

WELCOME TO VICTORIA HOUSE

*NEW STUDENT
HANDBOOK
2023*



WELCOME TO VICTORIA HOUSE:

“Be Victorious in all that you do”

Victoria House is one of five girls’ Houses at Gordon’s School. Three of the Houses; Victoria, China and Kensington, are for day boarding students only, whilst Augusta and Windsor are for residential girls. There are also five boys’ Houses at Gordon’s, Balmoral, Buckingham, Gravesend, Khartoum and Sandringham and a mixed residential Year 7 House, Woolwich.

Victoria House is the newest of the Day houses and opened in September 2016. It is named after Queen Victoria who thought very highly of General Gordon. Queen Victoria, took the lead in demanding a fitting National Memorial be created in General Gordon’s honour, so in some respects we have her to thank for the school. The building was previously The McQuillen Sixth Form Centre, but underwent a radical revamp resulting in a warm, bright and welcoming space.

The House now comprises a spacious changing room complete with toilets and showers, four common rooms fitted with TVs and Wii consoles, eight ample-sized study rooms for our Sixth Formers to study during the day, as well as a kitchen. The building was officially opened by the High Sheriff of Surrey on 13th October 2016.

The girls were able to make lots of decisions about colours of the furnishings and take pride in their surroundings. Our House colour is fuchsia and this is highlighted in our sports kit, House badges and water bottles.

Victoria House has grown substantially in numbers since our opening and we now have approximately 100 students, in years 7-13 inclusive. The students are supervised by a team of staff led by Mrs Jones. We work in partnership with parents and guardians and ensure that the student’s wellbeing and best interests are in the centre of all that we do. Parents can easily contact staff throughout the working day to discuss any worries or concerns they might have.

The ethos of Victoria House is one of respect and kindness. This is evident in the way the girls have stepped up to support one another in Inter-House events as well as the ceremonial part of the School. Every Victoria girl has a purpose within the House and their individual talents are celebrated. The students have a real sense of loyalty to Victoria.

There is a strong sense of loyalty and identity within the House and this is evidenced by the desire to represent the House in Inter-House competitions. These occur throughout the school year and include; debating, baking, art, drama, music as well as Sport's events and the annual Longmoor Drill competition which the whole House participates in. We also have House parties, movie nights and House Trips which students' report are some of the highlights of their year.

Character education is a strong feature of Gordon's life, where students are expected to understand and reflect upon the five character traits of Courtesy, Integrity, Diligence, Enthusiasm and Resilience. This character development, alongside the holistic pastoral and academic support from House staff and teachers, helps to develop our students to be well-rounded and resilient individuals who are better placed to deal with the various challenges throughout their Gordon's career in a safe environment where each individual is valued.

We very much look forward to welcoming all our new students in September. During those early and often daunting days, as new students make the transition to a bigger school and a completely different change of routine, the House team will be on hand to help, guide and support them in any way that they can as well as be on hand for any questions from parents and guardians that may arise.





THIS HANDBOOK:

This handbook has been written to aid your transition to Gordon's School and gives an insight in to life at Gordon's and some of its rules and expectations, which should help new students to settle in as quickly as possible.

This handbook is not exhaustive and any questions parents or students may have before the start of term in September can be emailed to Mrs Jones, whose details will feature at the back of this pamphlet.

ABSENCES:

Any planned daily absences must be e-mailed to Mr Moss' PA, Mrs George at head@gordons.school this includes absence from Parade or Saturday morning school. If a student has an appointment and needs to leave school earlier than the end of the day or come in late please email majones@gordons.school and victoria@gordons.school. Any unplanned absence due to illness or similar should be directed to absence@gordons.school or phoned to **01276 858084**.

AEROSOLS:

Aerosols are strictly banned. Aerosols set off the school's fire alarms as well as potentially cause harm to other students, especially those who are asthmatic. Any student caught using aerosols will have it confiscated and may face a sanction.

ARRIVING AND DEPARTING GORDON'S SCHOOL:

Victoria House opens at 7:45am Monday to Friday. Students arriving after 8:20am are to report directly to the School Office.

All students are encouraged to stay for Prep, see below for more information. Whilst we respect that it is a long day and may take some time to adjust to, it has been proven that students perform better if they remain to complete their homework in a classroom environment supported by staff.

