



Boarding Policy

Advent 2025

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8.1 Group Guardianship Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Ethos

Bilton Grange is a boarding and day school with full boarders, weekly boarders and flexi-boarders who may stay overnight for one or more nights each week. It is considered that boarding enables children to benefit more fully from the rich variety of the education that is offered. However, Day children may also take advantage of as many of the boarding opportunities as they wish and as is practicable. Boarding plays a very important part in the school's overall aim of developing well-rounded, confident and articulate children although it is important that boarders and day children co-exist happily at Bilton Grange. Furthermore, many children proceed to a wide variety of senior boarding schools and it is felt that Bilton Grange offers the ideal environment to introduce them to boarding. It is very important that all members of the boarding staff at Bilton Grange provide the support systems and pastoral care necessary for boarding children. The aim must be to provide an atmosphere that is as near as possible to that at home with several quasi-parental figures at school to whom the children can turn at any time.

1.2 Boarding boys and girls are housed in separate areas of the first and second floors of Earle House, with resident Head of Boarding and her family, Houseparent, Head Matron and Assistant Houseparent & family, in various locations. In addition, the Head and his family live near to the boarding house and take a close interest in all matters affecting boarders.

1.3 Pastoral Care

The provision of pastoral care for all boarders with a particular emphasis on the full and weekly boarder is of the utmost importance. Pastoral care focuses on the welfare and social development of each **individual** such that his or her boarding experience becomes a wholesome, fulfilling and happy experience. Every effort must be made to provide an environment that nurtures each child's potential, both social and academic. Bilton Grange's buildings, grounds and surrounding facilities offer an idyllic and inspirational setting for our children to grow up in and provide a safe and stable environment in which to enjoy their childhood.

1.4 Head of Boarding, Houseparents, Assistant House Parents, resident staff, Gap Students and Boarding duty staff have an exceptionally important role and it is vital that they put the interests of the children first on every occasion. The Boarding team must make themselves available for the needs of any boarder who wishes to approach them and provide the opportunity for individuals to seek personal guidance or advice. The Boarding team are asked to be particularly sensitive to problems concerning relationships with parents, guardians or other pupils and identify any signs that might be linked with bullying or abuse. Boarding staff are fully aware of the degree of trust and responsibility that has been placed in them by the boarders' parents and guardians.

1.5 Bilton Grange is a school that was founded on Christian principles and these continue to underpin the approach to boarding as well as school life generally. It is accepted that not all of our boarders are Christian, and that we have children from other faiths and children with no particular faith, but the aim is that the experiences to which boarders (and day children) will be exposed at Bilton Grange will provide a set of core values that will serve them well throughout their lives. All boarders are expected to attend the weekly Chapel services and assemblies, and occasional extra services (eg: Remembrance Sunday), all of which convey a clear Christian message in an interesting and appropriate manner. We also acknowledge and celebrate the rituals and festivals of other faiths too, for example Divali or the Lunar New Year.

2. Boarding Statement

- 2.1** Bilton Grange Boarding embraces a family life ethos which can offer our children significant advantages. We are so proud of the multi-cultural diversity, heritage, and ethnicity of our boarding community. We celebrate, embrace, learn and respect everyone's faith and beliefs. The formal Candlelit Dinners are a unique and special occasion, which the whole community looks forward to.
- 2.2** Our pastoral pyramid is totally focused around our boarders with a caring, friendly and supportive approach 24hrs a day, 7 days a week. We want our boarders to be prepared for the next step and adventures of life when they leave BG at the end of Year 8.
- 2.3** Bilton Grange provides stability for boarders who come from families with a range of different circumstances and dynamics.
- 2.4** At Bilton Grange, it is important that boarders are able to relax in their free time to be happy and fulfilled. There is a huge range of activities and events in which boarders are actively encouraged to participate in their free time. The structure of the weekends sees the community engage with on-site activities or boarders enjoying heading off to local attractions. Home Days on site are always popular where the boarders get to enjoy their 90 acre garden and use all the fantastic facilities that are on site.
- 2.5** Several opportunities are provided throughout the year for families to be actively involved in the life of the school and for all pupils and their families to enrich their relationships in a relaxed and stimulating environment (e.g. Ski Trip, Sports Tours – home & abroad, Sports Day, Summer Fair, Christmas Ball, Candlelit Dinners, Concerts, Speech and Drama Showcases, School Plays, Boarders Bonfire, Summer BBQ). In addition, parents are invited into the school each Wednesday and Saturday afternoon for a cup of tea after matches or games coaching and members of the teaching staff and school community are expected to be part of these important occasions.
- 2.6** Bonds of trust are built between boarders and the staff from the beginning of each child's boarding journey. This trust will flow from the consistency and respect offered by staff who will treat each child in a fair and appropriate manner; giving their time and care, support, sympathy, praise and encouragement via a range of positive verbal and non-verbal communications. All members of the boarding staff are required to be tolerant and to offer warmth and understanding to boarders.
- 2.7** We believe that self-discipline, excellent pastoral care, support and common sense are the key aspects of a safe, happy and proactive boarding community and that any staff intervention is mainly to help and guide each child so that they are able to choose the most appropriate course of action. Community guidelines are kept to a minimum and only result from an obvious need to benefit the boarders to try to make the right choices.

3. Parental & Family Contact

- 3.1** Good communication between children, staff and parents is vital in a boarding school and there are plenty of opportunities at Bilton Grange for different kinds of communication to take place.

