



## HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

### I. The Religious and Cultural Ethos of the School

The school was founded in 1945 along non-denominational lines, with “free access for any creed, colour or race” and this remains the ethos today, although it is fair to say that strong moral codes and essentially Christian principles underpin the spiritual atmosphere within the school community.

It is accepted that not all pupils are regular churchgoers but the policy of the school is to provide a foundation of instruction in the Christian way of life, which will provide a basis and inspiration for pupils throughout their lives. Although Holmewood House boarders are very much in the minority, we still run as a full / weekly boarding school, and the staff are constantly aware of the enormous responsibility of providing for the needs of boarders and of the trust that has been placed in us by parents, carers and guardians.

Our parents, carers and guardians have many different reasons for selecting Holmewood House but we should remain vigilant in maintaining its attractive qualities, of which the safeguarding and pastoral care policies are paramount. We provide a safe and stable environment wherein children can grow into adolescence free from so many of the pressures that beset modern life and surrounded by opportunities for pupils to develop personal interests, and every encouragement is given to achieve a high level of excellence in as many fields as possible. Excellence is encouraged and high standards set in all aspects of the curriculum. Responsibility for seeing that children develop a sense of success belongs to all the staff.

Pastoral care is a high priority. Great stress is placed on providing children with guidance and support, to develop independent attitudes and to 'stand on their own feet'. The emphasis is on setting high expectations and standards so that the children can gradually develop their own self-discipline. Positive and praiseworthy attitudes and effective use of time are emphasised rather than negative criticism. All staff are to be firm, fair and friendly and set out to create an environment in which both adults and children may be fulfilled as individuals and exposed to what is best at all times in all things.

Good communication and access between children, staff, parents, carers and guardians are seen as being vital to our success as a community and there are plenty of opportunities for different kinds of communication to take place.

## **2. Structures**

### **2.1 House Staff**

The Houseparent, who has overall charge of the boarders and different House requirements, liaise closely with the Head. Resident members of staff assist him.

**Mr O’Riordan: resident, Head of Boarding.**

**Mr Patterson: resident**

**Mrs Patterson: resident**

**Mr Davies: resident**

**Miss Graham: resident**

**Mr Porter: resident**

**Donna Sawtell: non-resident, School Nurse.**

**Danielle Swift: non-resident, School Nurse.**

**Gap Graduates/Students: Miss M Ives, Miss E Tallott and Miss E Vander**

The Houseparent holds discussions with Housemasters / Housemistresses and Form Teachers on matters of pastoral and academic concern when required. Housemasters / Housemistresses and Form Teachers have strong pastoral care responsibility, so liaison between them and the boarding house is important. The Boarding staff will report to the Houseparent and Head on a need-to-know basis. The Houseparent holds formal and informal consultations with his House staff regarding any pastoral matters in the House.

### **Duties**

Broadly speaking, under the Head's direction, the Houseparent is responsible for devising and publishing rotas of supervisory duties among the house staff and of students' duties (if applicable). He will be responsible for his full share of duties and liaise with other house staff. The Houseparent is effectively the person on duty, relieved, as appropriate, by other house staff to give him free time and time for personal access to the students. The Houseparent is in overall charge of the house and its staff under the Head. The house staff are responsible for the general supervision of house routines from rising time to lights out at night. Thereafter, the Houseparent ensures that there are at least two members of the resident staff in the building through each night. These people are the Houseparent and a resident female member of staff.

### **Induction of House Staff**

The successful induction of all house staff is vital if the house is to provide the expected high level of pastoral care. The Houseparent has the specific responsibility of inducting assistant Houseparents and matrons. A record of such inductions should be kept.

Apart from formal procedural matters such induction should include advice on the following:

- Dealing with conflict situations in the house such as bullying.
- Advice on potentially difficult pupils or possible personality clashes.
- Advice on relationships with pupils. This might include the appropriateness of being in a one-to-one situation with a pupil or how to conduct oneself during lights out procedure.
- Making sure that staff are aware of key school policies, such as Safeguarding and Child Protection, Anti-Bullying and Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions, as well as the house rules.
- Making clear what a Houseparent is prepared to delegate and which decisions he would always want to reserve for himself.

