BOARDING POLICY

PRINCIPLES, PRACTICE AND FITNESS TO BOARD

Prior Park College

Policy Owner Head of Boarding	**Applies to** Prior Park College (PPC)	**Superseded documents** NA
Associated documents Behaviour Policy Safeguarding Policy Health and Safety Policy Risk Assessment Policy Health Care for Boarders Policy Medical Conditions Policy Students Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy	**Review frequency** Every two years (unless the legislation/regulations update before this time) **Implementation date** 20 November 2026	**Legal Framework** NMS for Boarding 2026 Supporting students at school with medical conditions 2015 Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 KCSIE 2026

This policy is reviewed biennially, or more regularly as required, prior to approval by Trustees, where applicable.

Last reviewed by:	Head of Boarding (Mr D Holmes), House Parents (Mr L Andrews and Mrs T Davis Webb), Lead Nurse (Mrs G Young) and Head of Compliance (Miss E Wickham)
Date last reviewed:	August 2026
Approved by Trustees:	NA Approved by Headmaster (Mr B Horan)
Date last approved:	November 2026
Date for next approval:	November 2028

1. Introduction

Prior Park Schools (PPS) is a family of Christian schools based in Bath and Gibraltar. Prior Park College (PPC) and Prior Park Paragon (PPP) are incorporated in England as Prior Park Educational Trust Ltd. Prior Park Gibraltar (PPG), is incorporated in Gibraltar as Prior Park School Ltd. Both are companies limited by guarantee and registered charities.

The Prior Park Schools mission, underpinned by shared values, is to steward a thriving family of communities with love for the young people they serve at their heart. These vibrant communities cultivate creativity, foster integrity, and transform lives.

Prior Park Schools Values:

Curiosity – Generosity – Courage

2. Aims and Purpose

With a higher ratio of students to adults in a boarding house than typically found in a domestic environment, it is not always possible for a school to provide an appropriate environment for a student where their needs require more intensive supervision and support. There may therefore be times when the school determines that it cannot reasonably accommodate a student in the boarding environment, whether for pastoral, behavioural, disciplinary or health reasons. In these circumstances, the school will work closely with the student and their family to ensure that there is a supportive transition away from boarding, and, should the situation improve, to reintegrate them back into boarding at a later date.

This policy aims to set out how an assessment of a student's suitability to board is undertaken, and what support the school will offer.

This policy links to our Safeguarding Policy, and has been written to align with the school's parent terms and conditions and national guidance on safeguarding and boarding standards (Keeping Children Safe in Education, and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding), along with our own internal policies on expected behaviours (for example, but not limited to: Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child on Child Abuse Policy, E-Safety Policy and Student Progress and Intervention Policy).

PPC aims to provide a caring and stimulating boarding environment, where boarding contributes to students' overall development.

Clinical input from the Lead Nurse informs Fitness to Board decisions where relevant.

3. Boarding Principles and Practice

Learning to live and grow up in a boarding community offers opportunities for students to develop as individuals in a number of important ways:

- Developing values – from experience and sharing come respect, tolerance, courtesy and a growing responsibility for others (practised particularly as mentors and prefects)
- Developing self-awareness and resilience – becoming aware of one's strengths and weaknesses and those of others
- Developing increasing physical and emotional independence and independence of thought, particularly valuable in preparing for life post PPC.

There are two boarding houses at PPC, one girls' house and one boys' house, but during the school day, all boarders join one of the nine-day houses, two of these are junior houses and the remaining seven are split into four boys' houses and three girls' houses, all containing a mix of boarding and day students.

Evenings and weekends see a range of activities both in school and off-site for students to involve themselves in and to develop their talents and interests. Opportunities for leadership, present in many co-curricular activities, are also promoted through the prefect system, which is an important part of the pastoral structure in our boarding houses.



