

Boarding News – Oct 2022

Welcome to the first edition of Boarding News for 2022-2023. Our Year 13's from last year have left us to start their courses in prestigious universities around the country (and a few in their home country) and have been replaced by a new cohort of boarders across most year groups who arrived in early September.

You will have seen in recent communications from Mr Ferrari, the excellent results achieved by our students in their A-level and GCSE examinations this year. 80.2% of all grades awarded at A-level were either an A* or A grade, and the GCSE results were the best ever with 87.7% at A* or A grade. The boarding team are proud of the contribution that our boarders made to these results and saw first-hand the effort and dedication that went into achieving these results.

Settling into a new environment is never easy, but it was lovely to see how quickly our new boarders felt at home in both Parc and Tenby House.

Many of our existing boarders went out of their way to make new students feel welcome and many friendships were forged before they even got to school in the transport from the airport.

Our Head Boy, Head Girl and their deputies joined our new

boarders before school started to answer any questions they had and conducted tours of the school and took them to the local garage to show them where to replenish their snacks.

After a showery first few days of school, the weather improved and we managed to get out for an afternoon on the beach with ice cream.

The first day of school for our Year 12's was given over to a team building day so that day students and boarders go to know each other better.



Parc House upgrades

over the summer have gone well and students were met on arrival with new signage and room doors. A new table tennis table is being used well in the common room.





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weeks at the school and this was the result 😊:



Janina from Hong Kong, in Year 9

It's has been fun moving to Parc House, and everyone was supportive and welcoming as the only new Year 9 boarder this year. My sister started here last year and she really enjoyed it, she's in Tenby House, but I still get to see here through the week at school and for activities.

Inas (Hong Kong) and Esther (UK) in Year 7

We enjoy living in Parc House. Our new friends are like our adopted siblings. It's not been easy being away from home and family, but if you keep busy you don't focus on it and it gets easier over time. My English has got better in the short time that I've been here (Inas) and the teachers are friendly.

Every year we welcome boarders who have joined us from other boarding schools both from across the UK and abroad. It is always interesting to hear about similarities and differences between our schools and reassuring to know that on things such as bedtimes and device restrictions, we are very closely aligned with most.

A 'Get to know me'

evening was a new idea this year in my attempt to forge new friendships between boarders and tap into interests and expertise that they may not otherwise know about.

Each Tenby House boarder sent me a couple of photos of their family, home or anything else that they wanted to talk about and shared this with the group over the course of a Friday evening.

It was interesting to hear about parents, siblings, university plans and hobbies.



Boarder feedback is really important to help improve the boarding experience year on year. I met with our new boarders shortly after the start of term to gather their thoughts on the application process, arrival and transportation arrangements and induction.

Those that Mrs Dorrington and I had spoken to before arrival found it useful and were grateful to see the common room and student rooms. They enjoyed speaking to current students and this sometimes helped them choose between subjects they were undecided about.

Most felt that the buddy system wasn't needed as they were made to feel welcome by all on arrival and almost all felt very settled quickly.

I asked them each to choose four words to describe their first two

When asked to give a sentence or two about their experience to date, this was a selection of the responses:

Seojin from South Korea, in Year 12:

It's been nice to experience different cultures, I feel more international. It's good to be able to study with others before tests and share knowledge.

Emma from the UK, in Year 12 weekly boarder:

It's more structured in boarding so there are less distractions than at home. Saves me time so I can prioritise schoolwork over travelling. Everybody is very friendly wherever they are from.

Ming from Hong Kong, in Year 12:

I came to St. Michael's as the academics results are very good. I feel that being here as a boarder, it's a positive competitive environment.

Ross from Hong Kong, in Year 12

I think that boarding life at St. Michael's has been extremely welcoming and warm. The academics here are extremely good, this school prepares you well for your future. I came here because my older brother had a very positive experience as a boarding student.

Subuhan from China, in Year 10

I'm really enjoying my Maths and Physics lessons. Living in boarding allows me to play basketball, and I've made friends with my housemates from all over the world and my pool skills have improved. I enjoy studying as a group during prep time.

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With smaller student numbers in Parc House, they know each other well very quickly, but will do the same when they join Tenby House.

Moses' picture below of him emerging from the school bus in Year 7 (he's now Year 11), was the highlight of the evening!



Mr Jones and family have moved into Parc House to replace Mr Tanner as the

resident houseparent who left to teach abroad at the end of last term.



Mr Jones is originally from Wales and has spent time teaching overseas in New Zealand, where he met his wife, and more recently in Italy. Mr and Mrs Jones both teach Physical Education and their two children have already integrated well with Parc House boarders.

Face masks were addressed in Mr Ferrari's start of term letter (see extract below) and I'd really appreciate your support as parents to encourage your child to remove theirs during lessons and while out and about.



Masks: *At the end of the academic year, around 5% of pupils were still wearing them at all times, so I'd like to remind everyone that these have long since been abandoned by the government in schools.*

It has become difficult to know if they are being worn by someone who is unwell (not a requirement of ours, I should add) or someone who hopes in vain that they are filtering the air of pathogens, despite prolonged and close contact with peers throughout an entire school day – only a respirator will do this successfully.

We won't prevent anyone from continuing to wear one, however our teachers have commented how they hamper communication

and stifle participation, as well as hindering relationships with peers.

Schools have been urged to consider support for a small minority of children who are too anxious to remove them now, because of a fear of showing their face.

Linda, our counsellor, is very happy to help should this have become the case

Parent evenings for all year groups are spread throughout the academic year. This is in addition to six formal reports each year, two of which contain written comments from teachers.

As the UK learns to live with covid, we have reverted to face-to-face parent evenings. This may be disappointing to some parents who took advantage of parent-teacher phone calls over the last two years but rest assured that if there were any academic problems, you would be contacted either by the class teacher, the Pastoral Leader or myself.

You are notified as parents if homework is missed, or classroom behaviour is poor and the vast majority will receive many more merit notifications highlighting your child's excellent effort and achievements.

Activities are an important part of boarding life and everyone across both houses is encouraged to take part in after-school and weekend offerings.

Parc House boarders sign up for after-school activities on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday and many also sign up for optional activities on Tuesday and Friday. Tenby House



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boarders are encouraged to sign up to these and can also help staff to run them.

Gym memberships are offered to those who want it from Year 9 upwards and there are at least three opportunities a week to workout. Those who enjoy swimming or want to learn, have a great opportunity to receive coaching from an ex-Olympian on a Sunday afternoon, and there's at least one shopping trip a week to stock up on essentials.

Recent activity highlights include weekend laser tag:



Dodgeball, introduced by Mr Jones is a popular Parc House post-dinner activity:



Success (Y11) coaching Junior Girls Football:



Volleyball (alternates with basketball) at the LC2 in Swansea on Saturday afternoons:



SIM Car Racing in Swansea:



Tenby House quiz night. Each team chose their own round so we had rounds on subjects as diverse as K-pop, Nigerian food, Disney Princesses, NBA teams, computer programming and Harry Potter. Quiz won by Ben, Ebrima and Tega who shared a £20 Starbucks voucher:



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Rock climbing at the LC2 in Swansea:



Macmillan coffee morning for cancer support (and baking the night before):