## **2.2 Students**

The Houseparent involves the boarders in the decision-making and monitoring process of their lives at school: he and other House staff select and invite students to be on a committee to help in the smooth running of the House. Organisational and personal matters affecting the School and non-resident staff are then passed to the Deputy Head. The purpose is reasoned counselling, discussion, implementation of safe, sensible and agreed ideas from the students, explanation of the rationale of procedures and sanctions, careful consideration of complaints, clarification of misunderstandings, with the aim of building and maintaining an atmosphere of mutual trust, friendship and contentment between the students and the staff. At all times, of course, students also have access to the Head, Deputy Head and other staff.

## **2.3 Unhappiness, despondency, abuse, complaints**

Each dormitory displays a copy of the leaflet, 'The Happiness Charter', which outlines the way in which he can proceed in matters of private worry that he feels that they cannot bring to the attention of others at Holmewood. Where psychological or psychiatric help is deemed desirable, the Head is consulted in the first instance, who will approach the parents, carers and guardians if so agreed.

## **2.4 The Day**

Please see separate notes on a day in the Boarding House and procedures for Boarders. Our aim is to provide each student with some time and space for play, rest or quiet work, some privacy, and to foster a homely, friendly, supportive and relaxed atmosphere within the House.

## **2.5 Activities and facilities**

Students can participate in such activities as are published each term in the calendar and the schedule of activities, which include assemblies and services. Students have access to their dormitories, common room, the school grounds (other than areas that are off-limits for safety reasons) and form rooms (also subject to security). The students have access to a phone for their private calls, and parents, carers and guardians may ring in on the boarding number (01892

860016 or 860017). In their dormitories students are encouraged to post their own posters, pictures, cards and to keep books.

### 3. Sanctions

There is **No** corporal punishment and no setting of lines. In all cases where school or house rules are broken, the following action is taken:

Where circumstances are clear and guilt admitted children are told why what they have done is wrong and given an appropriate punishment. In most minor cases simply a verbal ticking-off and a reminder not to do it again will be sufficient. In all other circumstances, students are invited to explain themselves before rebuke, more serious action or establishment of innocence, or the acceptance that the truth cannot be discovered. Students are listened to.

It is recognised that persistent misbehaviour and trouble making are usually indicative of deeper personal problems. In these cases patient and sympathetic counselling is needed and offered. Double or repeated punishment is avoided.

In serious cases of gross and/or persistent anti-social or criminal misbehaviour, exemplary action may be necessary, e.g. warning, suspension, expulsion, but only with the full agreement of the Head, who is solely responsible and follows procedures agreed by the Governors. Thus all cases of severe warning, suspension and expulsion are immediately notified to the parents, carers and guardians concerned, by telephone and always in writing.

Where possible, punishments are designed to suit the offence. They may include withdrawal of privileges, restriction of free time with chores (e.g. litter, tidying), the setting of extra work (but not lines) and letters of apology. All punishments are recorded on the Boarding Tracker which is available from the Houseparent.

### 4. Budgeting and Record-Keeping

It is the Houseparent's responsibility to liaise with the house staff over budgetary requirements and to negotiate with the Estates Bursar an annual cycle of maintenance and decorating and to report to her any shortfall in these areas.

The Houseparent keeps a book recording particular instances of bad behaviour and any action taken by way of punishment, and a book recording fire drills and alarms is located in the Bursary.

### 5. Parents, carers and guardians

#### 5.1 Communication

The Houseparent will be in direct and frequent contact with the parents, carers and guardians of boarders. Parents, carers and guardians are free to telephone the staff and students (on 01892860017), but are asked to bear in mind that constant telephoning is not necessary when a student is at home regularly or visited every day in some cases. A regular weekly call is ample in normal circumstances.

**For exeats and other requests, parents, carers and guardians should write to, email or ring the Houseparent. The Houseparent is always more than happy to talk to parents, carers and guardians by telephone or to meet them to talk about their children. You may contact him on the school numbers or ask for him to ring to talk or arrange a meeting.** Please DO NOT ring before 07:00, unless in an emergency and in the evening the best time is between 20:00 and 21:00. During the school day you can ring the

Houseparent's flat (01892 860011) or leave a message. **Pupils are not encouraged to bring mobile phones and their usage is monitored by the House staff.**

## **5.2 Parental Involvement in the House**

(a) Attendance of family at house and school matches is most welcome. So is assistance with fixtures, events and activities, e.g. with transport and outings.