Near the beginning of the school year you will be asked to let the school know when you expect your child to be going home each day. This may vary but we ask parents/guardians to inform Mrs Jones or House Staff of any change to the normal collection time.

BREAK AND TUCK:

Students have a morning break after Period 2 at 10:30 – 11.00am. The House has a tuck shop which runs two break times a week although we do limit spending.

BORROWING:

Borrowing is not encouraged in Victoria House. If a student finds they are missing an item of uniform, kit or stationary we have a stock of spares that they are welcome to use. There is too much potential for items to get lost or damaged if borrowed from peers.

BUDDIES:

All new students will be allocated at least one “buddy”. Students’ buddies may be in their year or, if the new student is in Year 7, in the year above. They are on-hand during the early weeks and months to answer any questions that new students may have, and also to help guide new students around the school site until they are familiar with where they are going.

BULLETIN:

Victoria House Bulletin which contain lots of relevant information is sent to parents, staff and students weekly via SchoolComms.

BULLYING:

The school has a very active and robust anti-bullying policy. All incidents of bullying should be reported via the link on Firefly or to a member of the House staff or a teacher.

CHAPEL:

Students attend Chapel once a week with their year groups. They also attend assemblies once a week, again with their year group. There is a timetable up in the House of when these are.

CHARITY:

The House supports the school charity Camelthorn. All profits from the sale of tuck help support this charity. We also hold charity events throughout the year which the students help with.

FACILITIES:

We are very fortunate to have four common rooms in Victoria House. All of these have Wii consoles as well as TVs with Netflix and Disney +. The Junior common room also has a football table, a basketball hoop and a variety of board games. Other activities are intermittently purchased and the students can request items they would like.





FAMILIES:

We recently introduced an in House families structure to encourage integration between the year groups, establish a strong reward system within the House and to develop a culture of in-House leadership amongst the older students. Families allow an informal system that rewards and reinforces the behavioural expectations of the school as well as recognising those students who are community minded.

FIRE AND LOCK DOWN DRILLS:

If the fire alarm sounds, all students are to form up with their House on the front field. In the event of a lock down drill, teachers or House staff will direct students to remain inside buildings until such time as they are given the all-clear. At this point, all students will be accounted for in a roll-call on the front field as per a standard fire drill. Students **MUST** be silent and follow instructions for these drills.

GOING OFF-SITE:

Students must not leave the school site during the school day unless given express permission to do so. During Periods 1-6, students must sign out at the School Office.

HOUSE BADGES:

Each house has badges that reflect their House colour. Ours are fuchsia and are given out near the start of the school year for student to wear on their blazer.

HOUSE MEETINGS:

House meetings are held for each Year groups weekly. These are compulsory and very important as this is where many notices are given out for the week ahead. House meetings are also used to gain views of the students. We firmly believe that the students should have a voice and a say in the House and the School and are encouraged to speak to a House Prefect or a member of Staff if they would like something or are unhappy with something.

HOUSE SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES:

Victoria House has a Facebook Page, Victoria House, Gordon's School, and an Instagram account, [victoria_house_gordons](#), which are regularly updated with photos and snippets of recent House events.

ILLNESS:

Students who feel ill during the day must report to the school office, who will arrange a visit to the school's medical centre or return them to the House. House staff will also be informed and may be able to help communicate home with parents when a child feels ill. The medical centre is open at 8:20am for residential students only who are feeling unwell. Day students must report to their own doctor.

INTER-HOUSE COMPETITIONS:

There are several Inter-House competitions throughout the year, where Houses compete against each other in various activities and disciplines. Competitions cover the Arts, Sports and Academic and all Victoria Students are expected to contribute to at least one competition each year.

KITCHEN:

There is a House Kitchen on the top floor. This can be used for toast, cereals and hot drinks by our 6th Form students. The kitchen must be kept clean and be respected by the students.

LOCKERS AND CAGES:

Every student will be allocated a cage for their PE kit and a locker for their books. It is their responsibility to keep these organised and tidy. A padlock is strongly recommended and must have a spare key which is kept in the student's file in the House office.

LOST PROPERTY:

All items brought in to school must be labelled. Uniform, must be clearly named and locked into students' cages immediately upon arrival at school. Victoria House cannot be responsible for any lost property in the House. All Blues uniform will be issued within the first couple of months of starting Gordon's and MUST also be labelled and hung up appropriately.

