

STATEMENT OF BOARDING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

*'Our task, then, is to establish a School of the Lord's service.'
(Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue)*

1. Introduction

1.1. Downside is a traditional, Catholic, family orientated boarding School, and as such, the values and ideals of the Gospel and the Rule of St. Benedict lie at the heart of the community here. Whilst Downside is a strong academic School, our aim is to develop the character of our boarders and day pupils alike, where the importance of moral courage, integrity and service is emphasised.

2. Aims

2.1. At Downside we aim to provide a safe, nurturing environment and strong close-knit community where all pupils actively live out the values and aspects of a Benedictine and Catholic education. Pupils have opportunities to develop their faith and spirituality and are guided to encounter Christ throughout all aspects of school life. The experience of living and working together helps pupils to develop personal discipline, active listening and social skills, self-awareness, confidence, independence, and compassion. Community life affords pupils opportunities to develop deeper cultural understanding and respect for those from different beliefs and traditions and to celebrate diversity.

We aim to cultivate a culture of unselfish love, integrity, humility and leadership through service and responsibility. Each pupil is challenged to embrace a growth mindset through the numerous academic, sporting and co-curricular opportunities and to contribute purposefully for the benefit of the School and wider community.

3. Practice

3.1. Boarding, whether as a full boarder, or day+ boarder, is an inclusive and progressive community. Boarders are encouraged to embrace and celebrate diversity and to recognise the unique value of each individual.

3.2. The boarding environment actively promotes mutual respect, Benedictine values, compassion, and concern from the individual and pupils are expected to act with courtesy and good manners at all times.

3.3. Downside offers a rich and vibrant co-curricular programme through the week and at weekends to provide opportunities for fun, challenge, celebrations, experience, teamwork, community building and socialising.

3.4. The boarding houses at Downside as split as follows:

Smythe House is home to boys from First Form to Upper Sixth ((Year 7-Year 13).

- Roberts and Barlow Houses are home to boys from Fourth to Upper Sixth form (Years 10-13).
- Isabella House is home to girls from First to Upper Sixth form (Years 7-13) whilst Caverel House is home to girls from Third to Upper Sixth Form

3.5. Each house is run by an experienced pastoral team, led by the House Master or House Mistress (HsM). They are supported by Assistant HsMs, House Assistants, tutors and house parents.

3.6. The Health and Wellbeing Centre supports the pupils and houses. It is staffed by experienced nurses and Health Care Practitioners and runs regular GP surgeries. There are three counsellors offering a range of different support for groups or individuals. Pupils also have access to an Independent Listener.

3.7. HsMs work closely in partnership with families to give individual, holistic care to each pupil.

3.8. Downside's boarding provision is managed by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure rigour, consistency and the highest standards in boarding and safeguarding systems, protocols and procedures.

3.9. Community worship through Mass, retreats, house prayers and Lectio Divina allows pupils to develop their faith and spirituality. The School chaplaincy includes an ordained Chaplain and a lay Chaplain . They play a central part in the lives of pupils and the school community, supporting the liturgy, promoting service opportunities and raising awareness of the needs of the vulnerable through charity work.

3.10. Pupil voice plays a crucial part throughout all aspects of the school. Pupils are encouraged to provide feedback and ideas for improving the quality of provision through student voice boxes in each house, prefect meetings, house councils and the school council.

4. Facilities and opportunities

4.1. The boarding houses are maintained and improved on a programme of development.

4.2. All houses have separate areas for socialising, kitchens and bathrooms.

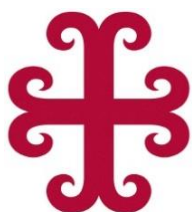
4.3. The boarders also have access to a variety of indoor and outdoor social areas and impressive sports facilities during their free time.

4.4. Boarders are provided with three excellent meals three times a day in the refectory and have access to the Weld Café in the evenings and at weekends in addition to snacks in houses. The Sixth Form also have access to drinks and snacks in the Sixth Form Study Centre throughout the day.

4.5. Laundry is provided centrally, and older pupils may be able to choose to do their own laundry in houses.

APPENDIX I

'Statement of Boarding Principles & Practices'



THE EIGHT ASPECTS OF A BENEDICTINE EDUCATION

The **eight aspects** provide a valuable perspective on the key qualities of a Benedictine education.

1. **Welcome** and hospitality are key elements in a school where pupils work and staff work together to form a kind, mutually supportive community, based on the core principle of Christian love.
2. Careful, active **listening** is an essential part of positive human relationships, and this is emphasised at Downside, as young people are guided in how to live together within their houses and within the school community as a whole.
3. **Reverence**, as an intrinsic part of regular school worship, and as part of respect for each person's individual human dignity, is a hallmark of life at Downside as a Benedictine school; it is part of the worship and love of God in Christ. This divine and human love draws the School into a communion whose members grow together in the love of truth and of one another. **Humility** enables people to live truly, communicating honestly with each other and God, enabling this love to develop.
4. **Teaching and learning** are central because of the need for our pupils to be skilled and educated people in a competitive world but also because our higher purpose is to grow in the knowledge of truth, which leads to God.

5. **Personal discipline** is something essential for the well-being of the individual and the community. It means that we are not enslaved to the world's distractions but free to pursue higher ambitions, such as service and the pursuit of knowledge.
6. Downside emphasises the importance of living within a nurturing spiritual community; **Concern for the individual** enables groups of individuals to live and grow together in a manner that fosters human flourishing.
7. Harmonious community life is the consequence of **building communion**; while there will always be some difficulties within communities, a spiritual purpose means that communion between people and with God is made possible.
8. There are many gifts in human life, if people are prepared to receive them. Through the Holy Spirit, the world is made full of beauty and wisdom; **the stewardship of gifts**, from the natural environment to human abilities, means that the whole world can benefit.

	<i>Downside School Approval Record</i>	
	Person(s) Responsible	Date
Author	Director of Pastoral Care	November 2014
Last Review	Deputy Head (Pastoral)	14 th January 2026
Approving Body	Senior Leadership Team	January 2026
Next Review	Deputy Head (Pastoral)	September 2027