(b) As with the students, parents, carers and guardians are welcome to approach the Houseparent or the Head with suggestions, comments of approval. Informal contact, as required, with form teachers is also thoroughly encouraged. Formal meetings with teachers are arranged annually.

(c) The running of the House in loco parentis is the responsibility of the Head and the Houseparent.

## **6. Daily Routine**

7.00 a.m. All students up, get dressed, make beds and tidy the dormitories.

7.30 a.m. Breakfast starts.

8.00 a.m. Brush teeth and collect what is required for the day.

8.30 a.m. Registration closes and a full school day.

5.00 p.m. Prep or Junior Boarding activity.

6.00 p.m. Free Time or activities such as Swimming, Judo, Gym Club or Cricket Nets.

7.00 p.m. Supper (on Wednesday at 6.15 p.m.)

7.30 p.m. Students start coming up to the dormitories depending on age group.

8.30 p.m. Lights out depending on age group.

## **7. PROCEDURES FOR BOARDERS**

### **7.1 BEDTIMES**

<b>Year 4 &amp; Below</b>	<b>Preparation for bed to take place from, 19:45, although usually students will be allowed same times as Year 5.</b>
<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year4/5 start to prepare for bed at 20:00. Lights out at 20:30.</b>
<b>Year 6</b>	<b>Year 6 start to prepare for bed at 20:15. Lights out at 20:45.</b>
<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Students will be encouraged to be in bed prior to lights out at 21:00.</b>
<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Preparation may be from 21:00 although less time is often required. Lights out at 21:15.</b>

Students must ensure that teeth are properly brushed and any showers or baths taken according to the rotas. There will be two members of staff on duty at bedtime.

At lights out the member of staff responsible will ensure that there is quiet in the dormitories. There is always a full-time member of staff on overnight call at each end of the house.

## **7.2 SHOWERING**

Boarders may shower every night if they so wish. Showers are to be taken in good time for bed - allowing time for teeth to be brushed properly. Hair is to be washed when showers are taken. In some cases a shower may be permitted in the morning rather than the evening.

## **7.3 RULES FOR PLAYING**

All boarders may play before and after Prep. Playing outside after dark is only permitted in the lit areas and only up until 20:30. Boarders may not play running or ball games indoors including in the changing rooms. The duty staff need to know roughly where pupils are at any given time.

When skating/blading students must wear the appropriate protection e.g. helmet, pads. There is a notice in the boarding house concerning this matter.

The Common Room and Games Room may be used by boarders during their free time.

A suitable DVD may be shown on a night when there may be some relaxation of rules to provide a more homely atmosphere.

## **7.4 RULES FOR BOARDING**

Every institution has to have rules to enable it to function in everyone's best interests. Adherence to these rules is expected of all. If you wish to be treated, as you would be at home then please treat your fellows, the staff, and school property as you would like yourself and your home to be treated by others.

### **Good conduct**

- Essentially, tell the truth and think of others.
- If you do something wrong own up immediately and apologise
- If you own up immediately to accidental damage you will not be punished.
- Helpfulness and co-operation are expected at all times. When asked to do something it should be done straight away.
- Good manners towards each other and all members of staff are expected at all times.
- Bullying, unkind teasing or name-calling, vandalism, fighting and 'borrowing' without permission have no place in the House and all incidents will be fully investigated and treated as seriously as they merit.
- No running is allowed in the House
- Books, games and videos belonging to the House must be cared for and returned after use.
- Food is not to be taken out of the dining-hall.
- No talking is allowed after lights-out.
- No littering. Use the bins provided.

- Respect the furniture and fittings in the House as if they were your own.

## **Routine**

- Children are not to get up more than 10 minutes before rising time, so as not to disturb others.
- Once woken at rising time children must get up dressed promptly, wash and arrive in breakfast by 07:35.
- Attendance at all meals is compulsory.
- Come inside as soon as it starts to rain.
- If a bell rings, respond to it promptly.
- Valuables and money must be handed to your Houseparent for safekeeping.
- Home clothes may be worn after work (which includes Prep.).
- Boarders should be in the House, with their shoes cleaned by their relevant bedtime bell.
- Day pupils may not buy things for boarders.

