



Boundary Oak School

Boarding Handbook

Information for Parents & Guardians'





Welcome

We are thrilled that you are joining our boarding family at Boundary Oak. As parents, you will have many questions about how boarding works, we aim to answer as many as possible in this handbook. Quite often, parents feel more trepidation than children at this stage. Please, rest assured that we are here to guide you on this remarkable journey alongside your child.

Our Boarding House is more than just a place to stay; it is a second home.

We want every child to come up the stairs and feel safe, relaxed and completely at ease. A place where they are known, welcomed with warmth and valued for exactly who they are. Somewhere they can kick off their shoes, laugh with friends, share their day, and feel that comforting sense of belonging that comes from being truly cared for.

We believe children thrive when there is a balance of structure and freedom. Clear routines and steady guidance provide security, while space for fun, creativity and spontaneity brings joy to everyday life. We celebrate each child's interests and passions, encouraging them to explore, grow, and confidently be themselves.

Kindness, compassion, and trust sit at the heart of our community. We aim to create a home where friendships flourish, differences are respected, and everyone looks out for one another. Above all, we want every child that stays here to feel happy, supported and proud to call our house their home. Boarding at Boundary Oak is not just an extension of school; it is a family you will always belong to.

Miss Rutherford

HEAD OF BOARDING

Useful Contacts

Boarding Phone Number (after 18:30)

+44 (0)1329 553270

Boarding Duty Mobile Number (after 18:30)

+44 (0)7767 162986

Mrs Sophie Savage - Head of School

ssavage@boundaryoak.co.uk

Miss Amy Rutherford - Head of Boarding

arutherford@boundaryoak.co.uk

School Office

+44 (0)1329 280955

office@boundaryoak.co.uk

Term Time: 08:00-17:00 & School Holidays: 09:00-14:00

School Nurse - Mrs Jenna Miles

medical@boundaryoak.co.uk

School Bursar (Billing) - Mrs Eileen Lloyd

elloyd@boundaryoak.co.uk

Admissions

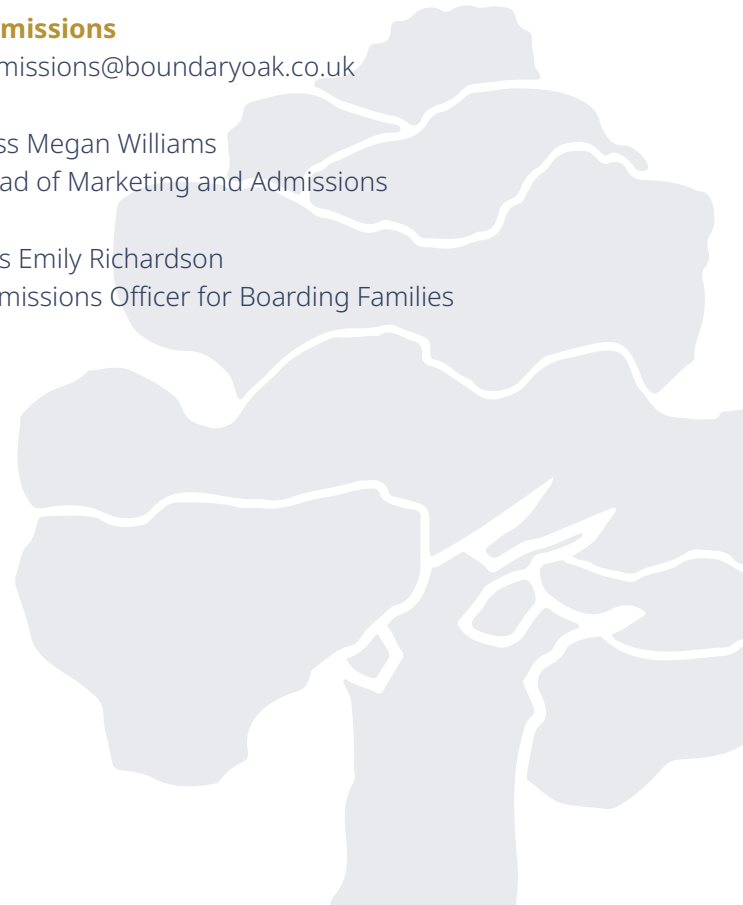
admissions@boundaryoak.co.uk

Miss Megan Williams

Head of Marketing and Admissions

Mrs Emily Richardson

Admissions Officer for Boarding Families



Who do I Contact?

