



STATEMENT OF BOARDING PRINCIPLES

At Clayesmore, we see boarding as a positively enriching experience within our strong and abiding family ethos. Our boarding community is flourishing with 245 boarders living on site – 44 in the Prep School and 201 in the Senior School.

Our aim for boarders is that they should grow up in a friendly, supportive and encouraging environment, gaining all that they can from being amongst friends, and we fully expect that our pupils will make friends for life whilst they are at Clayesmore. As far as possible, boarding at Clayesmore reflects family life. We strive to foster an open and trusting community and see the relationships between adults and the children as central to this. So many important lessons for the future are learnt from living with others; not least, the need to consider their welfare and happiness and the part that everyone can play in ensuring good relations. Boarding provides the ideal environment for pupils to learn how to get on with each other – how to give and take – but also to develop integrity and a sense of belonging and of selflessness, as well as independence and resilience. We aim to develop all of these qualities in our young people, in a safe environment that promotes equality and embraces diversity.

Each of our houses, Devine, Gate and Manor, King's and Wolverton in the senior school, and the Prep boarding house has its own individual character but they are all run along similar lines with a deep sense of care governing all that we do. The abiding principle is that each individual is our prime focus and we know that if the parents and the school work in harmony, the best possible outcome will always be obtained. We aim to foster and encourage the best possible communication between home and school and parents can expect issues to be responded to quickly. Excellent communication creates strong pastoral care and we aim to ensure that pupils feel safe and supported at all times and should know to whom to turn if they have a problem. Each boarder follows a careful plan of induction to help them settle in and older pupils take on some of this responsibility seriously and compassionately.

Each pupil's pastoral welfare is the responsibility of the Houseparents, but each pupil also has a personal tutor. These members of staff will help and advise pupils over any issue; whether it's to do with worries about friendships, the health of an elderly grandparent or choosing the best subjects for GCSE. Our experienced staff are dedicated to self- evaluation and improvement; they listen to pupils' views in house councils and are eager to make the boarding experience as positive as it can be.

All pupils at Clayesmore may seek help from our Health and Wellbeing Centre which, like the boarding houses, is a 24-hour operation, with at least one fully qualified registered

nurse always on duty during the day, with a team of health and wellbeing matrons in support. The Prep School has its own matrons. Our doctors' visit most days for routine appointments, help can be given with transport for other medical or dental appointments, and we have a confidential counselling service as well. Mental health and wellbeing is an important focus for us and we aim to provide a holistic service that takes into account a broad spectrum of need.

It is said that an army marches on its stomach; well, that is pretty much true of a boarding school too! Pupils eat together in a central dining hall where they are assured of a warm welcome and appetising, well-balanced, nutritious food. Meals are much looked-forward to at Clayesmore and we are able to cater for young people with special dietary needs.

As pupils grow up through their house and through the school, we hope that they will develop a great sense of pride in their house and we are frequently amazed at how quickly this happens. The older students encourage this in all the right ways, setting a tone for their houses. One only has to attend Sports Day or the House Music Competition to see how strong house spirit is at Clayesmore and what it means here. We believe that the strength of the relationships between different age groups in the senior school is unusually strong. It is encouraged, of course, in so much of our daily life here, not least in our music-making and in Model United Nations and other LEX modules. House spirit and togetherness epitomises all that is right in a community.

Boarders join in the comprehensive sports programme provided in both schools and enjoy access to the sports facilities throughout the week. There is a lively and varied programme of weekend 'LEX' modules, including regular trips out of school and parties and social events on a Saturday night. In addition, we recognise the need for children to have their own space and quiet time and make sure that we allow for this in their busy schedules.

All the houses are comfortable, homely and attractive and boarders enjoy and respect the welcoming and cosy environment. In the Senior School, all day pupils belong to a boarding house and welcome this opportunity to be fully involved in the boarding family.

The boarding experience at Clayesmore enables our pupils to participate fully in the life of the school, to develop as individuals and to become healthy, responsible, resilient young adults, who leave us at the end of their school careers with the confidence, skills, attitudes and values necessary to thrive and succeed in an ever-changing world.

Jo Thomson, March 2024