

Boarding Handbook



Why should we consider boarding at Marlborough House?

While boarding, pupils learn to live with others, to understand and respond to their needs as well as to their own. They are helped to develop a degree of self-reliance while also having the advantages of all the school facilities being available – an especially useful asset for work, music or sport-based activities. Parents, meanwhile, have more time for work commitments, themselves or to the rest of the family, knowing that those in the care of the school are secure. Perhaps, above all, it is fun. Apart from the regular enjoyment of being with friends, there is often an outing or other treats organised for the boarders.

Who is able to board at Marlborough House?

Boarding runs on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights from April-October Half Term and Wednesday and Thursday nights, from November-April. Children from Year 4-8 are able to board on any night, with Year 3 invited to trial Boarding from November in Year 3. We cater for those who would like to board for only one night a week – maybe to fit in with a club – and also for those who would like to stay for any number of nights up to the current maximum number of three nights. We also try to cater for those who find that the occasional night is helpful – maybe while parents are away on business or holiday. When thinking about such a request, please liaise with the Head of Boarding, Mrs Philippa Archer.

Who is on the Boarding Staff?

Mrs Archer and her family (including Maggie the dog) live within the main school building. This means that they are very near the boarding accommodation and thus always available.

During Boarding nights a member of the Boarding Staff lives in a room in the boarding wing, so they are easily accessible to the children during the night. A Junior Masters ('Gaps') also lives within the main school building and assist with boarding activities during the evening.

Where do the children sleep?

Boarding Facilities are located in the main school building with separate areas for boys' and girls' dormitories. Depending on numbers on the specific night, children are arranged by age, in separate groups of boys and girls, with the smallest dormitories catering for two pupils, and with the largest sleeping seven.



What thoughts have been given to pupils' privacy?

The dormitory areas are largely private to the boarders. At no time should a girl enter a boys' dormitory or washroom or vice versa. Within sensible boundaries of supervision, all Boarders are entitled to personal privacy.

What happens after the school day on club nights?

All boarders register in the Boarders' Common Room at 5.40pm and then go to their rooms to change. A cooked dinner is served at 6pm and then Boarders take part in an activity between 6.30-7.30pm. Time is made available for children to do Prep or revision. Before going upstairs to bed, the pupils are offered a range of healthy snacks (cheese, salami, fruit platter, crisps etc.)



When do the Boarders go to bed?

Bedtime is incremental. With Year 3 and 4 going to bed at 7.30pm, Year 5 and 6 at 8pm, and Year 7 and 8 and 9pm. The children sometimes read for 15 minutes before the lights are put out or they may have a story read to them or have 'chat time'. This is decided on an evening-by-evening basis.

What happens if a Boarder is ill?

If a boarder were to fall ill before night-time, the parents would be contacted and, if possible, would collect him or her. If this were not an option, or if the illness occurred during the night, then of course we would look after the child for as long as necessary.

What should the boarders bring to school?

All clothing (including underwear, socks and any home-clothes) should be clearly named.

All boarders require a named towel, night-clothes, a change of underwear and socks, a dressing-gown and slippers (of a basic style to cope with stairs in the case of a fire drill), and a hair-brush or comb. In addition, Boarders should also bring a toothbrush and toothpaste, shower gel, shampoo and, if required, deodorant stick, and flannel. Of course, cuddly toys or other night-time comforters are also most welcome. It may be possible for the boarding equipment to be left at School – please liaise with Mrs Archer. No internet enabled devices should be brought into boarding.

What is expected of those who board?

All the normal School rules and guidelines apply, and we also have some House guidelines which relate directly to the boarding situation; these are commonsense items which try to cater for the needs of everyone living in the boarding community. If deemed necessary, any serious offences will be notified to Mrs Archer. However, the philosophy is very much that behaving in a positive manner will reap its rewards.

The Boarding Prefect System, encourages the older children to model excellent behaviour and provide role models for the younger children, particularly those who are new to Boarding.



What happens in the mornings before school?

The children are woken at 7.00am and have a few minutes in which to 'wake up'. By 7.10am everyone should be up, washing, dressing and getting ready for the day. The children and their dormitories are checked for tidiness before everyone goes to breakfast at 7.30am. This consists of a choice of cereal, plus a cooked or continental breakfast, with a glass of apple juice, water, milk or tea, and toast on demand. Boarding ends at about 8.00am and the children then go to their Form Rooms for Registration.

What consideration has been given to the security of the children while boarding?

Apart from ensuring the School is locked at night, outside security lights are switched on and there is also an internal intruder alarm system which notifies of any unauthorised access into or out of the boarding wing.

A run-through of the routine to follow in the case of a fire takes place for all boarders, every term.

Special Provision

All dietary, religious and cultural needs will be met on request. Please contact Mrs Archer and inform her of your requirements.

What can children do if they are worried or concerned about something?

If a child has any general or specific concerns, he or she can ask for help or advice from Mrs Archer, the Boarding Housemistress, or any member of the Boarding Staff and, as is the case for every pupil at Marlborough House, these will be taken seriously, and every effort will be made to sort them out. There is also a concerns and suggestions box in the Boarders' Common Room and Questionnaires are regularly carried out to gather feedback. The children also have access to a phone and numbers for Childline and the Independent Listener are made available.

Who should a parent contact if they wish to discuss a boarding matter?

Mrs Archer or a member of the Boarding Staff are contactable via email or on the Boarding mobile, which is shared with parents. Never be worried whether or not to raise an issue; if you want to talk, we are always ready to listen.

How much does it cost?

Information concerning the current cost of boarding can be obtained from Mrs Archer.

Final Thoughts

We aim to make the boarding experience as enjoyable and flexible as possible within an organised framework, and to encourage the ethos that community living is just that – living with others, caring for others, and being considerate to others, both pupils and staff. It is an open experience, and we very much encourage pupils and parents to ‘talk’ if there is something they would like to share.

Mrs Philippa Archer
Head of Boarding