- 3.2** Most UK-resident boarders' parents live relatively near Bilton Grange (within 1-2 hours' drive) and contact is generally frequent. Some, however, may be members of the Armed Forces and so may be subject to deployment which inhibits the level of contact.
- 3.3** Many boarders' parents attend functions and sporting events (e.g. Wednesday and Saturday matches).
- 3.4** Weekly boarders have regular parental contact at weekends. Occasional and flexi boarders have even more contact.
- 3.5** New full boarders are discouraged from going out during their first weekend, as this helps provide a reasonable period for them to settle, establish routines, and begin integrating into the boarding community. However, this is a guideline rather than a rule, and decisions will always be made based on what is in the best interests of the individual boarder.
- 3.6** Full boarders are allowed out of school to spend time with parents, relatives or guardians on Saturday or Sunday afternoons provided that they have fulfilled their school commitments and on the condition that they have sought permission from their Houseparent in advance. Members of the boarding and teaching staff work hard to provide interesting and worthwhile weekend activities and they need to know, in advance, which boarders will be taking part in those activities. Generally full boarders are expected to join such activities.
- 3.7** Many boarders are from overseas and every effort is made to maximise contact with the parents of these children. BG requires all overseas pupils to have a UK guardian who is able to fulfil all duties *in loco parentis*; Bilton Grange does not appoint guardians but is always keen to build links with guardians. Pupils have three breaks in each term; a half term week (or two weeks in October) and two 'exeat' weekends, when school finishes on Friday afternoon and boarders return on Sunday evening. In accordance with UKBA guidelines Bilton Grange monitors and organises appropriate transport for all boarders if requested by parents; this is coordinated by the Core Boarding team.
- 3.8** Boarders are encouraged to contact parents throughout the week, via the house phones, email and Facetime. Earle House has six independent phones which allow calls to come in and also to be used for outgoing calls. Pupils have regular access to IT facilities and there is Wi-Fi connectivity in the boarding areas, with the ability to use VOIP technology.

Parents may telephone their children at weekends or weekday evenings on their mobiles or using the telephones in the boarding house. To ensure contact is made at sociable times with our international families, Tuesday and Thursday milk-breaks are available for our international boarders to call home. Full and Weekly boarders have the option to bring in a mobile phone/ tablet; these are stored securely within the boarding houses in charging lockers for use at set times.

- 3.9** Parents are free to contact all staff by email and telephone and this is encouraged by the Head of Boarding. In addition, it is expected that Head of Boarding and Houseparents will contact overseas parents/agencies regularly to keep them abreast of progress and developments at school.
- 3.10** The school does its best to make boarding parents feel that they are not 'missing out' on seeing their children in school plays and concerts; where they are not able to attend, we make every effort to record such performances and make them available via a secure weblink. If parents are not able to attend a parents' evening, or send a surrogate, the school will produce an extra written report at the end of term instead.

3.11 Mobile Phones and Tech Policy

Mobile phones and devices are very fast moving, and it is therefore important that our practices and protocols reflect this. There is a boarder's acceptable use policy and an agreement which clearly outlines the safe use and guidance of all SMART devices in the houses. Guidance and expectations of mobile use and other devices is also clearly displayed in the houses. All staff and boarders are expected to follow and uphold these principles to ensure everyone is safe in our care and in the community.

4. The Practical Provision of Boarding

4.1 Every member of the academic staff has been appointed with the clear understanding that they will be required to contribute to boarding at Bilton Grange. Some carry out boarding duties in the evenings but all are required to contribute to boarders' evening and weekend activities. Although the Head of Boarding and Houseparents will be the most important adults in the lives of the boarders, all staff have an important role to play in helping to look after each boarder. Any problems will be brought up at the weekly staff meeting under the agenda item 'children for discussion,' and will be further discussed at the weekly boarding meeting.

4.2 The Head has overall responsibility for all Bilton Grange matters and policies. The day-to-day oversight of all pastoral care is devolved upon the Assistant Head Pastoral. The Head with the Head of Boarding, Houseparents Matrons, Assistant House Parents, School Nurse, Boarding Tutors, staff and Gap Students all jointly oversee the day to day running of the boarding provision. A weekly boarding meeting is held (Wednesday) to review and refine boarding matters. Any relevant details are fed back to the weekly staff meetings. These meetings can be recorded on Teams and the Head of Boarding takes minutes.

4.3 The Head

The Head lives in the school grounds and keeps in touch with the boarding by liaising regularly with boarding staff and visiting the house on a regular basis. He carries the ultimate responsibility for boarding.

4.4 The Assistant Head Pastoral

The Assistant Head Pastoral has responsibility for pastoral care and, therefore, is closely concerned with all aspects of boarding. This is achieved by liaising with the Head of Boarding, Houseparents, School Nurse, Boarding Tutors and Matrons. All boarding documentation and records are checked by the Head, as well as relevant members of the Governing Body.

4.5 The Head of Boarding

The Head of Boarding has the general overview of all boarding, chairs the weekly boarding meetings and generally reviews, directs and promotes boarding in full consultation with the Head and boarding staff. She is responsible for producing the boarding development plan and producing and implementing the boarding policy. They ensure that there is a good balance between boarders' use of recreational time and their academic commitments. They liaise closely with all boarding staff in order to make any necessary adjustments or changes and oversees the duty cover. The Head of Boarding is responsible for overseeing all boarders' social activities and ensures that boarders have the option of participating in a varied and entertaining range of activities in the evenings and at weekends.

