



Boarders' Handbook 2023-2024

Houldsworth House

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Welcome to New Boarders

Welcome to St George's! Our boarders are the heart of the whole school. We want all of you to be happy in the home-from-home atmosphere of Houldsworth, where the Deputy Head in charge of Boarding, Mrs Bryce, and her team will care for you and stay closely in touch with your family and your guardians. Your opinions will be heard, both in the school itself and in Houldsworth.

We have prefects who are known as the Head of Boarding and her Deputy. They are boarders, like you, and they will represent you in Houldsworth and work with Mrs Bryce to help make sure that you are comfortable and happy, and to support you in your work, activities, leisure and future plans. In school you will have a Tutor and Year Head who will be there to answer any questions you may have; in Houldsworth Mrs Bryce and her team are there to help you at any time.

I am glad you have decided to live at St George's, and I hope you will make friends for life here. I look forward to meeting you.

***Mrs Chandler-Thompson
(Head)***

Welcome to Houldsworth House! We hope that during your time here Houldsworth will be like a 'home from home' for you where you will make good friends and reach your potential academically and socially.

My colleagues and I are here to support you in all areas of school life, and we hope that we will be able to get to know you really well. We and our student Head and Deputy Head of Boarding and Boarding Ambassadors are always available to help you or just to have a chat.

***Mrs Jill Bryce
Senior Deputy (Head of Boarding)***

We are all looking forward to you joining us in Houldsworth! We know once you settle in you are really going to enjoy it and will make some great friends. Houldsworth is full of wonderful people, fun activities, delicious food and lots of laughter. I am part of a caring, supportive team and your wellbeing, happiness and achievements are our priority. We can't wait to meet you!

***Mrs Melissa McMurray
Housemistress***

People always ask what it is like to be a boarder. Well, unlike in Harry Potter, we don't arrive on the Hogwarts Express, or share one giant room like in St Trinian's, but one thing is for sure: Houldsworth is not just a boarding house; it's a home, a community where you will make lifelong friendships.

There is always something fun to do and someone to talk to if you need advice or if you just feel like having a chat. Being a boarder will help you settle into the school community very quickly and you will feel your confidence blossom. There are boarding tutors (teachers from school) who visit the boarding house, so you will not have to worry if you are ever stuck on your schoolwork! There are many great people here and our house parents are fantastic. You will make friends so quickly and immediately feel part of Houldsworth life, so you should not be worried. Rather, you should be excited to join the adventure!

New boarder

Aims of Boarding

St George's exists to promote educational excellence for all.

The specific aims of our boarding provision are:

- To provide a safe, comfortable and 'home from home' environment for boarders.
- To ensure each boarding student has the care and support of committed and understanding house staff so that she may develop a good personal relationship with them.
- To work closely with each student's subject teachers, form tutor and year head to promote the academic, social and emotional development of each boarder.
- To give students of all ages leadership opportunities within Houldsworth, in order that they develop a sense of ownership of Houldsworth, as well as new skills and greater responsibility.
- To provide flexible boarding facilities which, as far as possible, suit personal and family circumstances.
- To reach out beyond the school to make good use of the local facilities provided in the city of Edinburgh and beyond, in order to increase student awareness of Scottish history, culture and society.
- To promote international understanding and awareness.



Accommodation

Houldsworth House is situated in the leafy residential area of Ravelston, on the edge of the school grounds, only 20 minutes on foot from the centre of Edinburgh.

Houldsworth House consists of four buildings:

1. Number 15 is the main building and attached to this is number 17. The Bungalow is a separate building in the Houldsworth grounds and is used to accommodate our sixth form boarders.
2. Houses 15 & 17 each have bedrooms which vary in size from 4 beds to single rooms. The office is staffed at all times during the day and evening and is situated in House 15 beside the front door. Communal areas in these buildings are the bathrooms, dining room, laundry, prep room and large common room.
3. The Bungalow consists of single bedrooms and a twin bedroom, a common room, bathroom and laundry.
4. The Lodge provides a flexible common room space which is also used for music practice and studying. We will also use the Lodge for temporary isolation, if required.

There is a flat for a member of the resident house staff in each building, enabling us to be near the girls at night.

Grounds

Houldsworth has its own garden, which students are welcome to use in their free time. In addition, the school grounds, including sports facilities, are available for recreation.

