



WESTMINSTER
SCHOOL

BOARDING PRINCIPLES AND AIMS

Author: Tasos Aidonis
Lead: Head Master

Date: September 2026
Review Date: September 2027



WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

BOARDING PRINCIPLES AND AIMS

INTRODUCTION

Boarding has been central to the fulfilment of a Westminster education since the School's refoundation in 1560. At Westminster, boarding is not simply a residential arrangement but a structured educational setting in which pupils live, learn and develop within a close-knit community. It provides a coherent framework through which pastoral care, academic life and character formation are integrated securely and purposefully.

More than this, boarding is one of the defining contexts of a Westminster education, shaping not only how pupils study, but how they relate to others and understand themselves.

PASTORAL CARE THROUGH COMMUNITY

We believe that boarding at Westminster offers an exceptional depth of pastoral care precisely because pupils live within a residential community where they are known and understood. Daily contact with housemasters, tutors, matrons and other residential adults ensures continuity of care, while the informality of shared living builds trust, openness and strong relationships.

Within this environment, pupils grow in confidence and are able to share concerns more readily, secure in the knowledge that they are listened to and supported. These close relationships promote emotional literacy, self-awareness and resilience, alongside the ability to build respectful and meaningful relationships with both peers and adults.

STRUCTURE, RHYTHM AND RESPONSIBILITY

The organisation of boarding life provides pupils with structure, consistency and a strong sense of rhythm. Through shared routines, supervised study time and planned opportunities for rest, sport and recreation, boarders learn to manage their time effectively and develop habits that support both academic progress and personal wellbeing.

Living within this structured environment encourages pupils to balance competing demands with clarity and purpose. In an age often characterised by fragmentation and over-stimulation, boarding offers a stable counterbalance, promoting sustained focus, thoughtful regulation of digital engagement, and the value of meaningful, face-to-face interaction.

INTEGRATED APPROACH TO WELLBEING

Pastoral care at Westminster is embedded within the residential structure of the School. Each House is led by a Housemaster and supported by tutors and matrons, alongside a wider network that includes chaplaincy, School Counsellors and medical staff.

The presence of an on-site NHS surgery, with regular GP access, ensures that pupils' physical health needs are met promptly and effectively. Close collaboration between pastoral and medical teams supports a holistic approach to wellbeing, ensuring that safeguarding, health and welfare are integral to daily boarding life rather than discrete or reactive processes.

COMMUNITY, MENTORSHIP AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

A defining strength of Westminster boarding lies in its emphasis on community and mutual responsibility. The vertical house system brings together pupils of different ages within a shared residential setting, fostering supportive peer relationships and positive role modelling.

Older pupils are given opportunities to guide and support younger members of the House, while younger pupils benefit from reassurance, encouragement and role models. These relationships extend beyond formal mentoring into daily shared experiences, meals, study time and recreational activities, enhancing academic preparation, personal confidence and a strong sense of collective belonging.

A MODERN AND COHERENT BOARDING EXPERIENCE

Westminster boarding combines age-appropriate boarding options with coherence. While younger pupils may return home at weekends, all boarders are fully integrated into their House communities during the week, ensuring a consistent, inclusive and immersive experience.

Boarding life also extends beyond the House, with pupils benefiting from access to London's exceptional cultural, academic and co-curricular opportunities. These are carefully structured and supervised, enriching pupils' experiences while maintaining appropriate oversight and safeguarding.

Regular communication with parents supports a transparent and collaborative partnership, with pupils placed firmly at the centre of discussions about wellbeing, progress, aspirations and engagement.

A DISTINCTIVE SETTING: TRADITION AND A GLOBAL CITY

The School's unique location gives Westminster boarding a distinctive character. Rooted in a tradition shaped by Westminster Abbey and the School's long-standing moral framework, boarding life is informed by values of reflection, service and integrity.

At the same time, pupils live and learn at the heart of a diverse and dynamic global city. This environment encourages cultural awareness, empathy and the ability to engage thoughtfully with different perspectives. Boarding provides the structured setting in which these values are not only articulated but lived daily.

A SHARED LIFE AND LASTING BELONGING

Above all, Westminster boarding is about shared life. Through proximity, shared routines and collective experience, pupils develop friendships, mutual respect and a deep sense of belonging.

Within Houses at the heart of London, pupils are known, supported and challenged in equal measure. Boarding provides stability and care alongside intellectual and personal challenge, enabling pupils to flourish academically, socially and personally, and to leave Westminster with a strong sense of identity, responsibility and community.