

Boarding at Sibford School

Sibford is a British Day and Boarding school situated in stunningly picturesque Cotswold countryside north of Oxford and just 50 minutes train journey from London.

The aim of our boarding provision is to provide a 'home from home' safe environment for our boarders.

We have three boarding houses: Penn House, which caters for boys aged between 11 and 16; Margaret Fell, which caters for girls aged between 11 and 16; and Fielding, which is our sixth form boarding house (mixed but with separate 'wings' for sleeping).

Our houses are run by House Parents (some of whom are also teachers) who work hard to create a family style environment. House parents live at either end of the boarding houses. They know our boarders well, and, like parents, try to keep informed of their progress at school, whilst also giving them a secure home to retreat to from the pressures of academic work.

Our international boarders come from a wide range of countries and comprise about 10% of our school population.

Pastoral Care and Staffing

Our aim is to have an emphasis on the pastoral support that strongly reflects the school's Quaker Ethos and provides outstanding care for boarders.

We believe that the community atmosphere of Sibford School provides support and nurture for all our boarders. The wide range of backgrounds that boarders bring with them adds an international dimension to a rural school, which in turn adds to the diversity of the school and provides increased understanding of different cultures for all students.

The boarding environment is sensitive to the needs of individuals. Personal development is encouraged and students are motivated to use their gifts in service to the community. This approach supports the overall aims of our school which are summarised in three words:

- Respect;
- Resilience; and
- Relationships.

Our Head of Boarding is Victoria Baker. It is her responsibility to ensure compliance with National Minimum Standards and Safeguarding regulations. Victoria meets regularly with House Parents and is a frequent visitor to all the boarding houses. All teaching staff also play a small role in the boarding houses in that they have an evening duty once every half term and a weekend duty once a year.

Each house appoints a student member of the community as Head of House and Deputy Head of House. The role has a strong social aspect ... Student Heads and Deputies plan house parties and help to organise social outings. They also act as informal 'mentors' for other boarders who having difficulties settling into boarding life or life in the UK, and assist the House Parents to ensure that duties are carried out efficiently.

Student Heads of House and Deputies meet frequently with the Head of Boarding over lunch in a private dining room. The meetings are informal but are an excellent opportunity for the 'student voice' to be heard. It also helps the Head of Boarding to gain impressions about ways to improve the boarding experience.

Prep/Homework

Homework time for all boarders (and some day students) takes place directly after the end of the school day. Members of staff supervise the sessions, which take place in school classrooms or in the Sixth Form Study Centre. Students are able to make full use of computers and can also access resources in the school library. Boarders can also attend a special prep catch up time two lunchtimes a week.

Grades are sent to the House Parents so that they can monitor work in the boarding house. Pupils have individual desks in their rooms where they can do any additional work in the evening or at weekends. Wifi is available in all the boarding houses, however, it is turned off at 11pm to ensure that boarders get a good night's sleep.

Boarders' Activities

During the week all boarders have a supervised homework time, with access to the library and computers. This is followed by supper after which a wide range of evening activities can be enjoyed.

Boarders are encouraged to make full use of our many sporting facilities including our 25m indoor swimming pool, sports hall, squash and tennis courts and football and rugby pitches. Senior Boarders are also allowed supervised access to the Music School, for practice, and also the Art and Textiles studios.

There are a variety of House-based activities including cooking, milk shake making, board games, electronic games, pool, ping pong and craft activities.

Senior boarders are expected to spend additional time studying in the evenings especially during examination times.

Throughout the year there are various social events when pupils in all the Houses gather for fun and food either on site or at a nearby restaurant.

Sibford does not operate Saturday school so our weekends provide time for relaxation, trips out, activities ... and the chance to catch up on homework and sleep!

Pupils are able to enjoy their own individual time at the weekends, balanced with times when there are set activities taking place. We hope that this prepares our students to use their leisure time responsibly and productively, as well as renewing their energy for the week ahead.

Younger pupils have a more structured programme at the weekends while Sixth Form students have greater choice, as is appropriate for their age.

Catering

Healthy and appetizing food is an important part of boarding life. Our on-site catering team work hard to provide locally sourced fresh produce. Different diets are catered for and there is always a vegetarian option and salad bar available. Boarding House Heads and Deputies meet with the Head Chef on a regular basis to discuss ways to improve meals and vary the menu. We have 'international' food days throughout the year, to celebrate the cuisine from around the world. On Saturday evenings the boarders cook their own meal together in the boarding houses. Each house has its own kitchen and dining area and pupils have a supply of fresh fruit, bread and milk.

Medical Care

The school has its own medical centre staffed by a qualified nurse during the day. All House Parents have first aid qualifications, there is a doctor's surgery in the village and a hospital in Banbury (about 8 miles from Sibford). Seriously ill or injured international boarders are expected to re-cooperate in the care of their UK guardians.

