



Heath Mount School

# RIVER HOUSE



## ROUGH GUIDE TO BOARDING





## **BOARDING AT HEATH MOUNT**

***Dear Boarder,***

***Congratulations on becoming a boarder at Heath Mount. This booklet will help you out for your first few weeks, but will always be useful. The best way to learn about being a boarder is to just do it! Some people take to becoming a boarder very easily, others take a little longer, but with the house staff and established boarders to help, you'll do very well.***

### **What are the Aims of Boarding at Heath Mount?**

Boarding at Heath Mount aims are to be:

**Flexible**  
**Preparatory**  
**Nurturing**  
**Safe**  
**Enjoyable**

The caring and experienced House Teams are dedicated to realising these aims and turn our principles into practice.

### **Who's who?**

- **Mr Gillam** is the Head of Boarding. He is available to talk to you or your parents at any time about boarding.
- **Mr & Mrs Marsden** live in River House and are the Girls' Houseparents.
- **Mr & Mrs Irons** live in the main school house, next to the boys' boarding area, and are the Boys' Houseparents.
- **Mr Elliott** is Assistant Housemaster for boys' boarding.
- **Mrs Sperring** is the evening Matron. She lives in the main school house during the week.
- **Mrs West** is the day matron and is a contact for many parents during the day.
- **Mr Cowan, Mr Beskeen, Miss Rewcastle, Mr Russell, Miss Laroude, Miss Ferguson and Miss Thrower** run evening activities for boarders, they are our Boarding Tutors.
- **Nina Wiseman** is our Girls' Boarding Assistant. She lives at River House and helps with games, activities and boarding.



## **Help! I'm new!**

You are in for some very exciting times! To make sure you find your feet quickly, you will be given a boarding 'buddy', someone who's already experienced and knows where to go and what to do. They will help you settle in as smoothly as possible and will make sure you find the right staff if you need them.

## **What do I need?**

You **need** the following items:

- pyjamas
- dressing gown
- hard-soled slippers
- towel
- duvet with duvet cover
- wash bag with toothpaste, toothbrush, and comb/hairbrush
- casual clothes
- book or magazine
- clean school clothes for the next day



You may **additionally** have the following:

- iPod, PSP, Nintendo DS, a small (portable) game (*hand into reception in the morning when you arrive at school*)
- teddy bear
- posters, photos etc, to display in your room

You **do not need** the following:

- torch
- sweets
- mobile phone
- camera

*Remember – all of your belongings must be clearly named. We cannot have responsibility for missing/lost items which were not named in the first place; any unclaimed and un-named items will remain at school until we can keep no more, then they are given to charity.*

You can place these items neatly in your dorm when you arrive at school. If you lose something during the day, such as a pen or ruler, which you will need for school the following day after boarding, Mr & Mrs Marsden, Mrs Irons will be able to offer you a replacement, just ask!



## What happens in the morning?

- 7.00am - You will be **woken** by a member of the house staff, get dressed, brush your teeth, comb your hair, make your bed and tidy your dorm. Girls need to be downstairs at 7.25am, ready to walk to school or to board the minibus
- 7.45am - Line up for breakfast. When you have finished your food, you may clear your own things, but return to your seat to listen to announcements and grace. You may be asked to wipe and clear the rest of the tables.
- 8.15am - **Time to get ready for the day** in the school or complete music practice before you must be in your form room for registration at 8:30am.

## What happens in the evening?

- 4:45pm - End of school day, **prep session or school activity**.
- 5:30pm - Get changed into your **home clothes**
- 5.35pm - Line up for **supper**
- 5.40pm - **Supper**. When you have finished your food, you may clear your own things, but return to your seat to listen to announcements and grace. You may be asked to wipe and clear the rest of the table before leaving.
- 6.00pm - **Study time** with tutors
- 6.30pm - **Activities** either at school or in the boarding house, before the evening routine begins.

**Wednesday** evenings are slightly different, because of sports fixtures and because preps are not set for Wednesday night. At 4.00pm all boarders go to 'Retro Sweet Shop' in Boys' Boarding to be registered. There is a large section of **free time**, during which areas of the school will be available for boarders to entertain themselves while the Boarding Tutors supervise. At 5:30pm it is supper, which is followed by **study and activity sessions**.



### **Am I always supervised in Boarding?**

There is always a member of the Boarding Staff around to make sure you are safe, but they will respect your privacy, so will always knock on the door before entering your rooms and won't be in the dorms when you are getting changed, for instance.

