



# HOUSE HANDBOOK

2025-26



WELCOME

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## WELCOME FROM THE HOUSEMASTER

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to Durham House. Now Housemaster, I previously worked as a tutor in Durham House, and as Assistant Housemaster between 2018 and 2021. I teach Maths and Further Maths, as well as coaching Rugby and Athletics, so I feel privileged to see the students in an academic, sporting and pastoral setting. Having spent many of my younger years working in a team, during my days as a burgeoning athlete, I can fully understand the importance of a nurturing environment, and this is what we offer in Durham House.

As a former Boarding House, Durham is especially well-placed to continue offering that caring environment for boys to develop and grow. It is a place that rewards tenacity and pushing yourself out of your comfort zone. A place where character matters and is developed, where they can attempt new skills safely. Whether it's in the drama studio, on the sports field or in the music school, members of Team Durham will try their best for themselves and each other.

I am ably assisted by the outstanding tutor team, who are experienced, driven, and supportive. If there is anything you need, please do not hesitate to contact me on [dr@barneyschool.org.uk](mailto:dr@barneyschool.org.uk) or 01833 696005.

I look forward to seeing how all members of Durham House develop and guiding them on their journey through Barney.

David Riley



## OUR HISTORY

Durham House is now a boys' day House. However, it was one of the original Boarding Houses established when the School moved into its present buildings in 1886. As a result of reorganisation, it began a new life in September 1995 as one of the three Senior Day Houses.

Durham House is currently home to around 65 boys who share four common rooms. The House colour was originally chocolate, but this was changed in 1887 to gold. Durham House currently uses all three of its colours ; the gold of its flag, as well as the crimson and black of its shield.

## 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.

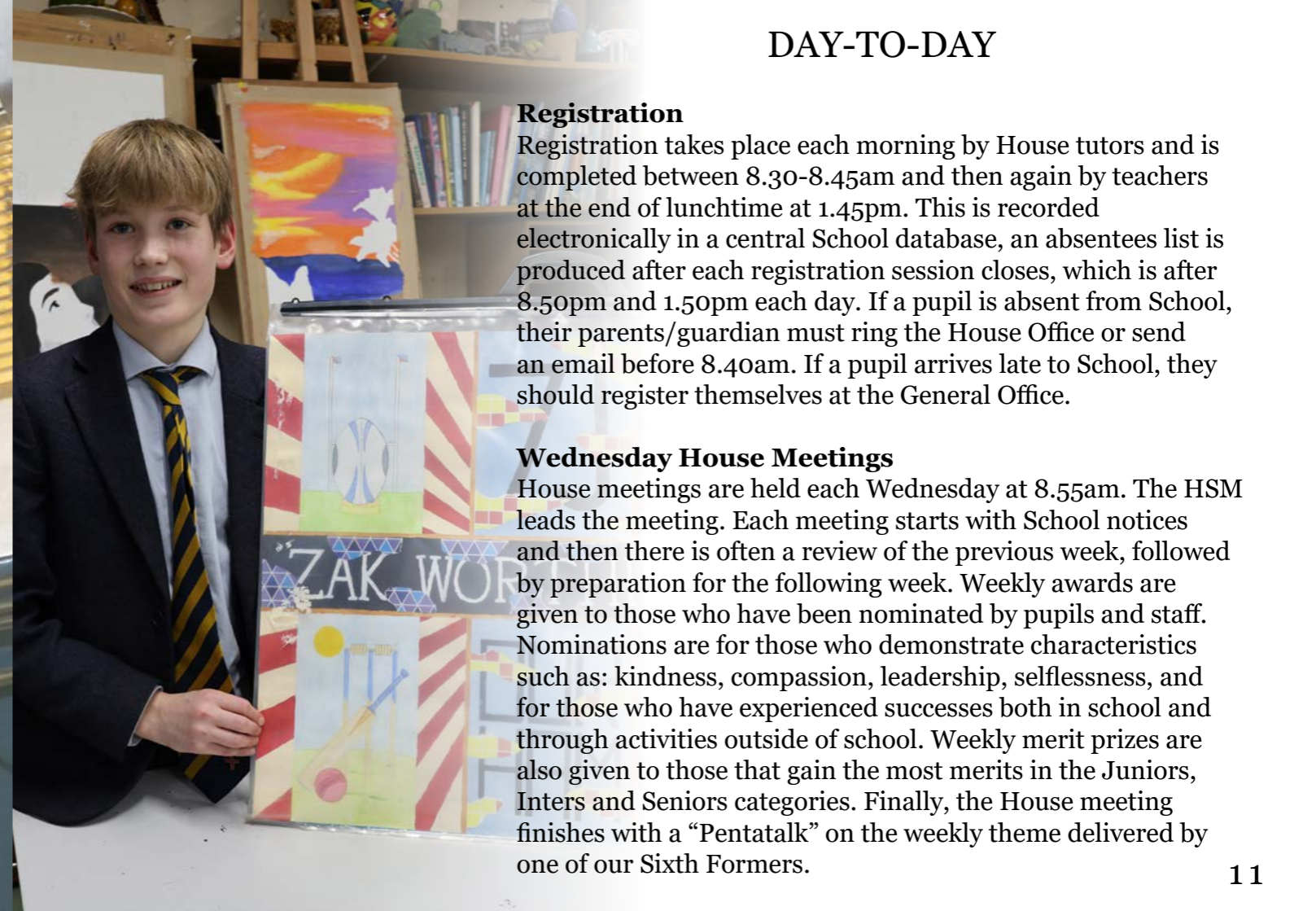
Each September hustings are held for pupils who wish to represent their year group on the School Council. A whole School election then takes place and the School Council members for that year are announced in the Headmaster's Assembly.

## 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 at 1.45pm. This is recorded electronically in a central School database, an absentees list is produced after each registration session closes, which is after 8.50pm 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. Each meeting starts with School notices and then there is often a review of the previous week, followed by preparation for the following week. Weekly awards are given to those who have been nominated by pupils and staff. Nominations are for those who demonstrate characteristics such as: kindness, compassion, leadership, selflessness, and for those who have experienced successes both in school and through activities outside of school. Weekly merit prizes are also given to those that gain the most merits in the Juniors, Inters and Seniors categories. Finally, the House meeting finishes with a "Pentatalk" on the weekly theme delivered by one of our Sixth Formers.

## 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