

Behaviour Policy

Introduction

Queen Margaret's School aims to encourage girls to adopt the highest behavioural and moral standards and to respect the ethos and aims of the school. We aim to develop mutual trust, honesty and common courtesy. We believe that strong relationships, good manners and a secure learning environment play a crucial part in the development of free-thinking girls, who are motivated to become life-long learners. In addition, we develop qualities of team-work and leadership through our extensive programme of enrichment activities.

QM girls are part of a community of people who care for each other and grow as individuals. We welcome girls from a variety of ethnic and social backgrounds and faiths. Once a girl has completed her education she will be an independent, courageous individual prepared to take her learning to the next level and her place in the modern world.

Code of Conduct

Queen Margaret's School community of Governors, staff, parents and girls adhere to an established code of conduct, rather than a long list of rules. We see education as a partnership between girls, parents and staff. Members of staff are committed to excellence, aiming to achieve a spirit of trust and co-operation. We expect the highest values and standards of behaviour inside and outside the classroom, as well as outside the school and in any written or electronic communication concerning the school.

We expect girls to treat staff and each other with consideration and politeness and to respond positively to the opportunities, demands and challenges of school life. Girls should follow the school rules and understand what is expected of them and why sanctions may be imposed for inconsiderate behaviour.

Everyone has a right to feel secure and to be treated with respect, particularly the vulnerable. Harassment and bullying will not be tolerated as detailed in our Anti-Bullying policy. Queen Margaret's School is strongly committed to promoting equal opportunity for all, regardless of age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability or learning difficulty.

We expect girls to be ready to learn and to participate fully in school activities. They should arrive punctually at lessons and other school activities, and follow the registration requirements. It is assumed that girls will respect the authority of members of staff, follow instructions and behave with courtesy at all times. They should care for the buildings, equipment and furniture. We expect girls to behave at all times in a manner that reflects the best interests of the whole community.

Involvement of Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians who accept a place for their daughter at QM undertake to uphold the Schools' policies, rules and regulations. They will be expected to support our ethos, aims and values in matters such as attendance, behaviour, uniform/dress and appearance, standards of academic work, enrichment activities and private study. However, QM has an inclusive, responsive and open-minded policy to behaviour and welcomes suggestions from parents. In working in partnership with parents, the School communicates information about individual pupil behaviour via telephone and email. In addition to receiving grade cards and reports, parents are encouraged to visit the School for Parents' Meetings and special events such as sports fixtures, concerts, shows, drama productions and Speech Day.

Involvement of Girls

Our experience shows that the ethos and respect for the school is enhanced by listening to girls and by encouraging constructive suggestions from individual or groups of girls such as Prefects, Monitors and the School Council. On occasion the girls' perspective is sought more widely for example with Focus Week questionnaires for an entire year group.

Involvement of Staff

In order to maintain the highest standards of discipline and pastoral care, all colleagues are required to provide firm, consistent behaviour management in line with School Rules, the Code of Conduct and the Rewards and Sanctions Policy. The girls' behaviour in lesson time is the responsibility of classroom teachers with support from Heads of Departments. Out of lesson time behaviour is overseen by individual tutors with support from Heads of Year. Concerns arising from behaviour in the evenings and at weekends are managed by the House staff on duty.

Given the round-the-clock nature of boarding school life, regular e-mails and weekly year team meetings and pastoral team meetings enable colleagues to provide continual, co-ordinated care that adheres to the School Rules, Code of Conduct and the Rewards and Sanctions Policy. It is expected that every member of staff, whatever his/her role in school life, should intervene and deal with girls who are behaving or dressing in an inappropriate way. A referral is then made to the relevant member of staff.

School Rules

Queen Margaret's School rules are designed to encourage girls to show positive behaviour, pride in their School, compassion for others, self-respect and discipline. Our aim is to reward and encourage good behaviour through our Rewards and Sanctions Policy. Sanctions help us to set boundaries and to manage challenging

behaviour. The School Rules are included in the termly calendar which is distributed to all pupils, staff and parents and are available on the School website. Our rules may change from time to time following consultation with staff.

The Headmaster or his Deputy undertake to apply any sanctions fairly, and where appropriate, after due investigative action has taken place. Sanctions may undergo reasonable change from time to time but will not involve any form of humiliation or sarcasm.

Examples and levels of sanctions and how they are managed are contained in the Rewards and Sanctions Policy.

All parents, girls and staff should be aware of the more serious sanctions, including suspension and permanent exclusion that the Headmaster can impose for serious breaches of the rules and regulations, including criminal behaviour. Examples of serious breaches of the rules include:

Drug abuse
Alcohol and tobacco abuse
Theft
Bullying
Physical assault/threatening behaviour
Fighting
Sexual harassment
Racist or sexist abuse
Sexual misconduct
Damage to property
Persistent disruptive behaviour
Discrimination with respect to age or faith

In applying sanctions, especially those with serious consequences, we undertake to take reasonable steps to avoid placing any girl with learning or other difficulties at a disadvantage in any way.

Physical Restraint

As in all schools, we reserve the right for our staff to use reasonable force to control or restrain a pupil in specific circumstances. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 enables school staff to use "such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do" any of the following:

- Committing any offence (or, for a pupil under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older pupil)
- Causing personal injury to any person (including the pupil themselves)
- Causing damage to the property of any person (including the pupil themselves)
- Prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school, and among any other pupils

The act also defines to whom the power applies as follows:

- Any teacher who works at the school
- Any other persons authorised to have control or charge of pupils

All of our staff are trained in the circumstances in which reasonable minimum force may be used, both as part of their induction and regular refresher training on managing pupil behaviour. In particular, they are advised always to use their voices first, to use the minimum force necessary to restrain a pupil for the shortest possible period of time. The School's policy on the Use of Physical Restraint provides further guidance on this matter.

Teaching and Learning

Queen Margaret's School aims to raise the aspirations of all its girls and to help them to appreciate that there are no barriers to their potential achievements both inside and outside the classroom. We assume that exemplary behaviour is the norm so that girls can develop an enthusiasm for independent thought, research and learning. We celebrate success, emphasise the positive and deal with the negative in a sensitive and tactful way. To maximise potential, our teachers offer each girl a high level of individual attention, together with consistent and helpful advice.

Complaints

If there is a need to complain about the operation of our Behaviour Policy, this can be done using the Queen Margaret's Complaints Policy as shown on the School website. We undertake to investigate all complaints and to notify those concerned of the outcome of investigation within 28 days.

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