



# OLD BUCKENHAM HALL

## Boarding Policy

OBHP52

**The Boarding Policy (OBHP52) follows statutory and non-statutory guidance set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education – Sept 2023* and *National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools – Sept 2022*.**

### **Statement of Boarding**

Old Buckenham Hall recognises and values the importance of children’s emotional well-being as the foundation to everything else that happens in school; all principles and practice stem from this core ethos.

Boarding at Old Buckenham Hall follows the principles of the OBH Way, which promote mutual respect for all members of the school community.

The Boarding Houses create a homely and welcoming environment in which boarders feel safe, secure, and comfortable and where their privacy is respected. They offer pupils a place to “unwind” at the end of a busy day and share any triumphs or concerns.

Each boarder has the right to equality of opportunity, the right to privacy and the right to work, play and relax free from abuse, bullying, and harassment.

High quality pastoral and medical care enable pupils to flourish, grow as individuals and fulfil their potential.

A fun and structured weekend and evening activity programme offers children the opportunity to experience a broad spectrum of activities and adventures which encourage friendship, self-confidence, respect, leadership skills, community spirit, compassion, and a sense of humour.

### **Boarding Practice and Organisation**

Boarding is comfortable, caring and above all fun!

We strongly believe in the value of boarding; by living together in a close community the children can build up their self-confidence, independence, and community spirit. The Old Buckenham Hall boarding experience offers the perfect preparation for boarding at Senior School, as well as the chance to take full advantage of all that our facilities and staff can offer, long after the teaching day is over.

All boarders are housed in the Mansion. Mr and Mrs Large and their family live in the heart of the school as does the Head of Boarding and Matrons.

Enthusiastic staff run a range of activities during the evenings as well as a fun and structured weekend programme, making full use of our beautiful 76-acre grounds. Boarders' parents are encouraged to visit their children regularly, to watch concerts, plays, and matches.

We make it easy for children and parents to grow into boarding. It is available to all pupils in the prep school. Many choose to start as day pupils and transfer to boarding once they have settled in. A range of boarding options are available; from two or three nights in school as a transitional boarder, to weekly boarding – enabling fuller involvement in evening activities and full boarding which allows pupils to stay in and enjoy the extensive range of exciting activities offered throughout the weekend. Transitional boarders select their transitional boarding nights

prior to the start of term. It is then expected that they will board on these same nights for the rest of the term.

### **Aims and Principles**

**To ensure that each individual boarder is safe and secure.**

OBH recognises that it is of paramount importance for boarders to live and work in a safe environment.

#### **PRACTICE:**

- All boarding staff adhere to safeguarding policies and KCSIE (2023). The school is committed to safeguarding children, illustrated by its rigorous recruitment process, regular staff training and robust safeguarding culture. The Head of Boarding is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. A copy of the School's Safeguarding Policy may be found on the school's website. (See OBHP23 Safeguarding Policy)
- The telephone numbers of the School's Independent Person, The Children's Commissioner and ChildLine are clearly visible by the school phones, on posters throughout the Boarding Houses and in the Pupil's planners.
- Risk assessments are in place and annually updated – or more regularly if required.
- Everybody within the community is encouraged to report any issues relating to Health and Safety without delay.
- A Health and Safety committee representing all areas of school life meets termly. The Chairman of the committee is a Governor
- An external Health and Safety audit is carried out annually
- A full fire risk assessment is also carried out annually.
- A termly fire practice takes place to ensure that all students know how to evacuate the building at night. At least once a year this is overnight. Provision is made to ensure flexi boarders are fully aware of the procedures.
- Systems are in place to ensure the boarding staff always know the whereabouts of the boarders. A night register is taken before lights out.
- A high priority is placed on maintaining children's safety around the school site. In addition to clear guidelines for the children themselves, the school has digital keypads on external and some internal doors. The building is alarmed overnight. All visitors must report to the school office, or out of school office hours, the duty member of staff. The dorms are not accessible to parents, unless accompanied by a member of staff or at the beginning and end of term. (See OBHP35 Visitors to the Boarding House Policy)
- The school operates a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying. Staff are vigilant in looking out for signs of such behaviour and any offences are treated very seriously. (See OBHP03 Anti Bullying Policy)

- Physical Restraint – the school takes extremely seriously the importance of appropriate physical interaction between staff and children. (See OBHP48 Restraint Policy).

