



## PROMOTING GOOD BEHAVIOUR POLICY (INCLUDING REWARDS AND SANCTIONS)

**Policy Custodian:** *Deputy Head (Pastoral)*

**Last Reviewed:** *March 2026*

*This policy should be read in conjunction with the School Rules and Regulations.*

Members of the School are expected to behave at all times with common sense, self-respect and consideration for others, and in a way that will reflect well on themselves, their families and their School. All pupils have a responsibility to help to create a happy atmosphere and a well-ordered way of life at School for all to enjoy. To this end pupils are expected to abide by the Rules and Regulations of the School which are intended to create an unoppressive framework within which all pupils can feel that they are treated fairly, reasonably and consistently; within which they can feel happy and secure in the knowledge of what is and is not permitted; and within which they will feel encouraged to develop a confident sense of what is right and what is wrong. These Rules and Regulations form an essential part of a boy's education, helping him to find a proper, civilised balance between the need to conform to rules that make communal living possible, and the need to form individual opinions.

The school acknowledges its duties under the Equality Act (2010) and will make all reasonable adjustments when applying this policy to pupils with special educational needs/disabilities. These pupils will be known to staff (via the SEN Register) and advice on how to support them most effectively can be obtained from the Head of Learning Support, Tutors and from Heads of School.

The School rejects the use, or threat of use, of corporal punishment.

All pupils and especially those with serious behavioural issues will be supported through any difficulty by their Tutors, Heads of House, Assistant Heads of Section and Heads of Section; parents' help will be enlisted and they will be kept informed of what is being done at school to assist their sons – the aim, as ever, in pastoral matters is to achieve a situation where parents and staff work together to support pupils. Further support is available to pupils through the Chaplain, Learning Support, School Counsellor, School Nurses, and, where appropriate, outside agencies.

The Serious Disciplinary Incidents Policy is closely linked with this policy and should be read in conjunction with it.

This policy has been developed with the help of the advice contained in the non-statutory DfE publication *Behaviour in Schools – Advice for headteachers and school staff* (February 2024).

All members of the Senior Common Room are expected to be actively involved in ensuring good behaviour of the pupils in their care. This involves a number of important tasks:

1. Staff need to know what the School Rules and Regulations say, and to uphold them in a consistent manner.
2. Staff should be particularly vigilant, and ask themselves the appropriate questions, both as Form Teachers and as Tutors, when a boy's behaviour begins to change markedly; downward

'slides' in his work, absences and frequent lateness, poor homework, dodging games, a less desirable set of friends, loss of enthusiasm and commitment may all indicate a more general and serious problem.

3. Failure to attend lessons, Music lessons, Games, Assembly, Friday activities etc., needs to be checked thoroughly by members of staff. Any extra time and effort spent doing this should be mainly short term, if it produces in the longer term an improvement. Staff should be particularly insistent that boys are punctual at the beginning of lessons after the Quarter and Hour.
4. Effective supervision of pupils is vital in ensuring good behaviour. Teachers are responsible for the supervision of pupils in their classes and during games and extracurricular activities where they are in charge. At other times the Duty Staff, supported by all other members of the Senior Common Room, are responsible for pupil supervision (see the Staff Duty Policy). Duty is relatively infrequent, so must be done thoroughly and pro-actively.
5. Tutors and Form Teachers have a set of responsibilities which needs to be observed consistently: demanding punctuality, appropriate standards of attire and presentation, conduct, and interaction with the physical environment.
6. Staff should consistently ensure that regulations about hair, beards, school clothing, games clothing and general behaviour are observed.
7. Any member of staff sponsoring an activity or responsible for one organised by boys which involves some sort of money transaction (charitable collection, running a bank account) should ensure that as far as is possible regular checks are instituted and that temptation is not put in the boys' way.
8. Especially helpful and thoughtful behaviour should be praised; praise can be usefully reinforced by awarding a Gold Note.

Transition between a primary or prep school and Merchant Taylors' is a time when boys' behaviour occasionally lapses, in part because of the less regulated atmosphere in a senior school which some take time to adjust to. Tutors of new boys, Heads of House and Head of Lower School/Lower Master work together to help new arrivals understand the standard of behaviour expected. Transitions between the Lower and Middle School, and between the Middle and Upper School (the Sixth Form) are managed by close cooperation between the Heads of Section; CPOMS records support this process. The continuity and personalisation of pastoral care is enhanced through our Tutor system. As far as possible, boys remain with the same Tutor throughout their time at the school.