**When a boarder returns after an outing he/she must check in with the boarding staff or the day duty staff. When they are leaving the premises they must also inform the staff of their departure.**

## **8. The Dormitories**

One of the most important principles of boarding life is that everyone is equal. Students should be tolerant, friendly and flexible. Sleep is very important as Holmewood is a very busy school. Beds will be assigned by the staff and in each dorm are wardrobes and drawers for clothes under the bed. **Pupils may bring in books, photos and appropriate posters to personalise their own space.** Mobile devices can be used for listening to appropriate music (strictly no music with 'Parental Guidance' notices). Videos on mobile devices should be removed before you board. Cameras are only permitted on trips and photographs should not be taken in the dormitory.

## **9. Medical Matters**

The Medical Centre is open from 8.00 a.m. until 6.00 p.m. if a student has a problem. If a boarder needs attention during the night (out of hours) they must not suffer in silence but come and knock on a member of staff's door. All medicines, creams etc. must be handed into the Medical Centre or a member of the boarding staff. Pupils should not have medication on them unless given permission by the Medical Centre.

## **10. Food and Drink**

It is important that food and drinks are not brought in from home. There is a suggestion box and a school council committee to discuss the standard of food and any constructive comments can be implemented. Birthday cakes can be provided if sufficient notice is given or a birthday cake can be provided by parents, carers and guardians.

## **11. Fire Drills**

Fire drills are held during the day or night and it is important that the normal rules apply:

**Do not assume an alarm means a practice.**

**Make sure you read the notices in the dormitory regarding exits and assembly points.**

In conclusion, if you want to benefit from boarding, you have to accept that this is a community, with all that implies. What is important to appreciate is that we are all (both staff and pupils) here to make the most of each other's company and all of us have individual and unique talents to bring to the boarding experience. We hope that pupils leave Holmewood with a feeling of achievement; but also with lasting friendships.

## **12. Guardians**

They assist the school in caring for the pupils of parents, carers and guardians living overseas; **the school requires parents, carers and guardians to nominate a guardian who is resident in the UK**, and preferably within easy reach of Holmewood House. The role of a guardian is to provide or arrange accommodation:

- During school holidays, half-terms or exeat.
- If the school has to close temporarily because of an emergency.
- If a pupil has to be away from school on medical advice or if he/she is temporarily suspended.
- To take decisions in emergencies on behalf of the parents, carers and guardians in cases where the school is not empowered to do so.
- To be accessible in case of emergency. Given the above reasons for guardianship it is important that a pupil's guardian does not live too far from the school – ideally within two hours' drive of Holmewood House. The Houseparent must inform the Deputy Head or Head immediately if they have concerns over the reliability (or nonexistence!) of a guardian. Any concerns about guardianship arrangements will be referred to the relevant agency and where the guardianship arrangement may constitute private fostering; this is referred to the local authority. **Under no circumstances can school staff act as educational guardians for boarders.**

## **13. Independent Person**

The Independent Person is a confidential and supportive adult available to the pupils who wish to discuss something with someone outside the School community. They provide an independent listening ear. A policy explaining the role is available.

**The Independent Person is:** Mr R Smith,

**Home:** 01892 523409

**Email:** Rodneysmithjan@gmail.com

## **14. Insurance**



It is recommended that any valuable personal possessions that are brought to school, including laptops and other electronic devices, are clearly marked and insured under an 'All Risks' policy. The school is not able to accept responsibility for the insurance of pupils' personal effects.

## **15. Internet**

Pupils are given access to the internet at prescribed times. The Acceptable Use of Computers policy sets out clearly what the rules are in terms of this access and sanctions will be imposed against those who try to break these rules. Access to unacceptable sites is blocked by the school and pupils' use of the school computer system is regularly monitored and flagged to the Online Safety Officer (the Deputy Head acts in this capacity). The school will use sanctions against pupils who use Social networking sites to place unacceptable material and opinions, who by their words or actions bring the school into disrepute and who use new technologies to bully or belittle other members of the school community.