**To provide a relaxed family environment.**

OBH strongly believes that each individual is best able to develop successfully within a happy family style environment.

**PRACTICE:**

- Good quality accommodation is provided. The dorms and washing facilities have recently been updated and there is a continuous refurbishment programme in place.
- Boarders celebrate events such as birthdays, religious festivals and holidays and have parties in their houses.
- Each common room has a “kitchen table” to sit around and discuss the day’s ups and downs whilst having a snack.
- Common rooms are personalised with photographs and other items to create a homely atmosphere.
- Pupils are encouraged to put posters and photographs on the notice boards in their dorms and bring in their own bedding. They are encouraged to bring in toys and belongings to personalise their areas.
- All boarders are fully involved in choosing items for their dorms including colour and style when rooms are refurbished.
- Pupils are encouraged to contact parents regularly. All pupils have access to a telephone in several locations around school: Spero, Merton and Lodge all have phones. The ICT room and library are accessible for sending emails. Skype and Facetime can be arranged for international boarders.
- Parents can phone whenever they like, but they may be asked to call back, at a specific time, when the pupil can easily come to the phone. A good time for parents to call is between 7.30pm and 8:45pm. Letters, parcels and emails are always welcomed. Letters are placed in the letter rack under the main stairs.
- Pupils are not allowed mobile phones or electronic devices in school. Overseas boarders may bring in a mobile. This is kept securely by the matrons and only used to phone their parents or when they travel to and from school. There are occasions where pupils stay with a friend for exeat and they may take their mobiles, so parents and guardians can call them.

**To provide individual care to each boarder.**

An individual approach in our community is a vital part of the care provided. Each member of the community receives individual attention, thus ensuring that their particular needs are supported, and their talents are developed. In this way the strengths of each student are nurtured, and they are guided to achieve their own personal goals.

**PRACTICE:**

- Boarding staff know their boarders very well, regularly monitoring their physical and mental health, and emotional well-being.

- New pupils are supported and fully inducted to help them settle quickly. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress regularly, either by phone, email, or in person.
- Boarding staff correspond with the nurse, parents, guardians, and academic staff regarding the individual needs of boarders.
- Formal and informal monitoring of personal progress and welfare are continuous during a boarder's time at OBH. (examples include boarding reports, welfare plans, healthcare plans). Key issues concerning the welfare of boarders are regularly discussed in boarding meetings chaired by the Head of Boarding, and pastoral meetings chaired by the Deputy Head Pastoral. Boarding issues may also be discussed in the daily staff briefings which are attended by all teaching staff and led by the Headmaster
- Appropriate medical care for any child who needs it is provided by the school nurse and matrons. The School Nurse is responsible for the day-to-day health and well-being of the children, working closely with the school Doctor. See OBHP22 Medical Care Policy for procedures and protocols pertaining to all health care and medication.
- A school counsellor is available for pupil's needing extra emotional support.
- The school positively encourages the "pupils voice" in several ways. A pupil may complain directly, via their form tutor or to member of boarding staff. Boarders are given the opportunity to express their views about boarding, anonymously, via questionnaires (presently annual). The Head of Boarding coordinates these questionnaires, records them and acts accordingly. Regular house meetings with year groups and the boarding prefects encourage pupils to speak up. The pupil school council meets twice a term with the Deputy Head. Minutes are taken and circulated.
- It is essential for a school to run as a well-ordered community where both the rights of the individual and their responsibilities towards others are recognised and maintained. (See OBHP04 Behaviour Policy).
- We take great care to ensure that disciplinary measures which occur during the school day are not carried over into the boarding and evening environment; we aim to provide a distinct change between the day/night routine.

### **To promote a healthy lifestyle**

OBH strongly believes in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This is promoted and encouraged through a healthy diet, a wide range of sport and after school activities and the promotion of wellbeing through assemblies and PSHE. Sleep is actively promoted.