Our boarding practice aims to:

- Promote the welfare, safety and health of every individual.
- Foster a sense of community and belonging among our students, encouraging positive relationships, mutual respect, and a supportive atmosphere.
- Provide the academic resources, study spaces, and support to help our students excel in their studies
- Facilitate opportunities for personal development, encouraging students to explore their interests and talents.
- Prioritise the mental and physical well-being of our students through wellness programs, counselling services, and initiatives that promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Encourage independence among our students, helping them develop essential life skills that prepare them for future challenges.
- Offer a variety of recreational and social activities to create a balanced and enjoyable boarding experience, fostering a sense of camaraderie and fun among our students.
- Establish transparent and open communication channels with parents or guardians, keeping them informed about their child's progress and well-being.
- Encourage teamwork fostering an environment where students can work with each other to achieve common goals.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop leadership skills within the boarding community.
- To continue to raise awareness and embed equality, diversity and inclusion amongst our community.

Our central aim is to ensure students feel happy and fulfilled, which we believe is rooted in a strong sense of safety and care. This is fostered by well-qualified, experienced staff who are deeply committed to children's wellbeing and supported through regular, high-quality professional development.

A boarding education provides opportunities to encourage the development of both the individual and the community and is also a means to instil and develop personal values.

The boarding environment is designed to meet students' general pastoral and daily living needs; where a student's healthcare requirements exceed this capacity, Fitness to Board procedures will be followed.

Fitness to Board

Attached at Appendix A is our Fitness to Board Policy, which should be read in conjunction with the Boarding Policy, Principles and Practice.

The Fitness to Board Policy will be reviewed alongside this policy on an annual basis by the Head of Boarding and the Deputy Head Pastoral.

Clinical assessment supports the Head of Boarding and Lead Nurse in determining whether a student is fit to remain in boarding or requires an alternative level of care.

Appendix A

Fitness to Board Policy

1. Introduction

The wellbeing of all our students is paramount at PPC. This policy outlines the criteria and procedures for assessing a student's fitness to board, ensuring a safe, healthy, and supportive residential environment.

2. Objectives

- To ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all our students.
- To provide a clear framework for assessing and supporting students' fitness to board.
- To establish a process for addressing concerns related to a student's fitness to board.
- To ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, and parents/guardians at PPC.

To board safely and successfully, students are expected to be able to exercise responsibility in areas such as engaging with medical support; participating cooperatively in school life; following care plans and safety plans.

Fitness to board decisions are informed by clinical assessment and the ability of the boarding environment to safely meet a student's needs.

4. Criteria for Fitness to Board

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

Physical Health: Students 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.
Emotional and Mental Health: Students 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: Students 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 student should have the ability to manage their own personal hygiene, medication (if applicable), and other daily living requirements with minimal assistance.
Care Capacity: Students must be able to have their healthcare needs safely met within the boarding environment without requiring continuous nursing-level supervision.
Criteria for Continued Boarding: Students must continue to follow the procedures and rule of the school, both academically and pastorally, whilst in school and out in the community.

The Head of Boarding, Deputy Head Pastoral, House Parent and The Lead Nurse will exercise professional when assessing a student's fitness to board.

Admissions and Induction

Pre-Admission: All prospective students, regardless of whether they are boarding students, will be interviewed by the Head and/or one of the Deputy Heads, alongside taking reference from their current/previous school.

Boarding students must complete a health questionnaire and provide medical history, including any existing physical or mental health conditions, medication taken and this should be accompanied with a Doctors/Specialists letter (in English) before they arrive at the school.

Medical Examination: All boarding students undergo a health check upon induction at the school at the Health and Wellbeing Centre (H&WBC). The school may require a health examination by the H&WBC Team or a registered doctor to assess the student's fitness to board. All boarding students (where applicable) will be registered with our local Doctors surgery and local specialist teams within Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) appropriate, via the H&WBC.

Fitness to board is determined by clinical assessment and professional judgement rather than isolated symptoms alone.

In situations where there is uncertainty regarding a student's ability to safely remain in boarding, the Deputy Head Pastoral, Head of Boarding and Lead Nurse may take a precautionary approach pending further assessment or external medical advice.

5. Assessment Process

Various factors may lead boarding staff to question whether it is appropriate for a student to be accommodated within boarding. Consideration will be given to whether the student's needs can be safely and appropriately met within the boarding environment overnight.

