



The Purcell School
for young musicians

Boarding Guide



Junior Boarding Guide



Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 join Avison House

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are accommodated in shared bedrooms, based on year group. The largest rooms have 3 beds; most boarders share in double bedrooms. Students can personalise their rooms eg with their own duvet covers, posters and photos for noticeboards etc.

Avison is set in its own garden, with plenty of outdoor play space, as well as a large ground floor common room, with TV, board games and books, piano and a kitchen area for snacks.

There are 4 resident members of staff who live in Avison. The house is always supervised and secure. The house can accommodate 28 boarders. Day students in years 7-9 also use the house as a base during the day.

Junior boarders have their main meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner - plus morning break) in the main school dining room. They are taken to meals as a house and are supervised.

Fruit, toast and hot drinks are available at other times in the common room, and there is a snack available following afternoon lessons. Boarders can keep personal food and drinks ('tuck') in lockers in the common room.

Music practice

Junior students have two sessions of supervised music practice daily. Years 7 and 8 practice for an hour each day at 7.20am, and again at 6.30pm, having completed their homework in the boarding house.

Students in Y9 practice daily at 7.20am, then are involved in Music Block on Mondays and Wednesdays (ensembles, orchestras, masterclasses etc). There is further daily practice at 7.30pm, having completed academic homework, which is done in the boarding house.



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House routine

Boarders keep their possessions in their shared bedrooms ('dorms'). They wear slippers or equivalent inside the house, leaving outdoor footwear at the door.

Students are asked to make their own beds daily (straighten duvet etc). They change their beds fortnightly and will refit their own duvets and pillow-cases.

There are set times for showering/teeth brushing etc for Years 7 and 8. More independence is expected in Year 9; students take care of their own personal hygiene, though this is closely monitored by house staff. Boarders' laundry is collected twice weekly and returned to the house, where students collect it and put it away.

Daily evening registration provides the chance for notices and information to be shared, and for students to raise concerns about the day with staff. This is also the opportunity to celebrate achievements, mark birthdays and special occasions and plan social activities for the house.

Students hand in phones/laptops before bed; Year 9 can have phones with them during the day.

Free time

Years 7 and 8 have the chance for organised games (sport) several times each week.

Free time can be used for relaxation and chat, as well as catching up with practice and homework, or simply quiet time.

Weekend freetime often involves an organised sports programme and social activities such as film night, art activities, and lots and lots of food!

Junior boarders do not leave the school site in their free time. Approximately half the junior boarders go home each weekend.



Senior Boarding Guide



Where will I live?

Students in Years 10 - 13 live in either Sunley (Girls) or Ellington (Girls and Boys, who live on separate floors and separate sides of the house).

New students generally join in Years 10 or 12.

At this stage a good degree of personal independence is expected, for example in respect of:

Personal Organisation

- Unpacking after weekends and holidays
- Keeping rooms tidy on a daily basis, such that the domestic team can clean effectively
- Daily organisation of 'kit' for academic lessons and music commitments
- Timekeeping, especially regarding check-in times and mealtimes

Personal Hygiene

- Showering
- Teeth brushing
- Changing clothes regularly
- Handing in laundry to be washed
- Students in Year 12 and 13 can do their own laundry, using the house facilities

Bed Changing

- Being able to take off and put on a duvet cover and pillow cases.



Senior Boarding Guide



Students in Year 10 and 11 may be in shared rooms of up to 4 people. Students in Year 12 and 13 may be in triple, double or single rooms.

Individual bedrooms are accessible by keycard. Adult visitors to student rooms will knock, but will expect to be given access. Room orderliness is checked daily by house staff.

Individual safes are available in rooms for students' valuables and money. Houses are secured externally and internally, in terms of access to student sleeping areas, via keycard. There is CCTV monitoring around public areas and internal corridors.

We aim to give Sixth Form first study pianists rooms with a piano. Other students can practice in their rooms but most prefer to use the many practice rooms and performance spaces situated around the school.

Houses are communal environments, with plenty of shared spaces. Students need to be prepared to share eg TV, games, and respect the personal space of others.

When will I get up, and go to bed?

