

Flexi-Boarding Information Sheet



This information sheet outlines the flexi-boarding provision in place at the Prep School and seeks to answer any questions that parents and guardians might have.

Why do we offer flexi-boarding at the Prep School?

Following market research carried out by the school amongst our day families and, in common with many schools of our type, the option of the school providing the opportunity for day pupils to board occasionally appeared to be in demand. A review was carried out involving staff and senior management across the Foundation, taking into account all those in our school community, and it was felt appropriate to seek ways to introduce a flexi-boarding option to parents. Flexi-boarding is increasingly popular at Dean Close (senior) School and it was agreed that this provision would offer a helpful taster for those families that may wish to experience this option once their child moves 'across the road'.

Why is the school not able to host occasional boarders in the current boarding houses?

Due to the popularity of full-time and day-boarding, there are often very few beds available to cater for the increasing demand for occasional boarding. The school is also mindful of not unsettling the 'home-from-home' nature of the currently full boarding houses, with the comings and goings of increasing numbers of flexi-boarders. Therefore, in the interest of our current boarding pupils, as well as providing choice to our day families, a separate boarding house has been created in Hardy House. Hardy House is located in the heart of the Prep School, close to the other boarding houses. However, alternative arrangements could be made for junior flexi-boarders (Years 3, 4 and 5) depending on the circumstance and in conversation with the Hardy Houseparent.

What will the boarding experience be like for future flexi-boarders in Hardy House?

Flexi-boarders will join the current full boarders straight after school and take part in the before dinner activities (going outside, music practice, tech time, crafting). They will join the boarders for dinner and then after dinner, will be free to join the other boarders in their prep and free time, whilst under staff supervision. In common with the current boarding houses, at their age specific bedtimes, the flexi-boarding pupils will return to Hardy House, shower and prepare for bed. Lights out will be at the same time as those in their age group in the boarding houses. In the morning they will be woken by the live-in member of staff working in Hardy, wash and get dressed, before joining the full boarders for breakfast from 7.30am. After breakfast they will return to Hardy House to brush their teeth and pack up their personal belongings, before returning to their day house to start their usual school day.

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What time will flexi-boarders go to bed and who will put them to bed?

Flexi-boarders in Hardy House will go to bed on the same schedule as those in the other boarding houses. They will be put to bed by the live-in member of the boarding staff, whose specific role will be to look after the flexi-boarders in their care. The current bedtimes are: Years 3 to 5: lights out by 8.00pm; Year 6: lights out by 8.30pm; Year 7: lights out by 8.50pm; Year 8: lights out by 9.10pm. These times are slightly later in the summer months when it is light outside.

How will the new flexi-boarding house be staffed?

The boarding house teams will be made aware every time there is a flexi-boarder spending time in their house and will be part of the team caring for them up until bedtime, when the live in member of Hardy will take over.

How will this new boarding house affect our current full and day boarders?

Boarding remains a key part of our school community and we expect boarding numbers to remain high in the Prep School. We want to ensure our boarding community is not disrupted by introducing greater numbers of flexi-boarders, hence the choice to have a separate flexi-boarding house. Options in similar schools place occasional boarders in current boarding houses and we are aware that this can, at times, be disruptive to the 'home-from-home' atmosphere so carefully nurtured there. We are fortunate to have space in Hardy House available, in the heart of the Prep School, to provide a separate boarding house dedicated to flexi-boarding.

How many pupils will be able to stay over in Hardy House?

Hardy House has a capacity of five boys and six girls. We are purposeful in planning that the number of flexi-boarders will not be large, since we are keen to ensure that the provision of full and day boarding is the school's main boarding provision. There are a number of bedrooms and, of course, separate bathrooms for the boys and girls. The boys' and girls' sections of the house are separated by the live-in staff accommodation.

Which nights will Hardy House be open?

Unless special arrangements have been made with the school, flexi-boarders will only be able to stay in Hardy House on weekday nights, from Monday to Friday (not on Saturdays or Sundays).

Will parents be able to have a look around before booking in their children?

Parents will be able to book a visit to view the flexi-boarding house by contacting the front office at the Prep School or emailing the Houseparent on dcpsflexi@deanclose.org.uk.

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How far in advance will parents need to book their children in for a night in Hardy House?

Parents are required to give 48 hours notice so that the rooms can be made ready. The maximum number of nights a pupil could stay is five, Monday to Friday, unless agreed beforehand with the school.

What type of activities will be available to flexi-boarders in the evenings?

In common with current full boarders, flexi-boarders will be able to enjoy letting off steam outside in the extensive, and safe, school grounds. They will be supervised by staff on duty, or join with full boarders in one of the current boarding houses, participating in some of the many activities that take place each evening. These activities include crafts, cooking, board games, table tennis tournaments and the like.

What will happen if my child is unwell during their night at school?

In common with all our boarders, the welfare of your child is our highest priority. The school's health centre is on call throughout the day and night. It will be the role of the member of staff on duty in the boarding house to contact them in the first instance, should there be a medical concern. Parents will also be contacted should the concern persist and, in extreme cases, outside medical assistance will be sought. There is also a locked medical cabinet containing painkillers and antihistamines for any easily remedied problems.

What if my child needs to finish their school work? Will time and space be given to this?

Absolutely. Staff on duty will ask each flexi-boarder if they have to complete school work and, if so, they will work in a supervised area alongside other pupils needing to do the same. During the evening there will also be opportunities for pupils to find a quiet place to read or to chat with their friends, if desired.

What is provided and what is not provided in Hardy House?

Flexi-boarding pupils will be expected to bring all of the equipment and uniform they will need for a normal school day, plus their home clothes, pyjamas, wash kit and any medication that they may require. This will be handed into the member of staff on duty. Bedding is not required as this will be provided by the school. A full kit list will be provided to parents/guardians once they have made a booking to use Hardy House.

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Will mobile phones be allowed to be brought into school by flexi-boarders?

Flexi-boarders will be allowed to bring into school a mobile phone for the purpose of contacting their parents during the evening. In common with all pupils, these devices will need to be left with the front office during the school day and handed into the member of staff on duty in Hardy House each evening at the allocated time.

Will there be a charge for being a 'no-show' due to plans changing at the last minute?

Due to the costs incurred by providing this boarding provision, no refund can be offered to those parents wishing to change their plans up to a week before their child stays for a night at the school. If a parent chooses to remove their child at the last minute, once a booking has been received the charge will still appear on their school invoice.

Will priority booking be given to some age groups or for particular days?

Currently there are no plans to offer priorities to particular year groups for the use of Hardy House. Parents will be informed should these arrangements change.

How will the booking for a night in Hardy House be carried out?

Parents should email dcpsflexi@deanclose.org.uk to check availability and will then be sent a consent form and flexi-boarding information pack if there is space for their child. Upon the consent form being completed and returned, the booking will be confirmed.