P5 Boarding Policy

Aims

The Purcell School aims to provide a boarding environment in which individuals can feel secure, valued and respected; free from fear and anxiety and where they are supported 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. Boarding house teams understand they have a 'duty of care' to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students, and to work in partnership with students, parents, wider pastoral teams and external agencies, as appropriate, to best fulfill this duty of care.

The School is continually appraising boarding provision to enable it to constantly improve its care for boarders; the School welcomes both parental and student input in helping it to meet its aims.

Induction into Boarding

Following acceptance, the School works closely with students and families 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 and boarding life; we review this annually to improve the experience of our students.

House Structure/Care Arrangements

There are three Houses at The Purcell School; one junior co-educational house for the younger students - Avison House (Years 7 to 9); one senior Girls' house – Sunley (Years 10 to 12) and one senior co-educational house – Ellington House (Years 10 to 13). Houses provide a 'home base' for students while still taking into consideration the different needs of each age group. All Houses take break times and meals in the communal dining room in the main School. This provides students with the opportunity to meet and forge relationships with students across Houses and year groups.

Day students are integrated into the Houses and have full access to House teams to discuss work, interests or concerns. All houses have their own 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 and at least one other resident staff member as Assistant HP, as well as Resident Graduate Assistants. The wider House teams include day matrons, Medical Centre staff 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. There is a nurse available 24/7. There is a school counsellor and a specialist physiotherapist available to all 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 during the day, the evening allows opportunities for a wide variety of

co-curricular activities and outings. 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 followed by various sporting and social activities, as well as the opportunity for rest and relaxation.

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

Boarding at Purcell aims to provide opportunities for students to be independent, self-reliant and resourceful, especially in respect of time-management and personal organisation, while providing appropriate adult support, while skills are learned and developed.

The boarding ethos at Purcell emphasises kindness, honesty, respect, responsibility to self and others, tolerance and selflessness. It aims to build skills of curiosity and resilience that prepares young adults for the world beyond school.

In line with the aims of the School, the boarding experience values and celebrates the School's diverse and multi-cultural community and upholds fundamental British values of equality of opportunity and respect for all, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, or role within the School (student or staff).

Alongside day student, boarders are able to develop wider personal skills, including leadership skills, self-confidence, initiative and creativity through a variety of opportunities: these include the student leadership team, outreach programmes, educational visits, recreational activities, Commonwealth involvement, as well as via the many musical opportunities on offer, both formal and informal.

Guidance for Staff

All staff have a pastoral 'duty of care' to the students in the School. These guidelines are to support professional behaviour amongst house teams and academic staff in the execution of their responsibilities specifically in the boarding environment.

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 houses, regarding both operational and pastoral matters.

Each house has an online Dashboard where all house events/issues/ communications can be logged and students' behaviour and pastoral concerns can be tracked. This can be viewed by all duty staff to ensure cohesion and efficient communication. The Dashboards are monitored regularly by the Director of Boarding.

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

- **Each student's dignity and entitlement to privacy are respected.** This includes recognising the student's right to personal space. Generally, staff will not enter a student's bedroom unless the student is present and permission is granted. Staff will only enter bathroom areas in emergency situations, where possible with another staff member.

Staff, including domestic staff, should knock to indicate their presence, before entering. Only in exceptional circumstances, should staff enter bed 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 disciplinary offence is suspected, the search will follow the guidelines recommended by the BSA (Boarding Briefing paper 15) and the schools Searching a Student Policy.

All houses have copies of this document, including the Searching a Student and / or their Possessions Form and all staff are aware of its contents.

- **The operation of an open door policy to students is encouraged**. Staff are aware of the risks related to one-to-one student/staff situations. One-to-one conversations with students take place in settings which enable appropriate privacy, but are observable by others eg. rooms with view-panels or windows onto public areas such as Common Rooms. Staff are reminded that a one-to-one conversation behind closed doors is to be avoided. 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 mindful of the need to share concerns appropriately in order to best meet students' individual needs and should never offer or agree to keep confidential important pastoral information shared by students. Staff will sensitively explain this to students and, as appropriate, tell the student the name/s of the person/s who will be informed and the reason for such action.

  Staff are given training in using ***MyConcern*** as part of their safeguarding responsibilities.

  Additionally, if abuse is suspected, alleged or disclosed to have happened, the DSL must be contacted without delay and a written report logged on ***MyConcern***. Further guidance about pastoral, safeguarding and child protection conversations with students can be found in the Child Protection Policy.