4.6 House Parent(s) and Assistant House parents

There are two Houses (Fisher and Lyon) with a Houseparent in charge of each. One of these Houseparents is also the Head of Boarding. In addition, the Assistant Houseparent supports both Houseparents. The main role of the Houseparents and Assistant House Parent is to work closely as a support figure for boarders, taking responsibility for their welfare, general progress and happiness. They must foster a family atmosphere and create an environment where boarders will flourish, where trust and mutual respect are among the core values of the boarding houses. They liaise closely with each other and with Matrons, the Head, Assistant Head Pastoral, School Nurses, and Boarding Tutors. They must maintain high standards of manners, dress, tidiness and politeness in the children. They take part in boarding activities and organise and often lead the programme of Sunday activities. The Head of Boarding, Houseparents,, Assistant House Parent(s) and Matrons supervise breakfast times and will also play a major part in the evening boarding duty rota. Assistant House Parent(s) report directly to the Head of Boarding and will deputise and stand in if the Head of Boarding or Houseparents are away or off duty. The Head of Boarding also liaises with Tutors, parents, children and other staff to ensure that demands on boarders do not become too onerous or inappropriate (for example excessive clashes from sport, drama, music, academic, activities, external clubs etc).

4.7 The Head Matron(s)

The Head Matron is a joint role involving supervision of the Matron team and the running of the houses. They manage the matron duty rotas in conjunction with Head of Boarding and ensure that this department of the school runs smoothly. The Head Matrons report directly to the Head of Boarding. They are responsible for the general organisation and administration of their respective boarding areas. They are responsible for, bookings, décor, boarding routines and the general homeliness of the dormitories and boarding areas. Head of Boarding and Houseparents are supported by the team of Matrons, and they supervise Boarding Ambassadors to ensure that the right tone is being set. Head Matrons make themselves available at times when boarders' parents are delivering or collecting their children and have a significant responsibility for knowing their charges well and for building strong links with their parents, taking care to ensure that parents are aware of everything affecting their children. The Head Matrons are a vital part of the pastoral pyramid within the BG boarding community.

4.8 School Nurse

The School Nurse is responsible for all medical matters at Bilton Grange and has a particular responsibility for the health and welfare of all boarders, in conjunction with the school doctor. She reports directly to the Head and is expected to inform him quickly of any serious medical matter. She also has a duty to keep parents informed of any medical problem affecting their child.

4.9 Boarding Tutors

The boarding tutors are members of the teaching staff who contribute to boarding duties whilst acting as 'role models' in their respective boarding areas. They will work directly with the Head of Boarding and Houseparents and contribute to the 'family atmosphere'. They will also be available for 'back-up' should any difficult circumstances arise. Most boarding tutors live on the school campus.

4.10 Matrons

The matrons carry out responsibilities as directed by the Head Matrons who liaise closely with the Houseparents and Head of Boarding. They carry out boarding duties from the beginning until the end of the boarding school day. They also assist with the provision of clean linen and clothing, hygiene, medication and the general tidiness and cleanliness of the boarding areas. During the day they will monitor the eating habits and nutrition of children at mealtimes. They might also be in contact with parents but must keep the Head of Boarding and Head Matrons informed about all such communications. They also have a number of non-boarding responsibilities in relation to the health and hygiene and care/supervision of day pupils.

4.11 Night Matrons

Night Matrons provide a constant presence throughout the night and are employed on most nights of the week (when there is no night matron on duty, a member of the resident staff will be 'on call'). They help with the bedtimes in the evening and the wake-up in the morning. During the night the duty night matron will periodically patrol all dormitories both boys and girls. The duty night matron is 'on call' and can be contacted by any boarder during the course of the night. She is based on the ground floor of Earle House and can be easily contacted by the call buttons in the boarders' rooms. Night matrons also assist with hygiene and medication.

4.12 Gap Students

Bilton Grange employs a team of gap students who assist in a variety of areas of school life. They are usually from English speaking countries overseas such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, and also from the UK. Part of their role is to help out each night with boarding duties, evening duties and across the weekend. They often attend the informal boarding activities and are a good way of providing the 'big brother' or 'big sister' role model. Before appointing these students, every effort is made to check their suitability for a boarding school. Detailed and reliable references are taken up from their home countries and Certificates of Good Conduct requested. Internal induction training is given by the Deputy Head, Assistant Head, Pastoral and the Head of Boarding who all closely monitor their performance. The Gap Students are line managed by a member of the teaching staff, currently Mr David Searle.

4.13 Graduate Assistants

The Graduate Assistants are individuals who have finished their degrees and aspiring towards a teaching pathway. Each individual will offer a range of sporting/academic/creative interests which will see them support certain departments in the Pre-Prep and Prep. They will all be heavily involved with the boarding community during the week and at the weekends. There have been no Graduate Assistants appointed this year.

4.14 Child Protection/Complaints Procedure

Child protection and the complaints procedure are covered within the Staff Handbook and Pastoral Policy. An internally produced booklet entitled Helping Hands (see appendix 13) is given to each boarder which gives them guidance regarding these issues. Boarders are encouraged to speak to any member of the boarding staff (or whoever they feel most comfortable with). Boarders may choose a more formal approach where they would first consult the Head of Boarding, Houseparents, Assistant Houseparent or the Head Matrons although they are also free to approach the Head and the Assistant Head Pastoral. Mrs Mireille Everton is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The designated Independent Persons are Mrs Faith Matthews and Mr Paul Nicholson. Children can contact them by email on listener@biltongrange.co.uk or call them directly on a displayed number.

