

Job Description

Houseparent

Role context

Boarding at Highfield is led by two senior residential pastoral leaders: the Housemistress and the Housemaster (Houseparents). Each Houseparent holds responsibility for the pastoral care, welfare, supervision and day-to-day operation of their Boarding House. Houseparents work collaboratively to ensure consistency and high standards across boarding and to act as advocates for boarding within the wider school community.

Boarding ethos

Boarding at Highfield provides a warm, structured and family-style home where pupils feel safe, known and valued. Clear routines, high expectations and strong relationships underpin daily life, alongside fun, shared experiences and a strong sense of belonging. Pupil voice and close partnership with families are central to the boarding experience.

Role purpose

The Houseparent provides visible, calm and reassuring leadership within their Boarding House. The role ensures excellent pastoral care, effective supervision, consistent routines and strong communication with parents, while maintaining boarding practice that meets required standards and supports pupils' wellbeing, independence and development.

Scope of responsibility

The Houseparent is responsible for the day-to-day pastoral leadership, welfare and operational running of their Boarding House. The role requires familiarity with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and accountability for ensuring that daily boarding practice meets these standards. Strategic oversight of boarding policy, whole-school safeguarding leadership, statutory compliance and whole-school budget ownership remains the responsibility of senior leadership.

Line management and key relationships

- Line manage, work through appraisal process and oversee Matrons, Residential Graduate Assistants and Gap Assistants.
- Provide leadership, guidance and support to boarding staff, setting clear expectations and modelling best practice.
- Meet regularly with the Boarding Administrator to review systems, priorities, record-keeping and parent communications.
- Liaise closely with the School Nurse(s) regarding medical provision for boarders.
- Work closely with Heads of Phase, Form Tutors, Learning Support and academic colleagues to ensure joined-up pastoral and academic support.
- Work collaboratively with Admissions and Marketing in relation to prospective families, tours, boarding agents and promotion.
- Work with Estates, Operations and Catering to ensure high standards of boarding provision.

Key responsibilities

1. Pastoral care, wellbeing and community life

- Hold overall responsibility for the welfare, happiness, behaviour and personal development of boarders in the House.
- Set and maintain the tone, ethos and culture of the Boarding House, ensuring a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment appropriate to prep-aged pupils.
- Ensure that parents, pupils and resident staff understand the aims and objectives of boarding in the House and the principles on which community life is based.
- Develop in boarders a strong sense of belonging and collective responsibility for one another and for the Boarding House.
- Support the development of pupils' emotional intelligence, empathy, independence and resilience.
- Coordinate timely and effective responses where there are instances of pastoral or emotional difficulty, working closely with relevant colleagues.

2. Safeguarding and welfare standards

- Always Uphold and implement the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy within the Boarding House.
- Act promptly on safeguarding or welfare concerns, recording and escalating in line with school procedures, including CPOMS.
- Be familiar with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and ensure that daily boarding practice meets or exceeds these standards.
- Ensure boarding staff understand safeguarding procedures and apply them consistently.
- Contribute to safeguarding discussions and reviews within boarding meetings and audits as required.

3. Parent communication and partnership

- Act as the primary point of contact for parents and carers of boarders in the House to foster strong relationships.
- Communicate promptly, professionally and warmly with parents regarding pastoral, medical and routine matters.
- Communicate with prospective boarding parents prior to admission, working closely with Admissions to support smooth transitions.
- Attend parent information evenings, meetings and key school events (including Open Day and Speech Day) as required.
- Ensure parents receive regular, reassuring updates about boarding life and key events.

4. Staff leadership, rotas, training and performance

- Line manage boarding staff attached to the House, providing clear leadership, guidance and support.
- Oversee, maintain and quality assure fair and effective duty rotas, ensuring appropriate supervision and handovers.
- Lead boarding INSET sessions at the start of each half term and deliver termly training and CPD for boarding staff.

- Support the recruitment, induction and ongoing development of boarding staff.
- Lead performance reviews of boarding staff, meeting with staff to discuss performance, progress and continuing professional development needs.
- Oversee the preparation of the Boarding House for the start of term and the orderly clearing and closing of the House at the end of term.

