



PRESTFELDE

# Boarding Policy

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| Author(s)                     | Holly Keogh-Jones    |
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| Date of review                | September 2025       |
| Date of next review           | September 2026       |
| Website requirement           | Yes                  |
| Inspection folder requirement | Yes                  |

## Significant Amendments

| Date       | Amendment  | Initials |
|------------|--|----------|
| 08.09.2023 | Availability of phone for boarders during boarding hours. Pupils will always have access to the boarding mobile and access can be requested via the Boarding Assistant.  | HKJ      |
| 08.09.2023 | All substantive changes to the NMS for Boarding in force from September 2022 are now reflected in the Boarding Policy.   | HKJ      |
| 13.09.2024 | An appendix has been added to the policy: 'Risk assessment for dormitory allocation' This outlines the process followed for dorm allocation and the factors considered.  | HKJ      |
| 13.09.2024 | Language amendment- 'gender questioning'   | HKJ      |
| 28.02.2024 | Update to staff illness and contingency plan.<br>Update to Risk Assessment for dorm allocation<br>Update to boarders' voice overview<br>More comprehensive overview of the complaints policy for boarding  | HKJ      |
| 04.09.2025 | Added new Educational Guardianship section and minor insertions to Child Protection and Regulatory Compliance sections to align with NMS Standard 22 on Educational Guardianship.  | HKJ      |
| 04.09.2025 | Revised Missing Child Procedure to reduce police contact timeframe to 30–45 minutes, clarify risk-based escalation, add early parental notification (10–15 minutes), and confirm staff training. Added Online Safety and Mental Health and Wellbeing subsections under Pastoral Care. Updated Educational Guardianship with cultural support. Updated legislative references in Independent Person to KCSIE 2024 and NMS 2022. Reformatted Appendix 2 for clarity. | HKJ      |
| 04.09.2025 | Refine statement of boarding principles inspired by Prestfeldian values.   | HKJ      |

# **Prestfelde School's Policy and Procedures for Boarding**

## **Introduction**

Prestfelde House is a flexi-boarding house that accommodates boys and girls aged 7-13. We have a thriving boarding community, where 70% of our middle and senior school pupils board in some capacity.

Boarding at Prestfelde House is a happy extension of Prestfelde School life. Our boarding offers a great opportunity to prepare pupils for their future schools, and the experience and independence gained at this younger age is a hugely beneficial steppingstone for life beyond Prestfelde. Boarding is also an essential part of the wraparound care we offer at the school, and we encourage our busy parents to utilise boarding to support their families.

All boarders, whether regular or occasional, are fully integrated into boarding life and are part of a home from home family environment where they eat, work, and relax together, making the most of the fantastic onsite facilities. Activities ranging from swimming to cricket, golf, cooking and baking, movie nights, craft evenings and our FOPS bonfire events ensure that there is never a dull moment for boarders. We also host many offsite activities, from theatre trips, skiing, hiking, bike rides, ice skating and much more. Boarding at Prestfelde House offers our boarders opportunities to experience new things and even develop new passions and hobbies.

Prestfelde House is situated across two floors. Our first floor has a large lounge room with TV, library, and sofas to relax; 12 beds across two dorms; a new, high spec bathroom containing three shower rooms and three toilets with private wash facilities, and a medical centre with a single bed that can be used if it is necessary to isolate a boarder for health reasons. Our second floor has: a games room complete with pool table, table football, child-friendly dart board, TV and video games, and a ping pong table; 23 beds across 4 dorms (one of which is suitable for boys or girls, as it is separate from the boys only area of the house; the Assistant Head of Boarding's accommodation and another new, high spec bathroom containing three shower rooms and three toilets with private wash facilities.

Prestfelde House has a dedicated Boarding Assistant who supervises supper, delivers evening activities, and oversees boarders' bedtime routine 4-9pm every evening, and she is supported by an enthusiastic and passionate boarding team, consisting of the Head of Boarding and Assistant Head of Boarding, both of whom are teaching staff in the school, and our gap boarders. The Head of Boarding resides in Prestfelde Flat, which adjoins Prestfelde House, and she is always present and accessible on boarding evenings and throughout the night. In the case of an emergency, there are emergency bells on both floors that are linked to the Assistant Head of Boarding and Head of Boarding's accommodation, meaning both members of staff are on-call and instantly available 24/7.

## Statement of Boarding Principles and Practice

At Prestfelde House, boarding is a central and enriching part of school life, providing a supportive home away from home. It plays a vital role in a child's development, helping them become confident, compassionate, and capable individuals. Our flexible boarding options ensure that the experience suits the needs of every family, while our nurturing and structured community offers boarders opportunities to grow academically, socially, morally, and personally.

