



Boarding At Westbourne House



Parents' Guide

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Boarding at Westbourne House

Boarding Mission Statement:

The Westbourne Boarding community aims to create a safe, supportive and fun environment for the children in order for them to develop into caring, self reliant, confident individuals.

Introduction to Boarding at Westbourne:

Westbourne has a long tradition as a boarding school. However, boarding today is very different to what it was even ten years ago and may not be the same experience as many parents had when they were at school. The purpose of this document is to explain the aims and ethos of boarding at Westbourne today in order to help you make a decision about boarding for your child.

As a Preparatory School, one of our primary aims is to prepare children for the transition and progression to their Public Schools. As the majority of the schools we feed are boarding schools, part of that preparation is helping the children settle into a boarding routine that will ease that transition.

Why choose to board?

The first question you may ask is why should your child board? It can be an agonising decision to send your son or daughter off to board and it is a decision you will not take lightly. Boarding is central to life at Westbourne and we believe that boarding will enable your child to get the most out of school life. Boarding should be a partnership between the school and family that results in helping your child to develop and grow within a varied and supportive environment.

Boarding helps children to develop personal skills like:

- * Confidence
- * Community spirit
- * Independence
- * Social skills
- * Cultural awareness
- * Respect and tolerance for others
- * Self-motivation
- * Responsibility
- * A wide variety of interests

In addition to this, boarders also feel that they have:

- * A good social life
- * An enhanced education
- * Closer relationships with their family, with more 'quality time'
- * Friends for life
- * Greater access to school facilities
- * Good working relationship with teachers
- * A wide variety of activities available

At Westbourne we aim to help the children develop in all these ways and to give them the self-assurance to move onto their next schools without concerns for their ability to live away from home. Successful boarding should result in a more settled school routine and better quality time spent at home.

General Boarding Matters

When and how often is my child expected to board?

Children can board from as young as Year 3. Children tend to board progressively, as follows:

- Year 3/4 - Some board part-time for 1 or 2 nights a week
- Year 5 - Begin part-time boarding for 2 or 3 nights a week
- Year 6 - Continue part-time boarding or increase to full boarding
- Year 7 - Continue part-time boarding for 3 nights a week or board full-time
- Year 8 - Board full-time all week.

What does part-time boarding entail?

It is possible to board part-time up to Year 7. The aim of this is to help the younger boarders to settle into the routine of boarding and give them the experience of being away from home for a short period of time. In order for it to be a worthwhile experience and one that does not disrupt the permanent boarding community, we insist that part-time boarders must do a minimum of two consecutive nights a week.

Can my child board part-time in Year 7 or 8?

Year 7 children can part-time board for a minimum of 3 consecutive nights including a Wednesday night. Please be aware, however, that full-time boarders will be given priority over part-time boarders if there is a shortage of beds. By the time the children are in Year 8, we are preparing them for the Common Entrance examinations and for life in their next schools. Therefore, the children should settle into a full boarding routine and consequently there is no part-time boarding option for children in Year 8.

How does the Outhouse system work?

Westbourne does not run along the lines of a house system as you may find in a number of public schools. Each pupil belongs to a Patrol but this does not relate to his or her boarding accommodation. Each Outhouse is run by a married couple. Outhouses operate as family homes with dormitories in which the children sleep. They vary in size from 5 to 18 children.

At present, the boarders are accommodated as follows:

Boys

- Year 3 – 6: Main House, Middle Landing.
- Year 7: Middle Lodge.
- Year 8: Orchard Lodge.

Girls

- Year 3 – 6: Main House, Upper Landing.
- Year 7: Shopwyke.
- Year 8: Pear Tree Lodge.

Boarders will often move from one dormitory to another at the start of each term and Year 7 and 8 boys may move between Middle Lodge/Shopwyke House and Orchard Lodge.

How do we sign up for boarding?

If you want your son or daughter to start boarding, the first point of contact is the Head of Boarding. They will reply to your correspondence with further details and ask for any information they require in order to process your request. Following this, places will be allocated towards the end of term for the following term. If we do not have enough places to offer every applicant, priority will be given to those who made contact first. In addition to this, those requesting full-time boarding take precedence over part-time boarders and we will always favour a child who has shown commitment to boarding from an early stage. Once a child has become a boarder, we will assume that they will continue to board for subsequent terms unless we hear otherwise. If you intend to change your child's boarding arrangement, could you please contact us as soon as possible.