For day to day academic and school queries, please contact your child's form tutor. They will be your first point of contact during the day.

If your child is absent from school or is likely to be late, please report this by calling The School Office or emailing **absence@boundaryoak.co.uk**.

The School Office will also help you book clubs, music, or drama lessons.

If you have any questions about financial matters or bursaries, please contact Mrs Sophie Savage, the Head of School. She will also be able to help you should there be any concerns about staff. If you need permission for your child to miss

school, you should ask permission from the Head of School.

Any questions about Boarding, contact Miss Amy Rutherford.

All safeguarding concerns should go to our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Caroline Phillips.



Boarding Communications

We understand how important it is for you to feel connected and supported while your child is boarding. As Head of Boarding, I want you to know that I am always here to answer your questions, listen to any concerns, and ensure that emails and phone calls are responded to promptly.

Before your child begins boarding, I will be in touch so we can talk through any questions or concerns you may have. If your child is returning after a school holiday, I will also check in beforehand to see how they are feeling about coming back and whether there have been any changes at home that we should be aware of to help make their return as smooth and happy as possible.

During your child's first week in boarding, I will give you a call to see how they are settling in and to answer any questions that may have arisen. Those first few days can feel like a lot to take in, and this conversation is a valuable opportunity for us to reflect on how things are going together.

To make staying in touch as easy as possible, I also hold weekly open office hours, when you can contact me via Microsoft Teams, telephone, or email and receive a prompt response. These sessions provide a dedicated opportunity to chat about your child's boarding experience or anything else that may be on your mind. If you are overseas and time differences make these times difficult, please let me know and we will happily arrange a time that works better for you.

Alongside regular updates on the Parent Portal and in the Friday News Bulletin, which share key dates and reminders, you will also receive a weekly Boarding Newsletter every Saturday. This is a wonderful way to keep up with the activities, achievements, and special memories your child is making as part of our boarding community.

How do I keep in touch with my child?

Children have access to their mobile phones during the evenings and at weekends. We do keep this time to a minimum so that they can fully immerse themselves in boarding life, build friendships, and make the most of the many opportunities on offer.

There are several comfortable spaces within the boarding house where children can enjoy some privacy while speaking with you. If you have had a particularly tearful or difficult conversation with your child, we would be grateful if you could let us know. Sometimes a call home can bring on feelings of homesickness, and by working together we can ensure your child receives the reassurance and support they need.

We know how special it is to see your child's smile, and video calls are a wonderful way of staying connected. To protect the privacy and wellbeing of all our boarders, we carefully choose suitable locations for these calls. We

really appreciate your patience while we help your child find a quiet, private space.

Traditional post is another lovely way to stay connected, and children are always excited to receive letters, cards, and postcards from home. We encourage them to write back too. Simply address any post to the school, making sure your child's name is clearly written on the envelope.

Receiving post is often a real highlight of the week. Many children proudly display their letters and cards around their bed space as a comforting reminder of home and the people who are thinking of them. Advent calendars, Valentine's cards, birthday wishes, and good luck messages during exam time are always especially appreciated and can make an ordinary day feel truly special.