Security

Houldsworth is protected by security gates, which are operated electronically from within the house. As in the rest of the school, the outside doors have the added protection of a keypad



entry system and a code unique to the House. It is important that this code is not shared beyond Houldsworth staff and boarders.

Parents, guardians, family and friends are welcome to visit Houldsworth. For reasons of security and privacy, all visitors are asked to sign in and out with a member of house staff.

Who's who?

Mrs Jill Bryce

Mrs Bryce is the Senior Deputy Head and Head of Boarding. She also teaches Mathematics.

Mrs Melissa McMurray

Mrs McMurray is the Houldsworth Housemistress.

Ms Lorna Macrae

Ms Macrae is the Assistant Housemistress.

Our Houseparents:

Mrs May Gray is non-resident.

Mrs Kirsty Hallifax is resident.

Ms Molly Guilmant is resident.

Domestic Team

Houldsworth has its own chef and team of domestic staff.

Prep Supervisors

Members of the school staff visit Houldsworth to run 5 o'clock club for our younger boarders, have meals with them and supervise homework.

We also benefit from the input of several members of the school's administrative team.

Houldsworth Student Leadership Team

- **To be elected** (Head of Boarding)
- **To be elected** (Deputy Head of Boarding)



A Day in the Life of a Boarder: Monday to Friday



7.00am	Time to get up! Wash, dress and make your bed.
7.20am – 8.00am	Breakfast in the dining room.
8.00am – 8.15am	Final tidy of your room and preparations for school. Make sure your phone and any other device are charged.
8.30am	Your temperature will be taken by a houseparent before you leave for school. Sign out in the front hall by writing in your time of return and any after school activities. Leave for school.
8.45am	Registration in your form room.
3.50pm - 5.00pm	Return to Houldsworth, sanitise hands and sign in. Snack available in the dining room.
Free Time	
5.00pm - 5.30pm	5 o'clock club for P6 to Lower Five (Mon – Thurs). Games and activities with the prep supervisor.
5.30pm	1st sitting for evening meal (P6 to Lower Five).
6.00pm	2nd sitting for evening meal (Upper Five and Sixth Form). Temperatures taken on entrance to the dining room.
6.30pm	<p>Prep. This is a quiet time, and everyone should be working. This is not a time to watch the television, play games or to be on your phone.</p> <p>P6 to Lower 5 are supervised in the prep room.</p> <p>U5 & Sixth Form work in their bedrooms.</p> <p>This is a time for study and homework and is self-guided. Supervisors and House staff are available if you need guidance in organizing your work.</p>
8.00pm	Supper in the dining room. Help yourself to fruit, cereal, toast, and a drink. Students can also eat snacks they have brought from home. Free time until you need to get ready for bed. Optional activity each evening; House meeting for all every two weeks.
8.30pm onwards	<p>Lower School students get ready for bed.</p> <p>All phones and devices are handed in from P6 to Lower 5 at bedtime.</p>
Public rooms are closed by 9.45pm and everyone should be in their own bedroom.	
9.30pm onwards	Upper School students get ready for bed.
10.00pm	Sixth Form students get ready for bed.

A Houseparent will always come to say goodnight.

A – Z of Boarding

Activities – in the House

We organise various activities in the boarding house.

- You can choose to do arts and crafts such as origami, painting, bracelet making or more intellectual challenges such as sudoku or scrabble.
- More active choices include running, tennis and treasure hunts.
- If there is an activity you are particularly interested in, we would love to know so that we can introduce it to everyone in the House.

Activities – out of the House

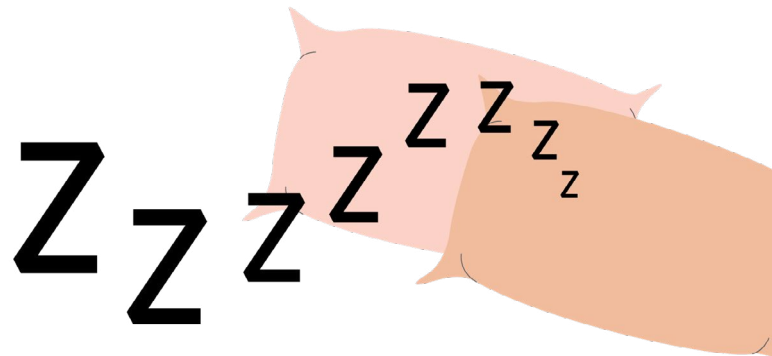
- Every Sunday, we take groups out for swimming, escape rooms, pottery café or cultural trips. We also watch the rugby matches at Murrayfield.
- Girls over 16 years may visit local gyms with parental permission.

