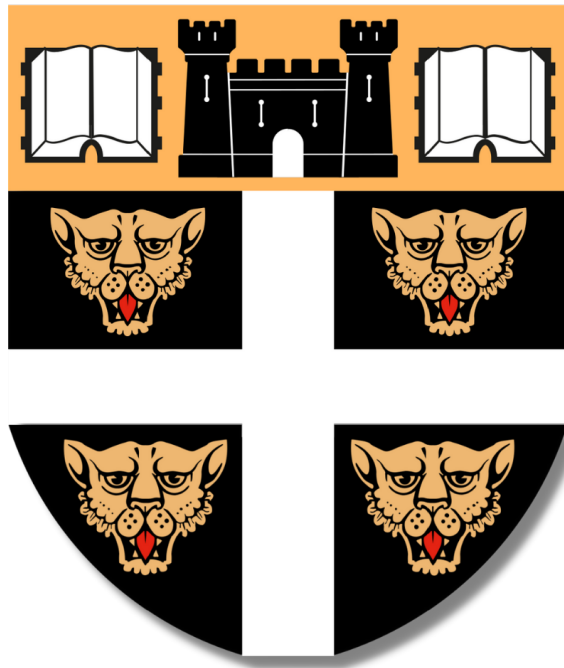


Boarding Principles and Practice

Dover College



Owner:	Assistant Head, Boarding and Behaviour	Date: August 2026
Approved By:	Chair of Council	Date: August 2026
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1. Introduction

Boarding is central to the character and community of Dover College. The College provides boarding within an integrated House system in which every Senior School pupil, whether boarding or day, belongs to a House.

Our aim is to provide a safe, welcoming and supportive environment in which every pupil can flourish academically, socially, culturally and personally. We want boarders to feel that the College is their home during term time: a place where they are known as individuals, where they can develop lasting friendships and where they are supported to grow in confidence, independence and responsibility.

The relationship between the pupil, their parents or guardians and the House is fundamental to successful boarding. We encourage regular, honest and constructive communication so that pupils receive consistent care and support.

Our boarding community brings together pupils from different countries, cultures, faiths, backgrounds and experiences. Pupils of different ages have regular opportunities to take part in House and whole-College activities together. These opportunities are arranged with appropriate regard to age, maturity, supervision and safeguarding.

New boarders receive a structured induction to help them understand:

- the people who are responsible for their care;
- House routines and expectations;
- how to seek help or raise a concern;
- fire and emergency procedures;
- arrangements for medical care;
- how to contact their family;
- how to contact the independent person and external support services; and
- the opportunities available within boarding and the wider College.

Particular attention is given to pupils who are boarding for the first time, pupils arriving from overseas and pupils who may require additional linguistic, medical, pastoral or SEND support.

This statement is made available to pupils, parents, guardians and staff. Its principles are introduced during induction, reinforced through House life and reflected in the College's boarding policies, routines and daily practice.

2. Our boarding ethos and TICK values

Boarding at Dover College is shaped by the College's values of:

- Tradition;
- Inclusion;
- Community; and
- Kindness.

Together, these form TICK and provide a shared foundation for life within the boarding community.

2.1 Tradition

Dover College is proud of its history, surroundings and traditions. Boarding pupils are encouraged to understand that they are part of a community which extends beyond the present day.

Tradition at Dover College means:

- respecting the history and identity of the College and its Houses;
- taking pride in the College environment;
- participating positively in House and College occasions;
- contributing to the life of the community;
- recognising the value of service and responsibility; and
- preserving worthwhile traditions while remaining open to reflection, improvement and change.

Tradition should create a sense of belonging rather than prevent progress. Pupils are encouraged to help shape the continuing development of boarding.

2.2 Inclusion

Every pupil should feel that they belong within the boarding community.

The College seeks to provide an environment in which pupils are respected and supported regardless of their:

- age;
- disability;

- race, nationality or ethnic background;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- family circumstances;
- cultural or linguistic background;
- special educational needs; or
- individual personality and interests.

Boarding practice takes account of pupils' ages, maturity, communication needs, medical needs, disabilities, religious observance and cultural backgrounds. Reasonable adjustments are made where required.

Differences between pupils are valued. Discriminatory behaviour, prejudice, harassment and exclusion are challenged and addressed.

2.3 Community

Boarding at Dover College is founded upon a strong sense of community. Every pupil should feel that they belong and that their contribution to House and College life is valued.

Community at Dover College means:

- contributing positively to House and College life;
- developing supportive and respectful relationships;
- taking responsibility for the wellbeing of others;
- welcoming new pupils and helping them settle;
- participating in shared activities, occasions and traditions;
- respecting the rights, privacy and possessions of others;
- contributing through leadership, service and pupil voice;
- understanding our responsibilities to the local and wider community; and
- recognising that the actions of each individual affect those around them.