Can I be sure my child will get a good night's sleep?

It is our main priority to ensure that the children are fully rested for the school day. Some of the children will go to bed earlier and some later than they do at home but we set lights-out times according to the age of the children to ensure they get a good night's sleep. We monitor the children after lights out to ensure that they go to sleep. The days of midnight feasts and dorm raids are long gone! However, you must appreciate that the children may be tired at the weekends. This is a combination of the long school days and sleeping in an environment different to the one they are used to. Once children have settled into a boarding routine, they soon get used to their surroundings and the sleeping routine. Boarders can easily alert Houseparents or Matrons at any time of the night if need be.

Can I take my child home for a night?

We would encourage you not to disrupt the boarding routine if at all possible. If there is a good reason for your child to go home for a night (medical appointments, sporting commitments or public school visits for example), then we would ask that you let the school office know well in advance of the evening so that we know that they will not be boarding on that night. It is disruptive both to your child and the school if they are taken home at short notice. In particular, if your child phones you up to request to go home, please inform us first so that we can look into any problems that may have occurred and try to sort them out. Part of boarding is living within a school community and we would always encourage the children to face up to any difficulties rather than avoid them. This can be a particular issue around exam time and again we would encourage you to keep your children to the routine during these times. If your child is ill and needs to go home, you will be contacted by a matron to discuss this.

Can I send in sweets?

No. Boarders are given sweets (known in school as "tuck") during the week by their Houseparents as part of their boarding routine. If children have sweets that they have

brought in from home it can cause difficulties within the community and they will be confiscated from them and returned to parents. Parents are very welcome to bring a cake in for their child when it is their birthday. Children are encouraged to share birthday cake with their friends!

Does my child require home clothes?

The children may have a home jumper that they can wear during the boarding evening and on Wednesday nights they may wear their own clothes. Any pupil boarding on Wednesday nights should therefore bring one set of home clothes into school. Depending on the season, this usually entails jeans or shorts and a t-shirt or warmer top. We recommend that designer and expensive items stay at home! As with school wear, all items are to be named please.

Can my child lock personal items away to keep them safe?

We suggest that boarders leave valuable and precious items at home. If they do bring valuable or confidential items to school then these can be looked after by Houseparents. Bedside cabinets do not have locks but children are welcome to bring a lockable container to school if they wish. These should be left in bedside cabinets, within each dormitory.

Are boarders taken out of school on trips?

Sometimes boarders are taken out of school in the evening for a treat. They may visit the cinema or theatre or go bowling or out for supper in a restaurant. These trips may not always be in the calendar.

Can my child board for one-off periods of time?

If there are free bed spaces in the houses, it is possible to board for short periods of time in emergency situations and for trial periods. However, it can be very disruptive to the permanent boarding community to have other children in on an ad hoc basis and we do not provide a babysitting service!

Are boarders allowed iPods and other electronic devices?

Please do not allow your children to bring these electronic devices to school. Part of the boarding experience is learning to interact socially with others. We have tried to accept these devices within the boarding community but it has become clear that they do more harm than good and so we have outlawed them!

Why can't part-time boarders have their clothes washed at school?

The matrons wash all of the full-time boarders' clothes and sports kit, which is kept at school. Part-time boarders washing would double this workload. Coupled with the difficulty of keeping track of items of clothing that are at school or home, it is much simpler for part-time boarders to bring in the clothes that they need for the days they are boarding and take them home afterwards. In an emergency, we would always wash items that needed cleaning.

Routines

What happens at the beginning of term?

At the beginning of term, boarders return to school on the evening before the day children. If your child is due to board on that evening of the week for the term then we expect to see them. The children should arrive back at school between 4:30pm and 6:00pm. On arrival, please see the room allocation charts to check where your child's bed is. There are always staff on hand to help.

If your child is in Main House (Pippa and Gideon Sutcliffe) please take their overnight bag and duvet to their dormitory and unpack it. In the dormitory you will find a bed with your child's name on it. Sports kit needs to be taken down to the changing rooms.

If your child is in Shopwyke House (Kevin and Clare Smith), Middle Lodge (Ed and Charlotte Cousens), Beeswing (Martin and Helen Barker), The Dower House (Tim and Sophie Pitman), Orchard Lodge (Mark and Felicity Forsyth) or Pear Tree Lodge (Sam and Mark Pollock) please take their overnight bag and duvet down to the appropriate house. This will give you an opportunity to meet and talk to the Houseparents in your child's Outhouse. All spare clothes are kept in their houses.