- **Kindness** and **Respect**  
We foster a caring environment where empathy, consideration, and respect underpin all relationships. Boarders are encouraged to support one another, celebrate differences, and embrace the richness of our diverse community. We value the unique backgrounds, identities, and perspectives of every individual, promoting inclusion, understanding, and a sense of belonging for all.
- **Independence** and **Responsibility**  
Boarders develop confidence and self-reliance as they take responsibility for themselves, others, and their surroundings. Through structured routines, clear expectations, and guidance, boarders learn to manage their time, make sensible choices, and contribute positively to a thriving community.
- **Leadership** and **Teamwork**  
We nurture leadership skills and encourage boarders to collaborate effectively. Whether in academic, sporting, or creative activities, boarders are supported to take initiative, lead by example, and work harmoniously as part of a team.
- **Learning** and **Intellectual Growth**  
Boarders benefit from a structured study programme, access to staff, and a supportive learning environment that values effort and perseverance. Curiosity, intellectual independence, and a love of learning are actively encouraged, helping each child achieve their full potential.
- **Wellbeing** and **Safety**  
Boarding provides a safe, secure, and comfortable environment, where boarders feel valued and supported. Pastoral care, healthcare provision, and risk management procedures ensure that boarders thrive both physically and emotionally, while enjoying appropriate privacy and comfort.
- **Holistic** and **Development**  
We offer a rich co-curricular programme, enabling boarders to develop new skills, pursue passions, and explore personal interests. Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural growth is actively encouraged, helping boarders become well-rounded, resilient, and reflective individuals.
- **Integrity** and **High Standards**  
Boarders are expected to act honestly, responsibly, and with integrity. Clear behavioural expectations, fair and consistent guidance, and opportunities to reflect on choices support the development of ethical conduct, accountability, and self-discipline.
- **Boarders' Voice** and **Participation**  
Boarders are encouraged to share their views and contribute to decisions that shape house life. Regular forums and feedback opportunities ensure that their perspectives help build a community that is inclusive, responsive, and supportive.
- **Partnership** and **Families**  
We value strong communication with parents and guardians, working together to support each boarder's wellbeing, development, and success. Open and constructive dialogue ensures that each child's experience is supported both at school and at home.

## Our Boarding Ethos

Prestfelde House is designed to operate on the principle of an extended family. Older pupils, and especially the Year 8s, are given responsibility for some of the supervision of younger pupils and various tasks within the house, closely monitored by house staff. The Boarding Assistant will select 'Dorm Leaders' each night, giving our older pupils the opportunity to develop their leadership abilities in a prefect role. The Head of

Boarding and the house team build strong relationships with boarders, providing the support, guidance, care and encouragement that one would expect from any loving family.

## **Pastoral Care of Boarders**

### **Child-on-child abuse**

The boarding community follows the school's anti-bullying policy, and this is held centrally and can be referred to at any time. This is reinforced and explicitly taught in morning chapel services, during school PHSE lessons, at various points throughout the wider whole-school curriculum, and through participation in 'National Anti-Bullying Week' which usually occurs annually in November. Prestfelde House will not tolerate bullying or unkindness of any kind, and this is regularly reinforced by the team. Boarders are encouraged to 'Speak Up' if they witness or experience unkindness in the boarding house.

### **Child Protection**

Prestfelde School's aim is to provide the very best care for the pupils entrusted to us. We aim to ensure that every pupil is happy at school and feels that they have a productive part to play in the boarding house and in the school. All staff at Prestfelde are given regular training in Child Protection and Safeguarding. Boarding staff must also complete further compulsory training, including the BSA and Educare introduction to boarding courses, both of which highlight crucial child protection and safeguarding awareness and understanding. The Head of Boarding and Assistant Head of Boarding are Deputy DSLs. Our 'Who Do I Talk To?' display outside the boarders' lounge highlights all the staff members our boarders can speak to, and this is also highlighted in their annual induction/refresher induction with the Assistant Head of Boarding. The display includes contact information and photographs of all available staff members and our independent person, who visits our pupils regularly.

Where boarders live with guardians outside of term time, safeguarding expectations are made clear and guardians are required to follow Prestfelde's safeguarding procedures.

The school operates its own Health Centre, with a school nurse on duty during the school day. The boarding team have a medical handover every day to pass on any medical information from the school day, and to confirm the medical needs of boarders overnight. Pupils with social and emotional issues are carefully monitored while boarding at Prestfelde House. The Head of Boarding is also the school's Head of Wellbeing, therefore boarders can access wellbeing and mental health support throughout their stay. Where further support is needed, such as counselling or accessing outside agencies such as Early Help, the Head of Boarding and Wellbeing will work closely with the Deputy Head Pastoral and SENCO to determine next steps.

Relevant phone numbers for Child Line, NSPCC, Samaritans and ISI are displayed prominently in the boarding houses:

- Child Line 0800 1111
- ISI 0207 600 0100
- NSPCC 0800 800 5000
- Samaritans 116 123
- The Children's Commissioner 0800 528 0731

The boarding community follows the school's Safeguarding Policy. (See the Safeguarding policy on website.)

## **Online Safety**

Prestfelde House promotes a safe online environment in line with NMS Standard 11. Boarders' use of Chromebooks and laptops is subject to school-managed filtering and monitoring systems to protect against

inappropriate content. Internet access is supervised during prep and free time, and boarders receive regular education on online safety through PHSE lessons and boarding inductions. Any online safety concerns are reported immediately to the Head of Boarding or Deputy Head Pastoral (DSL) for investigation in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy. All laptops and technology is handed into the Head of Boarding after supper and Prestfelde House remains a strictly mobile phone free house.

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Prestfelde House prioritizes boarders' mental health and wellbeing in line with NMS Standard 3. Staff are trained to identify signs of emotional distress through regular observation, pastoral check-ins, and feedback from the Boarding Council. Boarders have access to the Head of Boarding (Head of Wellbeing) for support, with referrals to counselling or external agencies (e.g., Early Help) arranged as needed in collaboration with the Deputy Head Pastoral and SENCO.

## **Independent Person**

As described within the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, the Independent Person is a person outside the staff and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. The Independent person reports directly to the Head of Boarding and Deputy Head Pastoral.