#### **PRACTICE:**

- Pupils are taught that establishing healthy eating habits is an essential part of their growing-up and they are provided with a wide choice of healthy food at mealtimes.
- All pupils have a choice of hot vegetarian, vegan and meat meals and a cold salad bar and meat bar. Provision is made for special dietary needs.
- Fruit is available at all meal and snack times and the consumption of biscuits is monitored and limited if necessary.
- Food is regularly discussed at boarding meetings, in questionnaires, at the school council meetings.
- Sport, PE, or OBEs is timetabled each day. Many evening activities and weekend trips require physical exercise e.g. corner hockey, tennis, golf, skating, trampolining, swimming, and bowling.
- In our grounds boarders can ride their bicycles and we organise treasure hunts, team-building activities, water fights and picnics.
- Mindfulness is offered as an evening activity

- Provision is made for boarders who want to be alone if they wish.
- Good quality activities for boarders during weekends and evenings are offered providing constructive free time. Time is also built in for boarders to relax and have “free time.”
- Regular boarding routines and close supervision after lights out ensure good sleep patterns and essential rest.

### **To promote inclusion, equality, and diversity.**

OBH stands against everything to do with discrimination, exclusion and hatred in whatever form it takes, actively promoting fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance.

### **PRACTICE:**

- Boarders are not discriminated against, in line with the legally protected characteristics and requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010. In addition, boarders are not discriminated against because of their cultural background, linguistic background, special educational needs, or academic or sporting ability. These factors are considered in the care of boarders, so that care is sensitive to different needs and an inclusive environment is promoted within the school.
- Accommodation is staffed appropriately and provides boarders with appropriate privacy, taking into account sex, age and any special requirements.(e.g. Disabilities, SENCO, LBQT+ needs)
- The school promotes all aspects of equal opportunity and diversity and welcomes pupils from a variety of faiths and denominations, making provision for religious, dietary and cultural needs. (See OBHP50 Provision for Pupils with Religious, Dietary or Cultural Needs Policy)
- We avoid gender specific language and gender stereotypes.
- Tolerance and understanding, as well as adaptability, are encouraged through the OBH Way values.
- Boarders are allocated rooms according to age and to promote a mix of nationalities.
- International pupils provide a valuable opportunity for boarders to broaden their horizons. They meet students from different cultures and enrich their experience through the generation of international friendships; sharing a room, dining together, learning about other cultures through events and trips together
- PSHE and RSE curriculums and teaching promote inclusion, kindness, consent, healthy relationships.
- We encourage pupils to speak up if they have been a victim of discrimination. Posters around school provide helplines and websites, pupils can also speak to a trusted adult or report via [whistle@obh.co.uk](mailto:whistle@obh.co.uk)
- Assemblies are widely used by both pupils and staff to inform and explain about diverse cultures, festivals, and religions. e.g Ramadan, Christmas, Diwali
- We celebrate national days/events e.g. European Languages Day and International Womens’ Day.

### **Boarding House Staff**

Emma Easdale – Head of Boarding, DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead), School Nurse

Tracey Thornton – Senior Matron

Debbie Gooderham – Evening Matron

The school Governor directly responsible for Boarding is Mrs Sally Greenlees

Achieving continuity and consistency is a priority - upstairs duties are carried out by the Head of Boarding and matrons, with the help of gap students.

All staff involved directly in Boarding will hold the health, safety and emotional welfare of the children to be of prime importance. They will be adhering to the school policies and provide a good role model to the children. They are required to have First Aid qualifications and will be aware of the school's fire policy and procedure regarding night time evacuation.

The Head of Boarding and Boarding Governor meet termly to discuss boarding management, initiatives, future plans and issues. These meetings are minuted.

Boarding staff contribute to the planning and implementation of the SDP.

Boarding staff are kept updated through INSET training, staff meetings and are encouraged to undertake CPD.

