

STATEMENT OF BOARDING PRINCIPLES

The Pastoral System at Tonbridge is based around a very strong House system, clear expectations and strong and positive relationships between boys, staff and parents. Fostering an atmosphere in which all members of the community look out for each other is at the heart of all that we do. The pastoral ethos and structures of the school are designed to enable boys to acquire the tolerance, self-reliance and sense of duty and values necessary for them to play a constructive role in the changing world to which they belong. Tonbridge School believes that the House system at Tonbridge provides equality of opportunity through a caring environment in which each individual, with support, mutual respect and encouragement from members of staff and of other boys, is valued and boys are allowed to develop his own personality and talents whilst learning to live as part of a community. We aim to ensure that this community is one in which there is no place for harassment, discrimination or bullying.

Boarding Houses, like day Houses, are relatively small, with 60-70 boys in each House, fostering the small group identity that strengthens a sense of security, belonging and well-being, and allowing boys to contribute meaningfully to House as well as school activities. Houses are organised “vertically” with each House including boys from every age group, allowing older boys to mentor and support younger boys. All boarding Houses have their own kitchens, dining rooms and social and communal facilities, as well a combination of shared accommodation, single accommodation and study facilities. All Houses undergo regular, periodic upgrades to ensure facilities meet the ever evolving needs of the boys and support excellent pastoral care.

At the centre of our system are the twelve Housemasters. The Housemaster remains the focal point of a boy’s life at Tonbridge; responsible for the boys’ academic progress and for their pastoral well-being, supported by a tutor team attached to each House. The way the House system at Tonbridge operates enables us to focus on the needs of each individual boy and to monitor their progress and development closely; a Housemaster is able to get to know the boys and their families well and is able to respond quickly to issues should they arise. In all Houses, both boarding and day, the accommodation for the Housemaster and their family are an integral part of the House. The House system is supplemented by an on-site Medical Centre, Chaplaincy, dedicated School Counsellor, Independent Listener and welfare group.

All boys have the opportunity to contribute their views on aspects of the pastoral system through a School Council, House Councils and House Food Committees. There is also a clearly stated complaints procedure for boys and others wishing to make formal complaints about any aspects of school life. Boys from each year group and House are represented on the School’s Anti-Bullying council which ensures that relevant issues remain a focus and point of awareness. This provides support to pupils and aids communication between boys and pastoral staff.

The whole pastoral system is formally monitored and supervised by the Second Master (who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead), and by the Governors’ Pastoral Committee. They report respectively to the Headmaster, and to the Governors of the School.