



BOARDING POLICY

Audience	Directors and Staff
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Last Review	August 2023
Next Review	August 2024
Related Policies	Staff Code of Conduct Whistleblowing Safeguarding and Child Protection

Key Members of staff

Head of Girls Boarding (also referred to as the Housemistress)

Head of Boys Boarding (also referred to as the Housemaster)

Deputy Head Pastoral

Introduction and Purpose

St. Christopher's International School is a busy and thriving day and boarding school that prides itself in providing a stable, secure and caring boarding environment while offering a full range of educational opportunities. Boarders lead active, structured and rich lives where every pupil is encouraged to participate as active members of their community; both within the St. Christopher's International School gates and outside of them. This creates a happy, helpful and engaged community with a vibrant mix of young people.

The aim of this policy is to provide an overview of the arrangements for boarding at the school. More detailed information can be found in the New Parents' Handbook and in the school Policy Documents on the website.

The Board of Directors and staff of St. Christopher's International School take seriously their responsibility for safeguarding and promoting welfare of all pupils in their care. The St. Christopher's International School Board of Directors are ultimately responsible for the provision stated in this policy.

The Management of Boarding

The key pastoral team consists of the Deputy Head Pastoral, Key Stage Coordinators and the Head of Girls/Boys Boarding. The Deputy Head Pastoral coordinates all elements of boarding life and practice through regular communication with the Heads of Boarding. The Deputy Head Pastoral reports to the Executive Headmaster.

The Executive Headmaster, Deputy Head Pastoral and the Head of Girls/Boys Boarding meet regularly to discuss a wide range of issues and to promote consistency of practice across all houses.

The Sanatorium is staffed twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week by fully qualified nurses. The school counsellor is available during school hours and can be reached via, studentswellbeing@scsinternational.sc.ke as an independent listener.

The Estate Manager along with the Catering Manager and Head of Housekeeping oversees the catering, health and safety, compliance, operations and facilities management. The school prides itself on the quality of food provided for its pupils. There is always plenty of choice, and provision is made for special dietary requirements, both in the Dining Hall and the Tuck Shop. Pupils have regular input into the development of catering provision through the Pupil Council meetings. A team of qualified security guards monitor and patrol the site twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

The Board of Directors monitor the effectiveness of the leadership, management and development of boarding provision in the school.

The school promotes a healthy lifestyle and offers guidance on all aspects of personal and social development. The Deputy Head Pastoral ensures that the PSHE/Wellness programme provides our boarders with a holistic education. Pupils are educated on, among other things, personal identity, forging healthy relationships, online safety, alcohol, smoking and drugs; the main points of which are reinforced in school and house assemblies.

The school has a wide range of first-class facilities and provides abundant opportunity for its pupils beyond the classroom, all of which are available throughout the week and at the weekend, during the working day and free time.

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and visitors to share this commitment. The school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available on the website.

The Model

The school has two single sex boarding houses; one for Boys and one for Girls. Boarders are expected to be at school at all times apart from school exeats and holidays.

Each house is led by a qualified and experienced Housemaster/Housemistress who is a member of the teaching staff and who lives alongside the pupils. The Housemaster/Housemistress has overall responsibility for the pupils' welfare, development and academic work. They manage a team of staff that act *in loco parentis* to ensure every pupil feels safe, happy and properly cared for.

Equal Opportunities

St. Christopher's International School is an Equal Opportunities school and, to the best of its abilities, is committed to providing equality of educational opportunities that are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

International Values

International values are to be celebrated; evidence of this can be seen through our Values Based Education (VBE) programme, assemblies, in houses and in Wellness/PSHE lessons.

Boarding Values

A boarding house should be regarded as a home from home, a place of safety and security, a place where everybody can feel comfortable and confident. To help with this here are some guidelines that we consider important when living in a boarding community:

- Think of others at least as often as you do of yourself;
- Be tolerant of those who have different views and habits;
- Respect everybody as an individual; care about them and be prepared to help when needed;

- Be kind, be honest, be trustworthy; unkind or immoral behaviour strikes at the soul of a boarding house and erodes the positive relationships we work so hard to foster;
- Be mindful of the school rules; they are there to keep you and your friends safe and happy;
- Aim to do everything to the best of your ability, whether this is your academic work, your sport, music, drama or other activity or simply being a good friend.

Weekends

As a seven-day-a-week boarding school, it is school policy to make weekends full and interesting.

The school is aware of the various needs of its boarders and their families at weekends, so is committed to ensuring a formula is achieved that can suit everybody and that exceeds the expectations of families who choose a full boarding education for their child(ren). The weekend activity programme is carefully managed by the Head of Boys and the Head of Girls Boarding, who organises a range of activities that take place both in school and out of school, and that are often driven by the pupils themselves, for example, house debates and climate change challenges. As a result, the school enjoys having boarders present every weekend throughout the school year. For those families wanting their child(ren) home regularly, the pattern of weekends is such that a weekend leave is possible upon request from the school office. While a weekend leave request for a whole school weekend (where all pupils are required to be in school) will be considered sympathetically, they are not encouraged and may be declined. Permission will be at the discretion of the Housemaster/Housemistress, who will use their experience to consider carefully the needs of the individual, as well as those around them. It is unsettling for all concerned if a boarder is away from school on a too frequent basis without good pastoral reason. We ask parents to trust and respect the professionalism, expertise and wisdom of the Housemaster/Housemistress in decisions linked to additional absences on Whole School Weekends.

Weekend Leave Arrangements

The school asks parents to write directly to the school office via, info@scsinternational.sc.ke to request a weekend leave for their child(ren). If the Housemaster/Housemistress grants permission for a weekend leave request, this means the pupil is free to go home after meeting all their school commitments and must return by 9.00pm on Sunday evening. If the pupil does have a school commitment at a weekend (for example, playing in a sports fixture or sports training on Saturday afternoon or Sunday), we expect them to honour it, and offer extremely limited flexibility with this. It is only in exceptional circumstances that a pupil will be granted permission to miss any commitment organised by the School, especially where their absence affects others. Such permission will have been sought a minimum of two weeks in advance of the weekend in question. We ask that parents endeavour to support the school as far as possible in this respect. Occasionally, by special arrangement with the Housemaster/Housemistress, a pupil can return by 7.00am on Monday morning, but this is the exception rather than the rule.

The school expects pupils to be with their parent(s) or guardian(s) when they are away from school overnight, on weekend leave and during the school holidays. The school requests parents to give permission to their child's Housemaster/Housemistress before they leave school to stay with another family.

If a boarder is taken ill during a weekend leave and will not be returning on time, the parent or guardian should contact the Housemaster/Housemistress to inform them of the reason why the

pupil will not be returning on time. The House will telephone the parent or guardian if a pupil is more than an hour late when returning.

Other Requests for Absence

Boarders are expected to be at school throughout the working week. Requests for absence during the week (i.e. for medical or dental appointments, university visits etc) must be made to the Housemaster/Housemistress and reach them at least three days in advance, except in an emergency, when parents or guardians are asked to telephone the House before 7.00am. Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds or in exceptional circumstances should be made in writing to the Executive Headmaster well in advance of the proposed absence.

Term dates are published a year in advance. They can be found on the school website or at the front of the school calendar. This allows family holidays to be arranged without disruption to a pupil's education.

Finally:

St. Christopher's International School is proud of the boarding environment and the sense of community it nurtures. We are constantly working to improve the level of care and the opportunities we offer our pupils. If you have any comments, queries or concerns, please contact your child(ren)'s Housemaster/Housemistress in the first instance.