Meet the Team



Mrs Amy Rutherford

HEAD OF BOARDING



Mr Jacob Rowe

BOARDING TUTOR



Mr George Barrett

BOARDING TUTOR &
HEAD OF CATERING

Our Boarding Team are supported by the School Nurse and a dedicated team of Boarding Assistants, who are completing a one-year placement. This year's Boarding Assistants are:

Mr Edwards

Miss Pointon

Miss Hoque

Arriving at the Start of Term

At the beginning of each new term, we warmly invite parents and guardians to join us for our Boarding Induction Evening. This is a wonderful opportunity to help your child settle into their boarding home, unpack together, and become familiar with the boarding environment before the evening routine begins. It also gives you time to meet the Boarding and Admissions teams, ask any questions, and share anything that will help us support your child throughout the term. We know that starting, or returning to, boarding is an important milestone for the whole family, and we hope this relaxed and welcoming evening gives you the confidence to leave knowing your child is happy, settled, and ready for the exciting term ahead.



Families to arrive for 15:00



15:00-16:00 - Tour of the School with the Admissions Team



16:00 - The Boarding House Opens

Parents & Guardians are invited to enjoy refreshments in the Library with the Boarding Team and School Nurse. Our Boarding Assistants will assist with the children's bags. You are welcome to help the children unpack and get settled.



18:00 - Boarders' Supper and Evening Activity

At this point in the evening, we ask you to say goodbye to your children before they join the Boarding Tutors and Assistants for supper and an evening activity. Miss Rutherford will remain in the Library should you have any questions or items you wish to raise before leaving.



18:30 - Parents & Guardians depart



19:00 - House Welcome

The Boarding Team host a House Welcome meeting and ask that no phones are used on the first night. Miss Rutherford will communicate with families after bedtime and first thing in the morning to detail how their first night went.

Returning After Half Term Breaks & Weekends

Following each half-term break, we ask that boarders return to the Boarding House on Sunday evening between 17:30 and 19:00. As the school kitchens will be closed, an evening meal will not be provided, so please ensure your child has eaten before they arrive. The boarding house kitchen will be open, with cereal, toast, fruit, and other light snacks available. Many children also enjoy bringing a pot of noodles or another favourite snack to have later in the evening.

If your child is a weekly boarder, or is returning after a weekend at home, we ask that they arrive back at the Boarding House on Sunday evening between 17:30 and 19:00. Dinner is served at 17:30, so if your child will be arriving after this time, please ensure they have eaten before they return.

Before each return, Miss Rutherford will send a weekly email asking you to confirm your child's arrival plans. If your plans change or you are delayed, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can ensure all safeguarding and registration procedures are completed correctly.

If you would prefer your child to return on Monday morning instead, simply let us know when you reply to Miss Rutherford's email so that we can make the necessary arrangements.



What is my Child's Routine?

07:00 - Rise and Shine

The day begins at 07:00 when we will make sure your child is awake. They will then make their bed, tidy their bedroom area, and prepare for the day ahead. Each dorm has a 'laundry duty' rota, with a designated boarder taking dirty laundry to the laundry house.

After tidying up, everyone gathers in the common room to ensure they are fully prepared for school. The Boarding House is not accessible during the school day to allow for cleaning and maintenance. We understand that children forget things they need, especially in the first few weeks. We ask that your child finds a member of the Boarding Team and asks for their support, we will accompany them back to the house where possible. Unsupervised access to the boarding house isn't allowed during the school day to ensure the safety of the children and their possessions.

07:40 - Breakfast Time

Breakfast is served at 07:40 in the Dining Hall. Your child will join other pupils attending the Breakfast Club, creating a lively and social start to the day. A variety of options will be available, including juice, fruit, cereals, toast, and a cooked breakfast, ensuring they have plenty of energy for the day ahead.

08:20 - School Day Begins

At 08:20, your child will head to their Form Tutor class for registration. This is also the time for boarders to visit the School Nurse for any regular medications or vitamins. Should your child feel unwell or need support during the day, they can reach out to us or the School Nurse for assistance.

16:15-17:15 - Clubs and Downtime

When lessons end at 16:15, pupils will go to their clubs and co-curricular activities. This provides pupils a daily opportunity to relax, socialise, and engage in activities of their interest.

