

ANNEX 40

PREP SCHOOL HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE PREP SCHOOL

The purpose of this booklet is to introduce you to Vinehall's ethos and procedures and to provide information that should help in making practical arrangements. If you feel that anything is missing, please do tell us so that we can add it! The school rules in this booklet form part of the terms and conditions agreement between parents and school, alongside the parent contract. You might like to refer to various other publications and policies and these are available to you through the school office or on our website: www.vinehallschool.com

Vinehall is a partly selective, co-educational school for pupils aged two to thirteen. On the one hand, we are proud of our scholarships to leading Public Schools and our academic record is enviable. On the other hand, we are equally proud of the academic progress that our less academic pupils make and we have a superb success-rate at the 13+ level, helping pupils to gain places to their chosen senior schools. Lists of recent achievements are available from the office and on our website. We encourage full boarding in Year 8 as preparation for the future and to help the children develop a sense of community and tolerance. There are many opportunities for children to take on positions of responsibility, such as prefectship, school council representative, team captaincy and others. We very much value a team approach.

Vinehall is a school of Christian character and this is reflected in the values upon which school life is based. Weekday assemblies include hymns, Bible readings and prayers and we follow the Christian calendar through the year. All pupils are expected to support our assemblies and whilst we have a clear, Christian ethos, we respect other religions and take an active interest in them. There is a School Chaplain who has a pastoral role and holds whole school services each term. Parents are welcome to attend Saturday assemblies, Catholic Mass and Sunday services as well as occasional voluntary services. Details of services are published in the School Calendar.

The older children in the Prep School have lessons on Saturday mornings and this helps us to offer depth and variety in our curriculum and balance a busy programme across the week. We aim to develop individual talents and to provide pupils with an opportunity to represent the School through sport and music, which are features of Vinehall.

Parents are always welcome to support matches, Saturday morning assemblies and school events. You might like to consider joining The Friends of Vinehall, a committee of parents who arrange social and fund-raising events. Contact details are in the school calendar. Form Representatives provide a link with new parents and will keep you informed of these events.

I am delighted to welcome you to the Vinehall School community. We hope that your children will be very happy here and will make the most of the wide range of opportunities on offer. Vinehall is a well-resourced school with a wonderful array of facilities and we aim to provide a broad range of subjects and activities so that children experience many varied aspects of school life. People are key to our success and we encourage Christian values and kindness within our school community. We want our youngsters to enjoy their school days and to develop a sense of what they are good at along with increasing independence. It is important that our children are encouraged not to fear or be ashamed of failure and we hope that they will exhibit a 'have a go' spirit, enjoying fulfilled lives. Vinehall provides a rich environment for each child's development and we want to work together with you to ensure that your child achieves all that he or she possibly can here. We hope that you will develop a close and positive relationship with the School.

J. Robinson

CONTACT US

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School Office – General enquiries	01580 880413
School Fax Number	01580 882119
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Info Line	01580 883058
Pre-Prep Office	01580 883094
Pre-Prep E-mail	pre-prep@vinehallschool.com
Registrar (fionaparry@vinehallschool.com)	01580 883090
Head's PA (headspa@vinehallschool.com)	01580 883057
Bursar (bursar@vinehallschool.com)	01580 880413
Financial Manager (mlewis@vinehallschool.com)	01580 883091
Domestic Bursar (jperry@vinehallschool.com)	01580 883054
Matron/Nurse	01580 883096
Boarding Office	01580 883098
Duty Boarding Staff	07503 015443 07899 996826
School Shop (www.simmonds-ltd.com) Opening Times: Mon and Fri 8 am – 9 am, Wed 3 pm – 4.30 pm	01580 881597

COMMUNICATION

General

The secretaries in the school office are happy to help and are on duty between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm. Outside those hours the phone is answered by the matron on duty. To leave messages for staff or children, parents can telephone the school, leave a note in the office or send an email.

Notices are posted on the whiteboard by the front door and on the website. The weekly newsletter, Vinelines, can be emailed direct to you or accessed directly from our website.

The School Calendar published at the beginning of each term helps with advance planning. You will receive a variety of letters from school including invitations to parents' consultation evenings and other school events. A request form for tickets to some of the events is sent at the beginning of term. Up-to-date information on matches and school events is recorded on the Info-Line and it is a good idea to check before setting out for any event.

A voluntary social register, listing parents' contact numbers, is published annually and this can help day parents in organising the school run, as well as encouraging contact between parents and their children.

It is important to let the school know if your child is affected by any traumatic experience such as bereavement, severe illness or divorce. Such information helps us to understand and support your child and will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Your child's Form Teacher should be your first port of call under normal circumstances. He or she will introduce him/herself at the beginning of the academic year. Senior staff are generally around School at the beginning and end of the day. They will be happy to deal with any questions or problems which you may have but if you need to raise an issue that will require more lengthy discussion, it is better to make an appointment with the appropriate person through the school office.

Boarders

The Houseparents, Head and School Nurse are happy to discuss the progress and well-being of boarders. All boarding staff are pleased to maintain close contact with boarders' parents and email can be particularly useful in this context. The children write a weekly letter and can use email and the telephone regularly. Vinelines also keeps parents up-to-date with events.

Day Children

If you wish your child to stay for school supper please inform the office (see End of Day). If you wish your child to board temporarily, please contact the office (see Boarding).

Absence and Off Games

If your child is absent for any reason, please telephone the school office between 8.00 am and 9.00 am. A child who arrives late at school or misses registration must sign in at the office before joining lessons.

If you wish your child to miss games, please send in a letter with your child to hand in to the school office at the start of the school day. This should state exactly which activities you do not wish your child to participate in and for how long.

There are frequent exeat weekends giving the children time off school from Friday evening. Holiday dates are published in the Calendar and we ask that parents observe these dates, taking care that your family holidays do not overlap with term-time. Absence during term can have a detrimental effect on both your child and others in the form. In the case of planned periods of absence, parents must write to the Head for permission in advance. We strongly urge parents to adhere to the dates printed in the Calendar.

GETTING STARTED

Day Children

On the first day of term new day children should arrive in the front hall between 8.00 - 8.15 am with their sports kit, play clothes, school rucksack and pencil case (see What to Bring to School). All new children from Year 4 to 8 are allocated a guardian who will act as a special helper in the early days, guiding them round the school, explaining the rules and routines and generally helping them to feel at ease. Year 3 children are all new to the Prep School and they are supported by their form teachers as well as pupils who are already familiar with the school.

The driveway can be busy at drop-off and collection times and we recommend parking by the sports fields and walking the short distance to the front hall.

There is a uniform check at the beginning of each term to ensure that all children have everything they need for the term. Each child has a peg in the sports hall changing room and in the cloakroom. Sports kit should be taken to the sports hall changing rooms and play tracksuits, coats and outdoor shoes to the cloakrooms. Dirty kit should be taken home for washing each week.

