



Mary Hare School

Boarding Principles and Practice

1. Introduction

Mary Hare School is a non-maintained special school serving deaf children and young people between the ages of 5 and 19 years old. It is a national school, with pupils coming from all over the United Kingdom and a small number from further afield. Therefore, it is a residential school. Pupils who live nearby are welcome to be day pupils, but experience shows that a number of local pupils will ask to transfer to boarding at some stage. The school educates young people through an auditory/aural approach in English, the language of the curriculum. Some young people sign in their leisure time.

2. Principles

Mary Hare does not make a claim of a 24 hour curriculum. Pupils are normally placed here because we are the nearest school which can meet their needs (even if they live hundreds of miles away). However, we see considerable benefits to our boarding provision and these are described below. We warmly welcome parents at any time and they are always free to take their son or daughter out of school in the evening. We also have a Lodge where parents can come to stay as well as a small caravan park area. Pupils are free to go home as often as they wish for weekends, with the exception of six weekends in Year 11 when we run extra GCSE study days. Some families ensure that their child goes home every week, while others stay at school more frequently. However, our designation is that of a termly boarding school and only day fees or termly boarding fees are charged.

3. Practice

Mary Hare School employs a full professional staff to care for children and young people outside the school day and they are referred to as Care staff. We have joint Heads of Care and Team leaders running each house at any time. Most staff work a shift system to ensure that the seven days and nights are fully covered. Most houses have waking night staff. Our Care Staff benefit from a comprehensive training programme with Child Protection and Safeguarding at its heart.

4. The Houses

There are six boarding houses in total including *Mill Hall*, which is our Primary School site. *Howard House* gently introduces boys and girls in year 7 to the boarding lifestyle. Through years 8 to 10, girls are housed in *The Manor* and boys in *Mansell House*. Both offer single and shared bedrooms as well as common rooms and laundry facilities. *Murray House* is the new boarding house for Year 11 students and is designed to encourage and facilitate study and revision. *The Wroughton Centre* incorporates four Sixth Form boarding facilities and includes single and twin study bedrooms, common rooms, kitchen facilities, a laundry and Jean Carnarvon Hall, which is devoted to recreational needs and leisure activities. The centre has been designed along the lines of University accommodation, with the intention of helping to provide a transition between Sixth Form and University and further education.

5. After school life

The school Activities Co-ordinator provides a full programme of varied trips and activities for all pupils, as well as running the Youth Club diner which opens twice a week. On-site and local facilities are taken advantage of whenever possible. Also on offer are trips to theme parks and activity centres further afield.

6. Key workers and One to Ones

All pupils are allocated a keyworker from the care staff team. They are responsible for a group of pupils on a more personal level. Each pupil has the opportunity to receive three One to One sessions with their keyworker through each academic year, with the exception of year 11, when they receive two and Sixth Formers, who receive them on a needs basis. A range of topics are discussed and targets set, which help to form part of each pupil's individual care plan. The aim is to build on each individual's development, taking into account specific needs. Keyworkers also hold regular house meetings with their group to share information and achievements as well as organising trips out and activities.

7. Health care

The medical department is staffed by two Registered General Nurses who are responsible for the health care of all pupils whilst at school. The medical department provides beds for pupils who are unwell, and where this continues for more than a day or so, pupils are encouraged to return home to recuperate, where possible. Pupils are encouraged to register with the School Medical Officer, a local GP, who visits the School once a week. Emergency appointments can also be made. All new pupils have an initial medical check with the GP and an Ear, Nose and Throat Consultant. Prescribed and homely remedies are dispensed either from the medical department or from the pupil's relevant boarding house. All medications are stored securely and administered according to School policy.

8. Special Educational Needs

The school has a SENCO who ensures that reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of young people who have Special Needs additional to their deafness.

9. Child Protection and Safeguarding

The School has a comprehensive Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed regularly by the Designated Child Protection Officer. All staff are trained in Child Protection awareness and procedures, using West Berkshire training materials.

10. Liaison With School and Families

Care staff liaise regularly with Heads of Year and Form Tutors and are encouraged to build partnerships with relevant teaching staff to support fully the needs of individual pupils. Mary Hare School is committed to establishing and maintaining good relationships with parents and carers. Open and honest communication and information sharing with parents is an essential part of the care staff role.

11. The voice of the young person

The pupil voice is at the heart of successful participation and allows our young people to be truly involved in their experience at Mary Hare. Pupils' thoughts, ideas and concerns are valued and taken into account wherever possible. There is ample opportunity for pupils to be heard, for example through House Meetings, Student Council, suggestion boxes and pupil questionnaires. An Independent Listener also visits the school on a regular basis to provide a confidential ear. The School has a complaints and representations procedure.

12. Rules and policies

School rules and the consequences of not following them are made clear to all pupils. These can be found in the school handbook as well as on display in all boarding houses.

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