17:30 - Big Tea

After clubs, your child will head to the Dining Hall for 'Big Tea,' the main evening meal. The menu offers a delicious and varied selection, different from the usual school fare. After dinner, we will ensure your child changes into non-uniform attire in preparation for the rest of the evening.

18:30 - Evenings in Boarding

We will meet your child after Big Tea and start our time boarding. There will be time for prep and quiet study, a variety of evening activities such as quizzes, evening walks, and craft. On some evenings there is access to the music department to enjoy practicing instruments. Wednesday is always a fun night with no prep and an evening activity planned. During the evening your child will collect their laundry, have time to contact home, and shower. There is access to our boarding kitchen for drinks and snacks. Bedtime is staggered, with our younger boarders going to bed at 20:30. By 22:00 all the lights are out and we expect quiet.



The A to Z of Boarding

A

Achievement

What happens when my child does well?

We are keen to encourage behaviour that goes above and beyond our expectations. We have a reward system in the boarding house where children can earn house points; boarding house points are converted into rewards such as; Amazon vouchers, Costa vouchers or treats. _

B

Birthdays

What happens when it is my child's birthday?

Birthdays in boarding are always special. We will wake your child to a wonderfully tuneful "Happy Birthday" and make sure they feel special all day long. You are welcome to order a cake from the school office for them to share in school and send in cards and presents for them to open in the evening. If you want to take them out for a birthday meal, please let us know.

E

Expectations

What are the Boarding House Expectations?

It is important for the children to have a clear differentiation between school and boarding, for this reason there are very few formal rules in the Boarding House. We consistently reinforce our expectations that boarders are safe, respectful, and kind. We do expect that bedtimes are respected. The boarding house is a home to a lot of people, it is vital that everyone living in the boarding house, staff included, has a healthy sleep routine. When we do lights out in the evening, it is our expectation that the house is quiet and sleep is prioritised. On the rare occasions that there are any serious breaches of school rules, boarding expectations or tech rules, these will be sanctioned in line with our behaviour policy.

F

Fire Procedures

Are Boarders taught the fire procedures?

At the start of each term, your child will be instructed on the school's fire safety procedures, including the actions to take in the event of a fire alarm. This is followed by a fire drill to ensure everyone is prepared. During the term, fire drills will take place at various times, including night or early morning. The fire alarm system is tested weekly.

Please pack your child with a dressing gown, slippers or sliders. These will be kept by their bed so they can leave the building safely during the night if there is an emergency. Hair straighteners or curling tongs are not allowed in school, as well as candles.

Food

Can my child bring their own food?

Food is a very important part of boarding! It can offer a true taste of home and really helps lift trickier days. We have a lovely kitchen in the boarding house with kettles, toaster, and microwave. Your child will have a secure space in the kitchen to keep their food, or “tuck” as we call it. Space is limited so please do not send too much; we have the chance to top up each weekend.

We are a nut free school; we cannot have any food containing nuts in school. Energy or caffeine drinks are also not allowed. Noodles and microwavable snacks are welcomed but shouldn't be an alternative to school meals; they are a brilliant idea for return days and weekends, however. It is a good idea to name food with a sharpie if possible.

We warmly welcome any treats to share from holidays abroad or from our international children; it can be fun to try new things together.

H

Homesick

What do I do if my child is homesick?

Feeling homesick is a very normal part of many children's boarding journey. While not every child experiences it, most will have moments when they miss home, and this is a natural part of settling into a new routine. It can be just as difficult for parents as it is for children, which is why we believe the best approach is for us to work together to support them.

If your child is finding the transition a little challenging, there are several simple strategies that can really help. Sometimes moving phone calls to the morning, or keeping them a little shorter for a few days, allows children to focus on building friendships and becoming absorbed in boarding life. If we feel this would benefit your child, we will always discuss it with you first so that we can decide on the best approach together.