5. Health, medical care and record-keeping

- Liaise closely with the School Nurse to ensure that boarders' medical requirements are correctly catered for.
- Report medical incidents appropriately and ensure, in conjunction with the School Nurse, that all medical matters are recorded accurately, systematically and consistently.
- Promote healthy routines, good personal hygiene and positive wellbeing habits among boarders.
- Oversee overnight and out of hours medical support

6. Standards of uniform, appearance and personal organisation

- Educate, encourage and consistently expect boarders to treat their own belongings, those of others and the fabric of the Boarding House with respect.
- Monitor and maintain high standards of uniform, appearance and presentation within the Boarding House.
- Ensure boarders' personal belongings and clothing are stored securely and tidily.

7. Boarding operations, routines, prep and activities

- Lead the evening and weekend boarding provision during term time, centrally coordinating activities across the site.
- Organise and quality assure an inclusive and engaging programme of evening and weekend activities and ensure these are communicated widely.
- Devise, publish and maintain an annual calendar of boarding events.
- Liaise with boarding staff, downstairs staff and academic colleagues to ensure that supervised prep and study routines provide effective support for boarders and promote independence and positive learning habits.
- Be prepared, where necessary, to provide additional cover within the Boarding House to ensure continuity of care.

8. Fire safety, security and health and safety

- Act as a designated Fire Marshal for the Boarding House.
- Take responsibility for overnight fire duties, including fire lists, night checks and emergency response procedures.
- Work with the Estates Manager to plan, document and review termly fire drills, ensuring accurate records are maintained.
- Liaise with operational services to ensure security, medical provision and health and safety arrangements are exemplary.

9. Catering, resources, finance and sustainability

- Consult regularly with the Catering Manager to ensure boarding meals are of high quality and meet pupils' dietary, medical and cultural needs.
- Consult regularly with catering for numbers and meals, to avoid waste and ensure strong administration
- Monitor the House boarding budget, ensuring budgetary control and value for money for families.
- Work with the Boarding Administrator and the NMS Lead to request and plan the annual boarding budget.
- Oversee the equitable and efficient use of resources within the Boarding House.
- Contribute ideas for cost-saving initiatives that do not compromise the quality of care or the boarding experience.
- Promote sustainable practice within boarding and take steps to minimise waste where possible.

10. Representation, marketing and external relationships

- Act as a champion and spokesperson for boarding across the school community.
- Represent the boarding community at relevant school leadership meetings by invitation.
- Build and maintain strong professional relationships with boarding agents, including developing a programme of visits and hosting tours.
- Work with Admissions and Marketing to promote boarding internally and externally, locally and nationally.
- Oversee the regular publication of high-quality boarding news and information, contributing content as appropriate- e.g. Instagram, termly newsletter etc.

Hours of work, residential commitment and weekends

The Houseparent role is residential and requires flexibility appropriate to a senior residential pastoral leadership position.

- Typically on duty three to four weekdays per week (Monday to Friday), including wake-up, evening and bedtime duties.
- Resident on site overnight for six nights per week during term time, with one designated full day and night off each week. On this night off the Houseparent is not on call, on duty or on fire duty.
- Lead the evening and weekend boarding provision during term time and be on site and on duty at weekends according to the rota.
- One full weekend off per half term, normally aligned with exeat weekends, from 5.00pm Friday to 5.00pm Sunday, free from duty, on-call and fire responsibilities.
- Additional weekend days off may be allocated according to the rota; on these days the Houseparent may be expected to remain on call.
- Required availability two days before the start of term, two days after the end of term, and from 5.00pm on the Sunday return from exeat weekends.

The Houseparent is expected to demonstrate flexibility, reliability and commitment appropriate to a senior residential pastoral role, always ensuring continuity of care for pupils. The above arrangements

should be regarded as a guide. In recompense for the residential nature of the role, accommodation is provided at no cost in the Boarding Flat.