



Statement of Boarding Principles and Practice

Our task, then, is to establish a School of the Lord's service

- Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue

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.

AIMS

- To engage our pupils in living their lives according to the **eight** aspects of a Benedictine Education
- To foster a community at Downside where individual boarders and day pupils, experience a secure, happy, mutually supportive and creative environment within which they can flourish

St. Benedict says, 'Let none follow what seems good for himself, but rather what is good for another' (RSB, Chapter 72). The priority of a Downside pupil is a duty to others. Pupils are obliged to act with courtesy and common sense for the good of the community. It is the aim at Downside that all pupils grow in love, knowledge and wisdom, and become a source of good for themselves and others. Every pupil is encouraged to develop a personal relationship with Christ and is supported to become a mature, caring and responsible Christian adult.

PRACTICE

Our aims are primarily achieved through our unique House structure where excellent pastoral care is provided by the House Masters / Mistresses (HsMs) and their respective teams. The School Chaplains are central to this endeavour, and the HsMs are also very well supported by the School's Health Centre and the School Counsellor.

The HsMs strive to develop mutual respect within their Houses and celebrate all cultures and diversity, ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for all of their pupils regardless of age, ethnicity, religious background or disability. As a boarding School, we have a full working week, supported by a rich programme of weekend activities, social occasions and other recreational opportunities. The pastoral team provide the support for pupils to develop life-long friendships, intellectual growth, their physical and mental wellbeing, confidence and self-awareness, yet at the same time ensure that their pupils learn to treat each other with kindness, sensitivity and respect, working tirelessly for the good of the others. Our responsibility is to develop the whole pupil, providing a rounded education, thereby preparing our pupils for life after School.



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 emphasized 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 emphasizes 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.

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