## SCHOOL REWARDS

The aims of the rewards system are as follows:

- to motivate each pupil to realise his full potential
- to develop each pupil's self-esteem
- to recognise and reward formally achievement and endeavour across the whole of School life
- to promote the values and ethos of the School

The system is designed to help staff to respond to all evidence of commitment, good work and positive behaviour (whether within the classroom or without) with praise and reward and, further, to share this with others.

In addition to the formal processes enumerated below, there are a variety of ways in which boys' achievements are recognised publicly. The Head Master's Assembly on Monday mornings offers a frequent opportunity to recognise achievement and communicate praise. Individual and group/team achievements, whether in or out of School (sporting successes including the award of Colours, Physics Olympiad Medals, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Sail Training Awards, success in Music exams etc.), are celebrated in this way. Celebration of pupils' achievements is a central feature of the weekly newsletter 'Scissorium' and of the school website.

Prizegiving is the occasion on which academic excellence is most publicly acknowledged. Cups and trophies are awarded at the final School Assembly of each term for sporting and other extracurricular achievements.

Promotion to the JCR, to the captaincy of a school team, to the leadership of the school orchestra etc. all provide all provide their own particular type of reward for a boy's endeavour.

Heads of House also record and celebrate relevant endeavour or achievement through House prizes, the awarding of House achievement ties and specific assemblies.

All rewards are aggregated and contribute towards the House Competition (see separate document).

Details on how, when and why the School communicates information about pupils' rewards is contained within the School Communication Policy, but is included *brevissime* below.

### **Gold Note**

Gold Notes are issued for a particularly notable achievement or contribution in any aspect of school life which demonstrates a school value, whether academic achievement in the classroom, contribution in extra-curricular activities or sport, positive behaviour around the school and so on. They can be issued to all year-groups. Gold Notes are issued by the teacher in ISAMS and details are emailed to the pupil and their parents. Gold Notes go towards the overall House Competition.

### **Commendation**

Commendations are awarded for exceptional pieces of work or contributions to the school community. They can be issued to all year-groups.

Work that is to be commended is passed to the Head Master's Secretary, who then contacts the pupil to collect it, along with a Certificate of Commendation, from the Head Master. The Commendation is recorded in ISAMS and emailed to the pupil and their parents.

## **Distinction**

At various points in the year the process for recognising a sustained level of performance or effort is formalised through the award of Distinctions. These are the gift of Heads of House and Heads of Section, who award a handful of Distinctions each half-term. The awarding of Distinctions is recorded in ISAMS and published in Scissorum.

## **Trophies & Prizes**

At various points of the year, most notably St. Barnabas Day, the school awards prizes and trophies to pupils to recognise their achievements in a particular area of the school. The Director of Sport oversees the awarding of sporting trophies, whilst the Deputy Head (Academic) organises the awarding of academic prizes.

## **Awards**

The school awards various scholarships to incoming and existing pupils. These include Academic Scholarships, Sports Scholarships, Music Scholarships, Art Scholarships and Design & Technology Scholarships. The organisation of these awards is overseen by the Head of Scholarship, Director of Music and Director of Sport, in concert with the Registrar and the Deputy Head (Academic).

# **SCHOOL SANCTIONS**

## **General Principles: Challenge & Correct**

All staff are asked and encouraged to challenge poor behaviour or standards whenever encountered. In most cases it is hoped that simply pointing out any shortcomings will be enough to prompt correction by the pupil (e.g. tucking a shirt in, boorish behaviour etc.) but where necessary any teacher may reprimand a pupil and insist on a higher standard of behaviour. The school has an atmosphere of civility and in almost all cases appealing to a pupil's better nature in a positive way produces the best results. But this should never be at the expense of an unwillingness to confront any pupil whose behaviour and standards are below the high expectations we have of them.

Such corrective challenges or reprimands are not automatically recorded, but this may be done on CPOMS, if felt necessary.

