



SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL



# Boarding

PROSPECTUS





# Introduction to Boarding

Set in the heart of the School campus, our three boarding houses form a central part of the Sutton Valence School community. Led by our team of dedicated housemasters, housemistresses, matrons and tutors, our boarding community encourages a diverse, friendly and nurturing environment in which our students can take full advantage of the opportunities and facilities on offer to them at the School.

As a home-from-home, our boarders receive dedicated support from our boarding staff to ensure that they maximise their academic potential whilst in the house. Away from their studies, they are encouraged to make the most of the vibrant community enjoying access to the School's facilities, such as the strength and conditioning suite, cardiovascular suite and swimming pool, as well as various social events and trips.

The School's position in the heart of the Kent countryside allows our boarding students to enjoy the best of both worlds; enjoying all that the Weald of Kent offers as well as having easy access to London, Maidstone and other nearby cities which offer a plethora of activities.





# Why choose boarding?

Our boarding provision offers a multitude of benefits. Not only does it start to encourage the students to become more independent and disciplined, it also allows them to encounter a little more of the 'real world'. Our high expectations of student behaviour, manners and work ethic, combined with a positive and caring approach, allows our students to benefit from all that boarding offers which, in turn allows them to flourish within the School environment.



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# The facilities available

Our boarders enjoy comfortable and well-appointed rooms with a maximum of three students per room. As students progress through their respective house, they enjoy the privilege of individual rooms providing them with additional privacy and independence. Each house benefits from its own common rooms and social spaces for the household to come together once they have completed their prep work.

With supervised access to the Sydney Wooderson Sports Centre, swimming

pool and the School's playing fields, the boarders will often be found letting their hair down enjoying sports and games during their free time in the evenings. With all three daily meals served in the School's Refectory, boarders are fully catered, but have the option to cook for themselves at other times with each house having its own fully fitted kitchen.

With the matrons on-hand to help them, the boarders ensure that the houses are regularly filled with the welcoming aroma of freshly baked treats. At the weekend, for those who remain in the house, regular trips are offered to local attractions, shopping malls, theatres and the cinema.



# International Boarders

We are dedicated to ensuring that our international boarders feel at home whilst they are with us. Starting a new school can be daunting at the best of times, but especially if it is in a country that doesn't speak your first language, or you have never visited before. Equally, we understand this is also hard for parents to send their child overseas to study. As such, we make every effort to ensure that parents are equipped with all of the information needed, making the registration and induction process as simple as possible.

With easy links to the biggest airports in the UK, and various public transport options, it is safe and straightforward to get to Sutton Valence. On arrival, the students will be warmly greeted, toured around their respective house and immediately made to feel at home.







# The Houses

## Boys' House

ST MARGARET'S

St Margaret's House was the first of the two senior boys' boarding houses to be established, welcoming its first residents in 1913. Since then, whilst the house has evolved and the faces within it have changed, the shared ethos of 'respect' has remained and is handed down like a baton from generation to generation. This basic principle permeates all we do in the house, guiding the boys in every aspect of their lives together.



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Benefitting from the diverse mix of nationalities in the house; St Margaret's has built up a reputation for its hospitality and kindness. Being such a close-knit group, the boys develop a genuine pride in their household which ultimately transcends their differences in age and background. For our younger residents, this provides a homely boarding experience with a host of older 'siblings' to support and encourage them. Collectively, they enjoy a healthy competitive rivalry with the other boarding houses, organising various sporting fixtures and events throughout the year that allow our wider boarding community to come together.

The housemaster in St Margaret's is Mr Steven Head, who is also the School's Head of Boarding. Mr Head, who has run the house since 2014, is also a qualified school inspector and uses this experience to ensure the house is run with efficiency whilst still maintaining a compassionate and nurturing environment. He is supported by Matron Mrs Bev Sparrowhawk and the team of dedicated house staff, who encourage and guide the boys in their care to be the very best they can be.







# Boys' House

WESTMINSTER

Westminster prides itself on its strong sense of house spirit. Whether the boys are studying, competing on the sports field or performing on stage, the household takes collective pride in their achievements. This supportive approach helps to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which the students can flourish and fully benefit from the School's boarding experience.



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With that simple ethos pervading much of life within the house, Westminster has built up a reputation for its 'work hard, play hard' approach that sees the students' enjoyment of their time in the house matched by a rigorous academic standard to which they collectively aspire. Alongside that is a desire to see them develop as motivated, independent young men whose confidence continues into all areas of their School lives.

