



ST HUGH'S  
BOARDING

**BOARDING HANDBOOK  
FOR PARENTS**



**CREATING AN EXTENDED FAMILY,  
WHERE EACH CHILD FEELS SAFE,  
HAPPY AND VAUED.**

# Welcome to the Boarding Family

Dear Parents,

We are delighted you are considering or have chosen for your child to board at St Hugh's. This handbook is designed to help you gain a better understanding of boarding at St Hugh's. It outlines our aims and ethos within the boarding house, including policies that we adhere to.

We hope that this handbook will help to answer some of the questions you may have about the Boarding House; however, we understand and appreciate that you may have many more. Please do not hesitate to contact us on [boarding@st-hughs.co.uk](mailto:boarding@st-hughs.co.uk) or alternatively call us on 01367 870712 if you have further questions.

We aim to create a family atmosphere, where your children feel safe, happy and valued. We look forward to welcoming you and your child/ children to the St Hugh's boarding family.

Jack and Jessica Avery

Houseparents

## Boarding Information

Houseparents	Mr Jack Avery Mrs Jessica Avery
Deputy Houseparents	Mr Giles Blanchard Mrs Anna Blanchard
Matrons	Mrs Denise Pargeter Miss Ellie Smith
Resident House Tutor	Miss Hannah Joseph-Green
Boarding Tutors	Mr Nick Armitage (Deputy Head) Mr Jim Towers Miss Sally Ewins Mr Joel Rundle Mrs Elizabeth Rundle Mrs Jill duPlessis Miss Tabatha Wood Mrs Judy Sharifi Mr Dan Crook
Headmaster	Mr James Thompson
Headmaster's Personal Assistant	Mrs Kaye Everatt
School Address	Carswell Manor Faringdon Oxfordshire SN7 8PT
Telephone	Office (daytime) 01367 870700 Houseparents 01367 870712 Day Room 01367 870715
Houseparents' email	<a href="mailto:boarding@st-hughs.co.uk">boarding@st-hughs.co.uk</a>
School email	<a href="mailto:office@st-hughs.co.uk">office@st-hughs.co.uk</a>

## Aims and Ethos of Boarding at St Hugh's

Within boarding at St Hugh's, we aim to provide a family atmosphere in which each child feels safe, happy and valued whilst staying away from home.

The health, safety and well-being of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in the school. All children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability, ensuring a secure and stable environment exists. They have a right to be safe in school and the school follows a specific child protection policy.

We are committed to creating and maintaining an environment that discourages bullying and deal constructively with any instances that may occur following the whole school anti-bullying policy.

We aim to promote an open and trusting ethos ensuring each child's right to privacy, dignity, independence and individuality. Each child must be treated fairly, and we aim to encourage children to learn to exercise a degree of freedom in a responsible way, which develops behaviour traits of respect, courtesy, honesty, care, co-operation and building positive relationships between each other. We follow the whole school behaviour for learning policy, which is designed to support the way in which all members of the school live and work together.

Children's emails, letters, phone calls, both incoming and outgoing, are completely without censor, and the personal cupboard space is totally private and must not be entered unless the child is present, and with the agreement of the child and the Houseparents.

As part of the holistic development of every boarder at St Hugh's we pride ourselves on the emotional and mental wellbeing of children within our care. Children need to express their fears and emotions. The boarding team are always there to listen to children after a busy day, helping to promote a strong and healthy mental wellbeing so they will be able to:

- Feel confident in themselves and have positive self-esteem
- Feel and express a range of emotions
- Build and maintain good relationships with others
- Feel engaged with the world around them
- Cope with the stresses of daily life

- Adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty.

We hope to create a family atmosphere that each child feels is an extension of home. However, we cannot and should not replace the child's parents and we hope that parents feel part of the boarding at St Hugh's. We strongly believe that the children should be at the centre of the boarding process. Under our guidance as Houseparents, the boarding team and with the support of parents, we believe children will enjoy boarding at St Hugh's and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and build lasting friendships.