Bathrooms

- Bathrooms are shared. All bathrooms are cleaned daily.
- Please put the toilet lid down before flushing and ensure that you wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.

Bedtimes

- 9.15pm P6, Remove & Lower Four
- 9.30pm Upper Four
- 9.45pm Lower Five
- 10.00pm Upper Five (& Sixth Form students in their rooms)
- On Friday & Saturday nights bedtimes are 30 minutes later
- Lower 5 and below hand their tech in half an hour before bedtime.



Committees

- We have five student-led committees to discuss Activities, Charities, Eco Matters, Food and Diversity & Inclusion.
- Committees are chaired by an elected boarder and supported by a houseparent.
- Committees meet half-termly.

Computers

- Computers are provided for your use both in school and in Houldsworth prep room. Houldsworth also has laptops which are available for use within the main house and can be collected from the office.
- Please sanitise House laptops when you sign them back in. Suitable wipes are available in the office.
- All computers are connected to the school network and have internet access and email facilities.
- You will be supplied with a username, password and e-mail address by the IT department in school. For security, you will not be able to access other email systems e.g., Hotmail, Yahoo etc. You can request that individual sites are unblocked via the school IT. Team.
- You may bring your own laptop into Houldsworth but you must take responsibility for its security and use. It can be connected to the school network via wi-fi upon completion of the appropriate consent form.

Door Codes

- All outside doors around the school have entrance security systems and you will need to remember the code number.
- The codes for Houldsworth's doors and gates are different from the code for the main school buildings.
- For everyone's safety, please do not tell anyone the door code.
- If you cannot remember the code, ask a member of staff. We all forget sometimes!
- If the doorbell rings, please do not answer the door even if you are nearby. Ask a member of staff.

Duties: This is your contribution to our boarding community

- Please make your bed and keep your area of your bedroom tidy.
- Please tidy your desk or bedside table when you leave for school. Put your belongings away in your wardrobe so that the cleaners can clean while you are at school.
- After each meal you should clear the table of your own dishes and leave them ready to be washed.
- Everyone is expected to help in keeping the public rooms tidy. Please take your belongings to your room when you have finished using them and clear up before leaving an area.

Electrical Equipment

- Our electrician checks all electrical equipment for safety annually.
- For fire safety reasons, please do not bring electric blankets, kettles, hotplates or any heating/cooking equipment into the boarding house.
- Please do not leave electrical equipment plugged in when not in use.

Face masks/coverings

- Face masks/coverings may be worn if you choose.
- Physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene are the most important and effective things we can all do to prevent the spread of viruses.

Fire

- The fire alarm is a continuous siren. If this sounds, you should leave by the nearest exit and make your way quietly to the Houldsworth car park where you should line up with your year group.
- Please remain quiet and listen carefully for your name to be called.
- Do not re-enter the house until told to do so by a member of staff.
- We have regular fire practices.
- It is important to familiarise yourself with the fire exit doors in the Main House: House 17, House 15, Big Comm, Laundry and Bungalow: Main Door, Door at end of corridor

Five o'clock Club

- Girls in P6-Lower 5 who have not attended an after-school club will join the boarding tutor for games and activities at 5 o'clock in the common room.

Friends

- Any St George's student is welcome to visit you in Houldsworth. They must sign in and be introduced to the member of staff on duty.
- Please ask if you would like to invite a friend to stay for tea, spend some time with you in the evening or at the weekend. This may include an overnight stay at the weekend.
- You may also visit your friends at their homes. However, their parents must contact the house to invite you. If this involves an overnight stay, your parents/guardian will need to contact us to confirm that they are happy with your arrangements.



Gates

- The main gates are operated electronically from within the office.
- Coming in - Press the outside buzzer once and wait to be let in.
- Going out - Please ask at the office to have the gates opened for you.
- The smaller gate has an entry code which is different from the door codes.
- Gate codes are confidential to boarders and house staff as per door codes.