The boarding community brings together pupils from different countries, cultures, faiths, families and experiences. Pupils are encouraged to learn from one another, share their perspectives and contribute to an environment in which everyone feels known, valued and included.

2.4 Kindness

Kindness is expected in everyday interactions between pupils and adults.

Kindness means:

- treating others with dignity and respect;
- noticing when somebody may need help;
- being welcoming to new pupils;
- listening to other viewpoints;
- offering support without judgement;
- respecting personal space, privacy and possessions;
- challenging unkindness rather than joining in; and
- seeking adult help when another pupil may be unsafe or distressed.

Conduct described as teasing or “banter” is not acceptable where it causes distress, humiliation, exclusion or harm. Kindness does not mean ignoring poor behaviour; it means responding honestly, respectfully and constructively.

3. The aims of boarding

Through boarding, Dover College aims to:

- provide a safe, secure, welcoming and homely environment;
- safeguard and promote the welfare of every pupil;
- ensure that each boarder is known, valued and supported as an individual;
- promote the College’s values of Tradition, Inclusion, Community and Kindness;
- encourage honesty, integrity and respect for others;
- develop independence, self-discipline and personal responsibility;
- help pupils learn to live and work positively with others;
- develop leadership, teamwork and service;
- support pupils to achieve their academic potential;
- encourage curiosity and participation beyond the classroom;
- provide an appropriate balance of study, activity, social time, rest and privacy;
- promote positive physical and mental health;
- foster healthy, respectful and age-appropriate relationships;
- ensure that pupils know how to seek help and raise concerns;
- enable regular and private contact with families;

- involve boarders meaningfully in decisions affecting their lives;
- recognise and respond to individual, cultural, religious, medical and SEND needs;
- prepare pupils for life beyond school; and
- create positive memories and lasting friendships.

4. Welfare and safeguarding

The welfare of pupils is the first priority of the boarding community.

Boarding is led by the Assistant Head, Boarding and Behaviour, supported by Housemasters and Housemistresses, resident and non-resident House staff, matrons, tutors, the Medical Centre, the School Counsellor, the Safeguarding Team and other appropriate staff.

The governing body monitors the leadership, management and effectiveness of boarding through the College's agreed governance arrangements.

All staff involved in boarding share responsibility for creating a safe environment and for following the College's safeguarding procedures. Staff receive training appropriate to their roles and are expected to:

- know the pupils in their care;
- remain professionally curious;
- notice changes in behaviour, presentation or wellbeing;
- listen carefully to pupils;
- report concerns promptly;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- record information accurately; and
- work effectively with colleagues and external agencies.

Boarding staff recognise the additional safeguarding considerations created by residential life. These include:

- pupils spending extended periods away from their families;
- overnight accommodation;
- relationships between pupils of different ages;
- access to bedrooms and private spaces;
- child-on-child abuse;
- bullying and discriminatory behaviour;
- sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour;
- abuse within pupils' intimate relationships;
- online harm;

- grooming and exploitation;
- substance misuse;
- missing pupils;
- inappropriate sharing of images; and
- the possibility that a boarder may find it difficult to remove themselves from a harmful situation.

Bullying, sexual harassment, violence, discriminatory conduct, abuse and harmful behaviour disguised as “banter” are not tolerated. Concerns are addressed under the College’s safeguarding, anti-bullying and behaviour procedures.

Online behaviour is treated as seriously as face-to-face behaviour. Boarders are taught and supported to use technology safely and responsibly. Appropriate boundaries around mobile phones and other devices support safeguarding, sleep, academic work and positive relationships.

Boarders are encouraged to speak to an adult whenever they feel unsafe, worried, uncomfortable or uncertain. A pupil will not be disadvantaged for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith.

Where a safeguarding concern arises, the College will take prompt and appropriate action in accordance with its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

5. Health and wellbeing

The College promotes the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of every boarder.

Boarders have access to the College Medical Centre during its published operating hours. The Medical Centre is staffed by appropriately qualified healthcare professionals and supports pupils with:

- illness and injury;
- ongoing medical conditions;
- prescribed medication;
- health education;
- emotional wellbeing;
- referrals and appointments; and
- individual healthcare arrangements.

Outside Medical Centre operating hours, trained boarding staff provide appropriate care and supervision. They may seek advice from NHS services, contact emergency services or arrange for a pupil to attend an urgent treatment centre or hospital where necessary.

A boarder who is taken off site for medical care will normally be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff until suitable arrangements have been made with healthcare professionals, parents, guardians or another authorised adult.

Medical treatment will not be delayed for disciplinary or administrative reasons.

Boarders also have access, as appropriate, to:

- the School Counsellor;
- mental-health support;
- dental, optical and other healthcare services;
- external specialist services; and
- support relating to substance misuse, healthy relationships or other individual needs.