# Applications to Board

## Weekly Boarding

Parents wishing to reserve a weekly boarding place should respond to the boarding request email sent during the second half of term. However, in some circumstances, a child may need to weekly board partway through the term. In this instance, the parents should contact the Houseparents directly [boarding@st-hughs.co.uk](mailto:boarding@st-hughs.co.uk) / 01367870712. Upon approval by the Headmaster and if there is space available, parents are then informed of the weekly space for their child.

The Houseparents will provide all the necessary information about their son / daughter becoming a weekly boarder. In addition to this, the Houseparents will arrange a meeting with the son / daughter to talk through becoming a weekly boarder. For many pupils who have already experienced boarding on a flexi basis this meeting is just to smooth over the transition from flexi to weekly, talking through the changes. For those who become a weekly boarder having not boarded much or at all before, this meeting is an important time to go through procedures and to try and answer questions and put aside any worries that the pupils may have.

In addition to this, the Houseparents will constantly review and guide the boarders throughout their time as weekly boarders, monitoring progress with regular meetings and ensuring a happy time is had. Communication with the parents of boarders is maintained through email, telephone and arranged meetings if necessary.

Weekly boarders will receive a welcome pack from the Houseparents at the start of the term to help them settle into the boarding house. At the end of the term the Houseparents write a pastoral report which is sent home to parents.

## Flexi Boarding

Parents wishing to book regular flexi boarding should respond to the boarding request email sent during the second half of term. If places are needed partway through the term, parents should email the Houseparents at [boarding@st-hughs.co.uk](mailto:boarding@st-hughs.co.uk).



Priority is always given to weekly boarders and to those staying regularly on multiple nights each week. We will always do our best to accommodate as many children as possible.

Information regarding what pupils will need to bring with them when boarding is sent out to parents. This information can also be found on the school website. When a pupil boards for the first time, the Houseparents like to meet the pupil beforehand to talk through any questions or worries that the pupil may have. Please see the boarders' induction page for more information.

## Open Boarding

Open Boarding will be available to all children from Year 3 to Year 8. This is a flexible boarding solution where children have the opportunity to board on one-off nights which may become available last minute. Where possible we will give as much notice prior to the beds becoming available, however, in the very nature of Open Boarding these places may only become available at short notice. Parents will be able to request an Open Boarding space via email ([boarding@st-hughs.co.uk](mailto:boarding@st-hughs.co.uk)) or by contacting the Houseparents directly on 01367870712. Places will be given to children on a first-come first-served basis. Places will be given to children on a first-come first-served basis. The cost of one Open Night Boarding place will be £46.

Children will need to bring with them: a teddy, duvet and duvet cover, home clothes, towel, toiletries (toothbrush & toothpaste, shampoo/soap), dressing gown, slippers, underwear & socks.

It is not acceptable that parents ask their children to make verbal requests, as so often these requests are not accurate.

# Outline of the Boarding Routine

## Monday, Tuesday, Thursday Boarding

7.10 a.m.	Matrons and Houseparents wake boarders
7.40 a.m.	Breakfast in dining room
8.10 a.m.	Boarding House meeting
8.20 a.m.	Registration in form rooms
8.20a.m. - 4.40 p.m.	<i>School Day</i>
4.40 p.m.	Register all boarders not in clubs
4.40 - 5.30 p.m.	Supervised clubs/ free time/ music practice
5.30 p.m.	Register taken
5.30 - 6.15 p.m.	Junior tea (Years 3, 4, 5)
6.15 - 6.45 p.m.	Junior prep (Years 3, 4, 5)
6.45 - 7.30 p.m.	Junior activity & free time
7.30 p.m. onwards	Evening snack
7.45 - 8.30 p.m.	Lights out (times vary depending on age, see bedtime)
5.30 - 6.00 p.m.	Senior free time/ music practice (Years 6, 7, 8)
6.00 - 6.30 p.m.	Senior tea (Year 6, 7, 8)
6.30 - 7.30 p.m.	Supervised prep (times vary)
7.30 - 8.30 p.m.	Activities and free time
7.30 p.m. onwards	Evening snack
9.00 - 9.30 p.m.	Lights out (times vary depending on age, see bedtime)

Pupils under supervision are free to play outside after prep when the evenings are light. During the winter period, pupils should not remain outside when it is dark unless they are taking part in an organised and supervised activity. All pupils should be in the main school building by 8.30pm.