Form teachers are in form rooms to greet their pupils on arrival in the mornings and the school secretary is in the school office from 8.00 am to deal with general enquiries. On the first morning of term there is an extended form time, at which introductions are made and timetables, homework diaries and notices given out, before a beginning of term assembly.

If you have not already done so, the first day of term is a good time to check that you have filled in all the relevant forms: medical form, photography consent, social register consent, request for instrumental tuition, activities and clubs selection, ticket booking form.

Children are remarkably adaptable and usually settle easily.

Boarders

Boarders should arrive at school by 4.30 pm on the day before term starts (as noted in the Calendar). They should arrive in school uniform and have everything they need for the first night in an overnight bag. Trunks are unpacked the following day. New boarders are allocated a guardian in the same dormitory to show them the routines of the boarding house. They may be allocated a separate guardian for the daytime.

Boarders' parents or guardians are welcome to meet with boarding staff and the Head in the Front Hall whilst the children are settling in. The boarding staff will contact parents or guardians of new children after the first couple of days to keep them informed about how the children have settled.

THE SCHOOL DAY

Beginning of the Day

Day children should arrive between 8.00 am and 8.15 am, when Registration takes place in form rooms. A child who arrives late at school or misses registration must sign in at the office before joining lessons. Assemblies and house meetings begin at 8.30 and the first lesson starts at 8.45 am. There is no supervision available for children before 8.00 am.

Daily Times

Daily times are published in the School Calendar.

Daily Routine

A detailed timetable for your child's class is available from the Form Teacher. The timetable stays in place for the whole academic year.

Morning break is from 10.45 to 11.15 am and the children are provided with a snack and, weather permitting, change into playclothes for outside playtime.

Lunch is from 12.00 – 12.30 pm for Pre-Prep, from 12.35 to 1.10 pm for Years 3 to 5 and from 1.15 to 1.55 pm for Years 6 to 8. Vinehall's catering is provided by Brookwoods and is extremely popular! We provide a healthy and palatable balance of dishes and a servery system affords choice for prep school pupils. Fruit is always available for dessert. Special diets are catered for and snacks are available at break times.

For most year groups there is a period from 1.55 to 2.40 pm called Rest, when a variety of activities such as choir, orchestra, drama rehearsals and sports practices take place.

Tea is from 3.40 - 4.00 pm or 4.00 - 4.20 pm and drinks and a snack are provided. The children do not need to change and they may use the table tennis equipment or computers.

End of the Day

Duty staff see the children off at the end of the day from the drive by the main entrance. Pupils may wait in the recreation room, front hall, porch or on the pavement directly by the entrance where staff can supervise them. They should not wait anywhere else for their own safety.

On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday the school day ends at 4.00 pm for Year 3, 5.20 pm for Year 4 and 5.40 pm for Years 5 - 8.

On Wednesdays, finishing time is 3.15 pm for Year 3 and 4.00 pm for Years 4 to 8, unless pupils are involved in matches or clubs. Team lists for matches are displayed on the sports board next to room 19.

Supper is at 5.45 pm, after which there are prep sessions and activities. Day pupils who are not collected by 6 pm when the school office closes are usually taken in to supper and will join the boarders until collected. Please phone the office if you know you are going to be delayed.

There is a programme of after school activities which children can select at the beginning of each term (see Clubs and Activities). For those day pupils who choose to stay on beyond 5.45 pm there is a small charge for supper and supervision. Extra charges are listed on the fees extras sheet published by the Bursar.

Saturday School

Years 4 and above attend Saturday morning school. This starts with assembly in the theatre at 8.20 am and ends at 12.35 pm (children do not register until the first lesson on Saturdays). Details of Saturday assemblies are published in the School Calendar. Relatives are encouraged to support these and are welcome to stay for coffee afterwards in the front hall with staff and the visiting speaker.

There are usually two sports Saturdays per term when a number of children are required to play in matches in the afternoon. Day pupils not involved in matches go home at 12.35 as usual.

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

Children are expected to bring their own pencil case to school and the school stationery shop is open before school, from which pupils can obtain items to stock their pencil cases. These items are charged to parents' bills.

All children need a Vinehall rucksack for use as a book bag. Years 3 and 4 keep their bags and books in the classroom and junior cloakroom. Years 5 and above have personal lockers.

Laptops are only permitted as part of a Special Educational Needs programme and with the express permission of the Head of ICT who monitors the software in use in school.

Mobile phones are not required, except by boarders who lodge them with Houseparents or Matron for safekeeping.

Medicines must be handed in to the School Nurse. No other drugs are allowed, except in cases where the school nurse has authorised children to carry their own medication.

Cash is not usually required but if it is brought to school it should be handed to a member of staff for safekeeping.

Food should not be brought into school by pupils except by special arrangement. If providing a birthday cake to share with your child's form, please observe our nut-free policy and ensure that nothing you send in contains nuts or sesame seeds. Form teachers will deal with birthday cakes. The school caters for special diets and there are opportunities for snacks at break times.

School uniform lists are available from the Registrar. Please do not bring extra items into school, such as jewellery, non-uniform hair accessories and toys which may get lost or damaged. Certain items of uniform are in house colours and the Registrar will inform new families as to which colour is appropriate.

Uniform is available through the school outfitters, S Simmonds & Son of Tunbridge Wells. The uniform shop is on the school premises and open at times specified in the school Calendar. Online ordering is also available at www.simmonds-ltd.com. Second-hand uniform is available from Matron.

On special days, such as trips, concerts, for school photographs and on the last day of term, children wear a white shirt and tie. These days are usually noted in the Calendar.

Please ensure that all items are clearly named.

Safety Gear

We insist that Vinehall pupils wear helmets and protective gear as recommended by the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS) and national organisations such as the English Cricket Board (ECB). Gum shields, shin pads, cricket boxes and helmets are therefore required for certain sports and activities.

ACADEMIC MATTERS

The Curriculum

The Vinehall curriculum is based on the National Curriculum. However, because we are an independent preparatory school, we are preparing our children for the examinations they sit at 13+ and this means covering Year 9 work during Year 8. We are able to cover work beyond the confines of the National Curriculum and offer subjects such as Latin, as well as starting French in the Pre-Prep. We believe in having a broad curriculum which challenges and stimulates our children and allows them to develop general interests. Vinehall caters for children across a range of academic ability, with the proviso that children can cope with the CE curriculum in the top two years (see Special Educational Needs).

Details of the curriculum and schemes of work are available to parents on request from the school office.

A range of subjects is included in the curriculum alongside the core subjects (English, maths and science) and other timetabled subjects (geography, history, religious studies, Latin and French). These are: drama, music, carpentry, Personal Social and Health Education, art and design technology and information communications technology.

Form Structure

Classes are named using a number according to the National Curriculum year group and the initial of the Form Teacher. Class sizes will not generally exceed 18. Our aim is to achieve a good social mix which supports the children's academic progress appropriately.

Streaming and Setting

Streaming is where children of similar ability are put into separate classes for subject teaching, such as a top stream for the most academic pupils in the top three years. Setting is where children of similar ability are put together for specific subjects, such as maths and French.

