

P5 Boarding Policy

Aims

The Purcell School aims to provide an environment in which individuals can feel secure, valued and respected; free from fear and anxiety and where they can work to reach their full potential. The Purcell School puts Safeguarding at the heart of everything it does, and the safety and well-being of all students is key to what we do. The School is continually appraising the boarding provision to enable it to constantly improve its provision of care for boarders; the School welcomes both parental and student input in helping it to meet its aims.

Induction into Boarding

Once a student receives their acceptance letter, the School works closely with them and their family to establish a good working relationship that facilitates a smooth transition into boarding and builds the foundations for a happy and supported School experience. On arrival, the School provides a comprehensive induction programme to help students settle into School/boarding life; we review this annually to improve the experience of our students.

House Structure/Care Arrangements

There are four Houses at The Purcell School; one junior co-educational house for the younger students ranging from Year 6 to 9; two senior Girls houses for Year 9 to 13 and one senior Boys house for Year 10 to 13 students. Houses are there to provide a 'family base' for students while still taking into consideration the different needs of each age group. All Houses take their meals in the communal dining room in the main School. This provides students with the opportunity to meet and forge relationships with students on other Houses and from other year groups. Day students are integrated into the Houses and have full access to House teams to discuss work, interests or problems. All houses have their own separate recreation spaces, with separate common room facilities and access to Wi-Fi. Sixth Form students can use study-bedrooms for music practice, and first study pianists are usually provided with pianos.

Each House has a resident Houseparent with his/her family and at least one other resident staff member who is either a Deputy HP or Resident Graduate Assistant. The wider House team includes day matrons, members of teaching staff who tutor/evening duties and housekeeping staff. The House team is involved in all aspects of boarding life and its members are integral in providing positive pastoral relationships with the students in their care, frequently acting as a vital link between Houseparent and student should problems arise. The Medical Centre looks after the physical and mental health of the students and there is a visiting counsellor and a specialist physiotherapist available to students.

Social and Recreational Activities

There are daily opportunities for boarders to take part in a variety of activities and although a lot of them are music based there are opportunities for sport and other interests. Students are actively encouraged to become involved and Houses keep a careful eye out for those students who are either overloading themselves or who are not making the most of opportunities that are on offer. There is a weekend programme consisting of a Saturday morning music programme and

then various other sporting and social activities; the programme is varied and also takes into consideration that students also need time to rest and relax after a busy week.

Boarders are able to make the most of the school's facilities with access to practice rooms throughout the evenings and weekends and many students attend Junior Music Colleges in London. Students are given the opportunity to attend concerts both in and out of School.

We believe that boarding provides opportunities for students to be independent and encourages them to be unselfish, responsible, and tolerant and that boarders leave us as resilient young adults who are adequately prepared to meet the demands of a complex and ever changing world. In line with the mission and aims of the School, the boarding experience values and celebrates the School's diverse and multi-cultural community and upholds the values of equality of opportunity and respect of all, whatever their age, gender, race or role in the School (student and staff). The boarding experience aims to promote self-reliance and resourcefulness and to develop the wider person through a variety of opportunities offered to students: prefect system, outreach programmes, educational visits, recreational activities, Commonwealth involvement and a myriad of other activities available at The Purcell School. We strive to provide a safe, friendly, stimulating and supportive environment for our students.

Guidance for Staff

All staff have a common law duty of care to the students in the school; essentially this is a pastoral role. These guidelines are to support professional behaviour amongst house and academic staff in the execution of their responsibilities. Much of this information is to be found elsewhere in the Staff Handbook.

It is imperative that clear lines of communication exist between staff. In particular, de-briefing should take place on the changeover of duty personnel in the house situation and between Heads of Year, house staff and tutors. It is essential that each house has a 'daily working document/diary' where events/issues can be logged and viewed by all staff members of the house. This should be kept securely as it may include sensitive material. It should be monitored by the Head of Boarding.

Staff need to be aware that the security and happiness of each student is paramount. In order to accomplish this, staff ought to ensure:

- **Each student's dignity and entitlement to privacy are respected.** This includes recognising the student's right to personal space. Staff are advised not to enter a student's bedroom unless the student is present and permission is granted. This guideline applies also to the toilet and bathroom areas. Staff should not enter without knocking and indicating their presence. Only in exceptional circumstances, such as a medical emergency, should staff enter any of these areas without student permission. In such cases, the presence of another adult is desirable.

If staff are required to search a student's room, which should only take place if a serious disciplinary offence is suspected, it must be performed according to the guidelines recommended by the BSA (Boarding Briefing paper 15) and the schools Searching a Student Policy.

All houses should have copies of this document and all staff should be aware of its

contents. Please also refer to search kits provided by the Head of Boarding.