## **16. Casual / Flexi-Boarding**

The school offers casual / flexi-boarding particularly for those who are going to board at Senior School. Bookings are made through the Head of Boarding who will also advise on the cost and the items required.

# **APPENDIX I**

## **HOLMEWOOD HOUSE**

### **HAPPINESS CHARTER**

You and your parents, carers and guardians have chosen this school because they believe it is the best one for you and, while school can never replace home, it is our aim to make life for you at Holmewood House as happy as possible.

There may be times, just as there are at home, when you may feel unhappy, worried or feel that you have been treated unfairly, and this leaflet suggests what you might do when you feel like that.

If you lose this leaflet you can always get another one from the School Office, or from your Housemaster/mistress.

If you do not understand anything in this leaflet, get a member of staff, a friend or an older friend to explain it to you.

### **THERE ARE TWO THINGS TO REMEMBER:**

- A. You may just wish to talk to someone, or
- B. You may wish to make a complaint.

Either way, this leaflet will assist you to decide what to do.

## **What do I do if I just want to talk to someone?**

Remember you have close friends who may be able to help, or an older boy or girl to whom you feel you can turn. The Head, your Housemaster/mistress or your Tutor are always ready to help or any other member of staff you know and to whom you feel you can comfortably talk.

There may be times when you feel you cannot talk with a member of staff - this is perfectly all right and natural. Talk, telephone, email or write to any of the following:

- \*Your parents, carers and guardians
- \* Childline
- \*Office of the Children's Commissioner

## **What happens if I want to make a complaint about something?**

Sometimes you may feel that you would like to complain about something that is worrying you. This might be about how you are being treated. The first thing you should do is to talk to any member of staff you trust (e.g. the Head or your Housemaster/mistress).

Addresses and telephone numbers of people outside school whom you may wish to contact:

Your parents, carers and guardians:	tel. no:
Childline	0800 1111
Office of the Children's Commissioner	0800 528 0731
(help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)	

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **New Boarders Information**

I hope you have had an enjoyable holiday and are looking forward to the new term. The following guidelines are there to help you with the transition from day to boarding or in some cases as a new pupil boarding for the first time.

- Boarders should arrive the night before term begins after 7:00pm.
- **You can make your dormitory as comfortable as possible so bring cuddly toys, posters and photos of family and pets.**
- Please name everything, including CDs, books, teddies. Boots and shoes are particularly vulnerable to loss when they are not named.
- You are provided with a locker to keep your personal items secure. You do not require money but if you have some it would be sensible to give it to the Houseparent.
- Please do not bring your own tuck unless previously discussed with the Houseparent.
- Mobile phones are not permitted unless the Houseparent has given special permission. In your dormitory there is a copy of the Happiness Charter and some rules. Please make time to read these. Fire procedures will be explained to the whole dormitory.

- You will always have someone to talk to – other children, tutor, form teacher, houseparent, housemaster and the Head. - so please talk to us when a problem arises. Remember we are in this together, so be part of the team!

Our aim is that you will develop qualities of leadership and the ability to work as part of a team. I hope you will develop responsibility for yourself, for others and for the environment you are living in. Enjoy the boarding experience.

**Please find a clothing list attached.**

### **CLOTHING LIST FOR BOARDERS (FULL/WEEKLY/FLEXI)**

2 Blue Shirts (Boys)  
 2 Blue Shirts (Girls)  
 1 House Tie  
 1 School Tie  
 1 School Blazer  
 2 prs Grey Trousers (Boys)  
 1 Kilt (Girls)

5 prs Pants  
 5 prs Socks  
 1 pr Pyjamas  
 1 Dressing Gown  
 1 pr Slippers  
 1 Bath Towel  
 1 Flannel

Hairbrush, Comb, Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Shower gel etc.

#### **HOME CLOTHES**

1 Shirt  
 1 Jumper  
 1 pr Jeans  
 1 Anorak (Autumn/Winter)

**HOME CLOTHES MUST BE MACHINE-WASHABLE AND ABLE TO BE TUMBLE DRIED**

**ALL CLOTHES MUST BE NAMED**

Person responsible: Boarding Houseparent

Reviewed January 2015, 2016, August 2016, September 2018, May 2019, August 2019, January 2020, July 2020, July 2021 July 2022 January 2023 July 2023 January 2024 June 2024