We set mathematics from Year 3 upwards and there are spelling groups within English classes. French is set from Year 6.

Sometimes we stream year groups and sometimes we leave them as mixed ability groups. This is done when we have assessed the abilities and needs (both academic and social) of each year group. At Vinehall there is no dogma about this - we simply like to take each year group as it comes and structure it in the way we feel will help all the children to make greatest progress.

In the top two years, Year 7 and Year 8, we have one scholarship form to prepare children for academic scholarships to their next schools and two forms which prepare children for Common Entrance. Preparation for the scholarship form usually begins in Year 6 in maths but there is often some movement of streams at the end of Year 6 allowing for children to develop at different rates.

What are Scholarship and Common Entrance?

Scholarship

Individual independent schools offer academic scholarships to candidates at 13+. The schools either set their own papers or use the Common Scholarship system. These papers are of considerable complexity and we have to be sure that those children in the scholarship form can cope with the pressures which the advanced syllabus involves. If a child takes a scholarship, he or she is generally accepted at the next school without the need to sit Common Entrance. Not all children in the scholarship form will take scholarship examinations. Some might demonstrate their ability better at Common Entrance and will therefore switch to CE work for the last part of the course of study.

Common Entrance

These papers are taken at 13+ and are the usual means of entry to an independent senior school. Papers are generally taken in all subjects. The exams are in the June of the final year (Year 8). They are marked at the school to which the child is entered. The pass mark varies from school to school and lies between a 50-68% average (based firstly on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science). We work closely with parents when choosing the next school for each child and plenty of advice is available (see Choosing Your Next School).

Some children take other entrance examinations such as the 11+ to Grammar School and leave at the end of Year 6 and some children return to the state sector in Year 9.

The school's annual Common Entrance and scholarship results are available to parents from the school office. However, certain details may be restricted owing to data protection legislation.

ASSESSMENT, EXAMINATION AND PREP

Assessment

We aim to monitor pupil progress through the school. Each subject teacher will assess your child in a variety of ways which can include oral work, written tests, examinations and written work undertaken in class. We also use Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs), which are a form of 'intelligence test', and NFER tests in English and maths. These are simply to help us understand your child better. We do not make the results known because they are only one method of assessing a child and just help us to build up a broader picture. They help us to track your child's performance against potential and, in some cases, to identify specific learning difficulties or underachievement.

Examinations

We have examinations at the end of the Michaelmas term and Summer term. In Year 3 these are in a limited number of subjects and are designed to be very low key (and revision is undertaken in class).

As children move up through the school, examinations help reinforce learning and provide markers to demonstrate progress. We provide advice for children about how to revise for examinations, since good techniques established now will help them throughout their school career. In Year 8, the pupils preparing for Common Entrance sit mock exams in the Michaelmas and Lent term and take CE in the Summer term, usually the week after half-term.

Prep

'Prep' is work done out of class. The purpose of prep is to allow children to undertake tasks that either reinforce work that has been covered in class, prepare for new topics, or revise for tests and examinations. It is important that parents do not do the prep for their children! This may seem obvious, but it is tempting to assist; however it doesn't really help in the long run. If your child simply cannot undertake the task which has been set, then a note sent to the teacher with an explanation or a note in the homework diary is helpful.

Preps are set on weekdays and at weekends according to a prep timetable issued at the beginning of the year. They are designed to take approximately 30 minutes, though may take longer, for example if a child is preparing for a test. Years 3 and 4 are not set prep to this extent: they have weekly tasks for maths and a weekly spelling list to learn along with handwriting practice. They are also encouraged to read regularly and to learn their tables thoroughly.

Boarders have supervised prep sessions and also have reading or revision sessions which enable them to catch up on work and to prepare for examinations. Academic tutors are assigned to boarders in Years 7 and 8 and their role is to support individual pupils academically.

As children progress through the school they will have extra work set from time to time, particularly as they approach important examinations. The Form Teacher is there to advise you if you think your child is receiving too much or too little prep.

Children in Years 5 – 8 should keep details of their prep in their homework diary and it is very helpful if parents see these regularly and sign them. Juniors have a home-school reading record book that can operate as a link book for messages between parents and the Form Teacher.

REPORTING BACK TO YOU ON YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS

Reports

In the Michaelmas and Summer terms, you will receive a full school report which will include a comment from your child's subject teachers as well as a summary from the Form Teacher and the Head.

In the Lent term, which is a relatively short term with no major school examinations, we issue a condensed, shorter report. However, overseas children, new children and children in Year 8 receive a full report.

Assessments

As well as reports, we issue regular assessment cards. There are five assessment cards issued throughout the year and the dates are published in the Calendar. The grades are based on effort not ability and are to show whether your child is trying hard or not. An explanation is included with the assessment card.

If a pupil has done particularly well, he or she is congratulated by the Head or Head of Juniors. If your child has not been trying as hard as we would like, we have a variety of strategies to encourage him/her. Sometimes we will use a work card which requires him/her to have the card signed at the end of each lesson. This means we can monitor an improved effort. Sometimes a teacher is allocated to keep a special eye on a pupil and to guide him/her individually.

Parents' Evenings

We hold parents' consultation evenings for each year group at which you will have the opportunity to meet your child's teachers and discuss progress. Parents are invited to these in writing and the dates are published in the School Calendar in advance. Years 3, 4 and 5 also have sessions when they can show their books to parents.

What do you do if you have concerns about your child's progress?

The first stage is to contact the Form Teacher or the subject teacher if the problem is quite specific. They will help you find out about the difficulty and agree strategies to deal with it (see Special Educational Needs, below).

The Head of Juniors will help deal with problems for those in Years 3, 4 and 5 and the Director of Studies oversees the academic progress of all children in the school.

Learning Support

Occasionally, children need extra help. It might be with English or mathematics or English as an Additional Language. Parents and teachers work together to try to identify what help is needed. The Learning Support department can provide screening and discuss special needs with parents. In some cases we may require a full report from an educational psychologist for clarification and this can lead to a child receiving extra time in examinations, for example. For extra time to be allowed at Common Entrance there must be an assessment within 2 years of the Common Entrance examinations. Very occasionally, difficulties might emerge which require such additional help that we would recommend a school which would be able to offer that level of support. However, we aim to do our very best for each child and we are willing to be flexible in order to incorporate individual needs.

CHOOSING YOUR NEXT SCHOOL

It is vital that you select a school which you can trust to do the best for your son or daughter and one to which their personal needs are well suited. The Director of Studies is happy to advise on choices and often has discussions with parents. Through long experience we can offer guidance on the relative merits of the schools and also match them up with your child's own talents and interests. Standards vary from school to school and requirements at Common Entrance differ. The teachers will have formed a judgment about your child's abilities and therefore what kind of school will be most suitable.

Some schools, such as Eton, Harrow, Winchester and Tonbridge, decide on their lists in Year 6. It is up to parents to contact the schools individually. Vinehall will be asked to write a reference for your child. Some schools will give intelligence tests and interviews to prospective applicants.

