

# WELCOME TO BUCKINGHAM HOUSE

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*STUDENT  
HANDBOOK  
2021*







## WELCOME TO BUCKINGHAM HOUSE:

Buckingham House is one of five boys' Houses at Gordon's School. Three of the Houses, Buckingham, Gravesend and Khartoum, are for day boarding students only, whilst Balmoral and Sandringham are home to a mixture of day and residential boys. There are also five girls' Houses at Gordon's, Augusta, China, Kensington, Victoria and Windsor.

Buckingham has around 120 students, ranging from ages 11-18, in years 7-13. The boys are supervised by a team of staff led by Head of House, Mr Sinclair, two House Assistants, Miss Jackson and Mrs Green, and a number of House tutors. The House enjoys a great supportive relationship with the parents and guardians of our current boys, with parents able to contact the House staff during the working day to discuss any worries or concerns, which enables the team to offer the best support it can during the development of the students.

The House sets high standards of behaviour and as such there is an atmosphere of friendliness and respect in Buckingham. Students in years 7-10 enjoy playing pool or table tennis together in the junior common room on the ground floor, whilst the older boys enjoy socialising in the senior common room on the first floor. There is also a strong sense of identity and the Buckingham boys are fiercely competitive in the many Inter-House competitions, which cover a range of activities including sports, the arts and academic pursuits. All students are encouraged to represent their House in at least one competition each year, with older students often leading the teams.

The House runs a tuck shop which normally opens three times per week and all profits are donated to the House's chosen charity of the year. Students are also encouraged to participate in other charitable endeavours, not just within Buckingham, but also within the wider school, which helps to foster a sense of benevolence and community.

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 firm 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 boys in September. During those early and often daunting days as new pupils make the transition to a bigger school, the House team will be on hand to help, guide and support them in any way that they can.



## THIS HANDBOOK:

This handbook has been written to aid your transition from primary school, to secondary school, and gives an insight in to life at Gordon's and some of its rules and regulations, which will help new students to settle in as quickly as possible.

This handbook is not exhaustive and any questions parents may have before the start of term in September can be directed at any of the House staff, whose details will feature at the back of this pamphlet.

## AEROSOLS:

Aerosols are strictly banned. Aerosols set off the school's fire alarms and any student caught using aerosols will have it confiscated and may face a sanction.

## ARRIVING AND DEPARTING AT GORDON'S:

Buckingham House opens at **07:45hrs**. All students must sign in and out using the school's Biometrics system upon arrival and departure. There are several Biometrics terminals situated around the school, including one in Buckingham's reception area. Students are to promptly attend registration period at **08:20hrs**. Students arriving late are to report directly to the School Office.

## BIKES, SCOOTERS AND SKATEBOARDS:

Parents must sign a permission slip for students to bring bikes, scooters and skateboards into school. They are used at students' own risk and students must play only in specified safe areas within the school site. Students must have appropriate safety wear.

## BOOTS:

Football and rugby boots must be stored in students' allocated lockers and must be named. Students must not walk across the bridge to the sports pitches wearing studded boots.

## BREAK:

Students have a morning break after Period 2.





## **BUDDIES:**

All new Year 7s will be allocated a Year 8 Buckingham 'buddy'. Students' buddies 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:**

Buckingham House bulletin with lots of relevant information and is sent to parents weekly and on firefly.

## **BULLYING:**

The school has a very active and robust anti-bullying policy. All incidents of bullying should be reported to a member of the House staff, a teacher or a peer mentor.

## **CHARITY:**

The House's chosen charity changes each year. We will have a House discussion and vote on the charity for that year. All profits from the sale of tuck help support this charity and other worthy causes.

## 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 Buckingham boys are expected to contribute to at least one competition each year. Older boys often lead the House teams. The House colour is navy blue.

## FACILITIES:

There are two commons rooms in Buckingham House. Years 7-10 have access to pool and table tennis, computer games and TV on the ground floor common room, whilst Years 11-13 have TV and computer games, pool and table tennis in the senior common room on the first floor.



## FIRE DRILL & LOCK DOWN DRILL:

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.

## GOING OFF-SITE:

All 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, and, using the Biometrics system.





## HOUSE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

These are held termly and are chaired by the student Head of House. These feed into the school's Boarders' Council and are a useful forum for sharing wider House views on important topics.

## HOUSE MEETINGS:

Year group meetings are held weekly at 0820, year groups on different days

## ILLNESS:

Students who feel ill during the day must report to either the school office (P1-P2) or the House office (P3-P6), where House staff will assess the student's condition and may communicate home with parents when a child feels ill and needs to go home. The medical centre is open at **08:20hrs** for poorly **residential students only**. Day students must report to their own doctor.

## INSTAGRAM:

Buckingham House has an instagram account (**[buckingham.house.gordons](https://www.instagram.com/buckingham.house.gordons)**) which is periodically updated with photos and snippets of recent House events.



## INTER-HOUSE:

There is a wide-ranging programme of Inter-House competitions held throughout the year, from sports to debating to cooking to maths.

## INTRA-HOUSE:

In the winter months, when pupils are not outside so much, the House runs Intra-House events in pool, table-tennis, fifa and switch games (Smash bro and Mario kart.)

## LOCKERS & CAGES:

Every student will be allocated 2 cages. A padlock for each is required which must have a spare key which is kept in the student's file in the House office. There is a supply of padlocks available for purchase in the House for £2.