Pupils' dignity and privacy are respected when they receive medical or personal care. Information is shared only where there is an appropriate medical, safeguarding or welfare need.

The College provides boarders with three meals on each full boarding day. Meals are nutritious, balanced and varied, with appropriate provision for:

- allergies;
- medical diets;
- religious requirements;
- cultural needs; and
- other reasonable dietary requirements.

Boarders have access to drinking water and appropriate food outside main mealtimes.

Healthy sleep, exercise and recreation are promoted through House routines, appropriate device boundaries, sporting opportunities and a balanced programme of activities and free time.

6. Daily boarding life

6.1 Accommodation and privacy

Boarding accommodation is safe, comfortable, suitably maintained and appropriate to pupils' ages and needs.

Boarders are provided with:

- an appropriate bed and sleeping area;
- suitable storage for clothing and personal possessions;
- access to washing and toilet facilities;
- suitable study facilities;
- appropriate heating, lighting and ventilation;
- reasonable privacy; and
- opportunities to personalise their own space within House rules.

Staff respect pupils' privacy and dignity while maintaining the supervision necessary to protect welfare and safety.

Boarders are expected to respect:

- the accommodation;
- the privacy of others;
- personal possessions;
- quiet times;
- shared areas; and
- the work of domestic, maintenance and House staff.

No pupil should enter another pupil's bedroom or personal space without permission contrary to House rules.

6.2 Academic support and preparation

Boarding and academic life are closely connected.

Boarders undertake supervised or appropriately monitored preparation during the week. Each pupil has access to a suitable study space and the resources needed to complete their work.

House staff monitor academic engagement and communicate with tutors, teachers, Heads of Department and pastoral staff where support is required.

Where a pupil is having difficulty completing work independently, arrangements may include:

- supervised preparation;
- additional academic guidance;
- access to teaching or learning-support staff;
- adjustments for SEND or other individual needs;
- study planning; and
- communication with parents or guardians.

Academic support should encourage independence rather than create unnecessary pressure. Pupils should have sufficient time for sleep, recreation and social interaction alongside their studies.

6.3 Activities and free time

The College offers a varied programme of weekday and weekend activities intended to support pupils' personal, social, cultural and physical development.

Opportunities include:

- sport and physical activity;
- music, drama and performance;
- creative activities;
- trips and visits;
- cultural experiences;
- service and volunteering;
- House competitions;
- social events;
- outdoor activities; and
- opportunities to explore the local area safely.

Boarders are encouraged to participate positively. Activities are planned with regard to age, maturity, ability, interest, accessibility, risk and individual need.

Participation should be balanced with sufficient free time. Boarders should have opportunities to:

- relax;
- socialise;
- pursue personal interests;
- contact family and friends;
- spend appropriate time outdoors; and
- spend time alone safely where they wish to do so.

Pupil feedback is used to shape the programme.

6.4 House identity and community

Houses aim to provide a stable, supportive community where pupils develop a sense of belonging.

House identity is strengthened through:

- shared routines;
- House meetings;
- competitions;
- celebrations;
- meals and social occasions;
- pupil leadership;
- informal conversation; and
- opportunities for service and responsibility.

Healthy House rivalry is encouraged, but never at the expense of kindness, inclusion or respect for pupils in other Houses.

Day pupils form part of the House community and are encouraged to participate in House life alongside boarders.

6.5 Contact with families

Boarders are supported to maintain regular contact with parents, guardians, siblings and other significant people in their lives.

Pupils may communicate privately with their families at reasonable times, subject only to proportionate safeguarding, welfare and House arrangements. The needs of international pupils and differences in time zones are considered.

House staff communicate regularly with parents and guardians and will contact them promptly where there is a significant concern about a pupil's:

- health;
- safety;
- behaviour;
- emotional wellbeing;
- academic progress; or
- boarding experience.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to share information which may affect a pupil's welfare or support needs.

6.6 Leave, travel and guardians

Leave from the College, overnight stays, travel and holiday arrangements are managed through clear authorisation and recording procedures.

The College seeks to ensure that:

- pupils' whereabouts are known;
- leave is appropriate to age and maturity;
- parental or guardian permission is obtained where required;
- travel arrangements are safe and properly recorded;
- educational guardians meet College requirements; and
- concerns about a proposed arrangement are addressed before the pupil leaves College care.

Boarders are expected to follow signing-out, registration, curfew and return procedures.

7. Pupil voice, support and complaints

Boarders should feel able to express their views about their care and the operation of boarding.

Opportunities for boarder voice include:

- House meetings;
- Boarding committee meetings with the Head of Boarding;
- pupil welfare meetings and round-table discussions;
- the Student Council;
- boarding surveys;
- prefect and pupil-leadership roles;
- online and physical suggestion boxes;
- individual pastoral conversations; and
- informal discussion with House staff and senior leaders.