4.15 Induction of New Boarders

The Head will have formally and informally gleaned all the information and background before a child enters the school and passed relevant details onto the boarding staff. The Head of Boarding is closely involved in the admissions/interview process before a place is formally offered. Every new boarder is provided with one or two 'buddies.' One is a member of the same tutor group and one of them a boarder.. All new boarders will be 'checked-in' and talked through the BG Boarding Passport. This document cross checks and ensures all new members of the community understand all aspects of the BG boarding houses, routines, drills, timings and expectations. There is a comprehensive induction pack sent with welcoming handbooks (for both the boarder and the parents) and an induction process when the new boarder arrives into the houses. All boarding staff are particularly sensitive to the feelings and emotions that can be experienced by the new boarder and they are carefully monitored in the early stages. New full boarders are discouraged from going out on their first weekend in order to give them a reasonable period to settle and establish themselves.

Early in the first week, the boarding team will email/telephone the parents/guardians to tell them how their child has settled.

4.16 Induction of New Boarding staff

The Head will formally appoint all new staff but in the boarding house, new staff may be appointed by the Head of Boarding and HR manager. All new employees undergo a detailed and structured training programme and day which is in line with regulatory requirements which is issued by the Secretary of State.

Staff supporting the Boarding Houses will be met by the Head of Boarding and shown around the boarding houses. A new member of the boarding team will be given a boarding induction pack (handbooks, boarding policy) and also an induction sign off sheet which clearly and thoroughly cross-checks all aspects of the role have been covered. This is signed off at each stage, counter signed by the Head of Boarding and then checked by the HR Manager/Head and kept on file.

4.17 Staff Training

All members of staff are aware of the importance of keeping up to date with modern ideas in boarding practice and childcare and protection. Documentation outlining the various IAPS and BSA courses is passed to the boarding staff, who attend such courses as required. The training needs of the boarding staff are regularly monitored at performance evaluations and less formally, ensuring that they continue to attend the appropriate courses and keep up to date with developments in boarding. Following a course, a member of staff is expected to pass on their findings to interested colleagues, verbally and in documentary form, in order to facilitate the speedy implementation of new ideas in good boarding practice. The school and group has an Edu-Care membership and all staff are expected to maintain and develop their professional development. This is reviewed annually by their line managers.

4.18 Records

Records concerning matters of discipline and complaint are kept, on file, by the Deputy Head and Head, respectively. Personal and welfare information is kept, on file, by the Head. Health and medical records and care plans are kept by the School Nurse.

4.19 Rewards and Sanctions

Lyon and Fisher Awards

The BG Boarding Community is a really special place, and to reward and support the boarders we have the 'Lyon' and 'Fisher' dormitory awards.

Every week, boarders and their dormitories will be marked on the following areas and there will be a running total.

These areas are:

1. Tidiness
2. Helpfulness
3. Being organised and ready in the mornings and evenings
4. Respectful
5. Making their dormitory a home (pin board displays)
6. Being kind and considerate to others
7. Behaving and supporting the community
8. Manners

Each dormitory will be given a mark(s) out of 10 for the above areas and these will be collated each week and displayed in the main hub, next to the matrons'.

Reward: The winning dormitory will receive the Lyon and Fisher awards at the end of term and will be able to choose an activity from the Lyon and Fisher shopping list.

RAK Awards (Random Acts of Kindness Award)

The boarding house team are looking to award boarders who go above and beyond, without being asked. If this is witnessed or reported, the member of staff will raise a RAK award incident on ISAMS. Boarders who receive one or more RAK awards (the more they achieve the better the chance they might win!) will then be entered into a draw every half of term in both houses. The RAK incident form asks the member of staff what it was awarded for and this is logged on ISAMS and an email is sent to; Head of boarding, Form Tutor, Head of Phase, Deputy Head, Boarding team and Assistant Head Pastoral.

Draw: The draw will take place every Wednesday before half/end of-term and the reward will be a piece of 'BG Boarding/Earle House merchandise'.

Sanctions:

The boarding community is run with a strong family environment with a home from home ethos which positively reinforces that boarders try to make the right choices and reflect on the mistakes they make. This policy sits in line with the whole school policy.

The Head of Boarding, Houseparents, Assistant House Parents, Graduate Assistants, Gap Students and Matrons should all lead by example. If a boarder fails to follow instructions/guidance and high expectations of the house, then the following steps should be taken:

The incident should be logged via the boarding house reward/conduct tab.

Within this area there are a number of options which allows the member of staff to record carefully what has happened. This boarding message is then logged and emailed to all the relevant parties. If significant, the parents and guardians can also be contacted during this time to keep them in the loop. The Head of Boarding or the member of staff will then follow up the incident and discuss the next step/action that needs to be taken. This may include:

- Calmly addressing the boarder and confirming that his/her action is wrong and it is not appropriate and they should stop immediately.
- If they persist, then the boarder should be asked to come away from the area and explain their actions and reasons
- It is important to ensure that all actions are measured and the Head of Boarding is kept informed at **all** times.

