



Cobham Hall

Statement of Boarding Principles and Practice 2024

Cobham Hall aims to provide a high standard of pastoral care through a well-established boarding system which aims to provide a warm, secure, friendly and family-style environment for boarders.

The following aims are intended to ensure that boarders at Cobham Hall are confident, open-minded people who can develop a strong sense of community in a multicultural setting. A pro-active approach to life in the community is encouraged and sensitivity to others, leadership and independence are fostered. At Cobham Hall we adhere to the National Minimum Boarding Standards and fully observe Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

Principle 1 – We Are A Community of Care

Statement: We Join together to make boarding safe and enjoyable for every person, ensuring that we are all looked after and feel part of the boarding community.

Health and Safety

Cobham Hall recognises that it is of paramount importance for boarders to live and work in a safe environment. All boarding staff adhere to safeguarding policies and KCSIE (2024).

Practice:

Everybody within the community is encouraged to report any issues relating to Health and Safety without delay and there are procedures in place allowing them to do so.

- A Health and Safety committee representing all areas of School life meets termly. The Director of Boarding sits on this committee.
- The Chairman of the committee reports all matters raised to the Governing Body termly.
- An external Health and Safety audit is carried out annually. A full fire risk assessment is also carried out annually for each boarding house.
- Systems are in place to ensure the House staff know the whereabouts of the boarders at all times. Orah boarding software is used to enable any member of boarding staff to know where any boarder is at any time.
- Orah is also used to record pupil outings off the School premises, with whom and where they have gone. Where a student is staying somewhere off-site overnight, parental and host permission is sought before a House parent endorses the pass. The final approval is given by the Director of Boarding.
- A security alarm is active on the door overnight in Brooke and Bligh House.
- House staff check rooms daily and complete a room check on Orah. Any maintenance request is completed as necessary. Each house has a risk assessment updated termly and procedures to follow.
- Boarding Houses register boarders every day first thing in the morning /at breakfast, after School at 4.30pm, and a final register at lights out. On Monday to Thursday a register is also taken at prep at 6.30pm for Bligh boarders.
- A weekend register is taken throughout the day according to activities and trips.

- On trips, pupils are registered during the trip as well as at the start and end and allocated to a named member of staff.
- A termly fire practice takes place to ensure that all students know how to evacuate the building at night. This takes place during 'boarding time' between the hours of 4.30pm and 7.00am
- Boarding staff book taxis for all students using the recommended company. Students cannot organise taxis themselves. The taxi company employs drivers that have a current DBS check.
- A list of mobile telephone numbers of students are kept by boarding staff on Orah to enable contact if necessary. Boarders also communicate with staff using Teams chat.
- Process for take away nights is clear and managed by house staff.

Individual Care

An Individual approach in our community is a vital part of the care provided. Each member of the community receives individual attention, thus ensuring that their particular needs are supported, and their talents are developed. In this way the strengths of each student are nurtured, and they are guided to achieve their own personal goals. Our aim is to develop a well-balanced and contented person who is also caring and able to empathise with and to consider the needs of others.

Practice:

- House staff know their boarders very well, regularly monitoring their physical and mental health, emotional well-being and academic progress. New students complete an induction programme.
- House staff correspond with the nurse, parents, Guardians and academic staff regarding the individual needs of boarders and attend pastoral meetings. There is an open-door policy for all and together with this support Housemistresses ensure the well-being of the students in their care.
- Staff from international backgrounds support individual students settle into the boarding environment by helping them with language and cultural issues. Interaction in their first language can help students to get used to a new environment and can help them to quickly overcome any problems.
- Boarding staff collaborate with academic staff through the use of a Whole School Academic and Pastoral OneNote
- Boarding staff are able to raise any concerns through Orah and any safeguarding concerns through RecordMy.
- Boarding staff contribute to the planning and implementation of the SIP and BIP and work hard to achieve the set outcomes.

Continuity in our Care

Cobham Hall provides continuity of care for each student throughout their time at the School. All house staff are qualified in first aid and a qualified Nurse is on site during the academic day and is on call for advice after hours. House staff and other staff provide ongoing and continuing care for the boarders. We aim to ensure a smooth transition from one year group to the next. Students are placed in boarding houses according to age. Our aim is to maintain and foster the boarders' confidence at all times.