When you have accepted a place and paid the deposit, it should be remembered that it is subject to the child achieving the necessary average in Common Entrance.

When visiting and selecting the next school the guiding principle is the same throughout; will the school support and nurture your child/ren throughout their important teenage years, producing self-confident, polite, academically secure and well-rounded eighteen-year-olds at the end?

You should start looking by Year 5, as waiting lists for a number of schools build up quite quickly. You can finalise choices later on, when it will have become more apparent how your child is likely to perform in Common Entrance. At the end of Year 7 you will be given a form to complete on which you declare your final choice. Your chosen school marks your child's Common Entrance papers. This decision should be clear by the end of Year 7 so that the child has just one focus during Y8.

Initial visits are probably best done by parents alone. As a result of these visits you are likely to narrow your choices to perhaps two schools and should register with both of these. One of these should have lower entrance criteria than the other, so that if, as your child develops, it becomes apparent that he/she is unlikely to attain the required average at CE for one school, you have an option which is attainable.

Once you have narrowed your choice to a couple of schools, it is a good idea to take your child to visit during Year 6, and during this visit you and your child should make a choice of house, dependent upon how well your child relates to the houseparent. In some schools houses get booked up during the Michaelmas term of Y6.

1. Primary considerations

- Day or boarding
- Single sex or co-educational
- International Baccalaureat or A levels (this will depend upon whether your child is one-sided in profile or equally strong across all subject areas).
- How far you are prepared to travel eg if you are wanting to watch Saturday matches you may not want to travel three hours each way.
- Whether you want to find a school which will suit all your children or whether you are prepared to treat each one differently.

Above all, remember that you are looking for a school which will suit your child and bring out the best in him or her; this will not necessarily be one of the 'big name' schools.

You would be unwise to select on hearsay or recommendation alone. What suits one child will not necessarily suit another. Be prepared to look at a school which you might have hated in the 1970s; schools do change.

2. First steps

- Go to the school website
- Send for a prospectus and a copy of the school magazine.
- Consider financial factors, application for means tested bursaries, whether a scholarship might be a realistic option by that stage.
- Arrange a meeting with the Director of Studies to discuss general ideas.
- Discuss those schools which assess children in Year 6 eg. Winchester, Eton, Tonbridge, Harrow, Wellington.

4. Booking a Visit

Once you have formed an idea of the type of school you think would suit your child, then you should visit those schools which satisfy your criteria. However, it would also be a good idea to look at other options including one that you are fairly sure would NOT be right! If it isn't, then you will have confirmed your views, but if it turns out that it might be, this will be an indication that your priorities were not necessarily correct and you will need to think again.

This visit will be vital and will determine your child's whole future.

- Check on who you will be seeing and who will take you around.

- You might be meeting with the head or registrar. Use this opportunity to discuss the ethos of the school, entrance standards and academic standards in general. Ask what the 'value-added' is like and if there is a good tutorial system. Ask what the school is looking for in the pupils it takes in.
- What are the strengths of the school.....and the weaknesses?
- Always ask for a pupil to guide you round and ask them every question you want to know; they are likely to give you a very honest answer.

For example:

What is discipline like, which houses are strict, what do they do in their spare time, what do they do at weekends, how often do they go home?

Do they feel supported in their work?

Do they feel supported pastorally?

What do they most like about the school?

What do they like least about the school?

What kind of child would not get on at the school?

Could they describe a 'typical' pupil at that school

- Make sure you meet at least one housemaster or housemistress. (this is equally important if you are choosing a day house). Ask the same set of questions again and compare the answers.
- Ask about discipline and drugs.
- Ask about bullying – what is the houseparent's approach?
- Find out what the houseparent is interested in and how long they have been in charge of the house.
- Try to have a chat with a few of the children in the house and ask them the kind of things that you know your child would be interested in – food, tuck, sport, drama ...
- Ask them to describe the 'character' of the house.
- Do not worry if you don't meet the head – in larger schools there is usually relatively little contact between head and pupil unless there is a problem!

5. After your visit:

- Jot down a list of likes and dislikes as soon as you get back to the car.
- Ask your child's opinion (if he/she visited with you) - but remember that he/she will probably be influenced by trivialities rather than the substance of the school.

Please do arrange a meeting with the Director of Studies to discuss the entrance levels suitable for your child. We are here to advise you on a range of schools which might suit your child, but as parents, the final decision is yours.

SHIELDS

Shields, which represent the achievements, interests and activities of each pupil, are a long and cherished tradition at Vinehall and the shields of past pupils are displayed around the school.

Each shield shows the name of the pupil and major achievements. Icons in a range of colours show levels of achievement in four main areas: citizenship, academic curriculum, sport and creative arts. The children focus on filling up their shield in the last years at school and are presented with a framed copy of their shield at prize giving when they leave.

Leavers are invited to join The Vines' Society, our alumni society, and ex-pupils meet annually at Vinehall on Vines' Day.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND CLUBS

In addition to a busy academic programme, the children have opportunities to join various clubs and activities on Wednesday afternoons and weekday evenings. We generally suggest that Juniors do not take on too much before Year 5 and Form Teachers are happy to offer advice.

Extra tuition is usually available in the following:

Archery	Tennis	Cricket Coaching
Dance	Ballet	Gymnastics
Instrumental tuition	Golf	Pottery
Soccer Coaching	Learning Support	Swimming

Some activities take place during the school day and incur extra charges. In order to participate, pupils may miss some academic lessons. In addition, some are run as evening or holiday activities and are charged as extras.

An activities choice form is distributed each term through which children can select which activities they wish to participate in. Activities are also advertised through posters, letters, Vinelines and the other usual channels of communication to parents.

The school staff also provide a range of free coaching opportunities in the evenings, which may range from cricket to mathematics and children may be selected to join these sessions.

All activities are subject to change depending on numbers and staffing.

Boarders' activities take place on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Day children may join boarders' Saturday clubs by arrangement and usually at additional cost.

Year 6 pupils (day and boarding) take part in camping activities on approximately five Saturday afternoons throughout the year in preparation for Year 6 Camp in the summer term. The camping activities are scheduled in the calendar.

Special weekend events are advertised in the Calendar and parents are also informed of these through letters and Vinelines.

Using school facilities

School facilities such as the theatre, swimming pool and tennis courts can be booked for parents' use on special occasions. The Chef can also provide catering for special events. Details are available from the Domestic Bursar.

VISITS AND TRIPS

Vinehall offers the children a wide variety of trips which enhance their learning experiences and stimulate the development of the whole child through intellectual, cultural, physical or spiritual experiences or challenges. They offer children the opportunity of working together, developing resourcefulness, initiative and self-reliance.

Some school trips and visits occur as part of the school curriculum. If such a trip is to incur a significant cost, day parents' permission will be sought in advance. Permission is not sought for boarders' outings (unless they are likely to be particularly expensive) as they are arranged *in loco parentis*.