## LOST PROPERTY:

All items brought in to school **must be labelled**. Uniform, including ceremonial Blues, must be clearly named and placed into students' cages immediately upon arrival at school. Buckingham House cannot be responsible for any lost property in the House.

## MANNERS & 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 good comments in their diaries. Those who display poor manners or behaviour may receive bad comments or sanctions.

## MEALS:

The school has an outstanding catering department and a varied rolling lunch and supper menu is served daily. Students 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.



## MEDICINE:

Only controlled medicines can be administered in House. Any prescription medicines or over the counter drugs can only be given by the medical staff in the med-centre. 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 and for peace of mind the House can keep an additional epi pen too.

## MOBILE PHONES:

All students may bring a mobile phone to school, but students in Year 7-11 must hand it in to a member of the House staff upon arrival. These will be locked away securely and returned upon the student's departure for their journey home.

## MONEY:

Small amounts of money may be brought in to school for the tuck shop. Bringing large amounts of money in 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.

## NOTICEBOARDS:

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

## PERIOD 7:

Period 7 activities are compulsory. All students in main school will select their preferred P7 choices before the start of each term. Permission to miss or change P7 activities must be made to the Assistant Head (Co-Curricular).

## PICK-UP:

Buckingham boys can be collected by vehicle at the Library end of the school site at the end of the day. Collection from the Dining Hall end is reserved for Augusta, Balmoral, China and Kensington Houses only.

## 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 Y8-Y11 **18:00 to 19:30hrs**, apart from Y7 which is **18:00 to 18:45hrs** Monday to Thursday. On Friday there is an optional prep/quiet time in the library **18:00 to 19:00hrs** for all years) . Students may leave at **18.45hrs** (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 but all students have access to a laptop to help or research should they need to do so.

## 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.

## PUNISHMENTS & SANCTIONS:

Punishments can only be issued by members of the House staff, teachers or senior leadership. Punishments and sanctions can be attending detentions or House gating during break times, and for more serious issues, may result in internal or external exclusion.

## 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 wilful damage or abuse will result in a sanction.



## REWARDS:

Rewards may be issued in-House by members of the House team and include postcards home for success at Inter-House or treats for diary of the week. 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.

## SOCIAL EVENTS:

Buckingham House enjoys several social events throughout the year including trips to Gravity Force, go-karting and Thorpe Lake.

## STAFF:

The House has a supportive and experienced team, led by Mr J Sinclair. He is assisted by House Assistants Miss S Jackson on Mondays and Tuesdays, and Mrs L Green on Wednesday to Friday. There are also a number of associated House tutors who are present in the House during break and lunchtimes and to supervise prep in the evening.



## STAMPS:

These are awarded for academic, House or wider school achievements. Stamps contribute towards the Honours' Program.

## UNIFORM:

High standards of dress are expected in the House at all times. Correct uniform is to be worn, with shirts tucked in at all times and ties reaching the waistband of the trousers. Sixth Formers are to 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 boys to exchange their Blues as they grow.

## 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.

## VIDEO GAMES:

There are several games consoles with a wide range of games available in the House and are used at the discretion of the House staff.

## STUDENT HEAD OF HOUSE:

This position is held by a Sixth Form student who has displayed leadership, loyalty and team work. He will be on hand to support and offer guidance to younger students. He will also be expected to attend House social functions.

## STUDENT HOUSE CAPTAIN:

This position is held by a senior boy in the House, who takes centre stage during all parades and ceremonial commitments. He will be selected on his marching ability and will lead the House during Friday marching practice.



## STUDENTS QUOTES:

**"The teachers are very friendly and problems are solved very quickly."**

**"Buckingham is a kind house with friendly students."**

**"The tuck shop is the best."**

**"There are lots of activities in the House including pool, table tennis and PS4."**

**"There is a good vibe in the House and always someone to talk to."**

**"I was the only new Year 12 student in Buckingham this year the boys welcomed me in and settling in wasn't a problem. I couldn't ask for a better house master than Mr Sinclair."**

## PARENT QUOTES:

**"We cannot fault the experience Chris has had both in the warm welcome into Buckingham House and the wonderful way that Mr Sinclair and his team have quickly got to know Chris and helped him settle in at Gordon's. From day one Chris' interests were on the radar and he was encouraged to participate fully in various fun Inter-House events ; thereby becoming part of the team , getting to know the other boys quickly and feeling at home in a new environment. The response to any emails from us has been immediate and comprehensive, always with the offer to pop in and chat. We have felt completely at ease about both the education and wellbeing and this is in no small part due to the way in which Mr Sinclair and his team have created a 'home from home' feel in a school that has brought out the best in our son."**

## STAFF CONTACT DETAILS:

Head of House: [jsinclair@gordons.school](mailto:jsinclair@gordons.school)

House Assistant (Monday & Tuesday): [sjackson@gordons.school](mailto:sjackson@gordons.school)

House Assistant (Wednesday-Friday): [lgreen@gordons.school](mailto:lgreen@gordons.school)

House email: [buckingham@gordons.school](mailto:buckingham@gordons.school)



Buckingham House  
Gordon's School  
West End  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU24 9PX

01276 859722  
[buckingham@gordons.school](mailto:buckingham@gordons.school)