If my child is part-time boarding when should I bring in their overnight bag for boarding and where should I put it at the beginning of term and thereafter?

In Main House, the boys' dormitories are on the middle landing and girls are accommodated on the top floor. When you arrive, please take your child's overnight bag to their designated room. Beds will be clearly labelled with children's names. Please help them to unpack into their bedside locker and to make their bed. On the first day your child boards each week, please take their overnight bag to their dormitory between 8.00 and 8.30am when you drop them off at school. The duvet and pillow remain in school for the term.

If your child boards part-time in an Outhouse they will take their boarding bags with them to their Outhouse in the evening. Their duvet and pillow will remain in their Outhouse for the term.

What is the evening routine

Each evening the boarders follow the routine below:

- 5:30 pm - End of lessons
- 5:40 pm - Boarders' activity time
- 6:30 pm - Tea
- 7:00 pm - Spellings and reading for Year 4 and 5. Prep for Year 6, 7 and 8
- 7.45 pm - Children in Years 4 and 5 shower, dress in pyjamas and then have free time.
- 7.45 pm - Children in Years 6, 7 and 8 finish prep and then go to boarding houses to shower, dress in pyjamas and then have free time.
- 8.25 pm - Bedtime for Year 4 and 5
- 8.35 pm - Bedtime for Year 6
- 8.45 pm - Bedtime for Year 7

- 9.00 pm - Bedtime for Year 8

After 'lights out', children are given about 10 minutes 'grace time' when they are allowed to talk quietly before being asked to be quiet. This quiet talking time is a privilege and not a right. It will be taken away if children are too noisy or if they are slow to settle down once they have been asked to be quiet.

There is a variation to the routine in the Summer term to take full advantage of the lighter evenings. Music practice times are organised during the evening and in the morning.

What happens at the end of term?

At the end each term your child's clothes and all belongings will go home. We would like parents to check all uniform and kit and replace it wherever necessary. All of their clothing and equipment will be ready to collect on the last day of term from their houses.

Kit

What kit does my child need for full boarding?

If your child is full boarding a list of what they will need for boarding is printed on the Uniform List. Spare copies of the list are available from the School Office, School Uniform Shop and the Matrons' Department. Home clothes are required for Wednesday evening and weekends. These should be placed in your child's changing room locker along with their sports kit. After unpacking, the children are free to join their friends until bedtime. Afternoon tea will be served in the Inner Hall of the Main House. A meal is available for the children at 6.00 pm.

What kit does my child need for part-time boarding?

All part-time boarders should have a named overnight bag containing the following named items:

- Shirts for each day of boarding
- Spare trousers or skirt
- Pyjamas
- Dressing Gown
- Slippers
- Duvet and Duvet Cover
- Pillow and Pillow Case
- Coloured Towel
- Underwear & socks for each day of boarding
- A reading book
- A hairbrush or a comb
- Toothpaste and Toothbrush
- Flannel
- Shampoo and shower gel

Dressing gown, slippers, duvet and cover, pillow and case can all remain in school for the term. Please supply some spare games kit if your child is likely to be involved in matches on a Saturday. Please also take your child's boarding bag and dirty clothing home for washing at the weekends. This includes games kit from their lockers and swimming towels kept on their pegs. The duvet cover and pillowcase need to be taken home at half term and the end of term for washing. The duvet itself and pillow will also need to be taken home at the end of term.

Contacting your Child

Parents are able to ring the school at any time (01243 782 739) but may connect to the answer phone outside office hours. The children can contact home during their free time. There are two payphones in the Red Passage that the children can use, however, in an emergency, they will be able to use the school phone. The numbers of the two payphones in the Red Passage are:

- 01243 785720.
- 01243 790445.

The best way for your child to use the payphones is as follows:

- They pick up the phone and dial the number.
- When you answer, they don't put any money in but put the phone down. This is the indication for whoever has received the call to ring back using the numbers given above.
- The children wait by the phone ready to answer it when you call back.
- The person calling then pays for the call and no money needs to be put into the phone.

If the children are not sure about this, a member of staff will show them how to do it. Please try to finish phone calls well before their bedtime, and keep calls to a reasonable length to allow for other boarders to use them too.