Staff will listen to pupils' views and take them seriously. Where a suggestion cannot be acted upon, pupils should receive an appropriate explanation.

Boarders may approach any trusted member of staff for help. This may include:

- their Housemaster or Housemistress;
- a member of House staff;
- their tutor;
- House Matron or domestic staff;
- the Assistant Head, Boarding and Behaviour;
- the Medical Centre;
- the School Counsellor;
- the DSL or a deputy DSL;

- the Headmaster; or
- another trusted adult within the College.

Boarders also have access to an independent person who is outside the College's staff group and is not responsible for the leadership or governance of the College. Current contact information is displayed within Houses and included in the boarding information provided to pupils.

Pupils may also contact independent external services, including:

- Childline: 0800 1111; and
- the Children's Commissioner's Help at Hand service: 0800 528 0731.

Childline provides free telephone and online support, while Help at Hand provides advice and assistance to children living away from home and other eligible young people.

Boarders may make a complaint through the College's Complaints Procedure. Pupils will be helped to understand:

- how to raise a concern informally;
- how to make a formal complaint;
- who can support them;
- how their complaint will be considered;
- how they will be informed of the outcome; and
- what further steps are available if they remain dissatisfied.

A pupil will not be punished, disadvantaged or treated unfavourably for raising a concern, seeking help or making a complaint in good faith.

Where appropriate, advocacy or communication support will be arranged for a pupil who needs help expressing their wishes or understanding the process.

8. Behaviour, relationships and responsibility

Boarders are expected to follow the College's Behaviour and Discipline Policy and House rules.

Expectations are based on:

- safety;
- kindness;
- honesty;
- respect;

- responsibility;
- consideration for others;
- appropriate boundaries; and
- care for the College environment.

Boarding sanctions are to be fair, proportionate and educational. Staff consider:

- the seriousness of the behaviour;
- the pupil's age and maturity;
- the circumstances and context;
- any safeguarding concern;
- SEND, disability or communication needs;
- reasonable adjustments;
- the effect on others;
- the pupil's response; and
- the support required to prevent recurrence.

Sanctions must not be humiliating, degrading or unsafe. They must not involve:

- deprivation of food, drink or sleep;
- denial of necessary medical care;
- unreasonable restriction of family contact;
- collective punishment for the behaviour of an individual;
- interference with a pupil's right to complain or seek support; or
- punishment which is inappropriate to the pupil's age or needs.

Restorative approaches may be used to help pupils understand the effect of their actions, repair relationships and rebuild trust. Restorative work will not be used in a way which places a pupil at further risk or requires a victim to meet another pupil against their wishes.

Serious behaviour and safeguarding concerns may be considered under both the Behaviour and Discipline Policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

9. Staffing, leadership and oversight

Boarding staff are selected, checked, trained and supported in accordance with safer-recruitment requirements and the College's safeguarding procedures.

The College seeks to ensure that staffing arrangements provide:

- appropriate supervision;
- suitable experience and qualifications;
- clear responsibilities;

- effective communication;
- access to senior support;
- appropriate sleeping-in or on-call arrangements;
- sufficient knowledge of individual pupils;
- continuity of care; and
- an appropriate response to emergencies.

Boarding staff receive induction and continuing training relevant to their responsibilities.

This includes, as appropriate:

- safeguarding and child protection;
- child-on-child abuse;
- online safety;
- first aid and medical emergencies;
- mental health;
- fire safety;
- missing-pupil procedures;
- equality, diversity and inclusion;
- SEND and reasonable adjustments;
- behaviour and restrictive interventions;
- medication;
- risk assessment; and
- professional boundaries.

Boarding leadership maintains effective communication with academic, pastoral, medical, safeguarding, admissions, catering, estates and administrative colleagues.

Information about pupils is shared appropriately and proportionately so that their needs are understood and met, while respecting confidentiality and data-protection requirements.

10. Monitoring and review

The College monitors the effectiveness of boarding through:

- regular House and boarding meetings;
- pupil feedback;
- parent and guardian feedback;
- staff consultation;
- safeguarding and welfare records;
- medical and pastoral information;
- behaviour and bullying records;
- complaints and concerns;

- activity participation;
- staff supervision and appraisal;
- risk assessments;
- audits and reviews;
- governance oversight; and
- inspection findings.

Themes and patterns are reviewed so that improvements can be made to provision, supervision, training, routines and the boarding environment.

This Statement of Boarding Principles and Practice will be reviewed bi-annually and earlier where required following:

- a significant boarding or safeguarding incident;
- a material change in legislation or guidance;
- an inspection finding;
- a complaint which identifies a wider concern;
- a significant change to boarding provision; or
- evidence that the statement is not being implemented effectively.

Boarders will be given age-appropriate opportunities to contribute to the review.