From time to time, parents assist with transport. We require your written permission for other parents to drive your children. Staff make risk assessments before undertaking trips and visits.

Parents may take their own children home from matches provided that the teacher in charge is aware. Parents may not take other children home without prior permission and usually children return in the same way that they arrived.

We have a detailed School Trips Policy which covers areas such as staff ratios, insurance, transport, Health and Safety, consent and discipline. It also provides details for trips being made out of the UK. This document is available for parents on request at the school office.

BOARDING

Vinehall has a well-established boarding community. The boys' and girls' dormitories are at opposite ends of the main building, with Matron, the San (for sick children), the Houseparents' flat and the laundry department in the middle. The boys' and girls' dormitories house between six and ten children each, on a mixture of single and bunk-beds with pin boards and some storage space by all the beds. The rooms are pleasantly decorated to make them feel homely and comfortable and we like our boarders to feel that their dormitories are special places for them.

General rules and regulations are posted along the corridors and published in the boarding handbook (copies available). Boarding staff live in School and can be contacted at all hours.

We aim to promote a caring, family atmosphere and our boarding staff are committed to engendering this environment. There is always plenty to do as a boarder and our children are extremely happy with us. Some of our boarders are from overseas and the majority are in the top two years of the Prep School. We find that it is the children themselves who usually choose to board and it is helpful preparation for their later schooling when many will board at Public School. The children value their increased independence and we find that boarding supports their academic work, as well as giving them the chance to have fun with their friends.

Boarding offers an excellent experience. The children learn to live in a community and develop independence, tolerance and self-awareness. Boarding house staff, academic tutors, Matrons, Sister, Gappers and duty teachers are on-hand and all take an interest in the welfare of the boarders. There is a full laundry service and life very much resembles home from home.

Boarding is 'full' rather than on a weekly basis, although there are very regular weekend exeat breaks starting on Friday evenings and running to Sunday evening and boarders are also allowed out for special occasions or because they have commitments such as County level sport or orchestra attendance in London. Families are welcome to visit their boarding children at school for plays, matches and other events or simply to call in for a chat.

Day children can board for occasional or regular nights or even for a week at a time, by arrangement with the boarding staff.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Medical Forms

When your child joins Vinehall School it is important that you complete a medical form. This form is vital as it describes any medical conditions and treatment required as well as contact numbers and the name of your child's G.P.

Medication

Please bring any medication your child may require during the day, e.g. antibiotics, to the dispensary and sign a consent form. Please label all medicines, homeopathic remedies and inhalers.

Boarders

If your child becomes a boarder, you will need to complete another medical form and various consent forms. It is important that all inoculations and vaccinations are recorded on the form. Your child will be weighed and measured at the beginning of every term and these measurements are also recorded on the form.

Medical Update

Please will you ensure that if your child's medical condition changes or treatment is amended that you inform the School Nurse as soon as possible. Please also inform the School Nurse if

your child is suffering or likely to suffer any emotional upset /trauma, i.e. bereavement, family changes or experiences that may cause them emotional upset. Any information given will be held in confidence at parents'/guardians' request. This information is helpful to enable the School Nurse to give support, understanding, comfort and referral, where necessary, to other professionals, following discussion with parents'/guardians.

Influenza Information

Each year in November our School Medical Officer comes to the school to vaccinate the children against influenza. This is optional and you will be issued with a consent form when your child joins Vinehall. Once this is on file we will not send out a new form each year so if you decide to alter your decision please write to the School Nurse.

B.C.G. Vaccinations

The B.C.G. vaccinations are organised by the Child Health Team at the Conquest Hospital, Hastings and are available for Year 7 pupils. Consent forms will be sent out to you and the vaccinations take place in the Summer term. Please inform the School Nurse if your child has a needle phobia.

Sun Protection

Children they need to be equipped with sun protection for the summer term, ideally factor 25 or above. This needs to be clearly named. Day children should apply sun screen in the mornings before school when the weather is fine. Your child will also need a sun hat. During hot weather it is advisable that your child brings in a water bottle and is encouraged to drink plenty of water.

Head Lice

Please check your child's head for lice or eggs at regular intervals. Check at home ONCE A WEEK by wet combing. For detailed help and advice please contact the School Nurse. Boarding children have weekly inspections and treatment as required.

Medical Procedures

If day children fall ill during the day they will be cared for in the san and you will be contacted and asked to collect them. If they have a headache or minor ailment they may be given paracetamol (if consent has been granted) and allowed to rest for a while. If their condition improves and they feel they are able, they can go back to lessons. If they have received medicine during the latter part of the day a letter will be sent home with the child explaining what they have taken and when. If children wake up feeling unwell and with a raised temperature, please do not bring them into school. If their condition improves they can be brought in later in the day.

Please do not bring your child into school with diarrhoea or vomiting. Children should remain off school for a further 24 hours after symptoms are resolved.

If boarders become ill we will care for them in the san. If they are local we will inform the parents, giving them the option of collecting and having them at home whilst ill. If they are from further away, we will inform parents and keep you regularly updated.

Head Injury

If your child has a head injury, his/her condition will be monitored very carefully. If he/she has no symptoms of concussion and feels well, he/she may continue to partake in lessons but a head injury letter will be sent home with the child. If the child has symptoms of concussion, every effort will be made to contact you, but if this is not possible we will take the child to A&E at the Conquest Hospital. If your child is a boarder we will ensure that he/she is treated appropriately and seek further medical advice.

Accidents at School

If your child is involved in a serious medical incident, a form will be completed explaining when the incident happened, how it happened and how it was dealt with.

BEHAVIOUR, DISCIPLINE, REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

Houses

Each child is allocated to one of the four houses. This is a vertical grouping system and we aim to keep a balance of gender in each year group in each house. A shirt in the house colour is worn for house competitions and on sports day. There is a weekly house meeting with teachers who represent the house, at which house points and progress are discussed. The house system aims to encourage healthy and positive competition and co-operation.

House	House Colour
Ashton	Blue
Paxton	Green
Rushton	Red
Saxton	Yellow

The pupils' efforts in the classroom are measured through good copies and bad copies. Their behaviour (incurring credits and drills) also counts towards the house points totals. Good copies, bad copies, credits and drills are recorded on the Form Teacher reports each term and are displayed on a weekly basis on the house notice boards in the front hall and in the library.

Pupils are discussed as a matter of course at weekly staff meetings.

Good Copies

Good copies are awarded for hard work and effort, usually after three stars have been accumulated. Stars are given for individual pieces of work that show real effort. On the award of the third star, a good copy is written in the work book or equivalent. This is then brought to be signed up against the pupil's name on the House boards by a teacher. The good copies are then converted to house points on the overall totals. The winning house each term wins a trophy and a special trip (see House Winners' Outing).

As well as counting towards the house totals, a weekly form shield is awarded to the form with the best average per pupil for that week. The Gordon Shield for juniors and the Barrett Shield for seniors are awarded at assembly and are displayed in the winning form rooms for one week.

