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At Stoke College, we believe that boarding school life plays a pivotal role in shaping a student's character, fostering personal growth, and providing a unique educational experience. Our commitment to creating a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment for our boarders is guided by a set of principles and practices that form the foundation of our boarding program.

Boarding at Stoke College is overseen by the Head of Boarding who liaises closely with other members of the SLT and key members of College staff, to ensure that the principles and practices highlighted below are lived out by the Stoke community. Beyond the College, the friendships made in boarding endure for many years, if not life. There are 2 houses (Main House and the Stables), each can accommodate 23 students. The boarding houses are led by the Head of Boarding/Housemaster, who is supported by a team of house staff:

- Deputy Head of Boarding/Housemistress
- 4 Boarding Assistants

Most importantly, when students board at Stoke College they do not just join a school, they become part of an extended family where:

- They have a sense of belonging and know that they are accepted as individuals.
- Their problems will be shared and their triumphs celebrated.
- They have a safe training ground within which to develop critical life skills, such as the importance of communication, consideration, and compromise.
- Every child does indeed matter hugely.

Stoke Principles:

1. **Safety and Well-being:** The safety and well-being of our boarders are our top priorities. We maintain a secure and welcoming environment, regularly assess safety protocols, and provide access to healthcare and counselling services.
2. **Academic Excellence:** We encourage academic excellence by offering a structured study environment, academic support, and dedicated staff to assist students with their coursework. Our goal is to foster a culture of continuous learning and personal growth.
3. **Community and Inclusivity:** We celebrate diversity and strive to create an inclusive community where all boarders feel respected and valued. Our commitment to respect, kindness, and open-mindedness ensures that every student finds their place within our community.
4. **Character Development:** We emphasise the importance of character development by promoting values such as integrity, responsibility, empathy, and leadership. Through various activities and experiences, we help students become well-rounded individuals.
5. **Independence and Responsibility:** Our boarding program encourages students to become independent and responsible for their actions. We provide opportunities for self-management, time management, and decision-making, empowering students to become responsible adults.
6. **Health and Wellness:** We promote a healthy lifestyle by offering nutritious meals, regular exercise, and access to mental health resources. We aim to instil good habits that will benefit students throughout their lives.
7. **Communication and Collaboration:** Effective communication and collaboration are essential skills for success in life. We encourage open dialogue between boarders, staff, and parents, fostering an environment of mutual understanding and support.

8. **Respect for Rules and Policies:** To ensure a harmonious living and learning environment, we expect all boarders to abide by the rules and policies of the school. These guidelines are designed to protect the rights and well-being of all community members.

Our Practices:

1. **Residential Life:** We provide comfortable and well-maintained living spaces that foster a sense of home away from home. Trained residential staff members oversee dormitories and offer guidance and support to boarders.
2. **Safeguarding:** At Stoke College we are committed to safeguarding our students. To this end, our Head of Boarding is a trained DSL and acting as the schools Deputy Safeguarding Lead. Full details of the College's safeguarding procedures are set out in the Safeguarding Policy.
3. **Academic Support:** Our boarding program includes structured study periods, access to teachers, and a conducive learning environment to help students excel academically.
4. **Cultural and Recreational Activities:** We offer a diverse range of cultural, athletic, and recreational activities that allow boarders to explore their interests and talents while building friendships and creating lasting memories.
5. **Health and Counselling Services:** Our on-site medical department paired with staff who are trained first aiders, emergency first responders and lifeguards allow us to provide a high level of care for our students. Our boarding staff are also able to drive school transport which gives us access to West Suffolk Hospital, a local GP and an out of hours facility in Bury St Edmunds.
6. **Regular Feedback:** We maintain open channels of communication with parents and guardians to provide regular updates on their child's progress, behaviour, and overall well-being.
7. **Community Service:** We encourage boarders to engage in community service and volunteer opportunities, fostering a sense of social responsibility.

Our boarding program is rooted in a commitment to the principles of safety, academic excellence, community, character development, independence, health, communication, and respect. Through these principles and practices, we aim to provide an enriching and transformative boarding experience that prepares our students for a successful and fulfilling future.