## Wednesday night routine

There is a different routine for Wednesday night. Pupils have supper from 5.30 – 6.15pm and then boarders have music practice in the music suite or quiet time until 6.45pm. Quiet time is supervised by the members of staff on duty and music practice is supervised by the Houseparents or gap student. Films are shown from 7.10pm in the Houseparents' Flat, the Barn or Boarders' Common Room.

Pupils wishing to watch the films must change into pyjamas, dressing gown and slippers before entering. The Tuck Shop is also open on a Wednesday, please see 'Tuck Shop' for more information.

The Year 8 pupils are allowed to watch a 12-certificate film whereas all other pupils are required to watch a PG or U certificate. For this reason, we have two films and although a Year 8 pupil may choose to watch the younger film, it is not allowed for the younger pupils to watch the 12-certificate film. Sometimes if everyone wants to watch it, only one film is chosen which is suitable for all pupils.

**It is also possible for pupils to opt not to watch the films and whenever possible there will also be a Sports Hall option for those who choose it. The Duty Staff will supervise this.**

On occasions, external activities will also be organised on a Wednesday evening.

7.10 a.m.	Matrons and Houseparents wake boarders
7.40 a.m.	Breakfast in dining room
8.10 a.m.	Boarding House meeting
8.20 a.m.	Registration in form rooms
8.20a.m. - 4.40 p.m.	<i>School Day &amp; Sports Matches</i>
5.30 - 6.15 p.m.	Register & supervised tea (Whole House)
6.15 - 6.45 p.m.	Quiet time/ music practice
6.45 – 7.00 p.m.	Shower and pyjamas
7.00 p.m. onwards	Movie Night / free time
	Bedtime Routines (times vary depending on age, see bedtime)

### Friday night routine

Friday night boarding is an opportunity for the boarders to celebrate the end of the week where various special events, activities or outing are planned. This might be a trip to ten pin bowling, swimming, laser quest, a visit to the cinema or other external and internal activities.

7.10 a.m.	Matrons and Houseparents wake boarders
7.40 a.m.	Breakfast in dining room
8.10 a.m.	Boarding House meeting

8.20 a.m.	Registration in form rooms
8.20a.m. - 4.40 p.m.	<i>School Day</i>
5.30 - 6.00 p.m.	Register & supervised tea (Whole House)
6.00 - 8.30p.m.	Activities and Trips
8.30/ 9.00 p.m.	Bedtime Routines

### Saturday morning

8.00 a.m.	Houseparents wake boarders
8.15 - 9.00 a.m.	Pyjamas breakfast & registration in the Dining Room
9.00 - 10.00 a.m.	Study session in Houseparents' Flat/ Boarders' Landing

Whereas during the week wake up is at 7.10am, on Saturday children will be woken at 8am. Children will then choose when to take breakfast (which they can have in pyjamas and dressing gown if they wish) anytime between 8.15am and 9.00am At 9.00am an informal study session starts in the Houseparents' Flat for the children to complete any work they may have before pick up.

At 10am parents may collect their children from the Houseparents' Flat.

## Breakfast

The Houseparents wake the boarders at 7.10am and the matrons or resident staff on morning duty supervise pupils getting ready before breakfast, including ensuring they have brushed their teeth and left their dorms tidy. Once the children are ready, they must be dismissed by a member of the boarding team. If the children have time they may go down to the Houseparents' Flat and relax before breakfast.

At 7.40am children make their way to the Dining Room, where a variety of cereals followed by a cooked breakfast is available daily. Occasionally a continental breakfast is served as an alternative. Children are free to help themselves to cereal and the Houseparents will let each table up for cooked breakfast on a rotation. At the end of breakfast, pupils will clear their tables. At 8.10am the Houseparents will have a whole boarding house meeting and they will give out any messages for the day.

Having left the Dining Room, all pupils must go directly to their form rooms ready for registration at 8.20am.