Gary Wellings became Housemaster of Westminster in September 2021. He has been a member of staff at SVS since 2017 and, as well as running a senior boarding house of over 40 boys, he continues in his role as Head of Mathematics, coaches Hockey and Cricket and somehow finds time to run the chess club! Sarah, his wife, is a Year 5 teacher at a local primary school and they live onsite with their two daughters, Charlotte and Madeleine. Gary's passion is sport, and all of the family play competitively for Holcombe Hockey Club. If he went on 'Desert Island Discs', he says his five luxury items would be: Radio 5 Live, a Bill Bryson book, Spitfire ale, Sarah's cheesecake and his golf clubs!



“ As a boarder, my son has been able to take full advantage of the fantastic facilities available to him, the close family ethos of the School and the academic provision provided by the network of staff, who support both his academic and sporting needs and goals ”

Current parent





# Girls' House

SUTTON

With stunning views over the Weald of Kent, Sutton House is a warm and welcoming community which offers a safe and structured environment for the girls to live and work. Benefitting from a wonderfully diverse culture, the girls are encouraged to bond, explore each other's backgrounds and support one another.



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The real heart of the Sutton community is formed by the girls themselves. The close-knit nature of the house encourages them to build bonds that last a lifetime. As well as the social aspects, the girls are encouraged to develop their leadership and mentoring skills and help the younger students in the house. This is invaluable in helping new students to settle in, adapt to their new environment and ensure that they feel cherished within the house community.

The House is led by the housemistress, Mrs Sophie de Castro, who also serves as the School's Head of Modern Foreign Languages. Her ability to speak multiple languages is a huge benefit to our

international students, whilst at the same time providing encouragement to all of the girls, irrespective of nationality, to develop their own linguistic and cultural understanding. Mrs de Castro is supported by Matron Mrs Emma Agu Benson and a team of tutors who help to run the house on a day-to-day basis. Collectively, they pride themselves on nurturing rather than mothering; essentially guiding the girls, whilst at the same time encouraging them to become more independent.



# Case Study

“For me, boarding has been a cultural adventure and I have made new friends, tried new things and achieved the grades I wanted for the next stage of my education. The time in Sutton House passed faster than I could have imagined when I started.

The staff have always made me feel at home and I know that as I leave, I will take this family, our shared jokes and precious memories away with me. I have valued the trust and respect of the House staff as I have grown up through the School and have enjoyed being given responsibility in the House, especially for the younger girls.

During the weekends there are events and activities to join in with from trips away to House competitions in School. The most memorable was the ‘kitchen takeover’

when we cooked part of the evening meal as a House in a competition to make the best course. It is one of many fun activities which I have taken part in. After prep and during the weekends, the School facilities are ours to use and explore from the gym to the Music School, and it is here my interests have flourished.

But it is the personal relationships which have been life-changing, the friends whom I will never forget and always value. They have made this experience one of the best in my life. If I could, I would do it all over again.”

**Nejla**

Upper Sixth, Sutton House





# Case Study

"It was the best decision for me to come to Sutton Valence School from China. Although it was difficult at first as my level of English was poor, I gradually learned how to communicate well in spoken and written English - and how to live more independently in my boarding house, Westminster. I love boarding in Westminster as our matron, Debbie, is so kind and takes great care of us - she is always making lots of homemade cakes and other treats for us. When I first joined, I shared a room with a British student who really helped me by taking me to lessons and showing me around the site and facilities. As I am now in the Sixth Form, I have a single study bedroom.

I am currently studying for my A Levels in Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Physics. It has really helped me having small classes and kind, supportive teachers. I am also studying English as an Additional Language (EAL) as I will take the IELTS examination next year so that I

can study at a British university. I can also drop into EAL if I need extra help with my subjects.

Apart from boarding, sport is another big part of life at SVS. I love going to the gym before breakfast to keep fit. In addition, I am also captain of the Basketball team and I enjoy playing fixtures against other schools. We also have excellent music, art and drama facilities; I often drop into the Music School to practise playing the piano.

Overall, coming to SVS has been the best choice for me; I've made lifelong friends with both British and other international students. I cannot believe how quickly time has passed!"

**Tianbo (Harry)**

Lower Sixth, Westminster



# Contact



**Mr Steven Head** - Head of Boarding

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Mr Head looks after all three boarding houses at the School.



**Mr Jeremy Farrell** - Senior Deputy Head

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Mr Farrell has responsibility for all pastoral areas, including boarding.



**Mr Will Radford** - Director of External Relations

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Mr Radford leads our External Relations team, including all admissions.



**Mrs Kathy Webster** - Admissions Officer

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Mrs Webster will be the first point of contact for all admissions enquiries.



**Mrs Donna Child** - Admissions Assistant

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Mrs Child is able to answer any queries you have throughout the process.



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