

PASTORAL CARE

Stanbridge Earls School has a multi-layered system of Pastoral Care. In Years 7 & 8 pupils have their own Junior School Housemaster/mistress. Upon entering the Senior School each pupil joins one of four Houses, A, B, C or D, each with its own Housemaster/mistress. Each Housemaster/mistress has responsibility for and organises a team of Tutors. Each Tutor will have between two and ten pupils in their Tutor group. Tutors meet with their tutees daily, for morning registration, either at Tutor meetings, Year group assembly with the Headmaster, House meeting with the Housemaster/mistress or Whole School assembly taken by the Headmaster. Morning meetings are vital times for pupils to be able to discuss issues with their Tutors.

As well as having a Tutor, nearly all pupils will build a strong relationship with their one-to-one specialist teachers in the Learning Centres. Much unofficial pastoral care occurs through the relationships that are built up with teachers, be it individual or classroom based, over the years at School.

The Housemaster/mistress is the first point for contact with parents and they will endeavour to build a positive relationship with both the child and the parents.

Children are accommodated in Boarding Houses, in most cases according to academic year group. This is also the case for day pupils who will have areas allocated to them within the boarding accommodation for their year group.

Boarders and day pupils alike receive a high level of care from a committed team of staff in both boarding time and during the School day. We recognise that a boarding house cannot fully replace a child's home but we try to make them as homely and relaxed as possible. It is important that the children feel cared for and valued and not dictated to by the rigidity of institutional rules. To this end our guidelines are kept to a minimum, but living in such close proximity to others means that certain principles need to be followed.

The over-riding principle on which we operate is that everyone has the right to live a peaceful and happy life, without fear and anxiety. It is expected that everyone will be treated with respect and common courtesy and that boarders and staff alike will develop an increasing awareness of, and tolerance for, people of different views, beliefs or cultures. We aim to develop within our boarders a sense of personal fulfilment, responsibility, a respect for themselves and others and the independence, and confidence and social skills necessary to prepare them for their future lives.

In order to distinguish between School and home we do not have an extensive list of rules and sanctions. We see the boarding community as an extended family and, therefore, as far as possible, try to apply acceptable family sanctions such as the temporary loss of a privilege, undertaking a useful and necessary household task or an earlier bedtime for a night or two. Staff are expected to use their discretion when applying sanctions and treat each child as an individual whilst also trying to ensure that a sense of fairness and equality is maintained. The Houseparents and Housemasters/mistresses are always available should help and advice be required. Each Houseparent keeps a duty diary log for the boarding house, in which minor misconduct and sanctions are recorded. Major incidents requiring more formal sanctions, such as suspension or exclusion are recorded in the central school records.

Responsibility for the Boarding House and the happiness and welfare of all who live in it lies with the Houseparents, supported by a team of friendly and caring staff including Assistant Houseparents, GAP staff and Matrons.

Communal living places some limitations on personal privacy. It is expected that staff and boarders will respect the privacy and dignity of others as far as possible. Staff knock on doors before entering dormitories and the children are allowed to dress, undress and wash free from unnecessary staff intrusion, although washroom areas are discreetly monitored for health and safety reasons.

Within each boarding house there is a diverse, and often conflicting, range of wishes and desires expressed by the children. They have opportunities to make their feelings known at any time through individual discussions with staff or in person at house meetings. All suggestions are accepted, although not all can be acted upon quickly and some not at all. Either way, some feedback will be given to the boarders concerned. A diverse range of activities and trips is arranged for the weekends and is advertised in the School Calendar.

In boarding time the children are allocated to particular members of staff on duty within their Boarding Houses. Children are also the collective responsibility of duty staff they come into contact with, including during activities, meal times and preps. Set staff rotas ensure that the children know who is on duty throughout each day and night. Children who have concerns may contact any member of staff of their choice and the Houseparents, Housemaster/mistress, Duty Master and On-call SMT are always contactable in an emergency. Should the need arise, Houseparents will communicate any concerns with the appropriate member of School staff so that continuity of care is achieved. As in all matters, we recognise the importance of communication between School and home. We aim to contact parents or guardians quickly should a problem arise and work on the principle that a close relationship between School and home is vital in order to provide the best care for those who board at Stanbridge Earls.

The Deputy Headmaster – Pastoral is the School's Designated Person (DP) for Safeguarding. Each child also has access to useful telephone numbers, such as Child Line and the School's Independent Listeners, which are published alongside telephones.

All children, therefore, have several key staff with whom they can build positive relationships. This enables the early establishment of several different lines of support, allowing issues to be dealt with both quickly and compassionately.

The pastoral care diagram explains the system in place at Stanbridge Earls School; however, it cannot show the dedication and hard work of the staff that help our pupils throughout their time at School and beyond.

R J Bailey
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