## **End of the school day**

The school's club programme operates between 4.40 and 5.30pm every day of the week, except Wednesdays when pupils are involved in sports fixtures. All Weekly Boarders are encouraged to take part in at least two activities that the Houseparents help them to select. Boarders may choose to do more and are encouraged to follow a variety of pursuits.

A list of the activities that boarders choose to take part in can be found online, which helps in the case of trying to locate pupils at short notice.

If a boarder is not attending a club during this time, they must check in to the boarding house at 4.40pm and change into home clothes. The remaining time until 5.30pm is their free time. This can be used in the Common Room, music rooms, ICT (when supervised), Sports Hall (when supervised) or with permission by the Houseparents, on another arranged activity. Boarders are able to spend this time in their dormitories; however, this privilege may be restricted if it is abused. When the evenings are lighter, the boarders can play on the sports fields.

## **Tea**

All junior boarders (Years 3, 4, 5) assemble in the dining room at 5.30pm. The register for pupils boarding that night is taken by the Houseparents and any notices for that evening given out. The House staff sit with the junior boarders to encourage good table manners and keep an eye on individual's appetites and healthy eating. All pupils are expected to help with the clearing of their tables at the end of supper.

At 6.00pm senior boarders assemble in the Dining Room and enjoy a 'rolling tea'. Once everyone on their table has finished eating, the pupils are able to go up for seconds, and then clear and have pudding. All pupils are expected to help with the clearing of their tables at the end of supper. After supper has finished and tables have been cleared, pupils will leave to attend prep.

## Prep

All boarders attend prep, which occurs after supper. In addition to boarders, there may be day pupils who are staying for Tea & Prep. Prep for Years 3, 4, 5 takes place in the Houseparents' Flat/ landing. Years 6 & 7 takes place in F2/ ICT2 and Year 8 prep takes place in the Dovecote Library. Prep times vary for different ages and below shows the current timetable for all age groups.

	Years 3, 4 & 5	Years 6 & 7	Year 8
Monday	6.15pm-6.45pm	6.30pm-7.30pm	6.30pm-7.30pm
Tuesday	6.15pm-6.45pm	6.30pm-7.30pm	6.30pm-7.30pm
Wednesday	Quiet time	Quiet time	Quiet time
Thursday	6.15pm-6.45pm	6.30pm-7.30pm	6.30pm-7.30pm
Saturday a.m.	9.00am-10.00am	9.00am-10.00am	9.00am-10.00am

On a Wednesday, the 6.15pm. - 6.45pm slot is used for either quiet time, musical instrument practice or, if necessary, catch up of work that has been missed.

## Boarders' Kitchen and Snacks

Boarders at St Hugh's have the exclusive use of a boarders' kitchen within the boarding house. Drinking water and fresh fruit is always available. As part of the boarders' snack, cereal is available on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and toast available on Tuesday and a Thursday, between 7.30pm - 8.30pm. Children are allowed to eat their snack at the breakfast bar, landing table or in the Houseparents' Flat. Year 8 boarders are allowed to make tea as part of their snack. Children will be expected to keep the kitchen tidy at the end of every evening, and a rota of responsibilities is in place. It is important that the kitchen is treated with respect, as the privilege of using it may be restricted if it is abused.

## The Boarders' Tuck Shop

There is a boarders' Tuck Shop, which will be open on a Wednesday and Friday evening. Boarders are **not** allowed to bring sweets and food in school. We do urge you to support us in this matter as tuck is offered as part of our boarders' reward system and if children have access to their own supplies then it completely devalues this.

Boarders have access to fruit, toast, cereal and other healthy snacks from the boarders' kitchen after the activity each evening and therefore should never go hungry!

We are always welcome of any suggestions you may have for the Tuck Shop.

## Evening activities / Free time

Following prep, boarders have free time which is supervised by the boarding team. There are a variety of options available to boarders:

Sports Hall activities – supervised by House staff and / or Duty staff

Table tennis

Tennis

Astro Games

ICT and Art – supervised by Duty staff or Gap student

Music practice

Board games

Baking

Common Room / houseparents' Flat

Fields and woods – supervised by Duty staff (when light enough)

Swimming – supervised by two House staff / Duty Staff (one must be lifesaver qualified)

Whole School Hide & Seek

Spotlight

TV  
PlayStation/ Wii  
Relaxing

Occasionally if boarders want to watch a specific TV programme then it can be put on in the common room or Houseparents' Flat. If there are any special requests for other activities, then they can normally be arranged.