There is an end of term good copy prize for the individual with the most good copies in that term.

Credits

Credits are awarded for spontaneous acts of kindness and helpfulness. Two credits will add one point to the house totals. There is an end of term prize for the pupil with the most credits for that term.

Good Copy Tea

When pupils achieve a target number of points in the term, they are invited to a special afternoon tea. At each subsequent required multiple of points, the child qualifies for another tea party and so on. This is a very popular and effective incentive system!

Merit Badges

Merit badges are awarded at assembly to individuals who have been recommended by the staff as having shown a quality of character befitting our school motto - to do our best for the

benefit of others. The badge is worn for one week and is recorded for inclusion on the pupil's shield.

House Winners' Outing

At the end of each term the house with the greatest points average per pupil is treated to an outing organised by the house staff, usually on the Wednesday of the last week of term. The pupils with the highest number of points in the other houses may be invited to join the outing. The pupil(s) from the winning house with the lowest number of points or the largest number of drills may be excluded from the outing. A child who has received more than 20 drills in the term will not attend the outing.

Bad Copies

Bad copies are given for lack of effort with work. These are used very sparingly and are usually preceded by a warning - written or verbal. The child will generally be required to repeat the work and appropriate improvements will be expected. If this does not occur then a bad copy will be given, which is taken to the Head to be registered and counts against the house totals. Should two or more bad copies be received in any one week, the individual will be placed on a "Daily Report Card" which is to be signed by the staff each lesson and taken to the Form Teacher (usually) each day for one week. Day pupils will also need to have the card signed daily by their parents. Warnings and bad copies will be reflected in the next set of assessments.

Daily report cards may also be given to pupils who need a "boost" in their work.

Drills and Detentions

Red drills are given for misdemeanours and poor behaviour / rule breaking. Yellow drills are given for lack of organisation. These are registered alongside the pupil's name and the reason for the drill is recorded on the drill sheet by the teacher who gave the drill. Three red drills or more in any one week will result in a detention and a form recording the reasons for drills, with a space for "action points". The form is signed by the member of staff taking detention and the individual pupil. It is then kept on file. Drills detract from the overall house totals. Parents are informed if a child reaches a total of 10 red drills in any one term.

Should a pupil receive a detention on two consecutive weeks a drill card can be issued which is to be signed every lesson by the teacher taking the lesson and shown to the Senior Master or Form Teacher regularly. Free time can also be taken away.

Should a pupil continue to get into trouble whilst on a drill card, further measures are taken and parents are involved in subsequent action. We aim to formulate a plan to help the individual and we look for positive and practical solutions wherever possible so that the pupil concerned can learn better behaviour patterns.

At no time will any member of staff administer any form of corporal punishment to your child.

Exclusion

Although rare, there may be times when a fixed term exclusion (suspension) will be given for serious offences or for a lack of response to previous sanctions. A permanent exclusion or agreed withdrawal of the child from school is a last resort, in extreme circumstances.

Examples of incidents that might lead to suspension: wilful damage to staff/school/other pupils' property; stealing; using strong language; entering the dormitories of children of the opposite sex; aggressive or violent behaviour; bullying; drug or alcohol misuse; vandalism; persistent misdemeanours.

Examples of incidents that could lead to withdrawal/expulsion: Frequent examples of suspendable incidents; ongoing bullying; failure to respond to school support systems and continuing on a course of behaviour that undermines the smooth-running of the school community; drug or alcohol abuse; breach of terms of Parent Contract.

SCHOOL RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

The School motto is: To do our best for the benefit of others.
(PRO ALIIS OPTIMUM AGERE)

General Behaviour

All members of the Vinehall community are expected to set a good standard of behaviour by being friendly, polite, helpful and respectful towards each other. We should greet each other in passing, open doors for each other and present a cheerful face to the world.

If someone is unkind to you, try not to over-react. If they upset you on purpose and persistently then you must report them to a member of staff.

If you are unhappy for any reason you should speak to your form teacher, or you might prefer to take your concerns to Sister or Matron. All members of staff at Vinehall want you to be happy here, so talk to the person with whom you feel most comfortable, and trust them to pass the matter on as they see fit. We can only really help you if we know about it.

If you have a serious complaint, take it to the Head or the Deputy Head.

Pupils should present themselves in a smart and tidy manner in accordance with the School uniform lists and no extras such as jewellery, other clothing, mascots, money, food or other substances (except by arrangement). Expensive items, toys and electrical items should only be brought to school with permission.

Hair should be natural in colour and unobtrusive in style and cut. Boys' hair should be neat and tidy and of an appropriate length i.e. off the collar and clear of the eyes. If a child's hair is deemed to be insufficiently smart, parents will be contacted and asked to remedy the situation as soon as possible. In very extreme situations a child may be excluded. Boarders who have difficulty in arranging a time for a haircut can be taken to a local hairdresser. The Houseparents will check with parents first.

Think for yourself. You are responsible for your own actions.

Be honest and truthful. Do your best to be a good person and make the most of your time at school. The school is founded on Christian principles, respect and kindness towards others. Please uphold this.

Label your own things and keep them in the proper place. Do not tamper with anything that does not belong to you.

Work

Everyone has a right to learn and to enjoy learning! We should help to create a positive learning environment and apply ourselves so that we can achieve our personal goals.

The teachers are here to help pupils to do as well as they can. This will involve self-discipline and hard work but it is well worth the effort! If you ever need help with your work, find a good time to ask a teacher for advice. All the staff are here to help you and you can refer to your Form Teacher for general advice.

Prep should be done quietly, as should any work in the Library, so that you and everyone around you can work more effectively.

Tidy up after yourself.

Inside

Take care to keep the school tidy and clean. We share responsibility for our environment and we should take pride in it.

Pupils should play and learn safely. Move around the school with care - not too fast! Be sensitive to others and to potential dangers.

If you find anything broken or damaged, please report it to a member of staff.

Outside

Everyone is expected to care for the environment. This includes being gentle with bushes and trees.

Make sure that staff can find you easily and that you play in approved areas.

When taking part in activities such as roller-blading, skating and cycling, always wear the correct safety gear.

Rules for break times are posted in the changing rooms and form rooms.

When queuing for the trolley, be sensitive to others and wait patiently for your turn. Try not to waste food.

Take special care on the drive. Remember that it is a road and therefore potentially dangerous.

Not all the rules are written down and common sense should prevail. Ask a prefect or a member of staff if you need help.

PREVENTION OF BULLYING

Bullying is deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually sustained over time and might be caused by an individual (child or adult) or a group. It can be physical, verbal, emotional or indirect. We are also very much aware that mobile, internet and wireless technologies can be misused through 'cyberbullying'. We want our children to use their mobiles (if they have them at home) and the internet safely and positively, and to be aware of the consequences of misuse. The staff are aware of the nature of this kind of bullying and there are measures taken to prevent it occurring.

At Vinehall we do not tolerate bullying. We are a caring and friendly environment and our motto (to do our best for the benefit of others) means that we encourage children to support each other and to tell a member of staff if bullying is happening in the school.