### **Where will I sleep?**

Mr & Mrs Marsden will select which dormitory you will sleep in and will show you where your bed is. However, if you ever feel that you'd prefer to move dorm, just ask and we will see what we can do.

### **What's in the dorms?**

Dorms have storage for belongings, and hooks for dressing gowns and towels and best uniform if required. Try to keep your belongings together.



### **Am I allowed to read my book when I'm boarding?**

Of course! We encourage reading and all boarders should have their own book or magazine to read in bed for 15 minutes before lights out.

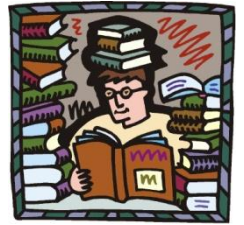
### **Are there any boarding prefects?**

Yes. Boarding prefects are selected by the Mr & Mrs Marsden at the start of the year and will have certain duties and privileges – it's quite an honour to be selected!

### **Will I have any duties to do?**

Yes. Everyone will need to look after their own items as well as possible, and to help look after others' too. You will have some extra responsibility if you are a boarding prefect, but this will not take up much time at all.





## **Do I have to do prep or school work when I am boarding?**

Yes. We believe that this is a very important part of being in a boarding school, and it will prepare you very well for life in a senior school. There are two designated times when prep can be done:

After school prep sessions (4:45-5:30pm) are supervised by a member of the school day staff, and are available to those not doing an after school activity.

There is a short, compulsory study session for all boarders every night, supervised by Boarding Tutors which is held after supper.

In addition, boarders who wish to do extra work may do so (having sought the Houseparents' permission) during activity sessions, or in dorms, or in free time on Wednesday. You will be told where the best place to study is and who will be on-hand to look after you as needed.

## **Will I have to make my own bed?**

Sometimes, this is all good training for when you're older! Houseparents and Matron will give you a hand when you first start boarding so you can see how it's done. You will also have to strip your bed from time to time – Matron or the Houseparents will tell you when you need to do this.

## **What activities are there?**

Boarding Tutors run activities according to boarders' suggestions. These could be sporty activities such as football, cricket, rounders or dodgeball. Other activities could be cooking, ICT, board games or art. There may also be occasional *special* nights when we may do something different instead of preps and activities. In the past these have included cinema visits, pizza nights, game nights, Easter egg hunts, pancake making, fireworks, Christmas party and carols.

## **What if I have a problem in the night?**

If there is a problem after lights out in River House you can ring the bell on the upstairs door and someone will come and help you. You will never get into trouble for ringing someone's bell during the night – we are here to help.



## **Where should I put my medicine?**

If you require medicine (prescription or non-prescription), this needs to be given to Matron when you arrive at school. She will make a note of receiving it and will ensure that you get the right amount at the right time. You are not allowed to keep any medicine in the Boarding House.



## **Will I be able to use the phone?**

Yes. You are welcome to use the Boarding House telephone in the evening – you don't even need to ask, however it must never go upstairs. You may also email parents using the computers in the Boarding House. Parents can also call you in the evening. We do not allow mobile phones in school, but upon request, 4 night boarders may be allowed one in the boarding house. Speak to your houseparents if you'd like to bring one in.

## **Will I be able to use the computer?**

Yes. You are welcome to use the Boarding House computers which are linked to the school network in the evening for work, fun, or emailing home. If you are in Years 7 & 8 you may use your netbooks. There is a house charger for netbooks. Houseparents will keep an eye on what sites you are visiting if you are using the Internet.



## **Where should I put my iPod and other valuables?**

If you have brought any hand held devices in to school, you must hand them in to the boarding box in matron's room in the morning. They will pass them on to Mr Marsden and Mrs Irons so that you can have them in the evening. They will collect them at bedtime and either look after them for you if you are boarding the next day, or pass them back to matron who will sign them back out to you at hometime. Please make sure your items are named.

## **Can I watch Films/TV?**

Yes. You can watch TV, but understand that others may wish to watch too, so you will need to decide as a team what is going on the TV. Years 3-6 can watch films rated U and PG. In years 7 and 8, you may also watch 12's if you are 12. 15/18 rated films are NEVER shown. You can bring in DVD's to watch, but these need to be for the right age. We have two TV's with DVD players in the house.



## **Are there any rules I need to know?**

Being part of a boarding community is quite different from normal school. You need to allow others space if they require it, be sensitive to others' wishes, and allow people to sleep properly. You will find that meals are run a little differently to normal school lunch. You need to obey the out of bounds list and fire precautions for your own safety.