Such factors may include;

- A concern over whether boarding is in the best interest of the child and/or other children in their House;
- whether the school can reasonably accommodate or make adjustments for a child's health, behavioural or pastoral needs; and/or
- disciplinary concerns about the child's behaviour.

For students to board safely and successfully, they are expected to be able to exercise responsibility in areas such as engaging with medical support; participating cooperatively in school life; following care plans and safety plans.

Initial Assessment:

If information comes to light that leads staff to question whether a student is fit to board, an initial assessment is made. Several factors influence how this assessment is made, such as the nature of boarding structures (rooms, staffing, routines), the nature of the concern, the school's duty of care towards the child, other children or staff, current professional guidelines, statutory obligations, (to include, where applicable, the Equality Act 2010) and the physical environment of boarding.

It will often be necessary to consider information and input to the assessment from other sources both within and outside of the school. It will always include discussions with the student and their parent/guardian. Other sources many included;

- If there is a physical or mental health element, advice from the Lead Nurse/Health and Wellbeing Centre is usually sought in the first instance. It may also be appropriate to seek verbal or written opinion from the school GP, hospital consultant, psychiatrist, psychologist or other healthcare professionals involved in the care of the child;
- If there is a Safeguarding element, advice from the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or a DDSL is sought. In some instances, it may also be appropriate to seek external advice from relevant external education safeguarding officers or social care professionals.

In all cases, the assessment is discussed between relevant members of the school's SLT, Head of Boarding (HOB), Lead Nurse, and the students HsM, before any conclusion is reached as to next steps.

Usually, any concerns will thereafter be addressed and resolved informally with appropriate support and guidance being put in place.

Where a student is deemed to be unsuitable for boarding, they are expected to return home or be cared for by a guardian. Due consideration will be given to how this move can be made safely and successfully given the reasons why a student is unsuitable for boarding, and support will be given by the House team. But the responsibility for this ultimately lies with the parent and/or guardian.
In limited circumstances, the temporary removal of the student from the boarding environment pending a full review may be appropriate.

It is sometimes but not always appropriate for a student to continue to attend lessons as a day student whilst they are away from the boarding environment, and due consideration will be given to this as part of any decision on suitability for boarding.

Full Review Procedure:

A fuller review will be necessary if informal resolution is not deemed appropriate and/or if the student has been temporarily removed from boarding. This assessment may require input from other professionals, such as the school's Counselling team, a GP or external medical or mental health specialist. The advice from these professionals' feeds into an assessment process undertaken by the school that considers the child's needs and what the school is safely and reasonably able to provide in terms of support and adjustments.

The timing of this review will vary depending on the reason for absence, recovery or improvements, and the speed of obtaining information from external sources. Although parents or the child may sometimes wish to 'get back to normal' as quickly as possible, it is in the best interests of all that a full picture is gathered and evaluated in a balanced way to ensure the correct decision is made

If the student has been temporarily removed from boarding following the initial assessment, the outcome of the review will usually be that the student either;
- returns to boarding with a plan of support in place;
- has a phased return to boarding with a plan of support in place; or
- remains as a day student, possibly with a plan for a further review in due course, (subject, where applicable, to visa restrictions- please see below).

If the School has been able to reasonably accommodate the student remaining in boarding pending the outcome of the review, the outcome of it will usually be that the student either:
- remains in boarding, on a temporary or permanent basis, with a plan of support in place, (and with regular reviews thereafter); or

- leaves boarding but remains as a day student, (subject, where applicable, to visa restrictions- please see below) usually with a plan for a future review should the student wish to return to boarding in the future.