Getting up in the morning

- On weekdays you will be woken at 7.00am and will be called for breakfast at 7.20am or 7.40am. Weekends are a little more relaxed. However, you should come down for breakfast by 10.00am.

Health and Wellbeing

- If you are not feeling well or are worried about something, please tell a member of staff. We can sort out most things!
- If you feel unwell during the school day, you should tell a member of staff and go to see the school nurse.
- We advise that boarders are registered with our local G.P. If you need to see a doctor at any time, we can make an appointment for you at the surgery.
- There is a weekly G.P. surgery just for boarders which takes place in the nurse's room at school.
- If you have any medicine, you must hand it in to a member of the house staff. Boarders aged sixteen and over may keep their own prescriptions but should tell a member of staff what they are taking.
- If you wish to register with a dentist, we can organise this and arrange for a regular check-up. If it is an emergency, we will make an appointment.
- We also arrange for boarders to visit the optician and podiatrist as required. Younger girls are accompanied to appointments by their guardian.
- House parents will meet individually with boarders to have a chat and complete a Care Plan looking at all areas of your wellbeing including feeling safe, being included and respected.



Homesick?

- Try not to worry if you are feeling homesick. It is quite normal, and all the girls are sympathetic, having experienced homesickness themselves.
- Please feel free to talk to a member of the house staff about anything that is troubling you – we will understand! You can also speak to your form tutor, your year head or a teacher. You may also ask your year head for an appointment with the school's counsellor.

Hungry?

- Fruit, biscuits, toast, bagels and cereal are available from the dining room up until 9.15pm.
- Diluting juice, water, milk and hot drinks are also available.
- If you wish to have anything different, please ask first.
- You can, of course, bring your own snacks into the boarding house, but do not bring in any food containing nuts. You will be allocated a food locker for the storage of personal items. Food should not be kept in bedrooms.
- If you need to keep any food refrigerated, please ensure that it is labelled with your name and date and ask a member of staff to put it in the fridge.

- Residents in our 6th form Bungalow have access to their own kitchen facilities which will be stocked with basic supplies from the main house.

Laundry

- You can use the house laundry after school, in the evenings and at the weekend.
- You will need to bring your own washing powder. If you need help with the machines, just ask.
- Bed linen will be sent to a laundry company on a fortnightly rota.

Lost Something?

- Have a look around your room, in your wardrobe and your locker.
- Ask your friends.
- Check the public rooms and your friends' rooms.
Retrace your steps.
- If you still cannot find it, report your loss to a member of staff and they will alert the rest of the house.



Meals

Weekdays:	
7.20am- 8am	Breakfast
In School	Lunch
3.50pm	Snack
5:30pm (1st Sitting)	Evening Meal (Remove - L5)
6.00pm (2nd Sitting)	Evening Meal (U5- Sixth Form)
8.00pm - 9:15pm	Supper

Weekends:	
8.00am onwards	Breakfast
11:30am	Brunch (Saturday)
12:30pm	Lunch (Sunday)
5:30pm	Evening Meal (Including Friday)
8.00pm - 9:15pm	Supper

- There is always a choice at mealtimes, including a vegetarian option, salad and cold meats.
- If you do not wish to have the dessert, there is the option of fruit or yoghurt.
- Please let us know if there is something you do not eat because you have an allergy, or it does not comply with your religious beliefs.
- On the hall message board there is a meal request sheet, please feel free to suggest your favourite foods and we will do our best to accommodate your requests.

Mobile Phones

- Most girls have their own mobile phone, but please remember that you are responsible for its safety and use.
- Your phone number must be recorded by the house staff who will keep it in our phone book and saved to our house mobile.
- When you go out of the house, please take your mobile with you and ensure that it is charged and switched on.
- Please save the Houldsworth numbers to your mobile: +44(0)131 311 8015 and mobile 07966519798
- Mobiles and other devices are handed in before bedtime by all boarders from P6 to Lower Five.
- Please do not use your mobile to take photographs of students or staff without their permission.

Outings: Outings are organised every weekend and are a great way to explore Edinburgh and have some fun.

- Outings may include art galleries, cafes, museums, theatre, cinema, swimming and bowling.
- We organise whole House outings to the theatre or a day out to visit another part of Scotland.
- If you have any suggestions for outings, please let us know.