Practice:

- There is a constant staff presence in all houses (when open) with at least one qualified First Aider on duty.

- All relevant information is recorded in House handover on Orah, to which all duty staff refer.
- Through weekly House parent meetings, information pertaining to all boarding students is widely shared. This not only helps achieve best practice but also ensures that all boarding staff can execute a continuity of care for boarders and, when boarders transition from one house to another, that member of staff is acutely aware of the boarders needs and support mechanisms.
- House staff follow medical protocols and keep the Nurse informed regarding ill students and medication. Students who are ill in the sick bay or in house are checked regularly by the House staff on duty or the nurse, and a Care Plan is set up to monitor this and ensure its implementation. If students are in sick bay, Tutors and Heads of School are informed.

Principle 2 - We Have A Culture Of Celebration

Statement: We come together to celebrate the achievements of others. We recognise the vibrant and diverse backgrounds of our boarding community and joining in with special cultural occasions.

Community Spirit

The aim is to nurture a sense of community within the School. Students are encouraged to empathise with others, demonstrating this through their concern for the welfare of their peers and their willingness to help.

Practice:

- Regular weekly house meetings give opportunities for all boarders to express their opinions and concerns with Housemistresses. Director of Boarding sometimes attends these meetings but is also a regular presence in the houses.
- Elected Heads of House meet with the Director of Boarding every half term to raise any issues and discuss ideas. Issues are raised and discussed at House meetings.
- Significant changes in a boarding house are openly discussed or explained to students before they are put in place.
- A number of students take part in preparation for house events and activities. For example, they organise birthday parties and dinner evenings in which they prepare meals for other boarders.
- Through the 'Buddy' system boarders look after new boarders who are unfamiliar with Cobham Hall.
- Students are encouraged to form a variety of friendships and those who socially struggle are given guidance on relationship building.
- Students are encouraged to participate in activities within the local community, for example, sports clubs, social service and special events.
- Students are enabled to practise their faith for example, to attend Church, mass or another place of worship, to pray in a private space, to attend family celebrations of religious festivals.
- Regular outings for meals enable social interaction in a variety of settings among students as well as staff.

Community Strength

Cobham Hall strongly believes that each individual is best able to develop successfully within a happy family style environment. Each boarding house functions as a closely-knit family style unit making its unique contribution to the whole school community.

Practice:

- Boarders celebrate events such as birthdays, religious festivals and holidays and have parties in their houses.
- House staff personalise common rooms with photographs and other items to create a homely atmosphere.
- Students are encouraged to put posters and photographs on the notice boards in their bedrooms. Boarders can use bedding provided by the School or their own bedding. They are encouraged to bring in toys and belongings to personalise their areas. All boarders are fully involved in choosing items for their bedroom including colour and style when rooms are refurbished. At the start of the autumn term there is a trip to IKEA to enable boarders to purchase items for their rooms.
- Students are encouraged to contact parents regularly by telephone and electronic means such as Facetime using the School Wi-Fi.
- There are weekly activities and meetings organised for students in each boarding house – see School calendar and wellbeing programme.

Being an international boarding school provides a valuable opportunity for boarders to broaden their horizons. They meet students from different cultures and enrich their experience through the generation of international friendships; sharing a room, dining together, learning about other cultures through events and trips together. Difference is celebrated and we believe that multiculturalism is fundamental to our ethos and such a living environment will enable our students to truly understand their place in the world.

Practice:

- Boarders in Bligh are allocated rooms according to age and to promote a mix of nationalities. Students may request a room or a room mate. Tolerance and understanding, as well as adaptability, are encouraged.
- Occasional themed days are organised focusing on the cuisine of different countries. The dining room is decorated with flags and other items representing the chosen country. We celebrate such events and European Languages Day and International Womens' Day.
- Boarders are made aware of various national holidays at boarding house meetings. Examples include Ramadan - all students are aware that Muslim students are observing this period and what it involves; Christmas - students are involved in Christmas preparations such as Christmas tree decorations, Christmas card making and writing, etc., and the Carol Service; Diwali - the Indian boarders greet other boarders and wish them Happy Diwali; Chinese/ Lunar New Year - is celebrated by the whole school and boarders have a Chinese dinner in a decorated dining room. Assemblies are widely used by both students and staff to inform and explain aspects of different cultures, festivals and religions.