If a verbal warning is given and the boarder still disregards this first stage, then further steps can be taken:

- A simple apology (verbal or written);
- An earlier night/bedtime;
- Not being allowed the privilege of tuck on a Wednesday/Saturday ;
- Restricted use of electronic devices and screen time to play games on a Sunday*;
- Being removed from an activity or Option;
- Being removed from going on a weekend trip.

(*please note this would not prevent a boarder being able to call home or make contact with their parents)

Incidents of a more serious nature, would result in further investigations and the Head of Boarding would be in direct contact with the Deputy Head, Assistant Head Pastoral and the Head. These might include; physical, verbal or mental bullying or abuse, stealing, threatening behaviour towards another boarder or member of staff. The sanction for this would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis but the following actions might be given:

- A task or project to raise awareness;
- A period of Community Service to help and support others;
- A formal warning;
- A period of house or school internal suspension within school;
- Fixed term exclusion from school for a day or period of time;
- Permanent exclusion.

All incidents of this nature would be logged on ISAMS and further details and findings would be shared and uploaded to ISAMS, CPOMS and a brief outline might be added on the Teams night log depending upon the nature and sensitivity of the situation.

5 Health, Hygiene and Wellbeing

5.1 The School Nurse has the general overview of all medical matters and takes a close interest in all medical difficulties affecting the children. She keeps all the other boarding and teaching staff informed wherever and whenever relevant.

5.2 Medical Bays

There are two medical bays in Earle House – one on the boys red corridor on the first floor, and one in the girls blue first floor corridor. The room on the blue corridor has a lockable unit to store medication upstairs when needed. The School Nurse and Head Matrons are responsible for arranging the constant supervision of pupils when necessary.

5.3 Health and Wellbeing Centre (HWC)

There is a central daytime medical assessment/surgery just off the Quad in addition to the medical bay & matrons room in each boarding area.

All medication is stored in locked cupboards in a lockable room (i.e. HWC,, Earle House matrons' room). Medication is stored and administered in accordance with the Drug Administration Policy and the Medical Policy. The boarding house currently logs all medical situations via the Matron Channel on Teams which is then transferred to the ISAMS medical module by the School Nurse.

Controlled drugs (e.g. Ritalin, Concerta XL & derivatives) are stored in a double locked cupboard in the main surgery only.

5.4 Medical Checks

All new pupils have medicals during their first term which include checks on height, weight, hearing and sight. All boarders are required to register with the school medical officer who is the senior partner at the Revel surgery.

Routine dental appointments are usually made by parents or guardians during holidays. Emergency treatment is given by local dentists during term time in which case parents are fully informed about such treatment.

Immunisation programmes are organised where possible for potentially dangerous and contagious diseases where government agencies recommend that we do so. Parental permission is always sought on these occasions and they are invited to be present if they so wish.

Parents are kept well informed of any medical problem, or any medication prescribed by the school doctor. Any social problems where medical advice is considered appropriate will, with parents' approval, be referred to the doctor.

Where illness is likely to be more than short term, parents are invited to take their children home for the period of illness and convalescence. Parents are always informed if their child is in sick bay overnight. Minor injuries are dealt with by medical staff on site. More serious injuries, particularly where visits to hospital are required, are immediately reported to parents/guardians.

Parents are asked to fill in an in-house form, outlining any relevant medical conditions that may affect a boarder's time at Bilton Grange. With the parents' permission, all staff are informed at the regular staff meetings or by written note so that they are sensitive to any problem. If appropriate, they are published in the staff common room. The medical history, notes and information are being transferred to the ISAMS medical module which our School Nurse, Mrs Cathy Gunn, is overseeing. Current medical logs are being made and taken on the BG Boarding House Team which is located in the Matron channel.

A special note is made of any allergies and the Lodestone House Catering team has a list, which is also on view in the staff common room. All staff are trained in food handling, allergies. A note is also made of any medication that is not permitted by the parents.

Ablutions

- 5.5 Ablutions: Boarding** – All boarders have ensuite bathrooms – with between two and four children sharing bathroom facilities. There is also one additional WC on the girls corridor, and on the ground floor of the building there are a further five WCs and four more on the lower ground floor next to the kitchen.

All boarders are expected to brush their teeth every morning and evening and this is supervised. Pupils shower every night and this is checked by matrons and duty staff. All boarders are checked for hair washing on a regular basis during the week. Fingernails are checked regularly and clippers are available if cutting is required. A close eye is kept on cleanliness. Most children bring in their own toiletry items, but these are available on account.

5.7 Clothing, Laundry and Personal Items

Earle House has its own laundry area where clothing is cleaned daily. Underpants and socks are changed daily and bed linen is changed weekly. Some shoe cleaning materials are provided. Matrons repair minor damage to clothes and may renew any loose name tags. They will also liaise with parents to arrange for the purchase of new clothes from the School Blazer website. Occasionally it may be necessary for a Matron to take a child out of school to be fitted with particular items of clothing (e.g. shoes, glasses). Whatever the case, these actions are only carried out with parental consultation.

Toiletry items such as soap, toothpaste, shampoo, combs, stationery etc. can be provided on account or bought from local shops.

Mobile phones, electronic gadgets, passports, travel documents and tickets are all stored securely by the core boarding team and are signed in and out as needed. Any money which is received is noted and locked away and kept in the individual file. No money is required for the term ahead as this is all ordered in advance of the weekend trip or school trip. A record of this is kept by the boarding team on a secure Team channel. In addition to this, all boarders have a lockable safe inside the cupboards in their rooms for any other personal items.