### The Boarding Day/Night Routine

<b>Weekdays</b>	
7.10am	Lights are switched on.
7.20 am	Boarders wake up, wash, dress and tidy dormitories, clean teeth, etc
7.40 am	Downstairs for breakfast
8.20 am	Form tutorial/registration
5.40 pm	Day pupils go home; boarders change into home clothes
5.50 pm	Supper
6.30 pm - 7.30pm	Activities and music practice
7.30 pm	Year 3,4,5 bed bell. Lights out 8.15pm
7.45pm	Year 6 bed bell. Lights out 8.30pm
8:15pm	Year 7 bed bell. Lights out 8.45pm
8.30pm	Year 8 bed bell
9.15pm	Year 8 lights out

<b>Saturday evening – timings flexible</b>	
4.00 pm	Free time/ Duty Staff Activity

6.00 pm	Supper in Dining room.
6.45 pm	Evening in-house activity/movie.
Bed bells and lights out as above.	
<b>Sunday – timings flexible</b>	
8.00am	Wake up.
8.30am	Breakfast.
10.00am	Church
11.00am	Free time
1.00 pm	Lunch
2.00 pm	Activities/excursion with weekend duty staff
6.00 pm	Supper
7.45pm	Year 6 bed bell. Lights out 8.15pm
8.00pm	Year 7 bed bell. Lights out 8.30pm
8.15pm	Year 8 bed bell. Lights out 9.00pm
Some Sundays will be all-day excursions, so times can vary	

### **Matronal Duties**

#### Wake up

- Arrive in the dorms at 7.10am. Switch dorm lights on, wake pupils.
- Children should be out of bed from 7.20am.
- Check on any ill/upset pupils from the previous evening (consult boarding diary if necessary).
- All pupils to dress tidily for school, make beds, take any unnecessary things to the changing rooms.
- Ensure pupils brush teeth, brush hair, and leave for school tidy and organised.
- All downstairs for breakfast by 7.40am, having been “passed” by a houseparent or matron.

#### Breakfast

- Always encourage good behaviour and manners.
- Pupils serve themselves cereal, juice and toast. Hot meals are served by kitchen staff or boarding staff.
- Ensure all pupils eat and drink enough, and that specific dietary requirements are met (liaise with the school nurse and/or Chef if concerned).
- Give any notices for the day ahead.

Laundry duties / Cover changing rooms as and when required to do so.

#### Change down 5.40-6pm

- Arrive on the dorm landing by 5.40pm to welcome the pupils as they finish prep.
- Ensure pupils change into home clothes in a calm manner.

- Ensure that all pupils are in the dining room by 5.50pm.

#### Supper

- All staff on evening duty attend supper from 5.50pm to help supervise the meal.
- Ensure all pupils eat and drink enough, and that specific dietary requirements are met (liaise with school nurse and/or Chef if concerned).
- Give out any notices as required, including that evening's activity programme.

#### Evening activities

- After supper academic day staff run clubs and activities between 6.30pm – 7.30pm. Years 3 - 7 must join an activity. Year 8s have a 2<sup>nd</sup> prep and can join in the activities from 7.00pm

#### Dorms 7.30pm - 9.15pm (children come up at different times according to age)

- Welcome the pupils upstairs
- Supervise changing and showering, ensure all pupils have brushed their teeth, and are ready for bed.
- Younger boarders (Year 3,4 5, 6) will have milk and toast or fruit or biscuits in their common rooms before bed. The older boarders (years 7,8) may have milk and toast or fruit or cereal in the Dining Room before their bed bell.
- All pupils are registered in their dorms before bed - the register (fire list) is put by the fire escape door in the Dining Room.
- Spend time hearing younger pupils read.
- Pupils may want to phone home - ensure this is possible
- Ensure dorm areas are tidy.
- Put dirty clothes into the laundry.
- Encourage boarders to play, read, chat together – free time.

#### **Overnight duty**

Residential members of staff on overnight duty will not leave the building and remain responsible for the boarders until wake-up the next day.

They are the first port of call for a pupil in distress during the night – There are night bells in each house to call for help.

In the event of a fire alarm, the staff members will follow the procedure as detailed in Fire Procedure.

If a pupil is ill during the night, there is always someone who can dispense medication on duty.

Any issues or concerns arising during the day or night should be reported to the Head of Boarding. These concerns should be recorded on CPOMS.

#### **Weekend duty**

Our weekend Houseparent runs the weekends with a gap student. A member of the SMT is always on call. The boarders will enjoy planned outings, games and activities; meals times may vary depending on activities and excursions. On Sundays the boarders attend a local church service.

Boarders go to bed 15 minutes earlier on a Sunday night.