The school helps prevent bullying through teaching in the curriculum, through our work together in forms, houses, assemblies and through our staff, prefects and pupils watching for signs.

Pupils are urged to tell. They know not to support bullies and to help those they see in difficulty. Staff are always vigilant and discuss their concerns. Staff will always help those who are bullied in a calm and supportive fashion.

Parents can help, too. You should be careful to make a distinction between occasional teasing or unpleasantness and be aware that children can exaggerate. Equally, you can watch out for signs such as unwillingness to go to school and signs of distress, and encourage your children to talk to a member of staff if they feel that they are being teased or bullied. If you are concerned, speak to the form teacher, houseparents, Head of Juniors, Deputy Head or Head and the problem can be resolved.

The school takes bullying very seriously and a number of actions can be taken which range from loss of privileges through to a child being asked to leave the school.

The detailed policy for the prevention of bullying is available to parents on request from the school office.

CHILD PROTECTION

We are committed to following the guidance set out by the Department for Education and Skills in "Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education", for safeguarding your children and promoting their welfare throughout the time they are at Vinehall.

In all of the work that we do at Vinehall, we see the safety and welfare of children as paramount. This means that sometimes we have to take actions which some parents could find threatening. In such cases we will work towards mutual understanding. We will explain our professional responsibilities and we will give every reassurance as to our motives but we will always stress that, for us, children's needs have to come first.

We provide a designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) who has received appropriate training. In addition, one of the school governors carries particular responsibility for overseeing child protection. The detailed child protection policy is available on request from the school office.

The Child Protection Officer is Mr Geoffrey Whitehead (Deputy Head). Parents should feel confident in contacting Mr Whitehead, or any member of the Welfare Team, with any concerns over child protection. The Welfare Team comprises the Head, Head of Pre-Prep, CPO, Deputy CPO (Mrs Quelli Coles) and the School Nurse.

DATA PROTECTION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

DATA PROTECTION POLICY (PUPILS)

1 GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S DUTIES

The School is required to process relevant personal data regarding pupils and their parents and guardians as part of its operation and shall take all reasonable steps to do so in accordance with this policy. Processing may include obtaining, recording, holding, disclosing, destroying or otherwise using data. In this policy any reference to pupils includes current, past or prospective pupils.

2 DATA PROTECTION CONTROLLER

The School has appointed the Bursar as Data Protection Controller (DPC), who will endeavour to ensure that all personal data is processed in compliance with this policy and the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998.

3 THE PRINCIPLES

The School shall so far as is reasonably practicable comply with the Data Protection Principles ("the Principles") contained in the Data Protection Act to ensure all data is:

- fairly and lawfully processed;
- processed for a lawful purpose;
- adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- accurate and up to date;
- not kept for longer than necessary;
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights;
- secure and not transferred to other countries without adequate protection.

4 PERSONAL DATA

Personal data covers both facts and opinions about an individual. The School may process a wide range of personal data of pupils, their parents or guardians as part of its operation. This personal data may include (but is not limited to): names and addresses; bank details; academic, disciplinary, admissions and attendance records; references, examination scripts and marks. Pupils' academic records and reports are to be retained until the pupil is 24 years old, after which they will normally be destroyed unless there is reason to retain them.

5 PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

Consent may be required for the processing of personal data unless the processing is necessary for the School to undertake its obligations to pupils and their parents or guardians. Any information which falls under the definition of personal data, and is not otherwise exempt, will remain confidential and will only be disclosed to third parties with the consent of the appropriate individual or under the terms of this policy.

6 SENSITIVE PERSONAL DATA

The School may, from time to time, be required to process sensitive personal data regarding a pupil, his or her parents or guardians. Sensitive personal data includes medical information and data relating to religion, race, or criminal records and proceedings. Where sensitive personal data is processed by the School, the explicit consent of the appropriate individual will generally be required in writing.

7 RIGHTS OF ACCESS

Individuals have a right of access to information held by the School. Individuals wishing to access their personal data should put their requests in writing to the DPC. The School will endeavour to respond to any such written requests as soon as is reasonably practicable and in any event, within 40 days for access to records and 21 days to provide a reply to an access to information request. Where the request is deemed to be sensitive or contentious, it may be referred to the governing body. Please note that the School may charge an administration fee of up to £10.00 for providing this information.

Certain data is exempt from the right of access under the Data Protection Act. This may include information which identifies other individuals, information which the School reasonably believes is likely to cause damage or distress, or information which is subject to legal professional privilege. The School is also not required to disclose any pupil examination scripts.

The School will also treat as confidential any reference given by the School for the purpose of the education, training or employment, or prospective education, training or employment of any pupil. The School acknowledges that an individual may have the right to access a reference relating to them received by the School. However, such a reference will only be disclosed if such disclosure will not identify the source of the reference; or, where notwithstanding this, the referee has given consent; or if disclosure is reasonable in all the circumstances.

8 WHOSE RIGHTS?

The rights under the Data Protection Act are the individual's to whom the data relates. The School will, however, in most cases rely on parental consent to process data relating to pupils unless, given the nature of the processing in question, and the pupil's age and understanding, it is unreasonable in all the circumstances to rely on the parents' consent. Parents should be aware that they may not be consulted in such situations.

The School will only grant the pupil direct access to their personal data if in the School's reasonable belief the pupil understands the nature of the request.

Pupils agree that the School may disclose their personal data to their parents or guardians. Where a pupil seeks to raise concerns confidentially with a member of staff and expressly withholds agreement to personal data being disclosed to parents or guardians, the School will maintain confidentiality unless it has reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil does not fully understand the consequences of withholding their consent, or where the School believes disclosure will be in the best interests of the pupil or other pupils.

9 EXEMPTIONS

Certain data, such as the following, are exempted from the provisions of the Data Protection Act:

the prevention or detection of crime;
the assessment of any tax or duty and
where the processing is necessary to exercise a right or obligation conferred or
imposed by law upon the School.

The above are examples only of some of the exemptions under the act. Any further information on exemptions should be sought from the DPC.

10 DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

The School may receive requests from third parties to disclose personal data it holds about pupils, their parents or guardians. The School confirms that it will not generally disclose information unless the individual has given consent or one of the specific exemptions under the Data Protection Act applies. However, the School does intend to disclose such data as is necessary to third parties for the following purposes:

To give a confidential reference relating to a pupil to any educational institution which it is proposed that the pupil may attend.

To give information relating to outstanding fees or payment history to any educational institution, which it is proposed that the pupil may attend.

To publish the results of public examinations or other achievements of pupils of the School.

To disclose details of a pupil's medical condition, where it is in the pupil's interests to do so, for example for medical advice, insurance purposes or to organisers of school trips.

Where the School receives a disclosure request from a third party it will take reasonable steps to verify the identity of that third party before making any disclosure.