## **Where can't I go?**

The following areas are out of bounds, unless accompanied by an adult, or with permission:

- Dorms (during the day)
- ICT Room
- Sports Hall
- Woods
- Swimming Pool
- Staff Common Room
- Residential Staff Accommodation



## **Can I do my music practice?**

If you want to practise a musical instrument, see the Director of Music, who will organise for you to join the Boarders' Music Practice list. Music practice is done after breakfast in the music school.

## **Can I bring in sweets?**

No. Houseparents may supply sweets on special occasions, or as a prize.

## **What food will I eat?**

At supper there is a choice of hot food or salad bar. There is also bread and spread, a dessert and tea.

At breakfast, there is always a choice of cereals, toast, juice, tea, coffee or hot chocolate, and a choice of hot breakfast or "continental" (for example pain au chocolat, croissant, and fruit).

You can always help yourself at any time to water, milk and squash in the Boarding House.





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When you come up to the boarding houses in the evening you can make yourself snacks such as cereal and toast. Boarders in year 3 & 4 will be helped by house-staff to start with, but can eventually take the 'Toaster Test' so that they can make their own snacks.

The school has a Food Committee which meets about once a term. Details of how to join or simply offer suggestions are available from your Form Tutor. We do have boarding reps on the committee, so you can see them too if you have any opinions on food for Boarders.

### **What happens if I break the rules?**

Heath Mount expects its boarders to be polite, punctual, thoughtful towards others, and well-mannered. There are certain rules that must be obeyed for your own safety and enjoyment. However, if you can't or don't stick to the rules, there will be consequences. You may be asked to do extra clearing after meals. If you misbehave after lights out, you may lose some privileges, or even be moved from your dorm.

### **Can I make suggestions for the Boarding House?**

Please do. Your ideas are very welcome. You can simply tell the Houseparents or place your idea in the suggestions box in the Boarding House. This box can also be used for any worries or concerns you may have – your suggestion or concern doesn't need to have your name on. You will also have the opportunity to complete a Boarders' Questionnaire every term in which you can give your thoughts to the Houseparents.

### **Do Houseparents ever contact Parents?**

Yes. Houseparents are in contact with parents very frequently for day to day issues or when boarders do things exceptional, or if boarders are in trouble too often. They may also send home photos of a boarder's first night or of special occasions such as birthdays. They may use the phone or email. Houseparents are also always available to parents either via email or phone:

Girls' Boarding House: [girlsboarding@heathmount.org](mailto:girlsboarding@heathmount.org) 01920 830224

Boys' Boarding House: [boysboarding@heathmount.org](mailto:boysboarding@heathmount.org) 01920 830792

### **What should I do if the fire alarm sounds?**



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You will have been shown on your first night where to go in the event of a fire. Do not panic, and follow the instructions of the House staff. There will be a fire drill each term. Each dorm has a copy of the fire drill procedure so make sure you read it so you'll always be ready!

### **What if I have some other questions?**

No problem – just ask one of the Boarding Staff and they will always do what they can to help.

*We hope that you will always feel happy in the Boarding House, but if you have a complaint or if you are unhappy and need help, or you know someone else who needs help, there are lots of people to turn to:*

The Headmaster – Mr Gillam  
Senior Deputy Head & Boys' Pastoral – Mr Dawes  
Deputy Head & Girls' Pastoral – Mrs Hawkins  
Houseparents  
Governors  
Matrons  
Friends  
Form Tutor or member of staff  
Our School Counsellor, Mrs Brown  
Hertfordshire County Child Protection School Liaison Officer,  
Jane Hardy, 01992 556975  
School Independent Listener – Reverend Briggs  
c.briggs@haileybury.com  
Childline 0800 1111  
ISI Children's Contact – Daisy Madder 0207 7109900  
Children's Rights Director - Roger Morgan 0800 5280731  
Children's Rights Website – [www.rights4me.org](http://www.rights4me.org)

### **Contact Information**

Boys' Boarding  
Heath Mount School  
Woodhall Park  
Watton-at-Stone  
Hertford  
SG14 3NG  
01920 830792  
[boysboarding@heathmount.org](mailto:boysboarding@heathmount.org)

The River House  
Woodhall Park  
Watton-at-Stone  
Hertford  
SG14 3NH  
01920 830224  
[girlsboarding@heathmount.org](mailto:girlsboarding@heathmount.org)

Girls' Boarding