- **The operation of an open door policy to students is encouraged.** Staff need to be aware of the risks related to one-to-one student/staff situations. Staff are reminded that a one-to-one conversation behind closed doors is to be avoided. Should such a conversation be necessary, it should be conducted in a setting, which simultaneously offers privacy, but also is observable by others, e.g. a room with a window on to a public area. Staff are not permitted to entertain students in their private accommodation under any circumstances. (See Students in Staff Accommodation Policy)
- **Confidentiality cannot be promised.** Staff must be sensitive to the student and, as appropriate, tell the student the name/s of the person/s who will be informed and the reason for this action. All such matters must be entered, dated and signed in the house incident book and The Head of Boarding informed.
- If a case of abuse is suspected or known to have happened, the DSP must be contacted and a written report logged on **MyConcern**. Staff are reminded that it is imperative that no leading questions or judgements are made during this interview with the student. For further information see the Child Protection Policy.
- **House staff relationships with students must be appropriate.** These relationships noticeably different from the relationships between students and their subject teachers. It is recognised that by the very nature of the situation, staff tend to be at greater ease with the students. Therefore, staff need to guard against actions which can be misinterpreted, e.g. the use of sarcasm. Staff are required to act as professionals at all times.
- **The cultural diversity existing in any house is to be celebrated for its richness.** Staff need to be sensitive to cultural issues and to create opportunities for students to share their experiences. Stereotypical comments are to be avoided.
- **British values are to be celebrated.** Evidence of this can be seen through the houses, for example: the house voting systems, student voice and house debates.
- **With regard to health and medical matters, there is a working partnership between the house and medical staff.** The aim is to enable students to make important decisions which will affect their present and future health. Methods include careful handling of information and guidance of students in maintaining and obtaining a healthy lifestyle - Emergency Medical boxes, first aid boxes and facilities for dealing with body fluid spills are located in each House, staff should acquaint themselves with these. Medication given must be recorded on the online medical book or the controlled drug sheet in house they must clearly state who, what and why and in the case of the controlled drug sheet be signed by hand.
- **The house is a safe place for students.** Staff supervision of the house is of primary importance, the house should not be left unattended and a member of staff should always be accessible in person in the Boarding House, unless dealing with an emergency, when the on call member of staff should be available. To ensure safety staff must check that all ground floor windows and doors are locked at night and students are all registered and safely in their rooms. Visitors to the school who are not wearing badges must be

challenged. Clear instructions on fire procedures must be given to students at the beginning of each academic year and regular drills are carried out each term. Students will also have the numbers of the House mobile, reception, the independent listener, childline and the Children's Commissioner for England available to them in their rooms if needed.

- **Exeats are monitored, recorded and permission sought where appropriate or in doubt, from parents/guardians.** See Parents Handbook.

Discipline Procedures

Discipline should be seen to be fair and just. (See Behaviour and Sanctions Policy for details).

Within the house situation, discipline should be characterised by mutual trust, respect and concern, if staff are to teach students to learn, to serve, to forgive and to care. All matters whereby breaches of the school rules have occurred must be recorded, signed and dated by the member of staff. The Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct must be followed. Each house has a set of rewards and sanctions that is available to every student in their rooms at the beginning of term and sent to parents and students before they arrive at the school.

The investigation of theft within a boarding house is a very sensitive issue and staff must be extremely security cautious in their actions. Accurate records of conversations must be recorded, dated and signed. If it is deemed necessary to search a bedroom, the student and another adult must be present in the room. (See guidance in BSA procedures 'Boarding Briefing paper 15 which can be found in the Boarding search pack in the Houseparent's office or on the BSA website)

In order to ensure fairness and consistency, the Head of Boarding should be informed of any punishments which should also be recorded in the house records.

- **Use of Restraint:** Staff are reminded that the use of force to restrain students is to be avoided, except in an emergency situation. In such circumstances, it is absolutely essential to contact another member of staff and request immediate assistance. Staff are advised to read the appropriate DfE circulars (e.g. 10/98, 'Use of Force to Control and Restrain Students') and the School's Restraint Policy.
- **Staff confiscation of students' belongings,** which are deemed to be in direct contravention of school rules, has to be recorded. The items should be stored safely and a collection time arranged with the student or parents.
- **Students should be reminded at the beginning of term of our expectations of appropriate behaviour especially with members of the opposite gender.** They should be reminded of the seriousness of such breaking of trust. Sixth Form students should be made aware of the curfew times. If a student behaves in an inappropriate manner with another student then they should receive a severe warning both verbally and in writing. A second offence will lead to a suspension. If a student is found in the boarding areas of the opposite gender then there will be immediate suspension pending investigation. A serious breach of this policy may lead to permanent exclusion. The Principal reserves the right to exclude any student who offends persistently.

- Breaking exeat & being out of bounds are treated seriously as breaking trust. Parents will be contacted and the students will have privileges withdrawn (e.g. gated during free time)
- As indicated in the Parent Handbook and Student Handbook, the use of alcohol and cigarettes is against the school rules. Please see the Drugs And Alcohol Policy and Behaviour Policy for more information.
- The supply of illegal drugs is a most serious offence and will lead to permanent exclusion. The use of illegal drugs would lead to immediate suspension pending investigation and can lead to expulsion

Policy author	Policy date/review date:	Next review due:
Jane Malan	January 2020	January 2021