Boarders are encouraged to visit their friends in their home countries during the holidays and to stay with day students at weekends and holiday periods.

Principle 3 – We Grow Courageous Leaders

Policy: September 2024
Date for review: September 2025

Statement: We help each other to grow leadership qualities so that we have leaders who are kind and encouraging but also bold and adventurous.

Boarders are encouraged to discover and develop their leadership qualities. They are encouraged to organise a variety of events and activities in which they can apply their leadership skills. Within each House, Heads of House and Social Officers are elected, and they take responsibility for organising some boarding events. However, initiatives generated by any boarders are welcomed and encouraged. Responsibility is also encouraged and developed amongst the whole group so that everybody has a chance to discover their own particular strengths and to develop leadership qualities.

Practice:

- The choice of weekday and weekend activities are discussed with the boarding representatives who voice the opinions of other boarders.
- House staff ask boarders to help to prepare in-house events and activities (e.g. Brooke House Friday activity, film and music evenings, take-aways, Ready! Steady! Cook! and preparing house noticeboards). Heads of House take an active role in boarding house meetings and oversee in-house events.
- Boarders are encouraged to develop and organize their own extra-curricular clubs and activities e.g. Lunar (Chinese) New Year parties.
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Principle 4 – We Believe in Cultivating Healthiness

Statement: We support each other to ensure that there is a good life balance between work, rest and socialising as well as keeping fit and healthy.

Healthy Eating

Cobham Hall strongly believes in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This is promoted and encouraged through a healthy diet. Boarders are taught that establishing healthy eating habits is an essential part of their growing-up and they are provided with a wide choice of healthy food at mealtimes.

Practice:

- All students have a choice of hot vegetarian, vegan and meat meals and a cold salad and meat bar when in the School dining room.
- All houses have well stocked fruit baskets in house. and the consumption of biscuits is monitored and limited if necessary.
- Students are able to order weekly rations through the house. The ration options are balanced to ensure that there are plenty of healthy options along with some 'treat' options. Ration orders are monitored by house staff to ensure a balance of different options are being ordered.
- House staff monitor boarders' eating habits and take spot checks at breakfast, lunch and supper time. House staff have regular discussions with boarders about healthy eating and sensible food choices.
- Sixth Form House staff monitor the food some boarders cook in the evening.
- Students in Years 10 and above are given weekly opportunities to visit a local supermarket. The intention behind this is to foster an independence within students whilst also being

Policy: September 2024
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able to monitor what students by. Students are then allowed to cook food in house. This in turn equips them to have the skills necessary to cook in a way that is conducive to a healthy lifestyle

Healthy Bodies

We actively encourage students to engage in physical activities throughout the week. Boarders partake in their normal curriculum PE/Games lessons and have good access to lunch time and afternoon activities that look at their physical health. In addition to this access that all students have, the boarding team also ensure that this access extends beyond the School day.

- Organised trips are varied but regularly involve outdoors or exercise based activities. e.g. skating, trampolining, swimming and bowling.
- In our grounds, we organise treasure hunts, team-building activities, games (such as rounders), water fights and picnics. Sports afternoons are also organised in School at the weekend.
- Boarders have access to the School gym at least 4 times a week. In addition to this, they have access to either the swimming pool or the sports hall at least twice a week.
- Boarders have the opportunity to join local clubs in order to socialise outside School as well as engage in exercise off-site. Students have belonged to hockey, football and rugby clubs outside of School.
- The School Nurse does a health check on all boarders at the start of the academic year and then repeats this check at the start of every term. This includes measuring and weighing students. The School Nurse is a trusted professional for our students, and they regularly communicate with her if they are having any issues with their body image.

Healthy Minds

We recognise that the physical healthiness of any student is closely linked to their mental health and wellbeing. Students who have outlets to keep themselves physically fit and health AND mentally fit and healthy are students who will be resilient beyond the walls of the School.

- Boarders have access to a School counsellor after hours should they need to talk to someone.
- We have an independent listener that students can engage with should they feel they need to.
- There are many posters around the boarding house signposting students to help and support groups should they feel they need to reach out a community beyond the boarding house
- Boarding staff receive ongoing CPD based around Mental health first aid and courses centered around the wellbeing of students.
- Regular 1 to 1 conversations are held between boarding staff and students. Students in the boarding house are comfortable raising issues with staff and talking about any problems they are facing.