Prestfelde has a system whereby any child who wishes to talk to an independent adult about personal problems or concerns at school can do so. Details of our Independent person is displayed around Prestfelde House, including the Wellbeing notice board, and within all boarding dormitories. Independent persons will visit the school several times throughout the year to make themselves known to staff and boarding pupils.

The Independent person is expected to follow all policies and procedures driven by *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2024), *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE, 2018), and the *National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools* (DfE, 2022).

It is a fundamental value of the school that we help our boarders to remain safe and healthy, enabling them to continue to access their education without stigma or exclusion. Hence all staff at Prestfelde School, including boarding staff, are committed to ensuring our pupils are safe and feel they have someone to talk to. Further information about the job/person specification, safeguarding responsibilities, and processes and procedures are set out in Appendix 1.

## **Educational Guardianship**

Prestfelde School warmly welcomes pupils from diverse international backgrounds and recognises the unique challenges they may face in adjusting to life in a new country. In line with NMS Standard 22, all international pupils are required to have a guardian while studying at Prestfelde.

An educational guardian is a responsible adult appointed by the pupil's parents, who:

- is over 25 years of age, not a member of Prestfelde staff, and resides in the UK;
- provides safe accommodation, appropriate supervision, and support during times when the school is not responsible for the pupil's care (e.g. exeat, half-term breaks, holidays, or emergencies);
- undergoes safeguarding checks, including an enhanced DBS, to ensure suitability;
- is available 24 hours a day for emergencies and able to communicate effectively with both the school and the pupil's parents;
- upholds the values and ethos of Prestfelde, complementing the pastoral care provided in school.

Guardianship arrangements must be approved by the school and reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the pupil. Prestfelde reserves the right to request a change of guardian where arrangements do not meet safeguarding or welfare expectations.

Guardians are expected to:

- liaise with the school regarding travel, medical, and welfare arrangements;
- provide safe, supervised accommodation (unsupervised hotel or university stays are not acceptable);
- support the pupil's emotional wellbeing, cultural adjustment, and academic development during school breaks;
- be alert to online safety, mental health, and welfare concerns, and liaise with the school where support is needed.

Parents may appoint a family friend, relative, or professional guardian from a recognised guardianship agency. Prestfelde encourages parents to consider accredited providers (e.g. AEGIS) and will not issue a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance to Study) for visa purposes until appropriate guardianship arrangements are confirmed. The school supports international boarders' integration through cultural sensitivity training for staff, access to language support where needed, and inclusive activities to promote a sense of belonging within the boarding community.

### **Complaints by Boarders' Parents/Guardians**

Prestfelde School is committed to maintaining a high standard of pastoral care within its boarding provision. We recognise that, on occasion, concerns may arise, and we encourage open communication to ensure any issues are addressed promptly and effectively.

- **Initial Contact:** Parents with concerns about boarding should, in the first instance, direct their complaint to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Head of Boarding. These staff members are best placed to investigate and respond to boarding-related matters.
- **Further Escalation:** If the issue is not resolved to the parent's satisfaction, or if they prefer to speak to someone else, they may contact the Head, Chaplain, or a School Governor. Contact details for these individuals are available in the school's Complaints Policy.
- **Formal Complaints:** Should informal resolution not be possible, parents may follow the formal complaints process outlined in the school's Complaints Policy, which details the steps for further review and resolution.
- **Boarder Involvement:** Boarders also have the right to raise concerns independently. They are encouraged to speak with any trusted staff member, including boarding staff, the Deputy Head (Pastoral), the Chaplain, or the Head. Additionally, information on independent external contacts, such as child protection services or helplines, is available on noticeboards within the boarding house.
- **Accessibility of Information:** Clear guidance on the complaints process is displayed on boarding house noticeboards and can also be found on the boarding page of Firefly. Parents and boarders are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this information.

### **Complaints by Boarders**

Boarders at Prestfelde School are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have and are assured that their complaints will be treated with respect and confidentiality. The boarding community follows the school's Complaints Policy, which applies to boarders, parents, and other concerned parties. This policy is centrally held and can be accessed at any time.

- **Access to Independent Adults:** Boarders have direct access to two independent adults: the Independent Person and the Safeguarding and Boarding Governors. These individuals are available to listen to and support boarders in a confidential and impartial manner. Additionally, the School Chaplain is also available to offer support and guidance.
- **External Support Services:** Boarders are provided with contact details for external organisations such as Childline, the N.S.P.C.C., and other relevant services. These details, including phone numbers

and websites, are prominently displayed in the boarding house to ensure boarders can access help outside the school community if needed.

- **Clear and Confidential Process:** Boarders can approach any staff member they trust, whether it's boarding staff or the Deputy Head (Pastoral), to raise a complaint or concern. All concerns will be treated seriously and investigated in line with the school's complaints procedure. If boarders prefer to speak to someone outside the boarding staff, they may contact the Independent Person, Chaplain, or Governors.
- **Support at Every Stage:** Boarders are assured that they will be supported throughout the complaints process, and every effort will be made to address concerns in a timely and appropriate manner.

## **Access to Telephones & Email**

The boarders always have access to a telephone and can use it to ring either family members, our Independent Person or Child Line during their stay. The boarders' phone is situated in the Boarding & Wellbeing Office, which is always accessible.

**Telephone:** 01743 234043

The boarding house is a no-mobile phone zone, in line with our whole-school policy, however boarders do all have Chromebooks/laptops for use in prep, which can be used to access emails. All electronic devices are taken in by the Boarding Assistant before bed and locked safely in the Matron's office. Parents of full weekly boarders can discuss their child bringing a mobile phone and this will be looked at on an individual boarder basis.

## **Equal Opportunities**

The boarding environment endeavours to give each child regardless of creed, colour, religion, gender, sexuality or disability equal opportunities to access all boarding house activities.

## **Privacy and Inclusivity**

Prestfelde House considers the inclusivity of all children, and this is reflected within our boarding provision. Our newly refurbished washroom facilities now include private shower and basin rooms, where all boarders have the privacy to get changed/washed in a safe and private space.

## **House Sanctions and Rewards**

The Boarding House follows the school's behaviour policy and has a range of rewards and sanctions for good and bad behaviour. As far as possible, the Head and Assistant Head of Boarding act in loco parentis and, like all good parents, provide a caring, supportive environment for the children in their care. Prestfelde House follows the Behaviour policy of the school, with the emphasis on encouragement and reward, rather than punishment. Behaviour expectations are on display around Prestfelde House and in dorms: 'How to be a Brilliant Boarder.' Rewards and sanctions are recorded on Class Charts so that teachers and form tutors can be informed.

## **Health Care/Health Records**

The medical and boarding team are dedicated to boarders' health and wellbeing needs throughout their stay at Prestfelde House. Both the Head of Boarding and Assistant Head of Boarding are First Aid trained and certified to administer medication. Matron, with support from the boarding team, keeps records of the boarders' individual medical records, including allergies, medication and any other medical needs. These are kept confidentially/digitally on iSAMS. The sick bay facility can be staffed 24 hours a day. There is an isolated bed and en suite facilities in the sick bay which may be utilised by boarders if they display symptoms of a contagious illness, such as Norovirus. Parents will be advised and may wish to collect their child as an alternative care option.

## Activities and Free Time

The House staff provide a wide range of activities in the evenings, both on and off site etc. Boarders will attend one of the extensive range of afterschool clubs immediately after school at 4pm (alternatively they may attend first prep) and will then move to the boarding house where they will have the option of wind down time or additional prep time if necessary. Supper is served at 5.45pm and activities begin at 5.45pm, led by the Boarding Assistant and supported by our gap boarders. Boarders have the option to remain in the house and not take part in activities if they need time to revise for an exam, practice an instrument, or simply want some quiet down time. All boarders have 15 minutes of quiet reading time at bedtime and are expected to bring a reading book with them when they board.

Parents can book their child on to boarding evenings via SOCS up to a term in advance. There is the option to book for the full term ahead using one of our regular boarding options, which can be booked via the school office:

1. Flexi boarder 1: 1 regular night each week
2. Flexi boarder 2: 2 regular nights each week
3. Flexi boarder 3: 3 regular nights each week
4. Flexi boarder 4: 4 regular nights each week
5. Weekly boarder: Monday-Saturday each week.

Alternatively, parents can book on an ad hoc basis using SOCS up to the day of boarding.

## Securing Boarders' Views & Boarding Council

The Boarding Council at Prestfelde School plays an integral role in representing the views and interests of all boarders, providing them with a platform to voice their concerns, share feedback, and contribute to the ongoing development of the boarding experience. Through this collaborative forum, boarders have the opportunity to participate in shaping decisions about life in the boarding house, fostering a sense of responsibility, community, and leadership.

### Boarding Council Structure

- **Composition:** The Boarding Council is composed of elected representatives from each year group within the boarding community. These representatives are selected by their peers for their leadership qualities, communication skills, and commitment to the wellbeing of the entire boarding community. The council is overseen by the Head of Boarding and is supported by the Deputy Head (Pastoral). The Boarding Council meets regularly to discuss ongoing issues, review feedback, and help initiate improvements in the boarding house.
- **Role of Boarding Council Representatives:** Each council member is responsible for representing the concerns and ideas of their dormitory group. They act as a voice for their peers and communicate any feedback, suggestions, or issues raised by other boarders. They also work together to facilitate positive changes in the boarding community.

### Responsibilities of the Boarding Council

- **Representation and Advocacy:** The Boarding Council acts as a formal channel for boarders to communicate their opinions, needs, and concerns to the school's boarding staff and senior leadership. Council members meet regularly with staff to ensure that boarders' views are taken into account in decisions that affect their daily lives, such as dormitory arrangements, meal planning, and extracurricular activities.

- **Feedback and Consultation:** Boarders' feedback is gathered in several ways to ensure broad participation and representation:
  - A termly questionnaire is distributed to boarders during form time with their tutors. This questionnaire allows boarders to provide anonymous feedback on various aspects of their boarding experience, which is then reviewed by the Boarding Council and staff.
  - A suggestions box is placed outside the boarders' lounge, providing boarders with a discreet way to submit ideas, suggestions, or concerns.
  - Boarders also have the opportunity to raise matters directly with the Boarding Council representatives at any time, ensuring that every voice is heard.
- **Collaboration with the School Council:** The Boarding Council works closely with the School Council, where boarding representatives are present at all meetings. This collaboration ensures that boarding matters are integrated into the broader school community discussions, strengthening the connection between the day and boarding students.
- **Initiating and Implementing Change:** The Boarding Council actively participates in initiatives to improve the overall boarding experience. This may involve introducing new activities, improving boarding facilities, or creating programs that support boarders' mental and emotional wellbeing. The council plays a key role in initiating these changes and helping to ensure their successful implementation.

## Role of Dorm Leaders

- **Additional Responsibility:** In addition to the Boarding Council, Dorm Leaders are senior boarders who take on an important leadership role within their dormitory. Dorm Leaders help ensure that their dorms operate smoothly and are supportive, inclusive environments where all boarders feel safe and valued. They also support the Boarding Council by providing input on dorm-specific concerns and assisting with the implementation of council initiatives.
- **Responsibilities of Dorm Leaders:**
  - **Peer Support:** Dorm Leaders act as a primary point of contact for other boarders within their dormitory. They provide support, guidance, and a listening ear for boarders who may have concerns or need assistance.
  - **Role in Conflict Resolution:** Dorm Leaders help resolve minor conflicts between dorm mates by acting as mediators. They encourage positive interactions and healthy relationships within the dorms.
  - **Monitoring Boarding Culture:** Dorm Leaders are role models for younger boarders and are responsible for fostering a positive and respectful dorm culture. They promote the school's values and ethos, encouraging boarders to respect one another and uphold the boarding community's standards.

## Engagement with Staff

- The Boarding Council works closely with the Head of Boarding, Deputy Head (Pastoral), and other staff to ensure that the boarding experience reflects the needs and expectations of all boarders. Council members attend regular meetings with staff to discuss feedback, identify areas for improvement, and follow up on actions taken in response to boarder input.
- The Boarding Council also plays a significant role in the school's annual review of boarding provision, participating in discussions and offering insights to guide future developments.

## Care of Possessions

Boarders are provided with designated spaces in their bedroom, including space underneath their bunks for possessions. Valuables can be given to the Boarding Assistant to be locked away in the Matron's office for safe keeping or stored in dedicated mini lockers on each floor. Boarders may bring a large variety of items from home. For security, boarders are asked to limit the number of valuable items that they bring into school.

## **Induction of New Boarders**

Parent and pupils who would like to join our boarding community will meet with the Assistant Head of Boarding/Head of Boarding to discuss their needs. New boarders will then be invited into Prestfelde House for a rigorous induction (see Appendix 2) with the Assistant Head of Boarding, including a tour, an introduction to boarding routines, a health & safety briefing, and a meeting with the boarding team. New boarders are allocated a buddy, who will be an experienced boarder. The Head of Boarding, Assistant Head of Boarding and Boarding Assistant will provide all necessary support to new boarders to ensure their first experience is fun, welcoming and that they are settled. Many pupils who board at Prestfelde are existing day pupils, or those who have 'tested the water' with flexi boarding through various taster days, starting in year 2. The induction process, as a result, is usually straight forward and easy to manage. A boarding induction 'refresher' is given to all boarders on an annual basis or as the Head of Boarding/Boarding Assistant see appropriate.

## **Catering**

School catering continues to be maintained at a high standard for our boarders, prepared by a team of experienced and skilled catering staff/chefs. The food is designed in line with the school's healthy eating standards, and boarders are exposed to a variety of flavours from around the world. Boarders are consulted on their views of the boarding menu and regularly review/feedback to our Head Chef. Pupils are fully catered for, including breakfast, lunch and supper, and are not required to prepare any food for themselves in Prestfelde House. All allergies and intolerances are catered for. There is also a water machine and access to snacks if needed in the boarding house.

## **Onerous Demands on Boarders**

The Head of Boarding and the form teachers liaise over the workloads of the pupils in their care. A staff meeting to discuss pupils takes place weekly where matters concerning individual pupils are discussed. The boarding staff are aware of the demands made of every pupil in their care and intervene when they feel the pupils may be overburdened by work or events.

## **Information Sharing**

Due to the flexible nature of Prestfelde's boarding, it is important that information is passed between the staff on duty in the house on different evenings. Information is communicated via Class Charts and an evaluation sheet is completed at the end of each boarding night, which is signed and reviewed by the Boarding Assistant. Any discipline, behaviour or pastoral matters are logged on Class Charts by the duty House Parent/duty staff member. Pastoral concerns are automatically alerted to the Head of Boarding, Form Tutors, Head of Year and Deputy Head Pastoral and brought to the attention of relevant school staff (if necessary) during daily staff briefings. In some cases, a meeting will be called with the Pastoral Team. All boarding staff are also teaching staff, making the communication process easy.

## **Communication**

Prestfelde School is a 'home from home' for our boarding pupils and therefore considerable care is taken to ensure that:

- The Head of Boarding and the team get to know pupils and, as far as possible, their parents as quickly as possible.
- Parents receive regular updates on their child's progress.
- Parents are informed of any problems that their child might be having and encouraged to work with the school to resolve those issues.

- Parents inform house staff if they become aware of any problems with their child.

Parents can contact the Head of Boarding or Boarding Assistant on email, school telephone, or the boarding mobile at any time.

## **Fire Protection**

Prestfelde House has a clear procedure for evacuation in the event of fire. Regular fire evacuation practices are carried out and timed. The Boarding Assistant /Head of Boarding has a list to hand in the event of an evacuation which includes the number and people in each dormitory.

At the start of each term the pupils are informed of the fire evacuation procedure and a practice is carried out. This process is repeated on the arrival of any new boarder. The Prestfelde boarding house is located over three floors and this presents obvious evacuation difficulties. However, there are two main secure staircases and dormitories are instructed on their nearest route. The pupils leave via the nearest stairs and meet under the covered way where they are registered by the boarding staff. As part of the bedtime routine, pupils are instructed to remove any trip hazards so that evacuation is safe.