MANNERS AND COURTESY:

Students are always expected to be courteous and use good manners, not only around the House, but also the wider school. Students who consistently display good manners and behaviour can expect to be rewarded with a commendation. Those who display poor manners or behaviour may receive bad comments or sanctions.

MEALS:

The school has an outstanding catering department and varied rolling menus are implemented throughout the year. For lunch and dinner students go to the dining hall in Houses and are expected to form up five minutes before their allotted meal time where they will be escorted to the Dining Hall by a member of the House staff. Special dietary requirements are catered for and parents can notify the House of any dietary needs at any point. All students are expected

to eat at school. The school menus can be found on the school website and are also displayed on a House notice board. This will allow parents to see the diverse amount of food on offer and may help students plan what they are going to eat in advance.

MEDICINE/MEDICATION:

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Only controlled medicines can be administered in House. Prescription medicines can only be given by the medical staff in the medical centre and should be handed in to them or House Staff. Students with asthma or allergies must be in possession of their inhaler or epi pen at all times. Another epi pen will be kept in the staff room for emergencies. Over the counter medicine, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen or Strepsils, will be given to students who are deemed to require it during the school day by the medical centre but should not be brought into school.

MOBILE PHONES:

All students may bring a mobile phone to school, however students in Year 7-11 must hand it in to a member of the House staff upon arrival. Each student has an allocated “pocket” which securely hangs on the office door. This is locked away securely and then the phone is returned upon the student’s departure for their journey home. Students can still contact home via the office if needed. The House cannot be held responsible for any phones or electronic devices that are lost or damaged in school.

MONEY:

Small amounts of money may be brought in to school for the tuck shop or charity cake sales and so on. Bringing large amounts of money to school is discouraged and the House cannot be held responsible for any money that is lost.

NAMING:

All property brought in to school must be named. This includes all footwear and personal (non-uniform) clothing and belongings as well as Blues and associated kit.

NOTICEBOARDS:

The House noticeboards are updated regularly. Students should check the noticeboards daily to keep current with school events.

PARADES:

There are several parades a year and attendance is compulsory. Absence can only be authorised via Mr Moss. Students must also attend weekly practices on a Friday afternoon, again authorisation to miss this must be sought from Mr Moss.



PEER MENTORS/ANTI-BULLYING AMBASSADORS:

The House operates a peer mentor system. Trained peer mentors in Year 9 & Year 10 will be on hand to assist or offer advice to any student during difficult times. This gives students someone other than staff to speak to and seek advice from.

PERIOD 7:

Period 7 activities are compulsory. All students in main school will select their preferred P7 choices before the start of each term.

PREFECTS:

The House appoints a number of prefects each year to fill positions of responsibility. All students are strongly encouraged to develop their leadership and put themselves forward for Prefect roles during their senior years.

PREP:

Prep is conducted in year groups each evening between 18:00 - 19:30 for students in Years 8-13 and 18:00 - 18:45 for Year 7s. Students may leave at 18:45 (half-prep) if they wish to do so with their parents' permission. Prep is to be conducted in silence. Students are expected to work independently with no exceptions. The supervising staff member may be able to offer academic assistance in some circumstances. Students may use their tablets during prep time and may listen to music using headphones unless staff tell them otherwise. They may also seek advice from peers during the break in prep.

PROBLEMS OR WORRIES:

There are a variety of staff and students available to seek advice or guidance from throughout the school. First and foremost, students should speak to a member of their House staff if they are concerned or worried about a problem they are facing, or if they have worries or concerns about a friend or peer. There are also many helpline numbers displayed around the House and school site should a student wish to speak anonymously. The medical centre and Chapel are also places of refuge should a student need or wish to speak to someone in difficult times.

REPAIRS:

Faults to House fixtures and fittings must be reported to a member of the House staff. All students must treat the House with respect. Any willful damage or abuse will result in a sanction and the student may be expected to pay for repairs or replacements.

REWARDS:

Rewards may be issued in-House by members of the House team and include, Commendations, Honours Programme Points for participation at Inter-House or treats for exceptional progress or commitment. Wider school rewards may be awarded by members of the wider school leadership team, including postcards home, letters of congratulations from the Head Teacher, and honours awards, colours to be worn on school blazers or special school ties.