5.8 Food and a Balanced Diet

Lodestone House, are contracted by Bilton Grange and they employ a trained catering team led by a Catering Manager. They ensure that boarders are provided with a healthy and balanced diet with a broad range and choice of interesting and appetising food. Suitable accommodation is provided for the hygienic preparation, serving and consumption of boarders' main meals. This is situated in the main part of the school and close to both boarding houses.

The Head has the overview and is responsible for monitoring the quality and nutritional value of all meals, in conjunction with the School Nurse. As with all children in the school, the matrons carefully monitor the consumption by each boarder at lunchtimes and may ask them to take more of a particular food and check that they have eaten a sufficient portion. The Lodestone House staff observe what each child takes at the servery and will occasionally give advice to individuals and encourage them to balance their intake. Duty matrons stand in the dining hall to see that good manners and habits are practised and will monitor the amount of waste food (a child may be asked to return to the table if necessary). Breakfast and Tea are very popular meals and once again there is plenty of choice (all pupils may ask for more food at all meal times). During the day, there is also a milk break in the morning and a little tea in the afternoon (this usually comprises drinks, a choice of fruit and a healthy snack). In addition, there is always an evening snack in the boarding areas, including cereal, milk, yoghurts and fresh fruit and this is monitored by the duty staff. Water is available at all times in boarding houses and in the dining room.

On Sundays, a full English, American or extensive continental breakfast is served in the morning on alternate weekends in the Earle House dining room.. There is always a staff presence at mealtimes to maintain good manners and eating habits. Children are asked not to bring food or drinks into school, however there is a well stocked tuck shop that pupils access twice a week (no food is permitted in bedrooms). The Boarding Council meets termly and will give an opportunity for feedback from the children re catering. This enables the catering staff to keep in touch with the children's preferences when planning future menus. In addition, parents of all new children fill out questionnaires relating to specific dietary needs.

On a number of occasions throughout the year, 'Candlelit Dinners' take place on Wednesday evenings, when boarders dress in smart (or smart casual) attire, and, following drinks and mingling in the Hub, have a formal meal, with a seating plan through which children mix with different age groups as well as guests, who may be governors, Heads or Housemasters from senior schools, or other visitors to the school.

The review and reflection of the boarders, core meals (breakfast and tea) are regularly discussed by both the boarding staff and boarders. The Boarding Council regularly raise ideas and suggestions, which Lodestone House have considered and actioned. Lodestone House may also attend the Boarding Council Meetings to 'put forward' and suggest ideas for the weeks and term ahead.

5.9 The Voice of Boarders

The Head of Boarding holds regular Boarding Council Meetings with boarders to receive their views on boarding life at Bilton Grange. Suggestions on how to improve any aspects of boarding life are warmly encouraged and these will be noted by the boarding team and discussed at future weekly boarding meetings where the Head is present. Other than informal conversations and House meetings, boarders have a suggestions (voice) box, a termly Boarders' Council, as well as the School Council where they can raise any ideas, suggestions, concerns, complaints or other views.

It is very important that all Boarders feel able to express their ideas, suggestions, and views and to offer constructive criticism of the boarding provision of the school. Open and regular dialogue between children and boarding staff is encouraged and it is considered to be an important aspect of the School. Boarders' views will be given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of Bilton Grange, and they will not be penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith.

6. General Welfare and Homeliness

- 6.1** The boarding staff actively encourage a homely environment in the boarding area. There is the opportunity for a great deal of informal contact which enables maternal, paternal and 'big brother' or 'big sister' type relationships to develop (but always knowing 'where the line is drawn' in terms of discipline and respect). Boarders are encouraged to treat the school as a second home.
- 6.2** Boarders have their own duvets and are encouraged to bring suitable items into the dormitory such as family photos, toys, teddies and other soft toys, rugs, books, comics and appropriate magazines to make their areas, pinboards and dormitory spaces homely.
- 6.3** Personal post and parcels are placed in the pupils cubby holes in Earle House each day. Children's personal post will never be opened by staff.
- 6.4** Tuck Shop is available on a Wednesday and Saturday where boarders may purchase a small number of items on account. Trips to local shops also occur on occasional Saturday or Sundays.
- 6.5** There are three recreational/common rooms in the boarding house and these are cosy informal rooms which have soft furnishings, TV with NowTv, Disney and Netflix for movie nights. The main common room is the large room that overlooks the main house Hub (The Fish Tank) – but there are two further sitting rooms- Lyon's Lounge & The Hideout. These areas are all well used and popular with all the boarders throughout the week and weekends.
- 6.6** There are areas and rooms in and around the school for boarders to withdraw for privacy or just to be quiet. The library is a designated quiet room and is available for specified independent work should the pupils require this. Children may also use the tables in the Hub should they wish to do some quiet work or revision when they are in the boarding house. Bilton Grange's grounds offer great opportunities to seek relaxation and peace in quiet surroundings or just to let off steam! The duty member of staff has an activity list which details the whereabouts of each child.
- 6.7 Weekends**
Children are not permitted to leave the school grounds unless accompanied by staff, parents, guardians or an approved and agreed adult. There will always be adult supervision on visits, shopping trips etc.