- **House staff relationships with students must be appropriate**. These relationships are noticeably different from the relationships between students and their academic subject teachers. It is recognised that by the very nature of the situation, i.e. replicating a domestic environment, students tend to be at greater ease with house staff. Therefore, staff will be alert to actions which can be misinterpreted, e.g. the use of sarcasm or over-familiarity. Staff will act professionally at all times, mindful of appropriate boundaries and helping train students to recognise the same.

- **The cultural diversity of houses 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. All houses promote inclusivity and diversity at every opportunity.

- **Fundamental British values are to be celebrated**. FBVs are built into the experience of student boarding life. Evidence of this can be seen through the houses, for example: house voting systems, 'house' rules and expectations about community living (shared spaces, noise limits, bedtimes etc), student voice.

  Students expect that house boarding teams will listen to them, including in respect of their

boarding environment; and are encouraged, in return, to contribute to the boarding community in a variety of ways.

- **With regard to health and medical matters, there is a strong working partnership between the house and medical staff**. Boarding staff and the medical centre work closely together to support students' wellbeing. This includes:
  - Clear communication and training in respect of OCMs and prescribed medication, and accurate records of issue, using the relevant books provided and monitored regularly by the nursing team. Medical Tracker will be in use March 2025.
  - Training in First Aid and the provision of emergency medical kits, fluid spills kits etc.
  - Regular meetings where confidential information relevant to student welfare can be shared. Attendees may include the Director of Boarding, houseparents, medical centre team, counsellor, SEND coordinator and DSL.
  - IPC meetings where staff from different areas of the school may be brought together to discuss a particular pastoral concern with the Pastoral Team
  - Information sharing about student absence for medical appointments.
  - Working together to provide education about healthy lifestyles eg food and nutrition, avoiding injury, avoiding infections, sexual health, mental health.

- **The house is a safe place for students**. Staffing rotas ensure that houses are supervised and that adults are available to students at all times. Except in an emergency, no house should be left unattended by the member of staff on duty. House 'duty phones' ensure a member of the house team is always contactable. Staff ensure that:
  - All students are registered at the appropriate times and that their whereabouts are accounted for.
  - That the physical security and safety of the house is carefully monitored e.g. ground floor windows locked at night; magnetic locks operating correctly; regular fire alarm testing, window restrictors checked routinely, PAT testing carried out etc.
  - Visitors to the school who are not wearing badges are challenged and escorted.
  - Clear instructions about fire procedures are given to students at the beginning of each academic year and regular drills are carried throughout the term.
  - Students have access to the numbers of the House mobile day and night, and the independent listener. Other helpline numbers are clearly available, including Childline and the Children's Commissioner for England.

- **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. The first step for low level negative behaviour is always a coaching conversation Sanctions for persistent low-level anti-social behaviour (mess, lateness, noise etc) may focus on giving back to the house community (eg tidying up communal areas) or removing a privilege. It is important that these are recorded, such that consistency and patterns of behaviour can be monitored. Positive Achievement points can be awarded by all members of staff, and recognition given in House Meetings.

Breaches of the school rules must be recorded and referred to the Vice-Principal following the Behaviour and Sanctions Policy.

- Use of Restraint: Staff are reminded that the use of force to restrain students is to be avoided, except in an emergency situation and as a last resort. 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. The Physical Restraint Incident Report must be filled in and handed to the Vice-Principal.

- Staff confiscation of students' belongings, which are deemed to be in direct contravention of school rules, must 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 terms of our expectations of appropriate behaviour in a number of key areas.

    - Curfew and checking in/out: Students have a critical role to play in helping staff fulfil their 'duty of care' in accounting for the whereabouts and welfare of boarding students.
    - Relationships: Should be based on mutual respect and kindness. Explicit sexual relations or sexual intimacy is not permitted within the school or boarding environment. Sexual harassment is regarded as a serious breach of school rules, as is breaking bounds in relation to boarding areas designated for girls or boys. Serious or persistent breaches may lead to permanent disciplinary exclusion.
    - Bounds (including exeats): Students are encouraged to develop independence, but must abide by the bounds and timings set out in the school rules, which are based on keeping them safe. Breaking bounds is regarded as a breach of this important trust as well as the school rules.
    - Smoking: use of cigarettes, including vapes, is not permitted (see Drugs and Alcohol Policy / Behaviour and Sanctions Policy). Possession or use of cigarettes in house represents a significant fire risk to all residents and will be regarded as a serious breach of school rules.

Policy author	***Policy date/review date:***	***Next review due:***
KC	September 2021	November 2022
KC	September 2022	October 2023
K.Cayley / J.Mitchell	September 2023	September 2024
J.Mitchell	February 2025	September 2025
J.Mitchell	September 2025 *Amendment - addition of The Physical Restraint Incident Report must be filled in and handed to the Vice-Principa*l	September 2026
J.Mitchell	July 2026	September 2027