Charitable Objects of St. Catherine's School- *The Objects for which the Company is established are to promote and provide for the advancement of education by providing, conducting, governing, carrying on and maintaining in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere, a boarding or day School or Schools for girls in which the teaching shall be in accordance with the principles of the Church of England.*

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL BRAMLEY

SENIOR SCHOOL FITNESS TO BOARD POLICY

'Believe… Achieve… Succeed'

Policy Holder:	Tracy Evans
Date Approved:	June 2026
Approval:	Pastoral and Wellbeing Committee
Date for next review:	June 2029

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are statutory revisions.

1. The Policy

St Catherine's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare, safety, and wellbeing of all pupils. This Fitness to Board Policy outlines how decisions are made when concerns arise about a pupil's ability to remain safely within boarding accommodation. The objectives of the policy are:

To ensure the health, safety and welfare of all our students.

To provide a clear framework for assessing and supporting pupils' fitness to board.

To establish a process for addressing concerns related to a pupil's fitness to board.

To ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

A decision that a pupil is temporarily or permanently unfit to board is not a disciplinary measure. Such decisions are taken solely in the best interests of the pupil and/or others and are rooted in safeguarding, pastoral care, and the School's duty of care.

This policy applies to:

- All boarding pupils at St Catherine's School.
- All decisions relating to temporary or longer-term removal from boarding, including modified or partial boarding arrangements.

2. School Procedures

All fitness to board decisions at St Catherine's School will be:

- Child-centred, with the pupil's welfare as the paramount consideration
- Safeguarding-led and risk assessed
- Proportionate and supportive
- Time-limited wherever possible
- Evidence-based and clearly documented
- Fair, consistent, and legally compliant

No pupil will be deemed unfit to board solely due to a disability, special educational need, or mental health condition.

Criteria for Fitness to Board

A pupil is deemed fit to board if they meet the following criteria:

Physical Health: The pupil must be in a state of physical health that allows them to participate in school and boarding activities without posing a risk to themselves or others.

Mental Health: The pupil must have a level of mental and emotional stability that enables them to handle the boarding environment's demands, including communal living, academic pressures, and social interactions.

Behaviour: The pupil must demonstrate behaviour that is respectful, cooperative, and conducive to a positive boarding environment. They should adhere to the School's Behaviour Policy.

Self-Care: The pupil should have the ability to manage their own personal hygiene, medication (if applicable), and other daily living requirements with minimal assistance.

Criteria for Continued Boarding: Establish clear criteria for determining whether a student can continue to board. This might include improvement required in health and wellbeing, consistent academic performance, and positive social interactions. Make sure these criteria are communicated clearly to all parties involved.

3. Parent / Guardian Responsibilities

Parents and guardians play a vital role in ensuring that a child is suitably prepared for boarding life. By accepting a boarding place, parents/guardians confirm:

They have given careful consideration to their daughter's readiness for boarding and agree to the responsibilities outlined below.

Their understanding of, and agreement with, the responsibilities outlined above and acknowledgement that boarding placements are subject to ongoing review in the best interests of the child and the wider community

3.1. Health and Wellbeing

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their daughter is fit to engage fully and safely in boarding school life.

- Parents/guardians confirm that their daughter is in good physical and mental health and is able to participate in the academic, social, and pastoral aspects of boarding.
- Parents/guardians must fully disclose to the School all relevant medical, psychological, emotional, or developmental information, including (but not limited to) ongoing treatments, diagnoses, allergies, medication, or support needs.
- Parents/guardians acknowledge that accurate and timely information is essential to enable the School to provide appropriate care and support.
- Failure to disclose relevant information may compromise the wellbeing of the student and others and may result in a review of the student's suitability for boarding.

3.2. Emotional and Social Readiness

Boarding requires a level of independence, resilience, and emotional maturity.

- Parents/guardians should ensure that their daughter is emotionally ready to live away from home and adapt to the expectations of a boarding environment.
- Parents/guardians understand that boarding involves communal living, shared spaces, routines, and adherence to the School rules and expectations.
- Parents/guardians confirm that they have discussed boarding life with their daughter and believe they are prepared to engage positively with peers, staff, and the wider boarding community

3.3. Behaviour and Conduct

Positive behaviour is essential to the wellbeing of the boarding community.

- Parents/guardians confirm that their daughter understands the importance of respectful behaviour, cooperation, and personal responsibility.