Activities are planned to ensure breadth and variety of excursions, as well as suitability for the time of term and individual pupils concerned.

### **Lock-up**

The school caretaker locks up at 8.45pm. The Head of Boarding or Senior Matron set the internal alarms for the boarding house.

### **Office phone**

Monday to Friday the school office closes at 6.00pm; the school phone is handed to the matrons until 8.00am the following morning. On Saturday the school office closes at 4.00pm.

### **Handling complaints by parents**

In the first instance, and in line with school policy, the Head of Boarding will reply to the parent's contact within 24 hours, acknowledging their concern either by phone, email or in person. If necessary, the Deputy Head or Headmaster will investigate the concern and reply fully in due course. In all instances, discussions regarding the complaints will be fully discussed and reviewed, and possible changes to procedure and practice considered. Parents may lodge an official complaint as per the School Complaints Policy. (See OBHP05 Complaints Policy)

### **Guardians**

All pupils who live overseas are expected to have a guardian in the UK who will look after them at exets, in the event of illness, or in exceptional circumstances if the school has to close. We are unable to arrange this but are happy to offer advice and direct you to AEGIS / BSA (Boarding Schools Association) registered guardians and agencies. Guardians, with parents, have full responsibility for travel and transport arrangements including airport runs. (See OBHP37 Guardianship Policy and Procedure)

### **Boarding Induction Protocols**

The proper induction of pupils is key to future success and happiness when joining the school, and every effort is made to ensure that the transition from day to boarding runs smoothly.

The process by which new children are inducted into boarding life at OBH begins some way in advance of their start.

### **Stages in induction process are as follows:**

- Prospective parents bring their child to visit, look around the boarding house and meet the boarding staff. If the child is already a day pupil, they might enjoy a current boarder showing them around.
- The Head of Boarding in consultation with the registrar will organise trail nights.

- The Head of Boarding will allocate a boarding guide who will help the child during his visit.
- When the decision is finalised, a boarding handbook and uniform list will be sent out by the registrar. If the child is already a day pupil within the school, the handbook and uniform list will be sent out by the Head of Boarding.
- Just prior to the child's arrival they will receive a post card from the Head of Boarding welcoming them.
- New children arriving at the beginning term will be met by the boarding team and introduced to their guide.
- Every effort is made to ensure a relaxed atmosphere. Parents can help their child unpack and settle in.
- On the first night Matrons will ensure all new boarders are aware of the location of fire escapes, loos and how to locate the night bell. They should record this.
- New boarders will be helped to settle in quickly by the boarding team. All school and boarding procedures will be carefully explained, and any questions answered.
- Boarding staff will keep a close eye on all new boarders, monitor their progress and report any concerns to the Head of Boarding.
- The Head of Boarding will make direct contact with the parents (both new pupils and ex day) about their children's first few nights of boarding.
- Communication with home during the first few days is closely monitored.

### **Boarding Prefects**

Prefects are expected to demonstrate the following:

- Honesty and reliability
- Care for fellow pupils; especially younger and newer pupils
- Support and help for staff
- Leadership in taking responsibility, organising, and the courage to stand up for what is right
- Setting a good example in manners, appearance and behaviour in every respect

#### **The role of a prefect involves the following responsibilities:**

Being the eyes and ears of the staff around the school. In the event that you see or hear behaviour that is against the school rules or is unkind in any way, you should tell the individual(s) to stop and report it to a member of staff. Staff will take action to investigate.

If another pupil tells you that he/she is being bullied or got at in any way by pupils, staff or anyone else, you should report it to a member of staff as soon as possible.

Helping with the smooth running of the boarding house, working with the members of staff on duty:

- This may include helping duty staff with snack the linen baskets. (you don't need to do alone – other Year 8 prefects will help)
- Help closing down the common rooms in the evening, by turning off lights and checking they are tidy
- Visiting younger boarders is encouraged
- Taking the lead at boarding functions (fireside, giving thanks, etc)
- Being the Boarding representative on the school council

The post of prefect is position of honour and prestige. Pupils aspiring to this role should not be doing it just for the privileges that may follow. However, prefects will receive recognition for the work and responsibilities that they carry. (e.g A badge, and a tie, meetings with the Headmaster, supper with the Head of Boarding)