Religion

Sibford was established in 1842 as a boarding school for the children of Quaker families. Today, the school welcomes pupil from all faiths and none. However, the Quaker values of the school, which seek to recognise 'that of God in everyone', remain at the heart of all we do. We believe passionately in the uniqueness of every pupil and know it is our job to seek out and nurture their gifts and develop their confidence to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Parental Contact

All boarding houses have office telephones so parents can contact House Parents and boarders.

Most pupils have their own mobile phones. All Boarding Houses are equipped with wifi so students can also contact their parents via the internet, using email or Skype.

Parents are encouraged to email or phone the houses if they have any concerns, no matter how small.

Parents receive a copy of the school newsletter on a termly basis. The school also produces an annual magazine 'The Sibfordian' which is published each September, reflecting activities that have taken place over the last 12 months.

Academic grades demonstrating student progress are posted to parents on a half termly basis (more frequently for some of our older students) and a full school report is produced on an annual basis.

In school, each boarder has a form tutor who looks after their academic and pastoral needs and who is more than happy to communicate with parents.

Guardians

Sibford School requires that an official UK-based guardian **must** be appointed for any pupil whose parents live outside of the UK, even if the pupil is in the sixth form and over the age of 18.

Policy for students to go out of school grounds

The school grounds are extensive with a good deal of space for pupils to enjoy the outdoors without having to leave the campus. Groups of three or more pupils may, however, go for walks or bicycle rides in the surrounding countryside provided they seek permission from House Parents first.

When boarders are on excursions away from school they are always supervised by staff. The ratio of staff to pupils will vary according to the type of outing and age of the pupils.

Boarders wishing to visit another pupil's home must have a formal invitation from that pupil's parents and permission from the House Parents/Guardian. Boarders are not permitted to go in a car when another pupil is the driver.

Laundry

Sibford School has its own on-site laundry facilities, enabling pupils to send their clothes and bedding to be washed and ironed. All items of clothing need to be named (please note: our school uniform supplier will name any uniform purchased from them).

Laundry is usually sent to and from the houses twice a week. Each boarding house also has its own washing machines and dryers for occasional laundering, which boarders may use in the evening/at weekends.

School uniform and PE kit can be purchased online (with the 'intelligent sizing' guide) and delivered to the pupil's home/guardian/or the school. If the size is incorrect, the supplier is happy to exchange items free of charge. Uniform is usually delivered within five days except during busy periods.

Boarding Houses

Overview

Sibford School

We have three boarding houses: Penn House, which caters for boys aged between 11 and 16; Margaret Fell, which caters for girls aged between 11 and 16; and Fielding, which is our sixth form boarding house (mixed but with separate 'wings' for sleeping).

Our houses are run by House Parents (some of whom are also teachers) who work hard to create a family style environment. House parents live at either end of the boarding houses. They know our boarders well, and, like parents, try to keep informed of their progress at school, whilst also giving them a secure home to retreat to from the pressures of academic work.

Penn House, Boys aged 11 - 16

Penn House is our boarding house for boys aged between 11 - 16. House parents are Greg and Sukey Symes and Dave Brassett. The house has a comfortable lounge and games room as well as a kitchen and eating/study area. There is also a laundry and cloakroom with individual lockers. Upstairs the house has nine shared rooms, some containing four beds and some containing two beds. There are also two single rooms (one en-suite). All rooms provide the students with room for private study. The bathrooms and showers have all recently been upgraded.

Margaret Fell, Girls aged 11 - 16

Margaret Fell is our boarding house for girls aged between 11 - 16. House parents are Joyce Scannell and Jodie Carey. The house has a large, homely lounge where the girls can relax, watch television/DVDs and even play the piano! The Margaret Fell kitchen is a popular gathering place and has witnessed numerous baking activities. All the girls have own their individual lockers. Upstairs the house has ten shared rooms, some containing four beds and some containing two beds. There is also a single room en-suite room. All rooms provide the students with room for private study. The bathrooms and showers have all recently been upgraded.

Fielding House, Boys and Girls aged 16 - 18

Our Sixth Form Boarding house, Fielding, is a mixed house for boys and girls aged between 16 - 18. Downstairs the students can enjoy relaxing together in the large common area, which includes a lounge with comfortable sofas, TV room, pool table and study area. There is also well equipped kitchen and breakfast bar. All the bedrooms in Fielding are twins and are contained in two separate wings ... one for girls and one for boys. The bathrooms and showers were all replaced and upgraded in 2014. Fielding House Parents are Emma Robinson and Michael Maguire who provide a family atmosphere while at the same time giving the students some additional independence in recognition of their age and as preparation for university or leaving home.