ROUTINE:

The House opens at 7:45am Monday to Friday. All students should be in by 8:10am to ensure that they have time to prepare their books for the first two lessons. The bell rings at 8:15am and students will leave for Chapel/Assembly or Form (which are on a rota). Students return to the House at break, lunch and to get changed for Period 7 activities which run from 16:00 - 17:00 this is followed by dinner. The House is locked at 19:40. On a Friday most students leave after marching practice around 16:50 but there is an opportunity for them to stay until 19:00 and complete Prep in the Library from 18:00 - 19:00 though the House is locked at 18:00.

SANCTIONS:

Sanctions can be issued by members of the House staff, teachers or senior leadership. Sanctions can range from bad comments, attending detentions, and for more serious issues, may result in internal or external exclusion.

SNACKS:

After lessons have finished students are provided with a snack in-House. This varies from day to day between fruit, crisps and biscuit based snacks. Students are entitled to one each before Period 7 activities.

STAFF:

The House has a supportive and experienced team, led by Mrs Jones. She is assisted by a Deputy Head of House as well as a number of House tutors who are present in the House during mealtimes and to supervise prep in the evening.

STUDENT COMMITTEES:

There are a number of committees that students from any year group can join. Committee members are responsible for collecting the views and concerns of their fellow Victoria girls and feeding them back during House Committee meetings and the wider School Council/Borders Council meetings. Students joining committees early on in their Gordon's career set themselves up well for positions of responsibility in the future.

STUDENT HEAD OF HOUSE:

This position is held by a Sixth Form student who has displayed leadership, loyalty and team work. She will be on hand to support and offer guidance to younger students.

STUDENT HOUSE SERGEANT AND CAPTAIN AND DRILL SERGEANT:

These positions work together and are held by a senior girl in the House, who take centre stage during all parades and ceremonial commitments. They will be selected based on their marching ability as well as leadership abilities. They lead the House during Friday marching practice as well as Parades, they are also responsible for teaching new students how to march.

UNIFORM, HAIR AND JEWELLERY:

High standards of dress are expected in the House and around school at all times. Correct uniform is to be worn, with shirts tucked in, ties and skirts must be the appropriate length. Sixth Formers wear business attire for all lessons, or Gordon's branded sports clothing during extra-curricular activities. All main school students will be issued with a ceremonial 'Blues' uniform. Students are expected to look after this uniform and are responsible for cleaning and any minor repairs. A Blues swap shop takes place periodically before all major parades for the students to exchange their Blues as they grow. For Years 7-11, hair must be neatly tied back at the back of the head and only one set of earrings in the lower lobe is permitted. Apart from a plain chain necklace that is to be worn under the school shirt and removed for PE, no other jewellery is permitted.

VALUABLES:

Valuables should not be brought in to school. When it is necessary to do so, they must be labelled and can be safely secured in the House office or in the student's locker or cage as long as these have padlocks. The school or House will not take responsibility for lost or broken items.

WATER BOTTLES:

House water bottles are available to purchase for £3 each, although all new students will receive one when they start. All profits go towards the school charity. Students are permitted to take these to lessons as well as use them around school during the day. There is a water fountain on the Ground floor of the House as well as a kitchen on the top floor where bottles can be filled up.



STUDENT QUOTES:

“Victoria House is a very friendly environment. We have a lot of fun and look out for one another.”

“The staff are friendly and always nice to just have a chat with or go to with problems. They always want what is best for us.”

“My Head of House supports the whole house really well and always helps when there are problems.”

“There’s no need to be worried about anything because everyone will be looking out for you in Victoria House”

PARENTAL QUOTES:

“My daughter has had some challenging times this year and the support, encouragement and availability of the house staff has helped her through. I can’t praise them enough.”

“I have complete peace of mind knowing my child is safe, encouraged, nurtured and supported within the House. Very impressed and grateful.”

“We have two daughters in Victoria House. They are both very different and we feel that the house gives them each the support and care they need. Very, very happy and grateful”

“When I have needed to make contact with the house, I have always received a very prompt response. I also really enjoy the weekly newsletter and the Instagram posts which enable parents to celebrate the achievements of the whole house and see what goes on day to day.”

STAFF CONTACT DETAILS:

Head of House: majones@gordons.school

House email: victoria@gordons.school

House phone number: [07825 459023](tel:07825459023) or [01276 859715](tel:01276859715)







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