## **Bedtimes**

The system of bedtimes differs depending on age. The simple principle being that the older the pupil, the later the bedtime. Consideration must be given, however, to dormitories where there might be more than one age group. In this situation, a single bedtime may be applied to minimise disturbance caused by other pupils entering the dorm as one group is settling down. All the dorms have a time when their main light is turned out and children have 15 minutes reading time using their individual nightlights. After that time house staff will insist on silence. Bedtime routines and lights out times have been carefully planned to allow children as much free time as possible, balanced with appropriate rest. Staff remain in the main corridors of the Boarding House for at least 30 minutes after the last dorm have been asked to be silent.

Year 3:	Upstairs at 7.30pm lights out at 8.15pm
Year 4:	Upstairs at 7.30pm lights out at 8.15pm
Year 5:	Upstairs at 7.45pm lights out at 8.30pm
Year 6:	Upstairs at 8.15pm lights out at 9.00pm
Year 7:	Upstairs at 8.30pm lights out at 9.15pm
Year 8:	Upstairs at 8.45pm lights out at 9.30pm

It would be very helpful if you could try to follow a similar routine the week before you start boarding. We hope this will help your child/ children settle in more quickly.

## **Overnight problems**

If a child feels unwell during the night, then they may ring the Resident Tutor's bell or phone, who will attend to them. They can also use this phone to contact the Houseparents.



## **Medication**

Should your child require medication whilst boarding, please make sure that it is handed in to the Nurses along with a signed consent form. This medication must be delivered in its original packaging, written in English and in date. In line with the school policy, medication will not be accepted if it does not meet these requirements. If a medication is required on a regular basis then we request at least six weeks supply.

Please will you also check that your child does not have any form of medication of any type in their own possession – all products must be handed in. There are two fixed surgeries in the boarding house; 7.20am and 7.15pm. Should a pupil require medication this will be dispensed by the Matrons, Resident Tutor, Houseparents (or in their absence the Deputy Houseparents). All medication is recorded on the school database (iSAMS).

## **Boarders' Common Rooms**

Boarders have exclusive use of communal areas. There is a Common Room which is located next to the Houseparents' Flat. In addition to this there is a boarders' kitchen and a cosy communal area, all within the boarding house. The Common Room area may only be used after 4.40pm and is open to all ages. It is important that it is treated with respect and the privilege of using it may be restricted if it is abused.

In addition to the Common Room, pupils also have access to the Sports Hall, Art room, Music practice rooms and computer room, with permission from the member of staff on duty, although internet access must be supervised. As aforementioned, boarders may also enjoy quiet time in their dormitories.

## **Organisation of dormitories**

All the boarding accommodation is contained within the Manor House. This building also contains the Houseparents' Flat and the Resident Tutor's Flat. The boys and girls have dormitories on separate floors - the girls on the first floor and the boys on the second floor. Dormitories are arranged by age as far as is possible and practical.

Each dormitory has a selected dormitory captain. The role of the dorm captain is to liaise with the staff if there are any problems or difficulties within the dormitory. The dormitory captains are selected by the Houseparents on a termly basis. This responsibility can be given to any child, regardless of year group, who boards and demonstrates leadership qualities.

Weekly boarders are allocated a bed at the beginning of the term and generally keep the same bed for the term. They can negotiate a mutual swap if they wish but must gain permission from the Houseparents before moving. Flexi Boarders where possible will also be allocated a bed that they will use for the term. This will be changed on a half termly basis. We encourage children to transform their dorms into their bedrooms; children are free to decorate their dormitories with posters and other personal belongings. Photos and posters are a great way of showing the boarding team what the children like and help the children to feel more at home. Each boarder is encouraged to bring a photo from home which can be placed in one of the frames in the dorms. All decoration must be taken down at the end of the school year to allow for redecoration.

