, what action was taken and how the matter was resolved. All parents are made aware of Moira House Complaints Policy which is also on the School website.

Our international parents are entitled to feel as connected to the school as our UK boarding and day parents. Extra effort must be made to ensure that there is a strong bond between home and school. This is easy when the parents are pro-active. It is more challenging when they are not and may not be able to communicate. In every circumstance, steps must be taken to overcome these difficulties and a communication must be set up with the family. In many cases we have language expertise in our staff, some of whom have been appointed for this very purpose.

## **19. Prefects**

One of the strengths of the House system is the possibilities it allows and responsibility it gives to all girls to care for one another at all levels and ages. The vertical House system is an organic structure, mimicking the family life of a group of siblings, which lends itself to older pupils supporting and acting as role models to younger ones, and the younger ones in turn looking up to and emulating their senior counterparts. In addition to this, the Houses do operate a system of House Prefects who pupils who have specific roles and responsibilities within the House. They are always supervised by members of staff and do not have any official powers.

Becoming a House Prefect is a formal, process, which involves an invitation to apply (advertised by the Housemistress), written application, interview and feedback. The duties that they may carry out are useful (e.g. induction of new boarders, wake up, supervising queues, organising events, checking younger pupils are in the right place at the right time, etc.), but the main function of prefects is to help set the tone in the community, lift younger people's sights and give positive help to others.

The Boarding prefects will be supported and encouraged by all boarding staff. The Head of Boarding will meet once a week with the boarding prefects to discuss specific boarding concerns events and future plans. The prefect team will then disseminate this information at the weekly house meeting, via the minutes displayed on the boarding notice board and by word of mouth when talking with the other boarders.

Prefects will have these guidelines to follow and prefects should:

- be good role models and set a good examples through their behaviour and make it clear what is acceptable and what is not (including the approach to their studies)
- help house staff implement house rules
- write on the Boarders' notice board each day
- represent house members and be a friendly face and listen to girls concerns or worries reporting back to the house mistress concerns or worries
- help with house meetings and take the register
- help plan and organise House Events and provide sound guidance and leadership
- make speeches occasionally
- attend prefects meetings once a week and suggest ideas for improving the House. communicate well and keep HOB informed of any problems or difficulties that they have detected
- help new girls at the start of the Autumn Term and work with Housemistresses on first day of Autumn Term
- run a Tuck shop or assist younger boarders to run tuck shop
- encourage good behaviour and positive relationships and give sympathetic help and advice to younger pupils
- encourage girls to speak English around the house
- Talk to the boarders and get ideas for activities and trips and encourage girls to sign up for trips. Help at the beginning of term when the boarders are shown a film show of events then assist with the girls signing up for the different activities
- Take meeting minutes, print and display on boarders' notice board
- Be aware of safe guarding, and report any safe guarding concerns to a member of the safe guarding team or house staff if one not available. Prefects should never promise to keep secrets if a girl makes a disclosure or she thinks a boarder may be at risk.

Prefects do not give sanctions

## **20. Lodgings**

The School does not arrange lodgings for any pupils.

## **Final thoughts**

Looking after girls twenty-four hours a day is a most demanding and rewarding job. It is therefore essential to look after yourself and your colleagues too. Weekly team meetings and individual conversations are vital for monitoring the welfare of pastoral staff as well as for pupils. They are an opportunity to share information, check that communications are effective and adequate, receive support, and put immediate interventions in place when necessary. If you have any concerns at all, no matter how small, you must voice them to your line manager so that the appropriate support can be given and action can be taken.

Reviewed: Sept 2018 J Talkington Head of Boarding and Welfare  
Next Review: June 2019