## **Health & Safety**

The Boarding House follows the school's Health and Safety regulations and carries out all the actions dictated by the policy.

Boarding staff complete a risk assessment for all activities where there is any risk involved, including all off-site activities. Risk Assessments are carried out by House Parents on duty and uploaded to Evolve for evaluation by the Deputy Head Pastoral and the Bursar. In addition, risk assessment and any supporting documents are printed off for all activities and must be signed by every attending adult. A risk assessment is carried out termly for Prestfelde House (the building), and/or when any new additions/refurbishments are made. When visiting an off-site provider, the provider's own risk assessments are obtained and uploaded to Evolve, together with the House Parent's own risk assessment.

A self-evaluation/audit is carried out regularly by the Head of Boarding and Boarding Assistant using the BSA self-assessment toolkit to ensure the safety of all boarders and boarding staff.

## **Lockdown Procedure During Boarding Hours**

During boarding hours, staff are asked to always remain vigilant regarding security of the house. The school has a lockdown policy in place in the event of any security concerns. Please see Lockdown Policy.

## **Prestfelde House Security**

Prestfelde House is fitted with both security camera and electronically locked and key coded doors that are activated each evening as part of the lock up procedure. This is to ensure that all members of the boarding community are safe and secure in the boarding house overnight. The member of staff in charge of each boarding evening, either the Head of Boarding or Assistant Head of Boarding, is responsible for checking all doors and activating the alarm at the end of night. A lockup register is signed, dated and time stamped every evening.

## **SUPERVISION OF BOARDERS**

### **Staffing**

Prestfelde House is staffed each evening by the Boarding Assistant (who resides in the main Prestfelde House) and the Head/Assistant Head of Boarding, who both live full time on site. In the case of an emergency, there are bells on both the boys' and girls' floors that boarders can use to alert the Head/Assistant Head of

Boarding of any immediate concerns and dangers. Boarders also have direct access to residential staff front doors. Our gap/graduate students also support every boarding night.

### **Staff Illness and Contingency Plan**

In the event of staff illness, the continuity of care and supervision within the boarding house remains a priority. Prestfelde School ensures that appropriate measures are in place to maintain a safe and structured environment for all boarders.

- **Evening Supervision:** As there are always two on-site residential staff members, the remaining staff member will assume full responsibility for the evening's supervision and overall management of the boarding house.
- **Overnight Cover:** If additional support is required, a gap student may stay overnight in the boarding house to assist the on-duty staff member. In cases where further support is deemed necessary, alternative arrangements will be made to ensure adequate supervision.
- **Evening Activities:** The boarding assistant will oversee the scheduled evening activities. In the event of the boarding assistant's absence, the Head of Boarding or Assistant Head of Boarding will take responsibility for running activities to ensure boarders continue to benefit from structured engagement.
- **Escalation Plan:** If illness results in multiple staff absences or impacts the ability to provide adequate care, the Head of Boarding will implement contingency measures, which may include temporary staff reallocation or additional senior staff oversight. An SLT rota of support is in place throughout the academic year.

### **Night-time Supervision of Boarders**

During boarding nights, there is access to several members of staff, including the Head of Boarding, Assistant Head of Boarding, and the Boarding Assistant (who is on site from 4-9pm and lives at Highfield House.) There is always at least two members of staff in Prestfelde House throughout the night. On busier nights, a gap boarder may reside in the house for additional support. SLT are on emergency call out every night.

### **Missing Child Procedure**

All boarding staff receive annual training on the Missing Child Procedure, including how to assess risk factors (e.g., emotional distress, child protection status) and escalate concerns promptly to ensure boarder safety.

If a boarder goes missing during a boarding night, staff will start by calmly questioning the other boarders about their whereabouts. More often than not, other boarders will know where the child is. In the event that they do not know, the Boarding Assistant and Head of Boarding/Assistant Head of Boarding will conduct a visual search in the building and check the following locations:

- Other boarders' dorms
- Bathrooms
- Games Room
- Boarder's Lounge
- Assistant Head of Boarding's accommodation
- Medical Centre

If the child is not found after the initial search of the boarding house (within 10–15 minutes), the Head of Boarding or Boarding Assistant will contact the boarder's parents to inform them of the situation and ongoing search efforts, as well as the Headmaster and Deputy Head Pastoral/DSL.

If all the above areas have been checked and the child is still not located, the Head/Assistant Head of Boarding (both DDSLs) and Boarding Assistant will contact the Estate Manager (who lives on site in Prestfelde Bungalow). Together, they will conduct a visual search of the remainder of the school buildings and immediate outside area, as well as check CCTV cameras located at the front and back doors of the building, stairwells leading to the exit, and various points around the site. They will check the following locations:

- The Head's office/front office
- The grounds immediately outside the Harry Potter door
- The front car park/outside BC&T
- The dining room
- Beckbury
- The senior school building
- The middle school building
- The Dovey building and toilets
- The Art/DT block and toilets
- The cage/tennis courts/adventure playground
- The boys' changing rooms
- The school fields

Meanwhile, the Boarding Assistant will question the boarders to ascertain any information that may support locating the missing child.

