

# Boarding Principles and Practice

## **TAUNTON SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL: BOARDING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE**

Our boarding practice aims to:

- 1) promote the health and welfare of each individual and access to economic well being
- 2) encourage physical, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- 3) develop a sense of identity in a community through common practice and activity
- 4) embrace partnership with parents, guardians and agents through effective communication.

We want our pupils to be fulfilled and happy and, at the minimum, this means they must feel secure and properly cared for by well qualified and experienced people who are well disposed to children and continually updated through appropriate INSET.

A boarding education provides a wealth of opportunities to encourage the all round development of both the individual and the community. It is a fertile field for the transmission of sound values.

We recognise the need for privacy, countering the possibilities of bullying and the abuse of all sorts of power and transcending the narrower values of an essentially teenage culture.

Our aims are realised by, among other things:

- clear communication of the principles to and by those with boarding responsibilities
- acceptance and adoption of these principles by those with responsibilities
- implementation of appropriate policies and processes in the areas of pupil welfare
- monitoring policies and practice and measurement and evaluation of boarding standards
- dissemination of good practice through effective teamwork and communication
- development of a sound model of pastoral care, appropriately staffed
- appropriate physical conditions of at least minimum care standards
- training and induction of those responsible for boarding
- providing an organised and rich programme of activities beyond the curriculum.

Additionally, [Taunton School International \(TSI\)](#) and its [Middle School \(TSIMS\)](#) aim to encourage students to develop independence and confidence in and knowledge of British culture/values. We recognise the extra difficulties that international students may have in adjusting to a culture and value system that may be very different from any that they have experienced. We aim to be sympathetic, but clear and consistent in the messages that we are sending to our students to enable them to adjust as quickly and painlessly as possible to a new set of expectations.

## **The Model**

- TSI is a mixed boarding house known internally as Foxcombe House. It is home for up to 85 students, aged 14 to 18, from many different countries;
- The boarding houses at TSI are led by the residential Housemaster (boys' house) and Housemistress (girls' house) who report to the Deputy Head, TSI;
- Additionally there is an Assistant House Master, an Assistant House Mistress, two residential male Graduate Resident Assistants, one female Graduate Resident Assistant and a Matron
- TSIMS is a mixed boarding house known internally as The Grange. It is home for up to 60 students, aged 8 to 14, from many different countries;
- The boarding houses at TSIMS are led by the Head of Pastoral and are also supported by the Deputy Head, TSI;
- Additionally there is an Assistant House Parent, one residential male and female Graduate House Assistants and two teaching staff, with boarding experience who have overnight boarding duties;
- Each student is also allocated a house tutor from the academic staff who monitors their welfare as well as their academic progress;
- There is an ongoing programme of refurbishment and redecoration which underlines our commitment to high quality boarding.
- Our 'mixed' boarding houses allow students the opportunity to mix with a range of people of different talents, cultures and background;

### **Some key elements in our practice**

- Expectations and policies are agreed and understood;
- The Deputy Headmaster (Senior School) is the school's appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- The Principal meets regularly with the Deputy Head, TSI and Head of Middle School on an informal basis and weekly on a formal basis to discuss both immediate and far-ranging issues;
- The Deputy Head, TSI and/or Head of Pastoral meet daily with the respective other House staff on an informal basis and weekly on a formal basis to discuss both immediate and far-ranging issues;
- There are house staff meetings weekly for all pastoral staff to meet and discuss any areas of concern;
- All staff, both pastoral and academic, meet weekly to discuss any immediate or far-ranging issues;
- There are clear channels of communication, including a house diary, for all members of the team to flag up any areas of concern daily;
- All staff on the pastoral team receive induction when they join TSI(MS);
- There is a formal appraisal system for permanent members of house staff and an annual performance review for Graduate Resident Assistants;
- Policies are constantly reviewed and amended annually as appropriate;
- There is a clear induction procedure at the start of each academic year for all students;
- Prefects are appointed to represent the concerns of the student body to the House Masters/Mistresses and Head of Middle School through a system of weekly meetings;
- There are two weekly meetings for students - a formal Assembly organised by the Principal or the Head of Middle School and a House Meeting organised by the House staff;

- The Deputy Head, TSI carries out regular checks in all the boarding houses to ensure students are being well looked after and that procedures are being followed appropriately;
- As well as the Matron at TSI, Taunton School employs five nurses (all trained in Mental Health First Aid), two specialist Mental Health nurse, two doctors, one counsellor and a Chaplain;
- The Principal, Head of TSI, Deputy Head of TSI and Head of Middle School are available every morning between 0800 and 0830 to any member of the community to discuss any matter of concern;
- An independent listener from outside the school is available for boarders to talk to;
- A Middle School Forum exists for boarders to air their views. This is also achieved in tutorial time and weekly House meetings;
- Prominence and investment in a full life throughout the working week and weekend;
- There is a fortnightly cross-school Boarding Meeting (chaired by the Head of Boarding and attended by the Boarding House from the Senior School, TSI and the Prep School);
- Within three weeks of arriving at TSI(MS), all parents &/or guardians will be contacted via email, providing a brief update on how their child has settled into boarding school life.