Outhouses should only be rung in an emergency; children have plenty of time to contact parents (about matches etc) during the day if they are suitably organised! The Houseparents' numbers are:

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| • Main House: | Pippa and Gideon Sutcliffe | (01243) 770758 |
| • Shopwyke House: | Kevin and Clare Smith | (01243) 536929 |
| • Middle Lodge: | Ed and Charlotte Cousens | (01243) 276735 |
| • The Dower House: | Tim and Sophie Pitman | (01243) 783405 |
| • Beeswing: | Martin and Helen Barker | (01243) 697204 |
| • Orchard Lodge: | Mark and Felicity Forsyth | (01243) 530614 |
| • Pear Tree Lodge: | Sam and Mark Pollock | (01243) 538403 |

Children are not allowed mobile phones in school. They can always contact home during the day and in the evening. Mobile phones cause a number of problems within the school and there is no necessity for the children to have them.

Complaints

If you are unhappy about an issue at school, we would strongly encourage you to contact us directly in order for us to look into your concerns and take action as required. However, if the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should **put their complaint in writing** to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will decide, after considering the complaint, upon the appropriate course of action to take. If you are still not satisfied, the matter will then be referred to the Complaints Panel made up of members of the governing body of the school. Details of this procedure are published on the school's website.

Parents may also contact The Independent Schools Inspectorate at ISI, CAP House, 9 – 12 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HA. Tel: 020 7600 0100 or via their website, www.isi.net ISI would expect the school to have been contacted first.

Medical Issues

Mrs Fiona Moore (RGN), Mrs Hayley Kewell (RGN) and Mrs Rachel Goldsmith (RGN) are our school nurses.

The school does not have a visiting GP. Parents are advised that their child should stay registered with their family GP and, should your child need to be seen by a doctor whilst boarding, you may well be contacted by the matrons on duty. Special arrangements will be made if boarders have parents who live abroad.

What if my child needs to bring medication to school?

We will accept medication for your child, however you **must** fill in an Administration of Medication form, kept in the Matrons' Department. Medication **must** be supplied in the original container or packet. We reserve the right not to administer medication should these requirements not be fulfilled. Medicines will be kept locked in the surgery refrigerator or cupboard, as appropriate. Vitamins are regarded as medication and must also be handed in to the matrons. Medication will be administered by the nurses and boarders must remember to collect it for weekends.

What if my child uses an inhaler?

Inhalers must be named clearly with your child's name and class and may be kept on the child's person from Year 3 upwards. Matrons must have a spare inhaler kept in the Matrons' Department for use in an emergency. If your child is in an Outhouse, an inhaler must be kept by their bed also.

What if a boarder has or is suspected of having head lice?

Parents are responsible for carrying out routine checks to ensure that their children's heads are free of head lice. If we suspect a boarder of having head lice then the child will be assessed by a school nurse or matron. If head lice are detected then parental permission will be sought before any treatment is administered. For the full details of our

stance on the prevention, detection and treatment of head lice, please see the school Medical Policy.

Laundry Issues

Why do I need to label clothing / bedding as required in the handbook?

This may seem very prescriptive but there is good reason.

- Duvet covers – We must be able to identify the covers when they return from the laundry so that they can be given to the correct children. If the name is across the corner, it is simple for the duvet to be identified.
- Towels – For both the children and for the staff, these need to be easily identifiable. It is much easier to find the name on a towel if it is placed in the corner. Loops should be sewn to the centre of the long edge. Towels with no loops do not stay on hooks and end up wet and dirty on the floor. Please check the loops during the holidays and repair if necessary.

Why does my child need so much uniform if full-time boarding?

Underwear and socks and shirts are washed daily. Trousers, skirts and jumpers are washed when necessary. Basic mending will be done but if an item is deemed irreparable, you will be asked to replace it.

Why should underwear be labelled?

Full-time boarders' underwear is washed 'in house' daily. Many items of underwear are similar in appearance and clear labelling ensures that each item is happily reunited with its owner.

Why does all the sports kit need to be named, even socks?

Sports kit is washed once a week by the matrons, who return it to the games lockers once it is clean. If any items of games kit are not named, it is impossible to return them to the correct lockers. Part time boarders' match kit is washed on the day prior to their matches, usually on Tuesdays and Fridays.

And finally...

We hope that this document has been of some help to you. We strongly support the social and academic advantages of boarding and we hope that you will make the most of the excellent facilities that we can offer, particularly if you are considering a boarding school as your child's next step. If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to call into the School Office and ask to speak to the Head of Boarding or any of the boarding Houseparents, all of whom will be happy to help.



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