To give every child the very best start, we do not use mobile phones on the first evening of boarding. Instead, we fill the evening with activities, games and time together, helping children get to know one another and begin to feel at home in the Boarding House. Once everyone is settled for the night, we will send you an email to let you know your child is safely asleep, followed by another message the next morning to reassure you that they have had a good first night.

On the second evening, your child will have an opportunity to call home. We kindly ask that this first call is kept to around ten minutes so that they can quickly return to the activities and continue building friendships and confidence. In our experience, this gentle approach helps children settle more quickly and feel part of the boarding community.

Above all, your child will never face those wobbly moments alone. Our boarding team is always on hand to listen, reassure and encourage. Sometimes all it takes is a friendly chat, a reassuring hug, or a mug of hot chocolate to help everything feel a little brighter.

M

Money

Does my child need pocket money?

If your child is a full boarder, we recommend that they have access to pocket money. We visit shops each weekend and it is important for the children to learn to budget and spend. We would advise a card or app-

based account such as Revolut, Monzo, or Go Henry. This gives you reassurance in their spending and is more secure than the children having cash in school. If your child has their bank card saved on their phone, it offers another layer of security. When you arrive at Boundary Oak, please hand any physical bank cards or cash to the boarding team and they will be kept locked in our safe until they are needed.

N

Nurse

What happens if my child is unwell?

If your child becomes unwell while they are with us, they will be cared for by our experienced boarding and healthcare teams. Our First Aid Room is staffed by a qualified nurse and healthcare assistants from 8:00 to 17:00, providing support for minor illnesses and injuries, ongoing medical needs, and emergencies when required.

When your child joins the school, they will be introduced to the First Aid Room and the healthcare team so they know where to go if they need support. The nurse will also complete a routine height, weight and blood pressure check and provide an opportunity for your child to discuss any medical needs or wellbeing concerns.

Outside of school hours, boarding staff will support your child and seek medical advice whenever needed. If there are any concerns about their health, or if they require further medical attention, we will contact you promptly and keep you informed.

Our local GP surgery is Wickham Surgery, where parents may choose to register their child during their time at school. Our nurse and boarding team are happy to support families with this process if required.

P

Packing

Will there be help with packing and unpacking?

Before your child joins us, you will receive a recommended packing list to help you prepare for boarding. If there is one piece of advice we could give above all else, it is this: please name absolutely everything! And we really do mean everything – right down to both socks! Clothes, shoes, water bottles, towels, and everyday essentials all have a habit of wandering, and a name makes it so much easier for lost items to find their way home.

Personalised name stamps are a fantastic investment, and we highly recommend having one at home as well as sending one in with your child so that new items can easily be labelled throughout the year. Home clothes are particularly easy to forget, so it's worth checking these before each return to boarding.

When you arrive, you will have plenty of time to help your child unpack and settle into their room. We encourage you to show them where everything has been put, as this helps them feel more independent once you have left. When it is time to pack for home, our Boarding Team will be on hand to gently guide and encourage them. It doesn't take long before they become confident, organised packers!

Are there any items I should pack for my child to help settle in?

Alongside the packing list, there are a few little touches that can make a big difference in helping your child feel settled and at home in the Boarding House.

We encourage you to pack a few printed family photographs for your child. Every boarder has photo frames by their bed, and having familiar faces nearby can be a great source of comfort, especially during those first few

weeks. Photos of pets are always a favourite and often become a wonderful talking point with friends.

We provide all bed linen, but if your child would feel more comfortable with their own duvet cover, pillow or blanket, they are very welcome to bring them. Familiar bedding can make a new room feel much more like home. Blankets are particularly useful, as they often come along to campfires, film nights and cosy evenings in the boarding house.

To help children make their space their own, battery-operated fairy lights or rechargeable bedside or reading lamps are welcome. For safety reasons, we try to keep plug-in electrical items to a minimum, but these simple additions can make a bedroom feel warm, personal and inviting.