6.8 On Sundays, a teaching member of staff organises the afternoon trip and activities with the support of the Houseparents and Head of Boarding. In the afternoon, there will always be an activity laid on (e.g. bowling, home days, walk, adventure playground, ice skating etc) which could be in the local vicinity or further afield, staffed by duty staff. There is a large range and choice of activities which are advertised well in advance, in the termly calendar. This normally runs from 12-5pm. Boarders are also given plenty of opportunity to get up to date with academic work, music practice or revision. Every night, the boarding routine allows 15 minutes for the boarders to read or revise before lights out.

6.9 High Risk Trips – Parental Consent

Across the academic year there is a large range of weekend trips and excursions. These are always risk assessed by the trip leader and then they are crossed checked by a member of SLT. On occasions, some of the Sunday trips would be classed as a ‘higher risk’ and therefore parental consent for these trips is required. The Head of Boarding writes to all the families at the start of the year to obtain their consent so that their child can attend and they agree to the risk. A higher risk Sunday trip might include high-ropes, Cliff Lakes, Go-Karting, Trampolining and Climbing to name a few.

7. Boarding Guidelines

7.1 Dealing with Children – Hints for Boarding Staff

Points to consider when interacting and building a relationship with children:

- Good communication and listening skills
- Understanding, friendly and kind, but also able to keep discipline
- Allow freedom to have fun, but don't allow it to get out of hand
- Consistency
- Even-tempered
- Fairness - willing to listen to all points of view
- No favouritism
- Close contact, seeing their point of view, but also keeping proper adult/child distance in the relationship

Once we have built up a relationship with the children and gained their respect and trust, we must then consider what expectations we have regarding their behaviour. We should also consider what the children should be able to expect from adults.

The children should all be aware of the boarding house rules and the consequences of breaking the rules. Consistency is essential in dealing with the children.

It is not appropriate to enforce sanctions without the knowledge of the boarding team. The aim should be that within the child/adult relationship we encourage them to keep the boarding house rules. If the children are not doing what is asked of them, then we should perhaps examine the reasons. Better communication and more interacting may be more pertinent than punishment. However, we should bear in mind that sometimes children will just be poorly behaved, no matter how good our relationship with them is and this is not a reflection on our interaction with them. If it does become necessary for a child to be given a consequence for a particular behaviour choice, then this should be with the knowledge and support of the Head of Boarding. It may of course be unavoidable for the matron or Boarding Tutor to give out a consequence without waiting for support from the boarding team. However, this should be the exception and not normal procedure and the Houseparent should be informed as soon as possible.

With the child/adult relationship established, what should we expect from the children?

- Respect for people and property
- Tolerance of others - staff and pupils
- Honesty
- A development of independence and self-esteem
- An ability to learn from their mistakes
- Willingness to express feelings, ideas and opinions
- Active participation in boarding life

What should the children expect from the adults in the house?

- Availability - it may be perceived (rightly or wrongly) that you are too busy to help.
- Confidentiality - see notes on this issue.
- Patience and understanding
- Fairness
- Trust
- Security
- Dignity
- Protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or harassment

This might seem a large expectation and indeed it is. As staff, we need to support each other in maintaining the high standards that are expected of us.

The role of Matron is a difficult one. They are in no way substitute parents and yet in their dealings with the children, they may be perceived to be more motherly than perhaps the other staff. It can also be difficult to maintain a professional distance and there may be a danger of becoming too friendly with the children.

The 'Principle of Supervision'

This is a particular term – there is a difference between "supervising" the children, and "watching" the children. Generally, it is supervision that is appropriate, rather than watching.

Listening Skills

It can be difficult for a child to approach an adult and they may need a message that you are interested and prepared to listen. How you phrase an invitation to start talking can be crucial. If you say in rather dismissive manner "so what is it now?" they are likely to make excuses and leave. However, you could say, "Please tell me what your problem is" or "You seem upset. Would you like to say what's bothering you?" or "What's up? Can I help?" and they may be more likely to relax a little and start talking.

Show interest and respect for what is being said. Pay attention to how you use your voice in your responses. Speaking too loudly for example may give out the message that you are angry.

Make sure you have a relaxed and open body posture and make good use of eye contact and facial expressions. Appropriate gestures such as the head nod can be useful. Consistency is important, it is no good smiling and nodding encouragement if you are looking at your watch frequently or perhaps fidgeting in your chair. Children are no less astute than adults at reading non-verbal signals and will react accordingly.

Questions can be useful, but are more helpful if they are open ended, not requiring a specific answer, but inviting the child to follow their own path, i.e. "What happened then?" or "What did you feel like when she said that?" You should avoid questions that require yes or no answers.

Confidentiality

The issue of confidentiality is an important one. It is vital that both staff and children are aware of the limits of confidentiality and what happens to information given to staff.

Do not give a guarantee that you will keep what is said confidential or secret. If a child has a problem, you have a responsibility to tell the right people to get something done. You might say that if they are going to tell you something very important that needs to be sorted out, you will need to tell the people who can sort it out, but that you will only tell people who absolutely have to know.

You might want to talk over any child's problems with any of the boarding staff. **In the case of suspected child abuse, you must not discuss this with anyone other than the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head.**

7.2 Missing Boarder Policy

During the normal working week, a boarder will be in school from 8am through to either 5.45pm or 6.45pm after Options. Throughout the day, registers are taken in the morning, after lunch and again at teatime. Each Option is also registered at the start.

