

Flaxfield House

**A Boarding House for Junior Girls
Up to Year 9**



A GUIDE FOR PUPILS & PARENTS

2016 to 2017

WELCOME TO FLAXFIELD HOUSE

Flaxfield House provides boarding life and pastoral care for girls up to Year 9. We provide a homely environment for the girls and live in the Boarding House with our two daughters Jade and Chloe. We believe in providing clear boundaries to support the girls in making a happy transition between home, boarding and the school.

This handbook is designed to be a source of essential information for parents and pupils. Should you require any further details, please do not hesitate to contact housestaff at any time. We look forward to meeting you, and getting to know your daughter.

Faith and John Potter

Contact numbers

Landline: 01889 594286

House Mobile: +44 798 476 7577

Email: faith.potter@abbotsholme.co.uk
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MISSION STATEMENT

FLAXFIELD BOARDING HOUSE

In junior boarding we aim to:

- Develop the whole person, with a desire for truth and a respect for others.
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of each boarder, in providing an environment that is, as far as possible, free from physical, emotional or social hazards and dangers of any sort.
- Maintain clear expectations of behaviour and personal organisation
- Provide training so that our juniors will develop into independent, well-organised and competent senior boarders.
- Provide suitable conditions for boarders to feel able to turn to members of staff and each other to share the good things in their lives, as well as being able to turn to them for advice, counselling and support during times of difficulty.
- Provide the conditions for boarders to develop their intellectual talents through well-structured evening assignment time, and liaison with academic tutors.
- Develop the concept of living together in harmony.

BOARDING LIFE

Living away from home.

Boarding, in the initial stages, can be a huge challenge for children and their parents.

Boarders are required to complete tasks on a daily basis which they may have not have had to do at home, live with people they might not necessarily associate with and accept instructions from people other than their parents.

They need to adapt to a structured environment which requires them to be at pre-determined places at specified times, to do their homework and to go to bed according to our timetable.

You, as parents, can assist your children in making the transition easier if they are familiar with a few life skills. They need to be able to make their bed, tidy and wash up after themselves, be able to use a diary and organise their study and structure their leisure time.

The nature of boarding life requires that students are cooperative and considerate; a positive attitude and a willingness to 'give it a go' should ensure that boarders get the most out of their boarding experience.

Hygiene is essential. This applies to both personal and clothing hygiene. We provide sufficient laundry facilities to service all the students who are in residence, but the students themselves must take responsibility for their personal hygiene and for getting their laundry ready to go to the School Laundry.

When living with other children, personal privacy is extremely important. Boarders should treat others the way in which they would like to be treated. This entails not entering other boarders' personal areas without permission; they should not touch, take or use the possessions of others without their express permission.

Boarding demands are easier for some children to come to adjust to than others, but all boarders develop tolerance, resilience, a sense of justice, self discipline, independence and as well realise the value of interdependence in varying degrees during their time in boarding.

Interpersonal problems will arise from time to time. It is important for boarders to share these earlier rather than later. It is far easier to deal with issues when they are small concerns, so early information is valuable information. Parents are encouraged to develop open and honest communication with the School and relevant boarding staff, in particular the Houseparents' **Faith and John Potter** so that each individual boarder gets the most out of their time at Abbotsholme.

“We aim to treat your children the way in which we would like our children to be treated by others.”

PASTORAL CARE

Flaxfield Team:

Resident Houseparent:
Resident Houseparent:

Mrs Faith Potter
Mr John Potter

Assistant house staff:

Miss Simone Morris
Miss Heather Fleming

During the term time, Flaxfield House is your home, and we want you to feel happy and secure here. Please be kind to each other at all times, and think of the feelings of the others you live with.

Flaxfield is a happy house and is run democratically, with girls of every age sharing responsibility for the duties in the house, the organisation of the house and the welfare of the members of the house. The dorms are generally organised by age, but we regard ourselves as a family, some dorms may be more like family units, with different year groups sharing. We believe the most important quality our girls should have is to be trustworthy. We meet at least once a week to discuss the smooth running of the house, discuss suggestions and concerns, and make plans for attendance at weekend activities.

If you have any worries or would like a chat, we are easily found in the House. The staff duty rota is posted on the House notice boards. The school has a zero tolerance approach to bullying. All reports of bullying are taken seriously. The school's Code on Anti-Bullying is included in this document. Additionally, the Childline number is displayed throughout the boarding house.

Tutors:

Each girl is assigned to a personal tutor, who is a member of Abbotsholme staff and looks after a tutor group of about eight pupils, who will remain with their tutor throughout their stay at Abbotsholme. The tutor oversees academic progress and, with the Houseparent, shares responsibility for her girl's well-being and pastoral care. At the end of the term, the tutor collates each girl's school report, and reviews it with her on an individual basis, helping to assess personal achievements and set targets for the next term.

Mrs Heather Fairclough, is Head of Year 7, Miss Simone Morris is Head of Year 8, and Mr. Sam Ritchie Head of Year 9, and together with tutors, can be contacted at school 01889 590217. They will be pleased to make an appointment to discuss your daughter's progress, either on the phone or in person.

HOUSE ETHOS

The Abbotsholme Behavioural Charter expects the whole community to demonstrate: Honesty, Courage, Humility, Integrity, Respect and Responsibility. In addition here are a few guide lines which will ensure good relationships and a happy community spirit within the House:

Being a Good Citizen

- Being a boarder means learning to live well with other people.
- Treat others the way you wish to be treated.
- Try and remember to put others before yourself.
- Offer your help and support to others without hesitation.
- Be polite and respectful to staff.

Being Honest

- Always tell the truth.
- Own up to any damage you have caused.
- Own up when you know you have done something wrong.
- Encourage honesty among your friends: be proud of being reliable.

Keeping a Clean and Tidy House

- Being tidy is part of learning to live with other people in harmony, and part of becoming an independent, organised person.
- Never think 'Someone else will clear up my mess.'
- Leave common areas at least as tidy as you found them.

- Your room contains your own personal space, and you can make it homely to suit your own taste, but also to suit others.
- A room check takes place each morning. Do not leave clothes lying around; make your bed neatly, and take pride in what your area looks like.
- Housestaff will help you in this, by showing you how to take care of your clothes and belongings.
- Remember that visitors to the school may be shown round the House during the day, and we always want to show that we care about our House: your tidiness plays an important part in that.

Taking responsibility

- Take responsibility for what you do, and for your belongings.
- Report and act upon any problems that have happened or which might occur.
- Ask advice from a member of staff if you need to.
- Start your journey on the road to independence.

Respecting others

- Do not enter anyone else's room unless you have been invited.
- Respect the belongings of others: they will also respect yours!
- Everyone likes to play her own music. But you should not force others to listen to yours. Music should not be heard outside a room.
- We want Flaxfield House to run as an independent community. Only girls up to Year 9 can visit, and must have the permission from Duty Staff.
- No visitors are allowed in the dormitories.
- Senior girls should not be invited into your areas, nor should you go into theirs.
- Mobile phones are to be placed in your pigeon holes at bedtime.

Personal Appearance and Hygiene

- Please look smart at all times; take pride in wearing clean, smart uniform.
- Make up (including nail varnish) and jewellery are not allowed below the Sixth Form. Girls may wear a plain flat stud in each ear lobe if the ear is pierced. No other piercings are allowed. Hair should be clean and tidy and of an acceptable appearance and should be of a natural colour. Longer hair should be tied back.
- Casual clothes may be worn after 5.00 on weekdays, and at weekends.
- Please keep your dirty clothes in your laundry box until you can send it to the school laundry on Wednesday morning.
- All your clothes must have your name on them. This includes Wellington boots and outdoor kit.
- Bed linen, is changed on a Tuesday evening, you may bring your own which the school will launder.

Summary

By following the above principles, we can ensure that we have a happy house. We will create an atmosphere of mutual respect and set out on the road to being independent, mature and caring individuals.

FLAXFIELD HOUSE ROUTINE

- **Morning:**
- 7.00 am girls are woken in time to attend breakfast and those that require medication go to Office.
- 7.30am all boarders to go to breakfast
- 8.00am return to Flaxfield, brush teeth, tidy rooms and go to school
- 8.15am all boarders to be out of house
- The duty person returns the supper box to the school kitchen and collects it in the evening.

- **Evenings:**

Register in House	5.00 – 5.15pm
Evening Activities	5.15-6.15 or 6.30pm
Supper	6.15pm up to Y5 - Y8 6.30pm Y9+
Register in house	6.40pm up to Y5 - Y8 7.00pm Y9+
Assignments	6.45-7.15pm (Y5) 6.45 – 7.25pm (Y6) 6.45 – 7.45pm (Y7&8)
Free time until bed time	Pupils must sign out and then back in if they leave the house. They must be with a buddy during winter months when it is dark.
Sign in Times	8.00pm for Y5&6 8.15pm for Y7 8.30pm for Y8 9.00pm for Y9
Bed Times with lights out times 15 mins later	8.30pm Y5&6 8.45pm for Y7 9.00pm for Y8 9.15pm for Y9

- **Responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of all the girls to make sure the house 'works'. The only formal duty team is for ensuring the lounge is tidied each evening. Also an individual is responsible for the night box that must be taken to the school kitchen each morning and collected each evening at 6.45pm during the week. Forgetting to bring the box back affects everyone! Both duty list and night box collection rota is posted on the notice boards.

- **Contacting parents:**

Girls and parents can phone each other during the evening. This can be done at any time, other than assignment time, using the house phone or the girl's mobile. Please remember that mobile phones are put away at bedtime so calls will not be answered after that time. The ICT room is available to the girls during activity time for sending and receiving e-mails. Letters and parcels are sent and received via reception.

- **Weekend leave:**

- Weekly boarders may leave with their parents for the weekend at 5.00pm on Friday. They may either return on Sunday night between 6.00 – 8.00pm, or Monday morning **in time for registration**.
- Please inform the duty staff when you arrive on Sunday. We must always be aware of who is in the House.
- If a girl is to visit the family of a friend, permission must be received, by Thursday evening, from the parent hosting the visit, as well as the visitor's parent or guardian.
- If your child is late returning to the House after a weekend/holiday, please inform the Houseparent

▪ **Beginning and end of term and half term holidays:**

Please ensure boarders arrive at school not earlier than 5.00pm on the return date, and not later than 8.30pm. If this is not possible, please inform School well before the due back date so that proper arrangements can be made. Please make contact with Houseparents when returning.

▪ **Requests for leave/additional nights:**

The following guidelines be followed:

- Any request for boarding extra nights (either weekdays or weekends) should be made by the parent/guardian to either Mrs or Mr. Potter by phone, e-mail or letter.
- Messages from the girls cannot be accepted as official requests, especially when made in retrospect. It is particularly important that requests for weekend stays are made well in advance (1 week's notice at least), as house trips for full boarders may have already been booked/planned, so house staff may be with them.
- Returning to the House on Sunday should not be earlier than 6pm as staff will be at supper with full boarders
- Any visit to another child's house must be made with the consent of the houseparent and parents of both girls.
- It is unlikely that permission for 'sleepovers' will be granted for weekdays, due to the amount of assignment work the girls have.

• **Pocket money:**

Pocket money can be arranged through the school. Alternatively, pocket money may be left with house parents in the safe and given to boarders during the term.

• **Laundry:**

Boarders are supplied with a net bag and a laundry box for them to put their laundry in every week. Houseparents will inform them of the procedure.

• **Bed linen:**

Boarders are supplied with linen, but they may want to bring their own duvet covers and pillow slips. If they do, it is a good idea to have 2 sets.

ACTIVITIES

- For full boarders, there are regular weekend outings, either arranged with other boarding groups, or within the House. You should try to join in as many of these as you can.
- For those not involved in one of these activities, there are many facilities to enjoy on site:
 - Walking;
 - Riding;
 - Instrument practice in the Music Block;
 - Sports and fitness unit in Reddie Hall;
 - Tennis, swimming and fishing [summer];
 - Use of the computer facilities and private study.
 - There is a bus from School every Saturday 10.15 am – 12.30 for shopping in the nearby town of Uttoxeter.

YOU GET OUT OF SCHOOL LIFE WHAT YOU PUT INTO IT!

Our founder, Cecil Reddie wrote:

“Nothing in life is unimportant. Every act should be performed skilfully; for a definite purpose, in a definite manner. This economises time and strength, and sets free the mind to solve new problems. It is amazing what immense results can be achieved by the silent influence of daily habit, especially when performed deftly and with conscious.

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

The girls have a weekly treat of something special to eat and they are able to stay up slightly later to watch a DVD. In the summer they are able to swim before they do their assignments.

Sanctions take the form of gatings or may be given an option to do a House chore. Girls may be gated for one or more nights, or for the weekend, depending on the nature of the misdemeanour. Girls may not take weekend leave if they are gated or on Headmaster's Detention. If they are required to attend Extra Work, they may not have free time or take weekend leave until that work has been completed. Parents are not always contacted on the first occasion of inappropriate behaviour, but Houseparents will contact them when they feel it is a serious breach of House ethos or if a boarders' behaviour is continuously being inappropriate.

MEDICAL INFORMATION PLEASE REFER TO THE HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS FOR FULL DETAILS ABOUT MEDICAL REGULATIONS

Boarding pupils who are on prescribed medication when they arrive at school should inform their Houseparent and the School Health Advisor. Pupils should not manage their own medication. Please bring medicines in their original box to help avoid problems. Pupils do not need to bring painkillers into school. These can be administered by the Houseparents and the School Health Advisor. Pupils are not allowed to bring Ibuprofen into the House as it is dangerous for asthmatics.

The school has a nut-free policy for the safety of those who may be allergic to nut products. Please ensure that your child does not bring into school any product that may contain nuts.

PARKING:

A limited number of cars can be parked outside the house on the road when dropping off and collecting your daughter. Cars should however not cause an obstruction as access may be required by service and emergency vehicles at any time.

SECURITY

Flaxfield is secured each night. The main door is accessed by key pads. The code should not be given to any other pupils outside of Flaxfield and the door should be kept locked at all times. Girls are not permitted back to the house during the school day. We have an open door policy for the dorms, but girls may leave valuables in the safe in the duty office (e.g. passports, wallets, and cash) or in a lockable drawer in their dorm.

PERSONAL SAFETY/PRIVACY

All of the dorms in Flaxfield are shared. In order to respect the privacy of all the girls and to comply with boarding standards regulations, we respectfully request that all parents/guardians knock before entering their child's dorm, and should request permission from Houseparents before entering the rooms, and should never be unaccompanied in the dorms or private areas of the house.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Girls are allowed to use the electrical equipment in the kitchen. There is half termly, certified training too. Additionally care should be taken when using knives and hot food/drinks. Never leave flexes trailing which could result in a trip hazard.

CARELESSNESS CAUSES FIRES:

All electrical equipment in dorms should be unplugged when not in use.

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

The fire exits are clearly marked and the girls are told about the escape procedure and have both announced and unannounced drills.

The assembly point is on the Junior Department play ground

EMERGENCY COVER

In the event that the member of staff on duty needs another member of the duty team due to an emergency, the following procedure would be put into action.

1. the resident house parent would be contacted to cover the house or deal with the emergency
2. the assistant houseparent would be contacted to cover the house or deal with the emergency
3. reciprocal arrangements are in place with both Orchard and Barnfield for emergency cover
4. the headmaster is also on call in the event of an emergency

Complaints Procedure For Parents

The complaints procedure is available to all parents in the Handbook for parents.

Complaints Procedure for Boarders

- Every pupil at Abbotsholme has a right to enjoy his or her learning and leisure time free from intimidation, fear or harassment.
- All pupils should learn to live with each other and show tolerance towards each other.
- We want our pupils to build up relationships of trust and it is hoped that any problems or anxieties can be resolved readily.

If you feel that the difficulty cannot be settled in this way there are a number of things you can do:

- Talk to a close friend, or a senior pupil who you feel you can trust
- Discuss the matter with any member of staff. You are always welcome to raise an issue with the Health Advisor or your Houseparent
- Contact your parents or a family member
- Contact someone from outside the school community. Any one of the following will gladly help:

Childline www.childline.org 0800 1111 NSPCC help@nspcc.org.uk 0808 800 5000
Samaritans jo@samaritans.org 0845 790 9090 Derbyshire Social Services 01629 580000
Children's Commissioner 0800 5280731

If you wish to make a complaint

- This can be by talking about it or by writing it down, whichever you find the easier. You can make a complaint by yourself or as part of a group or through your parents.
- The complaint can be made to any member of staff

- The issue can be a big problem or a small one. By discussing it, you may come up with some positive ideas.
- If possible, the member of staff will deal with the problem. If not, the member of staff will seek the help of a colleague (for example, a Tutor, Head of Year, House Parent, Health Advisor or Assistant Head).
- If you are worried about confidentiality, tell the staff: they will understand. Even if you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, do not worry: the matter will only be discussed by staff that need to know and who can help you. You will be consulted and kept informed about any action to be taken.

If a matter remains unresolved, or you wish to make a formal complaint see, Deputy Head, he will, discuss the complaint; make a note in a book. He will investigate your complaint and report back to you. You may be accompanied, if you wish.

All boarders year 8 and younger are accompanied by a member of staff on trips. Older boarders must always remain in a group and have mobile contact

HOMESICKNESS

Q. How can I support my child best in the first weeks of term?

A. It is inevitable that you will miss you children and they will miss you. Please keep in close contact with Houseparents and take their advice as to when and how often to phone or visit. When talking to your child there may be tears and expect to hear their worries. Always be positive and do encourage them to share with you many good and exciting things that have happened.

The vast majority of girls who join us take to boarding like ducks to water. However, from time to time, either at the beginning, or often after holidays, homesickness can raise its head. In a sense this is normal, indeed there would be something wrong if a child did not miss being at home.

Houseparents and house staff are very aware and conscious that homesickness affects children in different ways, and we are of course sympathetic to those girls who experience this, and give help and support when required. We truly believe that we are in partnership with the parents and are united in doing the very best for their daughter. The key to this being open communication.

We recently experienced just such a scenario, where a new boarder would, one minute be playing happily, and the next, on answering a telephone call be in tears throughout the conversation stating that she was miserable and wanted to go home. No sooner had he rejoined her friends she could be heard laughing and joking as if the upset on the telephone had not happened.

We appreciate that it can be extraordinarily difficult to be at the end of a telephone miles away listening to a child pouring out his heart, however if such a situation arises, speak to the Houseparents or member of house staff on duty as quickly as possible, then they can deal with it immediately.

A child will overcome her homesickness once she has a routine and feels settled, we as parents ourselves know that it can be just as hard for the parents and would like to offer some ideas that might help you and your child through the first term.

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD

Include your daughter when packing her things, and ensure the packing is done gradually and not left to the last minute.

Make sure this includes something that reminds her of home, a teddy, a photo or whatever will give her comfort.

Resist giving your child a mobile phone for the first half term.

The house phone is always available to use, and we feel that it is better if your daughter contacts you, rather than expecting a call at a pre-arranged day and time.

Encourage family and friends to write / send postcards.

It is a real moral boost coming back to the house and finding mail in your pigeonhole.

When feeling lonely, encourage your daughter to talk to the other girls who might also be experiencing homesickness.

Remember you are not alone and your houseparents will always make time to listen to you however small your concern might be.

ABBOTSHOLME BOARDING AIMS & ETHOS

At Abbotsholme we want all of our boarders to feel:

- Safe in their boarding environment
- Happy in their boarding houses
- Excited by boarding life
- Educationally supported
- Part of a boarding community

Working within the framework of our school aims, boarders are encouraged to live their lives in and out of school by following the principles of: honesty, respect, integrity, courage and humility.

We strive to provide an environment that enables our boys and girls to develop into well balanced, happy teenagers and adults, who are able to make appropriate decisions in their lives. We want our boarders to be self-aware, independent and value each other as individuals.

The boarders are supported by staff, within small boarding houses, set in rural surroundings. They are given a structured framework and where necessary individual support to enable them to fulfil their academic potential.

The boarders are provided with a variety of experiences, on and off the school premises, which aim to help them develop as individuals and as part of a community.