Personal Possession

- Use your small individual safe in your bedroom to keep your money and other valuables safe.
- You may lock your wardrobe if you wish. Look after your keys – keep them with you! Replacements will be charged.
- Take your possessions back to your room.
- Everything must be named.
- Keep your bedroom reasonably tidy and make your bed every morning.
- If you lose something, have a good look for it and then tell a member of staff if it cannot be found.

Money

- Please keep a maximum of £20 cash in your room. Larger amounts (of any currency) should be handed in to a houseparent; you will be asked to sign it in, and it will be kept in our safe. If you need to take any cash out, please ask a houseparent.
- £20 cash can be given to houseparents at the start of each term. Your child can access this money to cover incidentals such as charitable donations and in-house tuck.

Post

- The post is delivered Monday to Saturday and can be collected from the Houldsworth office

mail trays.

- If you would like to post a letter, please ask a House parent who can arrange this for you via our mail bag.
- Post for you should be addressed to:

Houldsworth House, 15 Ravelston Park, Edinburgh, EH4 3DX

Shopping

- Unless you are in the sixth form, you will be expected to stay in a small group with others when you go shopping.
- Younger girls will be accompanied by an older student, although plans may be assessed on an individual basis.

Signing out and in

- Please remember to sign out before leaving the house and sign in again upon your return. Remember to say hello or goodbye to a houseparent when you arrive or leave and have a chat about your plans!
- If you are ever sent back to Houldsworth to collect something, please sign out and in again at the main school reception. Do not do this without the permission of a member of staff.

Television

- You may watch television after school, after prep and at the weekends.
- We have several televisions, DVD players, a large DVD selection and access to Freeview and Netflix, which means that you can usually find a quiet spot to watch your favourite programme.

Transport

- Edinburgh is a great city for walking, and you will be encouraged to walk when possible. We are only a 20-minute walk from Princes Street.
- Buses go into town from Roseburn and the 13 bus from the end of the road will also take you into town but does not run in the evenings or on a Sunday. Applying for a Young Scot Card will allow you to travel around Edinburgh free of charge.
- If you need a taxi to go to the airport, dentist, etc. please ask in the office. We use 'City Cabs'; careful accounts are kept, and they are included in the outlays at the end of each term.

Uniform

- School uniform can be purchased from Stevensons, details of which are available on the Uniform List on the school website.
- Uniform can also be purchased from the Uniform Exchange (dates and times on noticeboards).

- Boarders who require items of uniform during the school term can order them from the House staff (with parental permission). The cost of these items will be added to the bill at the end of term.

Worship

- Worship is individual and your beliefs will be treated with respect.
- Everyone may practise their own religion and attend their place of worship, if they wish to do so.
- We are happy for you to organise your own outings to worship after consultation with staff.



Boarders' Kit List

In addition to items of school uniform, boarders will require the following:

- Bed Linen – duvet, 2 duvet covers, 2 sheets and pillowcases (a pillow will be provided).
- Towels.
- Dirty linen bag.
- Sufficient clothing, especially underwear, for 10 days (to allow for laundry time).
- 3 pairs of pyjamas / nightdresses.
- Dressing gown.
- Pair of slippers.
- Sponge bag and contents.
- Various outfits and footwear for leisurewear.
- Jacket / coat.
- Winter accessories – i.e. warm coat, waterproof rainwear, gloves, scarf, etc.
- At least one smart outfit for trips, special occasions and various social functions, i.e. a dress, skirt or smart trousers (not denim) and smart low heeled or flat shoes (in particular for country dancing).
- Swimwear and towel(s).
- Basic sewing kit for personal mending.
- Students undertaking Duke of Edinburgh's Awards and other activities will need outdoor pursuits outfits (a detailed DofE list will be provided prior to any expedition).
- Games and hobby materials.
- Washing powder.
- Chargers and adaptors which meet British safety requirements.
- Face masks/coverings (optional).
- Hand sanitiser (this is available in school and at Houldsworth, but you may wish to have your own).
- Footwear to be worn at all times in House: sandals, trainers, you choose.
- Bring your teddy, we have ours!

It is not advisable to bring valuable items into the boarding house. However, if this is necessary, it is advisable to insure any such item.

Please label all clothing and personal possessions with your name.

While the girls have their own storage space in their bedrooms, it should be noted that this is limited and needs to be kept clean and tidy for reasons of hygiene and wellbeing. The kit list above should be sufficient for their needs.