Incident

If at any one of these times a boarder was missing then Reception and the Duty Staff would be informed and the appropriate checks would be made to see the individual was at an extra lesson or had a planned absence. If at this point the boarder was still missing, the Head of Boarding and SLT member of staff on duty would lead a search from the last known point of contact. At this point, the Head would be involved, and further steps would then be taken.

Action

On searching all the known areas and the boarder was still not found the fire alarm would be sounded. If the boarder was still missing and not in the head count, further steps to call the Police to widen the search and contact with the family or guardian would be made to keep all relevant parties informed of the situation.

Weekends and Boarders' Trips

At the weekends, when the format is less formal, regular checks are taken by the duty staff throughout the weekend with up-to-date lists to ensure everyone is safe and accounted for. There is no point where a boarder is left unsupervised in the school or grounds over the weekend. Off-site trips are overviewed by the Head of Boarding, Head and Risk Assessed. Group/Trip leaders are expected to carry out a risk assessment of each trip, and all the boarders are split into groups of 8-10 with an adult/Grad/Gap. Parental permission/consent will sort for the more 'high risk' activities at the start of the academic year. This directly asks parents to confirm they are happy for their child to participate in the more adventurous trips and consent to allowing them to take part. These trips might include: High ropes, water-based activities, Trampolining Parks or climbing. Staff emergency contact details are always shared and the Head of Boarding and the School Nurse's direct numbers are on every Sunday trip overview in case of an emergency.

Missing boarder at night

Incident:

A child is found to be missing from their bed during the night either by a member of the boarding staff or by another child (who reports it to the duty staff or the Head of Boarding).

Action:

A search of the dormitory should be followed by a search of the following places:

1. Other dorms
2. Lavatories and washrooms
3. Boarders' Social Areas
4. House and across the floors

If a child is still missing, the Head of Boarding and HouseParent(s) should be informed immediately. A systematic and comprehensive sweep of all the boarding house should be made from top to bottom across all floors.

If the child is still missing, then the fire alarm should be sounded.

A full roll call should take place at the assembly point to determine that the child is definitely missing.

If the child is still not present, the Head should be informed immediately and parents would need to be notified of the current situation.

An incident meeting will follow as soon as possible and the appropriate action taken. This may include contacting the emergency services and further members of staff for support.

An incident log should be started immediately.

See "Emergency Plan for Bilton Grange School" document.

7.3 Overnight Fire List

It is vital that Boarding House and duty staff fill in the Fire List every night, so that we can be sure of exactly how many children are in and where they are all sleeping.

A copy must be placed each night beside the fire alarm control panel so that it can be collected quickly before moving to the assembly point in the Quad to enable the presence of all pupils to be checked. Copies are also left next to each of the resident staff houses.

7.4 Physical Restraint of a boarder policy

All boarding staff should be aware of the school policy on Physical Restraint when dealing with an incident of this nature.

The policy has been prepared for all teaching staff, support staff who have contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school, to explain Bilton Grange's arrangements for controlling and restraining pupils and boarders. All members of staff and volunteers who might have to intervene physically with pupils should understand the options and strategies open to them. They should know what is acceptable and what is not. These guidelines were drawn up according to the recommendations made by the then DfES in circular 10/98: The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils – 1996 Education Act (section 550A). It is consistent with IAPS guidance. The policy should be read in tandem with other Bilton Grange policies relating to interaction between adults and pupils, notably the Bilton Grange School Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy. Please see policy on common area and the importance of following up and logging and recording the incident.

7.5 Searching a boarder's home area and personal possessions within the boarding houses

The following is an excerpt from the School’s Search and Confiscation policy on searching a pupils’ space or belongings:

Amongst other things, the Education Act 2011 provided schools with powers designed to help teachers maintain good discipline. As a result, teachers now have the power to search pupils for any items that have been, or could be, used to cause harm or break the law, and for items banned by school rules, including alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen property. Any search of boarders’ personal belongings should be carried out in accordance with section 550ZA of the Education Act 1996 and with regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. In short:

- Any member of School staff can search a pupil for any item banned under the School rules, providing he/she agrees.
- The Head and staff authorised by him, also have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they suspect the pupil has certain prohibited items. The items that can be searched for under this power include alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items.
- School staff can seize any banned or prohibited item found as a result of a search or which they consider harmful or detrimental to School discipline.

All searches should be discussed with the Head of Boarding and or the Head and all searches and incidents of this nature must be carried out in accordance with the school’s Search and Confiscation Policy and formally logged. This can be located in the annex in the new Discipline and Rewards Policy.

7.6 Night logs

There is a central night log on Teams in the BG Boarding House Staff Team which allows the Head of Boarding, Houseparents, Boarding Tutors and Matrons to log each night a brief overview of the evening. This ‘live’ document is also used throughout the night by the night matron when she does her checks. This also allows for a very clear flow of communication from nighttime through to the daytime staff. Any incidents of a more serious nature are logged on the Boarding tab in Reward and Conduct and/or CPOMS.

8 Group Guardianship Policy

8.1 This policy has been jointly created to ensure that there is consistency and continuity across the group. It is clearly set out to ensure all international families who join the boarding community who have a boarder with a visa or requested UK residential authorisation due to their educational pathway at Bilton Grange must have an accredited Guardianship which must be approved by the Head of Boarding and Head.

Authorised Risk, Compliance and Safeguarding Committee:	
Date: Advent Term 2025	