- Parents/guardians agree to support and reinforce the School's policies relating to behaviour, conduct, safeguarding, and pastoral care.
- Parents/guardians understand that persistent or serious behavioural concerns may result in a review of the student's ongoing suitability for boarding.

3.4. Communication and Ongoing Support

Effective partnership between home and school is key to a successful boarding experience.

- Parents/guardians commit to maintaining open, honest, and timely communication with the School.
- Parents/guardians agree to respond promptly and constructively to any concerns raised by staff.
- Parents/guardians recognise the importance of providing emotional encouragement and support to their daughter during their time as a boarder and will maintain appropriate and regular contact.
- Parents/guardians recognise that they may, at short notice, be required to collect their daughter from boarding should there be concerns for her health, safety or wellbeing.

4. Circumstances Where Fitness to Board Decisions May Be Considered

Fitness to board decisions may be considered where concerns arise relating to:

- Medical or mental health needs
- Safeguarding risks
- Emotional or behavioural regulation
- Temporary crises or significant changes in circumstances
- The emergence of previously undisclosed history that may affect fitness to board

5. Decision-Making Process

Concerns may be raised by boarding staff, pastoral leaders, medical staff, safeguarding staff, or parents.

An initial risk assessment will be undertaken to determine whether the pupil can remain safely in boarding in the short term. Relevant information will be gathered, including medical advice, pastoral records, safeguarding concerns, SEND information, and the pupil's voice where appropriate.

Decisions will normally be made by a panel which may include:

- Head or Senior Leadership Team
- School Psychologist
- School GP where appropriate

- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Deputy Head (Boarding, Culture and Community) or Boarding Housemistress
- School Nurse or Medical Lead
- SENCo (where relevant)

A thorough evaluation of the pupil's health and behaviour will be conducted, which may include consultations with external medical or mental health professionals. Support strategies may be implemented or adjusted as necessary to ensure the pupil's ongoing fitness to board. The following support and interventions may be put in place:

Individual Support Plans: Pupils identified as having specific needs will have a Pupil Risk Assessment developed, outlining accommodations and support strategies.

Counselling Services: Access to counselling and mental health services will be provided to support pupils experiencing difficulties.

Health Services: Medical support, including medication management and emergency care, will be available through the School's health centre.

Where a pupil is deemed unfit to board, the decision will be clearly recorded and accompanied by a review date and conditions for return, if applicable.

Before determining that a pupil is unfit to board, St Catherine's School will consider reasonable alternatives, including:

- Reduced or modified boarding
- Day attendance
- Enhanced pastoral or medical support

Crisis Response: In the case of a crisis, a crisis response plan will be developed for situations where a pupil's fitness to board becomes a concern, such as sudden illness, mental health crises, or severe behavioural issues. This plan should include steps for immediate care, communication with parents, an evaluation of risk to students and decisions about the pupil's continued stay in the boarding house. A guardian may be asked to attend to take direct responsibility for a student in crisis whilst assessments and plans are structured. Referral to external agencies can be undertaken i.e. CAMHs, LADO.

6. Temporary or Permanent Removal from Boarding

Temporary Removal: If a pupil is deemed temporarily unfit to board, alternative arrangements will be made such as an agreed and appropriate period living with their parent/guardian, and a reintegration plan will be developed to support their return.

Permanent Removal: In cases where a pupil's needs cannot be adequately met within the boarding environment, permanent removal may be considered. This decision will involve consultation with healthcare providers, relevant school staff, and ensuring the pupil's best

interests are prioritised. Parents/guardians will be informed about the decision and given the opportunity to appeal the decision.

7. Communication

Parents will be involved at an early stage and provided with clear, compassionate communication explaining the rationale for decisions. Written confirmation will follow meetings, and the pupil's views will be considered where appropriate.

8. Review and Reintegration

All fitness to board decisions will be reviewed regularly. Reintegration into boarding will be carefully planned and supported, based on updated risk assessments and professional advice.

9. Record Keeping

Accurate and secure records will be maintained in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

I understand that the School reserves the right to review a pupil's suitability for boarding if there are concerns regarding their health, wellbeing, safety or ability to participate successfully in boarding life, and that additional information or professional advice may be requested where appropriate.

I have read and understood this Fitness to Board Policy and confirm that all relevant information has been shared with the School.

Parent 1 Full Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent 2 Full Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____