

Boarding Principles and Practice

A shared commitment to care, character and community

Our purpose. Boarding in the Warren should feel like a home from home: happy, welcoming and safe, with the right balance of freedom, routine and support. These principles explain the experience we commit to provide for every boarder and the shared responsibilities of pupils, families and staff.

Our boarding vision

Exceptional pastoral care sits at the heart of boarding at Packwood. The Warren is a family-focused community of children, parents and committed staff who know the boarders well and place their happiness, wellbeing and safety first.

Childhood should be nurtured and cherished. It should be full of friendship, adventure and fun, while offering enough challenge for children to develop confidence, independence and resilience. Packwood's rural setting, grounds and facilities give boarders room to explore, play, create and build the friendships that can last a lifetime.

The Packwood Way guides life in the Warren. We want boarders to show the tenacity to embrace opportunities and challenges, respect for other people and the world around them, and the humility to reflect, adapt and forgive. Our BIG TREE attributes make these values visible in everyday choices and relationships.

A home from home

Boarding staff care for children with genuine warmth, consistency and professional judgement. We listen when boarders want to talk, take an interest in their work and play, support them when they are worried or unwell, and celebrate their successes.

Children need space to grow, make age-appropriate choices and learn from mistakes as well as achievements. When difficulties arise, we respond proportionately and calmly, with kindness, fairness and understanding. Clear boundaries, rooted in safety and respect, help children learn to look after themselves and one another.

Every boarder should know who they can speak to and feel confident that they will be heard. Houseparents, matrons, boarding tutors, graduate assistants, form tutors, senior pastoral staff and the medical team work together so that care is joined up and no concern is overlooked.

Our commitment to every boarder

- To feel safe, known, valued and cared for.
- To be happy and to develop a genuine sense of belonging in the Warren and the wider Packwood community.

- To grow in confidence and independence while knowing when and how to ask for help.
- To thrive mentally, physically, socially and academically.
- To develop resilience, self-discipline and the confidence to learn from mistakes.
- To communicate clearly, listen well and respond with empathy.
- To support others, contribute to community life and form lasting friendships.
- To enjoy the freedom, opportunities and serious fun of boarding at Packwood.
- To live out the Packwood values and BIG TREE attributes in everyday life.

The Packwood Way in the Warren

Value	What it looks like in the Warren
Tenacity	We have a go, persevere when things are difficult and ask for support when we need it.
Respect	We value different opinions, cultures and experiences; we care for people, belongings and our surroundings.
Humility	We reflect honestly, accept responsibility, apologise when needed, forgive others and adapt our behaviour.
Attribute	How boarders can show it
Boldness	Having the courage to join in, speak up, ask for help, try something new and stand up for what is right.
Imagination	Creating games, performances, activities and solutions; bringing ideas to dorm and community life.
Growth mindedness	Learning from feedback, setbacks and mistakes; recognising that independence develops through practice.
Teamwork	Including others, sharing responsibilities, playing fairly and helping the Warren run well. Understanding that every member of a community has a part to play.
Resourcefulness	Solving everyday problems, organising belongings and using time, spaces and equipment responsibly.
Empathy	Noticing how others feel, listening without judgement and offering kindness and support.
Excellence	Taking pride in personal standards, routines, prep, activities and the care of shared spaces.

Our BIG TREE attributes in boarding

Our boarding staff undertake to

- Know each child as an individual and show genuine warmth, empathy and interest in them.
- Place safeguarding, welfare and wellbeing at the centre of every decision.
- Create a calm, welcoming and inclusive environment in which every boarder can belong.
- Notice and recognise positive behaviour, effort, kindness and contribution.
- Set fair, consistent and age-appropriate boundaries based on safety, respect and the needs of the community.
- Listen carefully and respond to worries promptly, proportionately and with appropriate confidentiality.
- Support children to repair relationships, reflect on choices and learn from mistakes.
- Model the Packwood values and BIG TREE attributes in their language, conduct and relationships.
- Work collaboratively, share relevant information appropriately and support colleagues professionally.
- Maintain a strong working knowledge of safeguarding requirements, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and school policies.
- Reflect on practice, welcome constructive challenge and undertake relevant professional development.
- Bring energy, good humour and a sense of fun to boarding life while maintaining professional boundaries.

Working with families

Strong communication with parents and carers is essential to a happy boarding experience. Packwood is a family school, and we want families to feel that we are on this journey together.

We encourage parents to ask questions, share relevant information and raise small concerns before they become larger ones. In return, boarding staff communicate openly and proactively, sharing successes as well as concerns and explaining the support being put in place. Communication should be timely, respectful and focused on the child's best interests.

A whole school commitment

Boarding is an important part of Packwood and is supported by the wider school community. To provide consistent care, we will:

- Use regular pastoral and wellbeing meetings to identify concerns, celebrate progress and agree support for individual children.
- Ensure effective communication between boarding staff, form tutors, pastoral leaders, learning support staff, the medical team and senior leaders.
- Make sure relevant information follows the child between the school day and the Warren, with due regard for confidentiality and safeguarding.
- Use assemblies, PSHE, tutor time and boarding activities to reinforce the Packwood Way, healthy relationships and the BIG TREE attributes.
- Support boarders with prep, organisation, routines, belongings and the practical skills that build independence.
- Seek and listen to boarders' views, including through informal conversations and appropriate pupil voice opportunities.
- Invite constructive dialogue with parents and carers and respond to feedback thoughtfully.

- Review our practice and routines so that they remain safe, inclusive, age-appropriate and responsive to the changing needs of the community.
- Remember that Packwood is a boarding school and that the wellbeing of boarders is a shared responsibility across the whole staff team.

How boarders shape our community

Boarding works best when children are active contributors to a shared community. Our boarders actively shape a community where:

- All people are welcomed, included and able to be themselves.
- Kindness is noticed and offered in practical ways.
- Differences are respected and unkind behaviour is challenged safely.
- Everyone has a voice and everyone also learns to listen.
- Shared spaces and belongings are treated with care.
- Success is celebrated without comparison or arrogance.
- Mistakes are acknowledged, relationships are repaired and people are given the chance to move forward.
- Fun, friendship and adventure sit alongside consideration for others.

What the BIG TREE attributes feel like in the Warren

Boldness means joining a new activity, asking for help, trying an unfamiliar food, or speaking up when something does not feel right.

Imagination means inventing games, decorating shared spaces appropriately, performing, creating and finding new ways to include others.

Growth mindedness means having another go, accepting feedback, learning a new routine and seeing a setback as something that can be overcome.

Teamwork means helping with a shared task, supporting a younger boarder, playing fairly and making sure nobody is left out.

Resourcefulness means finding a sensible solution, preparing for the next day, keeping track of belongings and knowing who can help.

Empathy means noticing when someone is quiet or worried, listening, respecting personal space and offering reassurance or companionship.

Excellence means doing ordinary things well, taking pride in our rooms and routines, contributing fully and being the best version of ourselves.

The standard we hold ourselves to

For everyone who lives or works in the Warren, the wellbeing and safety of children are paramount. Good boarding is built through hundreds of everyday moments: a warm welcome, a well-kept promise, a calm response, a shared laugh, a difficult conversation handled kindly, or a child finding the confidence to try again.

Our aim is for every boarder to leave the Warren more independent but never isolated; more confident but always humble; more resilient and also more able to show empathy. They should carry with them the Packwood values, the BIG TREE attributes, happy memories and friendships that endure.

Review and shared ownership

These principles should be understood and lived by the whole boarding community. They should be reviewed regularly in the light of pupil voice, parent feedback, staff reflection, safeguarding practice and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

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