11 USE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION BY THE SCHOOL

The School will, from time to time, make use of personal data relating to pupils, their parents or guardians to make use of photographic images of pupils in School publications and on the School website. However the School will not publish photographs of individual pupils with their names on the School website without the express agreement of the appropriate individual. Should you wish to limit or object to any such use please notify the DPC in writing.

For fundraising, marketing or promotional purposes and to maintain relationship with pupils of the School, including transferring information to any association society or club set up for the purpose of establishing or maintaining contact with pupils or for fundraising, marketing or promotional purposes.

12 ACCURACY

The School will endeavour to ensure that all personal information held in relation to an individual is accurate. Individuals must notify the DPC of any changes to information held about them. Individuals have the right to request that inaccurate information about them is erased or corrected.

13 SECURITY

The School will take reasonable steps to ensure that members of staff will only have access to personal data relating to pupils, their parents or guardians, where it is necessary for them to do so. All staff will be made aware of this policy and their duties under the Data Protection Act. The School will ensure that all personal information is held securely and is not accessible to unauthorised persons.

14 ENFORCEMENT

Individuals who believe that the School has not complied with this policy or acted otherwise than in accordance with the Data Protection Act should utilise the School complaints procedure and should also notify the DPC.

15. PHOTOGRAPHY

It is our custom to take photographs of children for the school magazine, website, prospectus, newspaper articles and other publications. We aim to avoid matching individuals' names with close-ups of their faces. However, if you object to having your child's photograph taken for any reason, please ensure that we are informed.

16. THUMBPRINTING

We have installed an innovative and efficient borrowing and identification system for our library. When borrowing a book, children scan the barcode inside the front cover and then scan their own thumb-print. The process involves scanning the thumbprint for each child which is transferred into a digital form and stored as a fragmented biometric pattern on a specific and separate library database. This data is encrypted for further security and cannot be used in any other database. It is not possible to recreate an image of the original scan from the data that is stored. Its only use is within the library database during your child's duration at the school. When they leave the school the data is deleted as part of our end of year procedures. If you wish your child to be excluded from the thumbprint scanning, please notify the Head of English in writing.

COMPLAINTS POLICY (FOR PUPILS)

This explains what you can do if you feel worried about something and what you may do if you wish to complain about how you are being treated. If you would like your own copy of the policy, ask for one from your Form Teacher or collect one from the school office. If you do not understand something in this policy ask a member of staff or an older friend to explain it to you.

WHAT DO I DO IF I JUST WANT TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

Remember you have friends who may be able to help. Your Form Teacher or house tutor is always ready to help, or any member of staff you know and to whom you feel you can talk comfortably, such as Sister, Matron or the Houseparents.

Staff at Vinehall will take you seriously and listen to you, giving advice as necessary. They might refer you on to someone else. They cannot guarantee confidentiality because sometimes it will be their duty to pass certain things on. You will need to trust them to do this as they see fit. Staff are there to support you.

There may be times when you feel you cannot talk with a member of staff - this is perfectly alright and natural. If this is the case, talk, telephone or write to any of the following:

Your parents;

The school doctor, who has a surgery at school each Wednesday. He is the school's official 'Outside Listener';

ChildLine. The ChildLine telephone number is posted next to the children's telephone.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I WANT TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT SOMETHING?

Sometimes you may feel that you would like to complain about something which is worrying you. This might be about how you are being treated. The first thing you should do is speak to a member of staff whom you trust, such as a senior member of staff, a houseparent or your Form Teacher. You can take a friend with you if you wish.

If the matter is not settled to your satisfaction, you can make a formal complaint. The complaint will be referred to the Head/Deputy Head, who will write it in the complaints book held by the Head. The complaint should be attended to within two school days of making the complaint.

You will then be invited to talk the matter through with either the Head or another senior member of staff. You may, if you wish, have a friend with you at this meeting, a fellow pupil or member of staff. If, within two more days, the matter has not been sorted out satisfactorily, you may wish to contact someone outside the school such as your parents, the school doctor or Child Line.

THINGS WHICH MIGHT MAKE YOU UNHAPPY OR UPSET

You may feel that you have been treated unfairly or verbally abused by a member of staff in school or class.

You may feel that a punishment is unjust or in some way not right.

A prefect or senior pupil has treated you unkindly.

You are being bullied.

You feel that no one understands the difficulties you are having with some of your work.

Someone has hurt you or abused you or has made suggestions that you think are not right.

Someone is making fun of you.

Someone has taken something of yours and has not returned it.

Anything else that you think is wrong.

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO COMPLAIN IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE NOT BEING TREATED FAIRLY

PARENTAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

From time to time, parents may wish to make a complaint. This document should provide an open and fair way for you to make known your problems. An effective complaints procedure can defuse problems and can provide the school with helpful information. Vinehall welcomes parents' views as useful feedback towards school improvement.

The aims of this policy are:

To promote a culture that is open and welcoming

To involve parents and value their opinions

To encourage parents to raise any concerns that they might have

To enable parents to feel comfortable in communicating with the school

This document contains the following guidance:

How and with whom to raise an issue

To whom next to appeal if not satisfied

Time limits

Additional points to note

How and with whom to raise the issue

All members of staff are encouraged to deal with parental concerns that lie within their areas of responsibility. In the first instance please direct your concerns to the appropriate member of staff.

Academic concerns

Pastoral concerns

Sporting matters

Music matters

Health and Safety

Juniors

Pre-Prep

Director of Studies

Head of Boarding (boarders)

Form Teacher (day pupils)

Director of Sport

Director of Music

Health and Safety Advisor

Head of Juniors

Head of Pre-Prep

Issues concerning individual members of staff should be directed to the Deputy Head in the first instance who will liaise with the Head.

Appeals

Matters which are not resolved to your satisfaction will be referred to the appropriate senior person, usually the Head or Deputy Head. You will be kept informed of the action being taken.

Senior staff will recognise when issues need to go straight to the Head, with whom responsibility for all complaints lies.

If you wish to go directly to the Head with your concerns this avenue will, of course, be open to you. Please appreciate, however, that the Head may not be able to respond until she has had time to make appropriate enquiries and has set in motion an enquiry.

The Head will inform the Chairman of Governors of serious complaints.

There may be circumstances when you wish to complain directly to the Governors. This should be done in writing and addressed to the Chairman of Governors, c/o Vinehall School, Robertsbridge, East Sussex TN32 5JL.

Time limits for each stage

Complaints will be acknowledged as soon as reasonably possible and certainly within five working days. The staff will inform you what is happening to your concern or complaint and, if a more detailed response is needed, by what date it will be received.

The issue will be dealt with as quickly as possible and we aim to get back to parents within 48 hours in term-time.

Additional points to note

Please make your concern as clear as possible. To clarify your complaint you may be asked to put it in writing.

The school keeps a log of complaints and other parental concerns. Official school inspectors may at some point wish to see the log of the school's response to complaints.

If a satisfactory resolution to the complaint or concern cannot be agreed then the matter will be referred to the Chairman of Governors.

The detailed policy for handling parental complaints is available on request from the school office.