## **Demerits**

Teachers award Demerits for infringements of the School Rules which, whilst individually might be considered relatively minor, would become a greater concern if such behaviour is allowed to go unchecked. In cases where a Demerit has been issued, the teacher may also apply some form of restorative justice and/or imposing their own sanction provided it is proportionate and fair. This may take the form of a formal apology, tidying up a classroom, remaining behind in class during a break, coming back at lunchtime to do the missing prep or anything else that offers redress for the original offence. This individualised approach can help the pupil recognise the consequences of their actions more readily and immediately than a centralised sanction, as well as reinforcing the authority of the teacher concerned. Heads of House, Heads of Section and Heads of Department are useful sources of advice in suggesting suitable restorative sanctions.

The issuing of Demerits provides the School with a constant stream of information about a pupil and allows the tutor, Assistant Head of Section and other staff to monitor patterns of work and behaviour.

Where possible the pupil should be informed that a Demerit has been issued, although any pupil should expect one if they have had to be reprimanded.

The categories of Demerit are as follows:

- Demerit – Punctuality – when a boy is late for any lesson or commitment without valid reason
- Demerit – Organisation – when a boy fails to bring the correct books/kit to lesson/activity
- Demerit – Uniform – when a boy fails to adhere to the School dress code
- Demerit – Missed Deadline – when a boy fails to complete or produce homework
- Demerit – Failure to Honour Commitment – when a boy fails to honour a School commitment (potentially could be straight into TDT)
- Demerit – Mobile Phone – when a boy’s mobile phone is confiscated for being in breach of the Mobile Phone Use Agreement. This will be automatically issued by Reception on receipt of mobile phone confiscated by a member of staff, but may be issued by a member of staff when confiscation itself is not possible/appropriate (for example, misuse of someone else’s phone, misuse at the end of the day etc.)
- Demerit – Other – for an infringement that is not covered by the categories above, and which therefore requires some clarification/elaboration. These Demerits are also useful ways of placing concerns on a pupil’s record (although do not automatically appear on CPOMS).

Demerits are recorded on the pupil’s profile in ISAMS. The Tutor monitors this report and discuss any patterns of concern with their tutees on a regular basis (typically reviewing each tutor period). Demerits are not sent home when issued, and tutors will use their judgement at what point it is appropriate to communicate with parents. A summary of the total demerits awarded in each category is included as part of the grades report sent home to parents each half-term. If the tutor feels that a pattern of poor behaviour or concern is sustained or worsening, and escalation/intervention by Assistant Head of Section has not yet been implemented (or has proved ineffective), they should push for further intervention through discussion with the Assistant Head of Section. The Head of House is a good person to advise the Tutor on this.

A summary of all Demerits issued each week for each year-group is sent to the relevant Assistant Head of Section on Friday afternoon. The AHoS analyses them and makes decisions about whether further action is appropriate. This decision is recorded in ISAMS and the pupil and tutor informed in time for Tuesday morning tutor period.

### **Academic Detentions**

In most cases, challenging inappropriate conduct and issuing a demerit and informal sanction will be enough to prompt a pupil to correct their behaviour. It is recognised, however, that during lessons, repeated low-level misbehaviour impacts on the pupil’s learning, as does repeatedly arriving late to a lesson or failure to hand in homework. Under these conditions it is appropriate for a teacher to issue an Academic Detention, as follows:

- **Low-level misbehaviour**  
Low-level misbehaviour, such as talking whilst the teacher is talking, calling out, messing with other people’s belongings or inappropriate use of a device should first be given a verbal warning. If there is a repeat of any further misbehaviour, the teacher should now issue a demerit (and may give an informal sanction or restorative task, as described above). A third repeat should result in an Academic Detention.
- **Punctuality**

A pupil who is late to a lesson without a valid reason should first be challenged and demerited, but repeated late arrival to a lesson should result in an Academic Detention. There are no strict guidelines as to how many times a pupil should be late before an Academic Detention is issued – colleagues should use professional judgement – but, as a rough guide, a pupil arriving more than five minutes late to three lessons within a half term, if warning and demerits had been given, should expect to receive an Academic Detention.

- **Failure to complete or produce homework**

A pupil who fails to complete or produce homework without a valid reason should first be challenged and demerited and given the opportunity to hand in the homework the next day (or next lesson). Failure to then hand in the homework, without a valid reason, should result in an Academic Detention.