Crisis/Incident-Based Assessment:

When a serious incident or crisis happens, use the steps below to guide your response:

a. Deal with the immediate situation

- Make sure the student (and others) are safe.
- Get medical or pastoral help straight away if needed.
- Inform the Head of Boarding and/or Deputy Head Pastoral as soon as possible.

b. Do a quick initial review

- Have a same-day (or next-day) discussion between the Houseparent and senior pastoral staff.
- Agree:
    - What has happened
    - Any immediate risks
    - Whether the student can safely stay in boarding for now

c. Let parents/guardians know

- Contact parents/guardians promptly.
- Share a clear, factual account of the incident and what has been done so far.

d. Make a short-term decision

Decide what happens over the next few days:

- Stay in boarding with support
- Stay with closer supervision or adjustments
- Go home temporarily if needed for safety or recovery

e. Hold a follow-up meeting

- Arrange a meeting with relevant people (student, parents, Houseparent, pastoral staff, and others as needed).
- Use this to:
    - Understand what led to the incident
    - Decide whether the student is currently fit to board
    - Agree what support is needed

f. Put a support plan in place

This might include:

- Pastoral check-ins
- Health or wellbeing support
- Clear expectations and boundaries
- Adjustments to routine or boarding life

g. Keep it under review

- Check in regularly with the student and staff.
- Adjust the plan depending on how things are going.

h. Reassess if needed

- If things don't improve, or there's another incident:
    - Review again

- Consider external professional advice
- Think about whether boarding is still the right setting

i. Make a clear decision

- Decide one of the following:
  - Fit to continue boarding (with or without support)
  - Fit with specific conditions
  - Not currently fit to board (temporary or longer-term)

6. Considerations for International Students:

International students who are temporarily unable to board and are subject to immigration control, may, within the terms of their visa, reside with their Guardian for a short time (up to a maximum of 27 consecutive nights) and, if possible, attend the school as a day student.
After this time, the student must either;

- return to boarding if it is possible for them to do so;
- return to their home country for further recovery;
- If under 16, and with the agreement of the school, the child enters a private fostering arrangement as directed by the local authority. This requires a process involving parents, the foster family, the School and the local authority; or
- If the student is over 16, an 'independent living' arrangement may be possible. This requires agreement from the school and completion of parental consent to 'live independently' in the UK. The school will monitor the student for the duration of the independent living arrangement to make sure they are safe and compliant with immigration rules.

As a visa sponsor, the school must notify UKVI of any change in a student's care arrangements within 10 working days e.g. private fostering arrangements or independent living arrangements.

Due to visa restrictions, international students under 16 cannot bring family members (dependants) to reside with them in the UK, unless they have a parent or relative in the UK that has a British or settled visa status.

An exception to the above is possible if the student is under the age of 12 or has siblings below the age of 12 currently in a school in the UK, and whose parent resides in the UK under a Parent of a Child Student Visa.

In all cases, advice will be sought from the school's visa advisor before any arrangement is made.

Please note, the above terms of visa sponsorship, by which the school must abide, are accurate at the time of writing. If these rules change, the school will have to abide by the current rules in place, as defined by UKVI.

7. Support and Interventions

Support plans may be used either within boarding or as part of a temporary non-boarding arrangement depending on the outcome of a Fitness to Board decision.

If a student is removed, either temporarily or permanently, from boarding, the school will implement support and adjustments as it reasonably can, to meet the needs of the student.

Measures may include:

- meetings between the student and/or parents and Guardian with pastoral staff and senior staff;
- support from the student's tutor around how to explain the student's absence to friends;

- counselling in person or remotely;
- ongoing support with medical appointments and referrals;
- help with travel arrangements;
- assistance in keeping up with academic work, or catching the student up, on their return, depending on the circumstances;
- facilitation of interaction with peers in order to minimise as far as possible any feelings of isolation the student may feel.

8. Permanent Removal from Boarding

In cases where a student's needs cannot be adequately met within the boarding environment, permanent removal may be considered. This decision will involve consultation with parents/guardians, healthcare providers, and relevant school staff, ensuring the student's best interests are prioritised. The Head will make the final decision regarding permanent removal (Please see our Exclusions Policy).

If a student is to be excluded from boarding the Head will discuss this with the parents directly to ascertain whether the student can meet expectations to continue at PPC as a day student as an alternative to permanent exclusion or withdrawal.

If it is deemed that the student can continue as a day student, there is an additional requirements, as per section 6, for International students.

9. Appeals Process

If the parents/guardians are unhappy with the outcome decision, they can ask for the decision to be reviewed.

They will need to make a formal request to the Clerk to Trustees within five working days.