- If the child is not located within 30 minutes of the initial report, or sooner if there are concerns about their safety or wellbeing (e.g., emotional distress, unusual behaviour, or external risks), boarding staff must contact the police. If the child is deemed at serious risk, subject to a child protection plan, or if circumstances suggest an immediate threat (e.g., leaving the premises or suspicious activity) boarding staff must not wait 30 minutes but will instead call 999 immediately.
- If the child is not found after the site search but no immediate risk is identified, the Head of Boarding will contact the Deputy Head Pastoral and the boarder's parents within 30 minutes, and the police will be contacted no later than 45 minutes from the initial report unless new information suggests the child is safe.
- If the child is subject to a child protection plan, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Head Pastoral) will contact the child's social worker immediately, and the police will be called without delay.
- The Head of Boarding will document the incident, including the timeline, actions taken, and rationale for any delays in contacting the police, to ensure compliance with safeguarding procedures.

## **Regulatory Compliance**

Prestfelde works hard to ensure that it meets all the regulatory requirements set out in the National Minimum Boarding Standards (in action since September 2022) and in other relevant legislation. This includes compliance with NMS Standard 22 on Educational Guardianship, with oversight and review of guardianship arrangements for international pupils. Regular checks are made to ensure that appropriate Health and Safety standards are met and exceeded in all aspects of school life. The school is subject to regular inspection by

the Independent Schools Inspectorate to ensure that all regulatory requirements are met or exceeded. In addition, termly self-assessments and audits are carried out by the Head of Boarding and Boarding Assistant.

## **Management and Administration**

The Head of Boarding is responsible to the Head for the smooth and effective running of their boarding house. In practice they report directly to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who is responsible for pastoral care in the school. Regular House meetings are chaired by the Head of Boarding and attended by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and are used for promulgation of information and discussions about topical issues or any pastoral concerns in the boarding house.

## **RELEVANT PAPERWORK**

- FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURE
- HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES
- BOARDING SCHOOLS NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS DOCUMENT
- SAFEGUARDING POLICY
- ANTI-BULLYING POLICY
- BEHAVIOUR POLICY
- GUARDIANSHIP POLICY
- BOARDING HANDBOOK/STAFF HANDBOOK
- STAFF EMPLOYMENT MANUAL
- STAFF BOARDING HANDBOOK
- FIRST AID POLICY

## **RECORDS**

- BEHAVIOURAL CONCERNS IN THE BOARDING ENVIRONMENT on Class Charts
- HEALTH RECORDS FOR BOARDERS on iSAMS
- RISK ASSESSMENTS on Share Point

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: Job Specification for the Independent Person**

#### **Independent Person: Main Areas of Responsibility**

Under the direction of and in consultation with the Head of Boarding, the Independent Person will be required to note the following:

- Take into account the school's views on the pupil's needs, as well as the pupils wishes and views
- If contacted by a pupil, they should provide an opportunity for them to talk through problems and issues in a safe and non-discriminatory manner
- Encourage the pupils to participate in decisions affecting them
- Keep accurate and confidential records bearing in mind some pupils' wish to remain anonymous

- Safeguarding and child protection issues arising from conversations with pupils should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) either directly or via the Head of Boarding who is a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
- Provide feedback to the Head of Boarding for reports, reviews and other meetings
- Work in a child centred manner, being clear about confidentiality and where boundaries lie.

### **Safeguarding Responsibilities:**

- To know the identity of the Schools Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy.
- Proactively be alert to indicators of potential safeguarding issues and report these immediately in accordance with the school's procedure.
- Be aware of the Schools Safeguarding Policy and to follow its requirements.
- Attend training relating to Safeguarding of Children provided by the school if required.
- Engage in safe practice and professional conduct to safeguard children to mitigate against the potential for misunderstandings or situations being misconstrued.
- The school is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and expects the same from its volunteers, employees and representatives.

### **Job Context**

- The Independent person must be child focused however sympathetic they may be to other points of view. The function is to complement the work and activities of the boarding staff and parents.
- In bringing this autonomous perspective, the Independent Person must behave in an anti-discriminatory manner. The Independent person is not expected to accept unquestioningly what those responsible for the child tell them is in the child's interests but should remain open-minded and foster a healthy scepticism.

### **Knowledge Experience and Training**

The Independent person should have qualities, skills, experience and/or qualifications in other settings that enable them to undertake work in a professional capacity with children. These may include:

- An understanding and empathy of the needs of school age children and adolescents
- An understanding and appreciation of the difficulties caused by living away from home
- The ability to work flexibly with a variety of adults and children
- An understanding of Good Care Practice and Principles
- An appreciation of the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and the National Minimum Standards and other relevant legislation
- Qualifications/experience in counselling or other relevant disciplines.

### **Problems and Decisions**

The Independent person will consult and work with the Head of Boarding (and the DSL where required), boarding staff and the pupils. They will work within all school policies and procedures. All grievances or disputes should follow the procedure and guidance within the Schools Policy.

### **Duration of Post**

The initial arrangement would be for a period of 12 months, after 12 months the arrangement will be reviewed by the Head of School, Head of Boarding and the DSL. However, if for any reason an Independent person is unable to continue with the role, they should contact the Head of Boarding as soon as is reasonably practicable.

**Notes on the Independent Person**

The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS) requires the school to identify at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. The role is voluntary although reasonable expenses for travel may be agreed in advance. The following procedure is to be followed in any appointments:

- Appointment procedures will be required to follow the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools standard 14 on Safer Recruitment standards
- The position is subject to the usual DBS, child protection, welfare and ‘whistleblowing’ requirements
- Offer an appropriate role description (this document) and briefing/induction
- Be clear that the position is independent of the main lines of school management, but still subject to the school’s specification and organisation
- Ensure Independent person knowledge of ‘school norms and expectations’
- There should be an awareness of perception of Independent persons other roles (e.g. police officer, governor, doctor, vicar, counsellor, local dignitary)
- There must be clear rules on confidentiality – and duty to breach if the event of disclosure or if informed of safeguarding risks pupils, there must be no absolute guarantee of secrecy

**Appendix 2: Prestfelde House Induction Checklist**

**Prestfelde House Induction Checklist**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Fire drill and Health &amp; Safety</b>   |  |
| <b>Organising dorms at bedtime in case of emergencies</b> i.e., shoes by bed, all trip hazards removed etc. |  |
| <b>Behaviour expectations:</b> see checklist in Prestfelde House  |  |
| <b>Speaking to an Adult:</b> Who to speak to if you have any concerns, issues, worries etc.                 |  |
| <b>Contact numbers:</b> Child Line, Independent person etc.   |  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Pupil Voice:</b> pupil suggestions box  |  |
| <b>Emergency bell:</b> doorbell at the end of the corridor on both the boys' and girls' floor links to Miss Vallonchini and Mrs. Keogh-Jones' houses               |  |
| <b>Use of technology:</b> no mobile phones in any year group. Laptops and Chromebooks (seniors) allowed but handed in to Miss Vallonchini after supper             |  |
| <b>Night-time/morning routine</b> i.e., bedding etc.   |  |
| <b>Tour of Prestfelde House</b> (for pupils new to boarding- a member of the boarding team will do this prior to )   |  |
| <b>Dorm leaders:</b> one pupil nominated as room leader (prefect) each night. This will be chosen based on behaviour and pupils demonstrating leadership qualities |  |

### Appendix 3: Risk Assessment for Dormitory Allocation

| Factor | Risk | Control Measures | Mitigation Strategies |
|--------|------|------------------|-----------------------|
|--------|------|------------------|-----------------------|

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Age Appropriateness</b>                         | Younger boarders feeling intimidated or overwhelmed by older pupils.   | Dormitories will generally remain age specific. In mixed-year dorms, clear expectations around behaviour and interaction will be established. | Regular staff check-ins and additional pastoral support to ensure younger boarders feel safe and included |
| <b>Character and Maturity Levels</b>               | Mismatched personalities (e.g., an extroverted boarder with a very introverted one) leading to discomfort or conflict. | Staff consider each boarder's temperament and social compatibility when making dormitory assignments.   | Dormitory adjustments can be made if necessary, with regular staff monitoring.                            |
| <b>Existing Friendships and Peer Relationships</b> | Isolating a boarder from their peer group or placing them with individuals they are uncomfortable with.                | Boarders may express preferences for roommates, which will be considered alongside safeguarding factors.                                      | Room assignments will be reviewed periodically to ensure positive relationships and resolve tensions.     |
| <b>Previous Boarding Experience</b>                | New boarders struggling with boarding routines when placed with more experienced boarders.                             | Newly enrolled boarders will be assessed and, where possible, paired with peers of similar experience levels.                                 | Additional support will be provided by house staff to ease transition.                                    |
| <b>Night-time Routines and Sleep Patterns</b>      | Differences in bedtime habits disrupting younger boarders' sleep.  | Dormitories are structured around similar age groups to reduce risks. Expectations around routines are clearly set.                           | Staff monitor night-time routines to ensure adherence to agreed schedules.                                |
| <b>Emotional and Behavioural Needs</b>             | Boarders with additional emotional or behavioural needs requiring special consideration.                               | A thorough understanding of each boarder's needs guides allocation decisions.   | Tailored support plans, additional pastoral oversight, and room adjustments where necessary.              |
| <b>Cultural and Personal Preferences</b>           | Lack of consideration for cultural backgrounds or personal preferences leading to discomfort or alienation.            | Cultural sensitivity is taken into account, with staff encouraging open conversations.  | Flexible allocations where necessary to ensure all boarders feel respected and included.                  |
| <b>Flexi-Boarders</b>                              | Disruption to full-time boarders due to the changing presence of flexi-boarders.                                       | Flexi-boarders are allocated sensitively with consideration of existing dynamics.   | Placements are reviewed periodically to ensure smooth integration.  |

## Monitoring and Review

All dormitory placements are subject to ongoing review. The Head of Boarding and house staff will frequently assess the dormitory dynamics, make adjustments as necessary, and gather feedback from boarders to ensure allocations meet the pastoral care standards of Prestfelde School. In any decision the review will be made taking into account needs and views of individuals along with the best interests of the boarding community as a whole.

In any situation where concerns arise regarding dormitory arrangements, staff will intervene swiftly to resolve issues, including rearranging dormitories if required. If an allegation is made against a boarder the school may consider moving dormitories as a neutral act during an investigation.

If an allegation of bullying between dorm mates is made and, following a thorough investigation, the allegation is substantiated, the perpetrator may be required to move dormitories (permanently or for a set time) where the school determines it is in the best interests of those concerned to do so. A risk assessment will then be carried out to determine a suitable reallocation, ensuring the wellbeing of all boarders involved. Restorative work will also be undertaken to support both the perpetrator and the victim, promoting understanding, accountability, and a positive boarding environment.

By following this risk assessment process, Prestfelde School ensures that dormitory allocations prioritise the safety, comfort, and emotional wellbeing of all boarders while balancing individual needs and preferences.