Academic Detentions should be recorded on ISAMS. They are organised within Departments or Faculties and take place during the Hour, supervised by a member of the Department. Departments are free to set written tasks or may allow pupils to complete late homework. The use of devices during Academic Detentions is at the discretion of the teacher supervising. Academic Detentions take priority over all other commitments during the Hour. If a pupil is given more than one Academic Detention (from different Departments) on the same day, they should ask to defer one until the following week.

These interventions are not sent home when issued, and teachers will use their judgement as to whether it is appropriate to communicate with parents or record on CPOMS. A summary of interventions awarded is included as part of the grades report sent home each half-term. A summary of all Academic Detentions issued each week for each year-group is sent to the relevant Assistant Head of Section on Friday afternoon. The AHoS analyses them and makes decisions about whether further action is appropriate. The Deputy Head (Academic) also has oversight of the Academic Detentions awarded each week.

It is important that teachers are aware of the needs identified on a pupil's Learning Support Factsheet before awarding an Academic Detention. Sanctions should not be awarded for behaviour which is identified on the Factsheet. If staff are unsure, they should err on the side of caution and speak to the pupil's tutor, Head of House or Learning Support before issuing an Academic Detention.

### **Sectional Sanctions/Lunchtime Detentions**

The most common response to a concerning pattern of Demerits will be a Sectional Sanction. This might typically involve requiring a pupil to stay in during the Hour to do some quiet work (if, for example, a number of Missed Deadline Demerits or Punctuality Demerits had been accrued the previous week), to report regularly to a member of staff to have their appearance checked (for Uniform Demerits), to have to surrender their Mobile Phone at the start of the day (for Mobile Phone Demerits) and so on.

These interventions are not sent home when issued, and tutors/Assistant Head of Section will use their judgement at what point it is appropriate to communicate with parents or record on CPOMS. A summary of interventions awarded is included as part of the grades report sent home each half-term (under the categories Lunchtime Detention and Sectional Sanction).

In addition, the Assistant Head of Section may decide to issue a Thursday Detention in response to multiple demerits on any given week if they believe a more severe sanction is required.

## **Thursday Detention**

Thursday Detentions are reserved for serious breaches of school rules. These could include truancy from games or extra-curricular activity, cheating in a test or plagiarism, verbal abuse, vandalism of property and so on. Any boy may be put into Thursday Detention, including members of the Sixth Form.

The teacher issuing the Thursday Detention will inform the pupil of the reason and the Detention is recorded on ISAMS. The Head of Section reviews all Thursday Detentions issued that week and at midday on Wednesday an automated email is sent to parents informing them that their son is in detention and that they will be serving it the next day. An email is also sent to the pupil. An email is also sent to the Tutor around the same time.

If a parent receives an email informing them that their son is in Thursday Detention they should in the first instance discuss this with their son, who should be aware of the sanction.

A failure to attend Thursday Detention is a very serious offence, and will normally be followed up by the Head of Section (contact home is likely here).

The fourth Thursday Detention in a term will automatically be upgraded to a Saturday Detention and (as with all Saturdays) prompt a communication with parents.

## **Saturday Detention**

Saturday Detention is only be used in the most severe cases of misbehaviour and breaches of the school rules. Typical offences that might lead to a Saturday Detention include cheating in an exam, truancy or absconding from the school site, offensive behaviour towards a member of staff, some forms of bullying, racist or misogynistic comments and so on. All of the above may well meet the threshold for Exclusion, and Saturday Detention is the stop-short of that sanction.

Saturday Detentions are issued by Heads of Section, who will write to parents explaining the incident and the position the school has taken at least 48 hours before it is due to be served. Saturday Detentions are recorded in ISAMS and on CPOMS.

Saturday Detentions can range from between 1 and 3 hours. The start time varies around sports fixtures but Saturday Detention always takes priority over any other school commitment. Pupils attend in school uniform and may be given work to do.

A failure to attend a Saturday Detention will normally result in a meeting between parents and the Head of Section and Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Three Saturday Detentions in an academic year, or the fourth across two years, will automatically prompt a meeting between Head of Section and parents and a warning that progression is at risk unless behaviour improves.

## **Exclusion**

The process and procedures relevant to exclusion are covered in detail in the *Serious Disciplinary Incidents Policy*, which should be referred to closely.