A Trustee, who has not been involved in the original discussions with the Head, will review the evidence which the school/Head had when making the decision to expel/permanently exclude, and a record of the process followed (notes of the meetings, etc). The student and/or their parents are able to make representations either in writing or in person, and the Trustee may also ask for the Head to be present to explain the basis on which the decision was reached.

The review decision is final.
Timeframes

- The review will take a maximum of 15 working days to complete.
- The outcome will be sent to the parents via email.

10. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All information related to a student's fitness to board will be treated confidentially and stored securely using the school's Safeguarding system, CPOMs.

CPOMs holds detailed records of all assessments, interventions, and communications related to the student's fitness to board.

Relevant information may be shared between pastoral, safeguarding and medical teams on a need-to-know basis to ensure student safety. This includes health reports, meeting notes, and action plans.

Access to this information will be limited to those directly involved in the assessment and support process.

Clinical records held within CPOMs and iSAMS medical module may be used collectively to support safeguarding and welfare decision-making.

11. Staff Training:

PPC provides ongoing training for staff on recognising and addressing issues related to students' fitness to board, including mental health, first aid, safeguarding, and pastoral care skills.

Training includes understanding the Fitness to Board framework and the role of the Lead Nurse in clinical decision-making.

APPENDIX B

PRIOR PARK COLLEGE FITNESS TO BOARD ASSESSMENT FORM

Student Name: _____
Date of Assessment: _____
Year Group: _____
House: _____
Assessor(s): _____
Time of Assessment: _____

Reason for Assessment
What concern has prompted this Fitness to Board assessment?
☐ Physical health concern
☐ Mental health/emotional wellbeing concern
☐ Behavioural concern
☐ Safeguarding concern
☐ Following illness or injury
☐ Following hospital admission
☐ Return to boarding following absence
☐ Other (please specify)

Information Considered
Please indicate sources of information used during the assessment:
☐ Student discussion
☐ Parent/guardian discussion
☐ Houseparent / House Manager discussion
☐ Medical records (iSAMS)
☐ CPOMS records
☐ Care plan / healthcare plan
☐ Risk assessment
☐ GP advice
☐ Consultant / specialist advice
☐ Counsellor / Mental Health Practitioner
☐ DSL / DDSL
☐ Other (please specify)

Clinical and Wellbeing Assessment
Presenting Concern:

Physical Health
Current health status:

Relevant observations (if undertaken):

Emotional Wellbeing / Mental Health

Behaviour and Engagement

Ability to Self-Manage

Consider:
Personal care
Medication management
Following care plans
Seeking support appropriately
Assessment:

Boarding Capability Assessment

Can the student's needs be safely met within the boarding environment?
Consider:
☐ Ability to participate in boarding routines
☐ Ability to access support appropriately
☐ Requirement for overnight monitoring
☐ Requirement for medical intervention
☐ Impact on other students
☐ Staffing capacity
☐ Safeguarding considerations
☐ Environmental considerations
☐ Risk of deterioration
☐ Other relevant factors
Comments:

Professional Judgement and Decision

Based on the information available, the student's needs:
☐ Can be safely met within the boarding environment
☐ Can be met with additional support and monitoring
☐ Cannot currently be safely met within the boarding environment
Clinical / Professional Rationale
(Please clearly document the reasons for your decision.)

Outcome

☐ Fit to Board
☐ Fit to Board with Support Plan

☐ Temporary Removal from Boarding Required
☐ Further Assessment Required
☐ Permanent Removal from Boarding to be Considered

Support Plan / Actions Agreed
☐ Healthcare plan reviewed
☐ Risk assessment reviewed
☐ Parent/guardian informed
☐ House staff informed
☐ DSL/DDSL informed
☐ GP review recommended
☐ Specialist review recommended
☐ Follow-up appointment arranged
☐ Other

Review Arrangements
Review Date:

Person Responsible:

Review Outcome:

Signatures Assessor:
Name: _____
Role: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Lead Nurse (where applicable):
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Parent/Guardian informed:
☐ Yes
☐ No
Date/Time: _____
Method of communication: