



HOLYPORT COLLEGE

SUITABILITY FOR BOARDING POLICY

Person responsible for policy formulation, implementation, maintenance and evaluation	Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Persons consulted	General Welfare Committee Senior Leadership Team
Adopted by Governors on	September 2021
Current review	Sept 26
Date of future review	Sept 29

INTRODUCTION

It is a requirement of all state boarding schools that a child is confirmed as suitable to board.

The Suitability for Boarding assessment forms a distinct part of the residential boarding admissions process. Two questions are considered when determining suitability for boarding:

1. Does the child present a serious health and safety hazard to themselves and/or others?
2. Will the child be able to cope with and benefit from a boarding environment?

Such an assessment will be conducted in line with the College's Admissions Policy and the procedures detailed below.

PROCEDURES

In order to reach a decision on suitability for boarding, the College will apply the following arrangements:

- a) An interview, which includes the opportunity for each child to be present without their parent/carer
- b) Information from the candidate's present school and/or previous school where the candidate is not currently at school or has recently changed school
- c) Consideration of any other information that the parent/carer of the candidate may wish to provide to support the candidate's application or which may be provided at the request of the parent/carer by another person
- d) Information provided by a LA (or equivalent authority outside England and Wales) where relevant

In determining whether or not a candidate is suitable to board, Holyport College has regard to the following questions:

- a) Does the candidate wish to board?
- b) Does the candidate have experience of staying away from their parents/carers whether or not s/he is currently a boarder?
- c) Does the candidate show evidence of self-reliance and independence?

- d) Does the candidate show evidence of understanding and relishing the challenges of a communal life?
- e) Does the candidate show understanding of the responsibilities of being a member of a boarding community which include respect for boarding staff, fellow boarders and boarding rules?
- f) Is there any medical or psychological reason why boarding would not be appropriate, or any need that could not be met by reasonable adjustment to the boarding accommodation, routine and practice?

DECISION ON SUITABILITY FOR BOARDING

The decision is determined by the following two considerations;

- a) Does the child present a serious health and safety hazard to other boarders, and
- b) Will the child be able to cope with and benefit from a boarding environment.

In relation to a. The College may find the child unsuitable for boarding if there have been major behavioural difficulties (particularly involving refusal to follow rules around safety, physical violence or aggression, bullying, sexual misconduct, arson, vandalism, theft or substance misuse), or if the child has previously been excluded from school.

In relation to b. the College will make its own assessment as to whether the child would cope with and benefit from the specific boarding environment it provides.

The College may refuse a place on unsuitability grounds even when the number of boarding places offered is below the admissions number.

The College will not rank applicants on the basis of suitability for boarding.

A Suitability to Board Panel comprising more than one person will determine whether or not a child is suitable for boarding. The panel will include representation from boarding, admissions and senior leadership.

A final decision on suitability for boarding based on the Panel's recommendation will be made by the Headteacher.

Parents have the right of appeal in the case of a refusal and should refer to the College Admissions Policy and the School Admission Appeals Code for students who are not yet on roll at Holyport College.

REASSESSMENT

The School reserves the right to re-assess suitability for boarding at any point during the child's time at the College following the same principles as per the initial application process.

All students are reassessed before transitioning to Sixth Form boarding where boarders are given more independence and influence than more junior boarders. If a student's Housemaster considers that a student may not be suitable to transition to the Sixth Form as a Boarder, they should make the Head of Boarding and the Admissions Team aware. In these cases a Suitability to Board Panel, as detailed above, will make a recommendation to the Headteacher.

If a child is found to be unsuitable for boarding after a re-assessment, the boarding place will be withdrawn.

Parents should be informed by phone and then in writing of any decision to withdraw a boarding place. The reason for the decision should be given.

Parents will be advised to follow up by contacting their home local authority for information on school places and/or fair access panels.

Unless a day place is available in the school, and the parents have applied for such a place, there is no automatic right to become a day student at the school. The award of day places is subject to the normal rules for oversubscription detailed in the College's Admissions Policy. The child's home address for non-term time is used for this purpose.

If a student is found unsuitable to board after reassessment resulting in the permanent withdrawal of their boarding place, this does not constitute an Exclusion from the College and is considered according to this policy, not the College's Exclusions and Suspensions Policy.

Appeals against the decision to permanently withdraw the boarding place of a student who is already on roll at the College following re-assessment should be made in writing and sent to the clerk of the governors within 15 school days of the reassessment decision. If requested, a panel consisting of at least three governors, will meet to review the decision.

THE GOVERNORS' PANEL MEETING

If requested to review the decision to permanently withdraw the boarding place of a student who is already on roll at the College, the Governors' Panel must meet. The meeting should take place between the sixth and the fifteenth school day after the governing body has been notified of the request to review the decision.

The role of the Governors' Panel is to act as another 'set of eyes' to review the Headteacher's decision to permanently withdraw the boarding place.

The Clerk to the Panel will write to parents/carers confirming the date and time of the meeting and send the paperwork which will be considered at the meeting. The paperwork will include written representation if submitted.

The following people will be invited to attend the meeting:

- the governors, one of whom will act as Chair of the Panel. The committee must be quorate (i.e. there must be a minimum of 3 governors);
- a Clerk to take notes and advise on procedure;
- the Headteacher and/or a senior member of staff;
- the parents or carers and a representative;
- the student - unless there are strong reasons against his/her attending, it is important that the student is given every opportunity to have his/her say;
- witnesses may be called to give evidence but do not normally remain for the full meeting.

The meeting will follow a clear agenda which gives everyone an opportunity to have their say. The agenda for the meeting will be as follows:-

- Headteacher's or nominated representative's presentation;
- questions by the parents and governors;
- parents'/carers' representation (a friend or representative and the student may also attend and speak);
- questions by the Headteacher and governors;
- summing up by the school;
- summing up by the parents;
- all parties will leave and the governors will discuss the information and make a decision. Parents/carers will be notified of the governors' decision within two school days.

The Governors' Panel must consider whether, on a balance of probability, the Headteacher's decision to permanently withdraw the boarding place was lawful, reasonable and fair.

The Panel's decision will be to:

- Uphold the Headteacher's decision; or
- Reinstate the student i.e. allow the student to return to boarding immediately or on an agreed date.

FIXED TERM EXCLUSIONS FROM BOARDING

The Holyport College Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, states that a student may be excluded from boarding for one or more nights but that during that time they may still attend school as usual. This sanction would not normally apply for more than 45 nights in an academic year and does not affect a student's status on roll as a boarder. Fixed term exclusions from boarding are therefore not covered as part of this policy.