## **Access to the dorms by adults**

Access to the dormitories is strictly prohibited to all adults apart from the boarding staff and matrons. The only exception to this is when Weekly Boarders are being returned on the night before term begins and boarding Open House events.

## **Bedding**

All Weekly Boarders are encouraged to bring their own duvet covers and pillowcases. This again helps to develop the feeling of home and personal space. Flexi Boarders are also able to bring their own bedding. Those pupils who do not bring their own duvet cover and pillowcase have them provided by the school. We expect all the children to learn how to change their own bed sheets. Flexi and Open Boarders are expected to change their sheet in the morning after their last night of boarding so that the bed is ready for the next boarder. We believe this is an important life skill that will stand the children in good stead for the future as well as helping to develop a sense of community within the boarding house.

## Boarding register

At the start of the term, the Houseparents produce a OneNote document with the boarding lists for the term ahead. These daily records are split into boys' and girls' boarding lists and have the date, dormitory name and number of allocated spaces for that dormitory.

**All requests to board or not to board on any given day must be, and can only be, authorised by the Houseparents, or when on duty, the Deputy Houseparents.**

As with all administrative systems, people can upset the process by leaving verbal messages that they are taking pupils out of school early, etc. **It is vital that if a boarding pupil is not boarding or is off site, that the Houseparents authorise this so that records can be amended**, and that the Boarder signs out following the correct signing out procedures below. Should a child be leaving school with someone other than their own parents or designated carer, permission must be obtained from the Houseparents beforehand, who will seek confirmation from parents.

The boarders' register is taken at 4.40pm, 5.30pm - 6.00pm and 8.30pm each evening by the Houseparents or boarding staff on duty. A register is also taken at 7.30am.

## Boarders signing out procedure

If a Weekly Boarder is leaving the school premises for any reason (other than a school trip or match) parents must email or call the Houseparents to inform them of their child's absence. This system also applies to any Flexi Boarder who was due to be boarding that evening.

It is essential that all parents cooperate with these systems so that the Houseparents know exactly which boarders are on the premises and which are off site.

## Tutor system

All boarders can approach any member of the boarding staff at any time to share the good things in their lives, as well as seeking advice, counselling or support during times of difficulty. In addition to the Houseparents, Deputy Houseparents and Matrons, all weekly boarders have a member of staff who acts as their personal tutor. Pupils can list the names of three preferred staff and the Deputy Headmaster allocates one of these staff as the tutor at the start of the academic year.

Regular meetings with the Houseparents and personal tutors help to develop the pupils from all perspectives, socially, academically and personally. Problems can be shared, targets can be set/reviewed and guidance constructed.

## Privileges and Consequences

In the boarding house, there are rewards/ privileges in the form of '**boarding bonuses**' (BBs). These may be awarded by any member of the boarding team.

A BB may be awarded to an individual who has shown any form of positive behaviour in line with the school core values of kindness, respect, independence, curiosity, collaboration and courage. BBs may also be awarded to a dorm for similar exemplary behaviour.

During boarding time "school" sanctions will not be applied. Boarding staff will use their discretion to apply "home-style" consequences to children. If appropriate a child may be 'house gated'. This involves a child losing their free time and giving back to the boarding community by doing some house chores. For example, if a child has taken something away from the sense of community then they should spend some time doing good for the community. Continuing or serious problems will, of course, be discussed with parents. Any poor behaviour is monitored closely by all members of the boarding team and any recurring issues with pupils will be discussed in the weekly boarding staff meeting and the Houseparents will take appropriate action, if necessary. Both BBs and consequences will be recorded electronically on school software (Class Dojo).

## **Boarders induction**

All new boarders will be helped to settle quickly into the boarding house by means of induction sessions organised by the Houseparents. Where possible children new to boarding will be invited to the Houseparents' Flat at a break time (prior to their boarding night) to talk to the Houseparents about boarding procedures and what they can expect. Boarding house procedures will be explained, support systems will be detailed, and new children will be introduced to their 'buddy' who will show them the ropes and help and support them with settling in to boarding life.