One of our favourite traditions is our Mug Wall in the boarding kitchen. We ask each child to bring a mug that reflects their personality, whether it's colourful, quirky or simply a favourite from home. It's a lovely way to add a little piece of themselves to the boarding community.

And finally, the most important packing advice of all... teddies board completely free of charge at Boundary Oak! Whether they are well-loved companions or lucky mascots, we can't wait to welcome them to the Boarding House too.

What toiletries should I pack?

Your child will need a full set of toiletries, and, as with everything they bring to boarding, we ask that each item is clearly named. It's easy to remember the toothbrush and toothpaste, but items such as combs, hairbrushes and nail clippers are often forgotten, so it's worth double-checking before they arrive.

For the safety and comfort of everyone in the Boarding House, aerosol products are not permitted. Please ensure that deodorants are roll-on or stick varieties, and that hairspray, perfume and aftershave are all non-

aerosol alternatives

Hairdryers are welcome, and we recommend bringing a small, inexpensive one that is easy to store. As mentioned earlier, hair straighteners and curling tongs are not permitted in school. Hair dye and bleach should not be brought into school.

If your child shaves, they may bring a safety razor. Please let a member of the Boarding Team know when they arrive, as we keep a simple record of who has razors as part of our safeguarding procedures. Dermaplaning razors are not permitted.

If you are ever unsure whether an item is suitable to pack, please don't hesitate to ask. We're always happy to help. Boarding staff also keep a discreet eye on purchases made during weekend trips to ensure that prohibited items are not brought back into the Boarding House.

S

Socialising

What happens if my child is invited to a friend's house or to parties?

It is really important that we help your child maintain a healthy social life outside of school whilst boarding. If they are invited to friends or parties, we will work with you to ensure they get the opportunity to join in. We will always ask your permission first and make sure plans are in place to keep them safe.

T

Technology

What technology can my child bring?

We try to strike the right balance for our children, allowing them access to technology and giving them time away from it. There are different rules for tech depending on your child's year group.

When your child starts boarding, they will have a Tech Induction with Mr Kates. During this time they will have their devices connected to our Wi-Fi and will be asked to sign our ICT Code of Conduct. Portable Wi-Fi, tethering or VPNs are strictly prohibited to keep children safe. Smart watches, including Fitbit are also not allowed in school. Kindles and readers are also discouraged as children cannot have them at bedtime due to their Wi-Fi connection capabilities. We favour traditional books!

Mobile phones are not allowed during the school day or overnight, your child's phone will be kept locked in our safe until the evening. We encourage safe and respectful phone use and help the children make good choices about the content they are accessing. We ensure they know how to report issues or worries and will work with you if they experience any negativity online.

Trips and Activities

Do you do trips and activities outside of school?

Weekends are a special time at Boundary Oak, and it is where boarding comes alive. We work hard to create a balanced weekend programme that gives children a feeling of family experiences alongside opportunities to try new activities.

Our weekend programme is designed to gently challenge the children and to build a sense of community. We aim to publish the full programme half termly in advance, occasionally the British weather will cause plans to change but we will let you know if this happens. There is time for study and relaxation during the weekend, as well as time to exercise. Every weekend will be an opportunity to visit shops so children can top up on personal items and tuck.

Our trips and activities reflect the school's fundamental British values and give our international children a real taste of Britain.

The last weekend of each half term will feature a "big" trip. This is open to all boarders, not just full boarders. If your child has stayed with us on an ad hoc, flexi or weekly basis, they will be very welcome to join us on this trip, and we will send a sign-up form closer to the time.

V

Visiting

Can I visit my child?

You and other relatives are always welcome to visit your child during evenings or weekends; we just ask that you let us know in advance. If a relative is visiting who we haven't met yet, we will need your permission and some identification from the relative to keep your child safe. If you are heading overseas and want to take your child out for a meal, we are happy to allow a later bedtime to accommodate this. Just let us know your plans and we will do all we can to make sure your child has a wonderful time with you and their family.



Boundary Oak School

Where We Flourish

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