Senior boarders in Years 10 and 11 get up for early morning practice which starts at 7.20am, on Tues, Weds, Fri. Breakfast is at 8.20am.

Sixth Form boarders register in house by 8am and go straight to breakfast. Years 10 and 11 hand in mobile phones and laptops and go upstairs to bed at 9.30pm.

Sixth Form go upstairs by 10.15pm.

All senior boarders change their own bed linen, which is washed centrally.

Sixth Formers have access to a house laundry room where they wash (and dry) their own clothes.



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What will my day look like?

Monday to Friday involves a mixture of taught academic lessons, instrumental music lessons, 'Music Block' - a time for rehearsals, ensembles, masterclasses, and individual music practice.

Students in Year 10 and 11 study up to 7 GCSEs, and take Music GCSE in Year 10.

Students in Year 12 and 13 study a maximum of 4 A-Levels; most students follow 3 A-Levels including Music. Each A-Level course involves an average of 5 classroom hours per week, excluding private study and homework (prep).

There are numerous opportunities to perform both inside and outside the school, as well as plenty of 'free time' (such as after prep) to make music informally with other students, or pursue private practice.

What happens at weekends?

Some students choose to go home at weekends, either regularly or occasionally, for a chance to rest and relax away from school. Many students take part in the junior music colleges in London on Saturdays.

For those who remain at school, there is a programme of musical activities on Saturday mornings. Senior students may then sign off-campus, if they wish, to visit the local area. There are usually centrally organised social activities on Saturday evenings, such as quizzes, film nights, birthday celebrations or open mic nights.

Sundays are a more relaxed time; brunch is available until 12.30pm. Students take the chance to relax with friends, catch up with work, or give some time to sustained practice. There is the chance for older students to go off-campus. It is important that students are confident and competent about eg safe road crossing, use of public transport, personal safety; as well as understanding the importance of timings for check-ins and helping staff to account for their whereabouts at all times.



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What will I eat?

Senior boarders have their main meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner - plus morning break) in the main school dining room. A wide range of hot food and salads is available, including vegetarian and vegan options. Special diets can be catered for, within reason. Registration takes place at lunch and dinner, but there is no check on what students eat.

There is the expectation that students will eat and drink enough, making independent choices, to keep themselves healthy and with sufficient energy to cope with the demands of a busy musical and academic schedule.

Fruit, toast and hot drinks are available at other times in common rooms. Boarders can bring personal food and drinks and have access to fridges in common rooms.

What IT access will I have?

Wifi is provided in the boarding houses. Students can bring mobile phones, laptops and other digital devices. Years 10 and 11 hand in digital devices at night. Headphones are advised as noise must be kept to a minimum during prep and at bedtimes.

TVs in common rooms can be used for films and gaming.

ICT facilities are available for students without personal laptops.

Who will look after me?

Senior houses are run by houseparents, who live in the boarding houses. They are supported by assistant house parents and practice supervisors/graduate assistants, who are all also resident.

By day, a house matron deals with practical matters as well as supporting pastoral care.



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The Resident Practice Supervisors are recent graduates from Music Colleges, who are well placed to support and guide younger musicians.

Students belong to tutor groups and the tutor provides academic as well as pastoral support.

There is a medical centre at The Purcell School; nursing support is available 24 hours a day.

Boarders register with the local medical practice through which they have access to GPs and other specialist services.

Medication can be held securely in the boarding houses and issued as required. Students should NOT hold medication of any sort in private rooms in boarding houses.

There is a counsellor who works at The Purcell School, working closely with the pastoral and safeguarding teams. Students can access counselling, which is free of charge and confidential; it is usual that a period of up to 6 weekly sessions is enough to support students with typical adolescent challenges and issues.

Students who require ongoing support, (eg for ASD, autism, depression, anxiety, OCD) or specialist psychiatric or psychological services, may find aspects of boarding difficult.

It is very important that the school is made aware of ANY diagnosed medical or psychological conditions, or mental/emotional health issues, or special educational needs, at the earliest stage of the application process. This enables us to assess the level of individual support needed in the event of a place being offered.



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