## **Boarding duties**

All boarders are responsible for ensuring communal areas and dorms are kept tidy. Those children that show leadership qualities in the boarding house will have the opportunity to be a dorm captain. These may change termly.

## **Boarding positions of responsibilities**

Within the boarding house, children are expected to maintain high standards of dress, appearance, academic endeavour and behaviour as well as developing independence, individuality and an ability to live with others. Any Year 8 boarder who consistently shows excellence in these areas as well as supporting all members of the house (staff and pupils) and regularly participating in boarding activities can expect to be appointed as a Boarding Prefect. The position of Boarding Prefect is a Year 8 responsibility, prefects will have specific duties and this position can be applied for through the school leadership process.

Boarding Prefects will have dinner with the Houseparents each half of term to discuss the term and to give the boarders the opportunity to voice recommendations.

## **Fire drills**

In the event of fire, it is the first duty of all staff to prevent injury or loss of life. It is a requirement that a fire drill is carried out at least once every term. Pupils are briefed on the course of action that they should take in case of an evacuation and have a practice walk through at the start of the year. The walk through is followed up with an unannounced drill during the week. The drill times are varied, sometimes being after lights out or before the rising in the morning. The fire muster point during boarding times is the top tennis courts.

With the changing population who board during the week, fire drills are arranged on different days each term to ensure that as many pupils as possible experience the drill.

## **House staff meetings**

Houseparents, Deputy Houseparents, the Deputy Headmaster, Head Nurse and Senior Tutors have a weekly meeting. The week ahead is discussed, and any concerns or problems aired. Minutes of these meetings are copied to the Headmaster and other House staff.

## **Communication with the Boarding Team**

Our aim is to ensure that every boarder feels safe, happy and valued within the boarding house. Our happy, caring home away from home is based upon establishing and nurturing the closest partnerships between children, home and Houseparents. As such we consider our relationship with you extremely valuable. (Please do not hesitate to call, email or arrange a meeting with the Houseparents). We will always let you know if we have any concerns about your child, and please we request you keep us informed if you have picked up any vibes at home, or if a pet is ill etc - every piece of information helps.

Email is a great way for children and parents to keep in touch. All children have their own email address provided by school; boarders are able to access their email accounts on any of the school computers during their free time.

*Please note on a Tuesday evenings all communication will be directed to Mr & Mrs Blanchard (Deputy Houseparents) [blanchardg@st-hughs.co.uk](mailto:blanchardg@st-hughs.co.uk) / 01367870712.*

## Electronic devices

Only Weekly Boarders can bring in electronic devices. This includes iPads, laptops, mobile phones or any other electronic device which must be handed to the Houseparents. Weekly Boarders will have access to their electronic devices at any point during the evening, however, they must remain on the boarders' landing. Electronic devices are not permitted anywhere else in the boarding house or school.

## Homesickness

Boarding will be fun, challenging and fulfilling, although staying at school will always differ from living at home. Everyone feels a little homesick at some stage, no matter how old or brave they are or how many nights they are boarding for. It is totally natural to miss home; some boarders settle quickly others take longer. The house staff are very experienced in dealing with home sickness and will help and support your child through it. We do recommend, after years of experience, that during your child's first night/ nights/week of boarding, communication between the child and parents is kept to a minimum. This can be hard but, in our experience, it allows the children to establish valuable relationships with others rather than being tied to a phone. Also, by the end of their first night/ nights/ week they will have lots more to talk about. Please see below three recommendations:

Please do not arrange a 'pick up deal' ('I'll come and get you if you start missing home'). In our experience this is counter productive to your child's boarding experience.

Talk to your child before their boarding night about things they can do to counter the feeling of homesickness; keep busy, take part in the activity, rather than feeling sad, feel excited about the next time they will be home, talk to one of the boarding team.

If you would like more information on dealing with homesickness please contact or see Mr & Mrs Avery.

## Complaints

If at any time you have complaints about boarding at St Hugh's, procedures are in place and these can be made following a specific complaints policy, which can be found on the school website.

Should you feel the need to, complaints can also be lodged with Independent Schools Inspectorate, Ground Floor, CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA. Telephone 020 7600 0100.