

BOARDING PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE

Principles

ISCA is committed to boarding, with an emphasis on community values and on developing responsibility, teamwork and independence. We are a small school of around 80 students aged 15 to 19, the vast majority of whom are boarders. To achieve these aims we understand that pupils need to feel happy and secure in the boarding environment. Above all they need to feel comfortable and at home in the place they live.

Boarding Staff have a vital role to play in supporting these principles. They do so by fostering good values, promoting opportunities for teamwork and self-improvement, and by encouraging pupils to take responsibility and develop independence.

Boarding Staff also focus on developing the following four attributes of the ten outlined in our Student Profile:

- Respectful of Others
You value your own culture and traditions but you also appreciate and respect the values and traditions of others. You are also kind and aware of the feelings of others, committed to showing empathy and compassion and contributing positively to harmonious community living.
- Trustworthy & Reliable
You are trustworthy, honest and have a strong sense of fairness and justice, not just towards yourself but towards the community as a whole. You take responsibility for your actions and for the consequences of those actions. You can be counted on to do the right thing even if an adult is not present.
- Communicators
Though English may not be your first language, you are committed to learning to express yourself confidently and fluently. You know how to work together in a team and listen carefully to try and understand the viewpoint of others.
- Self-disciplined
You think about your words and actions and then make choices that are right for you and for the community. You accept that things 'don't always go your way' and quickly move on rather than dwell on problems. You always finish work before you play.

A fundamental task of boarding staff is also to ensure that the general climate of the boarding environment is distinct from that of being 'at school'. On the one hand, students are encouraged to engage with the public spaces and activities available to them. However, they are also left free to retire to the privacy of their rooms if they so wish, or to go out and experience life outside the strict confines of the school.

A minimum of two boarding staff are always on-site at any given moment of the evenings, nights and weekends.

Practice

Quality Control

Boarding policies and protocols are reviewed regularly against the backdrop of the [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#). There are opportunities for all staff with boarding responsibilities to make a contribution to this process, through the Continuing Professional Development programme, weekly boarding meetings and the Annual Review meetings.

There is a regular pattern of meetings at which boarding and pastoral issues are raised and discussed.

- Weekly Boarding Staff meetings
- Weekly Cause for Concern meetings involving the whole teaching staff, boarding staff and any other member of staff who wishes to participate.
- Weekly Welfare and Safeguarding meetings involving the DSL and senior tutors.
- Weekly Senior Management Team meetings at which student welfare is a fixed item on the agenda
- Annual Review meetings

Facilities

Students are housed in free-standing accommodation blocks, which can only be accessed using a special pass code. Each student has their own room with ensuite bathroom and toilet. Preferably, each floor of the accommodation block is allocated to a specific sex in order to ensure the privacy and personal dignity of male and female students. Where this is not possible, a 'barrier' is created between the male and female sections of the corridor; usually in the form of a member of boarding staff occupying the room between the two sections. Facilities are modern, set in a beautiful natural environment and include a common room, dining room, gym and sports hall, swimming pool and extensive grounds and playing fields. They provide comfortable personal space, while simultaneously generating opportunities for developing a strong sense of communal living and nurturing self-reliance and resourcefulness.

Staffing

The School is both home and a workplace for all pupils during their school years. It is a place where long-term friendships are forged, where successes and disappointments can be shared and where tolerance and consideration for others is encouraged. Boarding staff are carefully selected to oversee this and assume collectively responsibility for the welfare of each student in their care; they live alongside their charges ensuring ready, natural and easy contact.

The Boarding Staff team is made up of:

- Resident Academics
- House Mother
- Boarding Supervisors

Resident Academics are also tutors in the School.

The boarding team is deliberately made up of both academic and non-academic staff. The role of non-academic staff (House Mother and Boarding Supervisors) is principally pastoral and domestic, while academic staff are also able to provide students with support and guidance with their studies and to help them find an appropriate balance between leisure time and self-directed study. We believe that this combination of academic and non-academic staff brings a complementary mix of skills to the boarding team that widens the scope of support offered to students, and is central to the success of ISCA's educational mission.

The Head of School takes an overview of all matters and works to ensure effective communication between the academic and non-academic communities within the School. Academic monitoring, reporting and administration are dealt with by tutors and Heads of Department who provide students with advice and support on issues as varied as subject choices and university applications to extra-curricular activities and relationships. Staff are expected to nurture supportive relationships not just with and among students, but also among each other, irrespective of their role in the School. They are role models who must lead by example.

Weekends

No lessons are scheduled for the weekend, although students are periodically expected to attend tutorials aimed at giving them one-to-one support in different areas according to need and circumstance. A programme of sports fixtures and cultural activities are organized at the weekends which students can opt in or out of. There is no restriction on how often students may go off site over the weekend, as long as they have met all their commitments and responsibilities toward their studies and the school community. Students are actively encouraged to take advantage of the rich, cultural heritage offered by our proximity to London. Irrespective of how many students decide to go out or remain on campus, the school continues to operate as usual and a full weekend programme is in place to provide opportunities for social activity at the weekends.

Day Students

The School has a limited number of day students and they are welcomed on an understanding that they are supportive of the school's boarding ethos.