



HOUSE HANDBOOK

2025-26



WELCOME

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WELCOME FROM THE HOUSEMASTER

It is an honour for me to be Housemaster of Dale, especially as an Old Barnardian and former Dale boy myself. Having walked these same corridors, I understand deeply how integral your Housemaster is to your journey at Barney.

In Dale House, our philosophy is simple yet powerful: everyone is a gentleman in every aspect of life. Central to that is the belief that “manners maketh the man”, a timeless idea that speaks to the value of character, of kindness over ego. The way we treat others, speak to each other, and carry ourselves matters.

As Housemaster, my priorities are clear. Above all, I want every boy to feel cared for, to feel safe to be themselves, and to know that Dale House is a home where they belong. Dale House is a strong community rooted in brotherhood, where we lift each other up, not drag each other down. We support one another through successes and setbacks. I am proud to be a key pillar of support in Dale House life, and alongside our incredible tutors and prefects.

In Dale, we talk a lot about “winning your own race”. Success looks different for everyone, and our goal is to help each boy find their version of excellence, whether that’s in academics, the arts, sport, leadership, or service. I greatly value effort as much as outcome, and growth more than perfection. The real victory is in becoming the best version of yourself.

My non-negotiables are simple: be a good human. Care for others. Support your peers. Do not be the person who pulls others down. Let kindness be your compass always. As the great Maya Angelou once said, “People will forget what you said, people will never forget how you made them feel.”

We’re looking forward to getting to know you and supporting you through every challenge and triumph in the years ahead.

Best wishes,

Joe Pickering



OUR HISTORY

Dale House was created as a result of increasing numbers of day pupils in Teesdale House, which was divided to create Dale and Tees House. Dale House lies towards the rear of the main school building. Pupils are proud to be a member of Dale House. As they progress through the school they certainly see it as their House where strong and long lasting friendships are forged.

HOUSE TUTORS

Tutors oversee their tutees day academic and pastoral life and are the first port of call for any queries. Each morning, tutors will meet their tutees for registrations, and throughout the week, as part of the HeadSpace programme, there is a group Tutor Time, as well as opportunities for individual meetings.

Tutors have regular contact with home through phone calls, emails and parents' evenings. At strategic points in the year, your child engages in regular target setting sessions and reviews with their tutor. Tutors work very closely with the HSM in order to raise and resolve any issues relating to pupils' pastoral or academic performance. Any repetitive or significant pastoral, behavioural or academic concerns will be dealt with by the HSM.

If a pupil is going to be absent from school due to illness, please inform the tutor and HSM by 8.40am.



PUPIL POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Pupils have ample opportunity to take on responsibility throughout their time in the House. Each year, a member of the Upper Sixth is chosen to be the Head of House.

A Deputy (sometimes Deputies) and House Prefects will be chosen to support them. These positions generally go to pupils who are wholehearted, trustworthy, approachable, and who set a good example. These senior pupils are expected to take on responsibility for the organisation of House practices and are expected to be role models for younger pupils.

As experienced members of the House, those in positions of responsibility have a varied role; this could range from being on duty in the House, disseminating information to other pupils or being the first point of contact for a pupil who has an opinion they wish to channel or a problem they feel they would prefer to air with another pupil.

In addition to these senior roles, pupils from across all year groups have the opportunity to volunteer for different committees. These include Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, Peer Supporters (Sixth Form), Diversity Focus Group and Food Committee.

Each September hustings are held for pupils who wish to represent their year group on the School Council. A whole School election then takes place and the School Council members for that year are announced in the Headmaster's Assembly.

HOUSEKEEPING

House Subs

Each pupil is charged £15 once a year to help fund the House. This is put on the School bill. The money is used to help make the common room a more homely environment, and to fund the much loved tutor trips. It is also used for awards and to help provide additional material for House activities.

All common rooms contain lockers to store books and other items. They can be secured by a padlock. We encourage boys not to bring expensive/valuable items into School.



DAY-TO-DAY

Registration

Registration takes place each morning by House tutors and is completed between 8.30-8.45am and then again by teachers at the end of lunchtime. This is recorded electronically in a central School database, an absentees list is produced after each registration session closes, which is after 8:50am and 1:50pm each day. If a pupil is absent from School, their parents/guardian must ring the House Office or send an email before 8.40am. If a pupil arrives late to School, they should register themselves at the General Office.

Wednesday House Meetings

House meetings are held each Wednesday at 8.55am. The HSM leads the meeting. During the meeting HSMs celebrate successes with their Houses and pupils are given any pertinent notices, as well as a message in line with our character education virtues.

HOUSE COMPETITIONS

House competitions cover a vast array of interests, both sporting and non-sporting in order to encourage as many pupils as possible to take part. While the majority of House competitions take place internally on Wednesday afternoons throughout the School year, please look out for invitations to certain House events which parents may attend, such as the Barney Run and Sports Day.





REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

Pupils are awarded merits for good work and strong assessments and these are celebrated in House meetings. A number of biannual and yearly trophies are also awarded in the House, chosen by the HSM and Tutors. House trophies have been donated by departing and former staff and students.

If academic progress is below a satisfactory standard the Tutor or HSM may instigate an academic report for a short period. This requires teachers to comment upon work and/or conduct on a lesson-by-lesson basis and is to be taken to the Housemaster for countersignature each day. The Tutor reviews the report each day and will contact home if they see the need for more dialogue. For infringements of House expectations, the HSM may impose an appropriate and proportionate sanction that helps the pupil to reflect on how they would change their behaviour in the future. More serious infringements of school rules would be referred to the Deputy Head (Pastoral). Parents may also be invited to a meeting to discuss the progress of their child. Simple house-based infringements are dealt with by the Tutor/Housemaster.

CONTACT WITH HOME

Routine home contact will happen via assessments, reports and parents' evenings. The Housemaster or Tutors generally make phone calls to address other issues as they arise. Parents are encouraged to call the Housemaster if they have any issues they wish to address. Parents should expect a call from their child's Tutor if there are any immediate concerns about attendance, lateness and academic progress. Parents can also contact Tutors to request a meeting in person or on the phone.

There is a direct telephone line to the Housemaster's study, which parents and guardians are encouraged to use to discuss any aspect of their child's education and welfare. The Housemaster can also be contacted by email. Parents and guardians are welcome to arrange meetings with the Housemaster and/or their son's Tutor at any point throughout the term.

The school sends out a regular email with any pertinent letters that staff wish parents to read.







BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL