

# Howson's Parents' Information Booklet



Chris Jarvis and Alex Whiteford – old boys of the House

For parents new to Howson's in  
September 2016

## **Boarding at Gresham's – an Introduction from the Head of Boarding**

As a school, Gresham's has always been committed to ensuring every child within its community is cared for and supported in an environment that fosters trust, independence, personal responsibility, safety and emotional wellbeing; factors that enable a pupil to achieve in all spheres of life.

Recent legislation, The Children Act 2004, supported by boarding School National Minimum Standards and Every Child Matters, sets out a national framework of services, safeguards and entitlements for all children living away from home. It highlights the relationship between educational achievement and well-being.

We hope that boarding at Gresham's will support and ensure the positive outcomes set out in Every Child Matters: that each child is encouraged, nurtured and has the opportunity to:

- Be Healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve Economic well-being

Dedicated staff are committed to ensuring each child is regarded as an individual and believe that fostering a successful partnership between parents and school is an essential part in creating a nurturing environment.

Hopefully this short booklet will help to give you an insight into the practices and procedures of life in one of our boarding houses and prove useful and reassuring to parents. It will probably not cover all eventualities and should be used in conjunction with 'A guide for new pupils', which your son will be given on arrival, and the section on the school's website entitled 'Pastoral Care', which contains school rules and policies in detail.

### **Mrs Julie Flower – Head of Boarding**

#### **Howson's**

Howson's is the oldest Boarding House on the school site, and was created to house the whole school when it first moved here from Holt town in 1903. It is named after George William Saul Howson, the then Headmaster and the man credited with starting the development of the school to the size and stature we know it today (see the bust in the common room!) It has had 8 Housemasters since then and is currently home to 71 boys (Sep 2016), both day and boarders.

#### **House Ethos**

Howson's has a special character. As well as the boys' home during the term, it is a place of work too, and the House prides itself on its friendliness, its honesty, its openness and the support that the older boys give to the younger ones. The staff run the House firmly but fairly. There is great House spirit and your sons will make friends for life in the years they spend here.

*“The boys of Howson’s are one of the best bunches of boys I have ever met. Sometimes we may be mocked for our slightly under- average performance at Sports’ Days, but as far as effort and team spirit go, we win all the races. After witnessing the atmosphere in the House earlier this year before our Fashion show and the level of commitment shown by all the lads, in a particularly busy part of the school year, I was even prouder to be a member of the House. It saw 4<sup>th</sup> Formers and the Upper 6<sup>th</sup> making videos together and pupils making fun of House staff! In Howson’s we are always enjoying ourselves and morale is booming. This is by no means to say that we are slack or ill-disciplined. A Howson’s boy is always well mannered, well presented but most importantly enjoying Gresham’s.” G Bettley, House Captain, 2011-12*

## **Residential Staff Roles**

There are three members of staff who all live in the boarding House – Howson’s is their permanent home.

The **Housemaster** is Mr Alan Stromberg. He has overall responsibility for the pastoral and academic welfare of every boy in the House.

Mr Stromberg moved to Howson’s in August 2010, and lives here now with his sons Benjamin, Nicholas and Oliver. (Ben is studying at Bristol university; Nick at Cambridge; and Ollie is a pupil at the senior school.) He has been at Gresham’s for 10 years as a maths teacher and, before Howson’s, as a Visiting Tutor in Farfield. Before teaching, Mr Stromberg was a Sapper, commissioned in the British Army, retiring in the rank of Major. His specialism was in the use of GPS for navigation and mapping and he holds Masters degrees in Geodesy and Geographic Information Systems, a B Eng (Hons) in Civil Engineering and a PGCE.

**Residential House Tutor** is Mr Chris Reed. He is the Housemaster’s deputy and will share both evening and weekend duties with him. Mr Reed has been at Gresham’s for 9 years teaching physics, having worked in the aerospace industry after graduation.

The **House Matron** is Mrs Sue Lancaster. This will be Matron’s sixth year in the House, having been the Matron at an Outward Bound Centre in North Yorkshire before Gresham’s. She has a major role in the boys’ pastoral care as well as looking after the daily running of the House and organising the domestic staff (the House has four cleaners permanently attached to it, as well as being able to call on the school’s maintenance staff for any issues with the fabric of the building).

There is also a young black Labrador called **Poppy**, who makes a very effective Hoover of crumbs during afternoon tea in the common room.

## **Non –Residential staff**

Three members of academic staff (Mr Mike Matthams, Mr David Bailey and Mr Sam Curtis) act as Evening tutors who supervise the House one evening each per week. Mr Steve Adams, Father Bryan Roberts, Mr Tim Keen, Mr Andrew Coventry, Mr Simon Gates, and Mr James Thomson are all affiliated to the House and will help the boys during the new early-evening prep. All Howson’s staff are academic tutors either to a small group of juniors or 6<sup>th</sup> Form, and I am sure they will be in touch directly to introduce themselves, once the new term is underway.

## Prefects 2016-17

House Captain : Mark Heath

House Prefects: Henry Coleman, Will Dugdale, Ben Brinsden, James Matthews and Lars Kreisel.

James and Henry are also School Prefects

## Contact details

The House's full contact details:

<b>Housemaster</b>	<b>Study : 01263 714573</b> <b>Mobile : 07900 605801</b> <b>astromberg@greshams.com</b>
<b>Staff duty mobile (evening tutors)</b>	<b>07833 206450</b>
<b>Matron's flat</b>	<b>01263 711008</b> <b>slancaster@greshams.com</b>
<b>Resident Tutor's Flat</b>	<b>01263 711646</b> <b>creed@greshams.com</b>
<b>Address</b>	<b>Howson's</b> <b>Gresham's School</b> <b>Cromer Road</b> <b>Holt</b> <b>Norfolk NR25 6DZ</b>

## Accommodation

The House is structurally very sound. It had a major refurbishment nine years ago, with, amongst other improvements, upvc double glazing fitted everywhere – although an old building to look at, it is a warm and comfortable home inside. A redecoration plan commenced in August 2011, with the Day study corridor, wing above and Common Rooms being painted. Painting was completed in Easter 2012 and there is now a smart cream and red colour scheme through the whole building.

*"Howson's is in possession of the most comfy chair in existence. Bring posters and pictures, it brightens up your room. Howson's is the most relaxed and happy House." Barney Wheeler*

**Study bedrooms.** All boarders have study space in their rooms. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Formers (years 9 and 10) normally share with one or two other boys (and change rooms and room-mates every term), but 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Formers (years 11-13) have their own study-bedrooms throughout the House. 3<sup>rd</sup> Formers will do their prep in the Common Room under the supervision of the duty staff member and Housemaster until they show they are good independent learners, when they can go to their rooms to study.

**Day boy studies.** All day boys have their own study along the day boy corridor.

**Recreation rooms.** The Common Room is the main House communal area. It has snooker, networked computers, Sky television (at certain times of the day), newspapers and a library. There is a kitchen,

stocked daily with bread, milk and drinks, cereals and spreads, to supplement main meals, and the 6<sup>th</sup> Form have their own living rooms and kitchenettes in two attic spaces.

### Visitors

Visitors are of course most welcome to Howson's. Parents are asked to make themselves known to House staff on arrival, and should avoid walking around the bedroom corridors unless accompanied by their sons. Other pupils, and especially girls, are restricted to the communal areas of the House.

### Daily Routine

This is the broad week-day routine:

7.00	Reveille	
7.00 – 8.00	Breakfast - CFB	All to attend
8.05	Morning Roll-Call	
8.25	Chapel / tutor time	
8.50	Lessons	
10.25 – 10.50	Morning Break	Boys can return to House
11.10 - lunch	Lessons	
1.40 / 2.20	Lunchtime Roll-Call	Dependent on afternoon activities
2.25 – 4.00	Afternoon lessons / games	
4.30	High Tea	Followed by Electives
5.30 – 6.45 / 7.00	Prep	
6.45 / 7.00	Supper	

Monday and Friday evenings are curfew nights where the boys spend the evening in House.

### Bed Times

The duty member of staff, with the help of both the duty prefect and matron, will supervise bed times as follows:

Form	Back in House	Ready for Bed	Lights Out
3 <sup>rd</sup>	9.15 pm	9.30	9.45
4 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 pm	9.45	10.00
5 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 pm	10.15	10.30
Lower 6 <sup>th</sup>	10.15 pm	10.30	10.45
Upper 6 <sup>th</sup>	10.30 pm	10.45	11.00

Telephone calls between boys and parents after these times can be disruptive, and House staff are quick to clamp down on boys who might be texting their friends after lights out. An ideal time to make contact with your son during the school day is from 1.30 to 2.15 pm (Mon / Wed / Fri), after games (Tue / Thur / Sat) or in the evenings from 8.30 pm to 9.15 pm. If your son doesn't have his own mobile, you are most welcome to call him via my Study.

## Medical

Thank you for completing the Medical questionnaires in your welcome packs. For routine appointments with a Doctor at our Medical Centre, boys see Matron between 7.45 and 8.00 am for a chit – all but the mildest complaints are sent to the ‘san’. Matron is the focus for all medical issues in the House. We don’t generally inform parents concerning these mild illnesses; normally only if an overnight stay is required.

Please hand medication from home to Matron, clearly labelled as such. Self-medication (with items such as asthma inhalers) is of course possible; we ask you to complete a self-medication form, as we must know who is self-medicating. There is an Emergency First Aid box in the house, with asthma inhalers and epipens, if urgent action is required. All boys are shown this on arrival.

Boys who feel unwell during the day will be told to return to the house to see Matron, or to report directly to the SAN from lessons. On no account should they put themselves directly to bed in house.

Boys are excused games if they have an off-games chit signed by the Housemaster or Matron. If boys need to be taken out of school for medical or dental appointments, parents are asked to liaise with the HSM or Matron in the usual way. Matron is a regular attender with boys at Cromer Minor Injuries Unit and at the Norfolk and Norwich hospital; parents can be assured of a speedy and compassionate approach by House staff to any medical issues.

*“Howson’s, the kudu, the beast at Gresham’s. A boy from Gresham’s is loved, but a boy from Howson’s is loved for ever. 1903: the birth of an institution. 10 wise leaders through 108 years of fine young men.” F Hardy (with help from W Brady)*

## Arrival and Collection times

Day boys are asked to arrive in House by 8.00 am every day of the week. Roll call starts at 8.05 am.

Collection times can vary. With a new timetable this year, parents will be asked to confirm when they plan to collect their sons from school. The options are : before prep, after prep, after supper. The aim is to make life simpler and more flexible for parents who might be making multiple collections

**Games Afternoons / travel with friends.** You are of course most welcome indeed at any matches, home and away, and there is always some form of match tea afterwards, normally in the new school pavilion. Boys can go home directly from away matches if their parents come to watch, or go home for the weekend with the parents of another boy. The school naturally has strict rules in place about boys travelling in other peoples’ cars. In essence, permission in writing or by email will seal the deal happily.

## Absences

Please try to give notice in writing (email) if your son has an appointment which will take him away from school. Please phone the House in the morning, too, if you think your son will be late for roll call or will miss the day. Boys late for first roll call have to report in to reception on arrival. Holiday times are published well in advance, and requests for your son to leave early or return late are discouraged, but should be made directly to the Headmaster please.

## **Academic Guidance in the House**

Howson's is not just the boys' home away from home, but also where much of their schoolwork is completed. Their dorms and bedsits are designed in such a way as to promote good learning, and there is a strong ethos of understanding and empathy between the boys about the need to work, and the quiet and privacy at times to do so, especially around exam times in January and June. The academic tutor system at school is designed so that your son's personal tutor will get to know him not only during tutor periods but in the house in the evenings too. Tutors will monitor your son's progress throughout the year, and will report on him alongside the other teachers. If you have any questions about your son's progress, then the tutor is your first port of call. I hope that your son's tutor will make contact with you within the first few weeks of term. You can easily contact the tutor by email, using the school-wide system of first initial then surname, for example : [astromberg@greshams.com](mailto:astromberg@greshams.com)

You will be sent regular school orders' cards and reports on your son's progress at school, and of course I and the Deputy Head for Teaching and Learning, Tim Hipperson, are always here to discuss academic matters with you as they arise. There are regular Parent / Teacher meetings scheduled in the school calendar.

*"If you are boarding, then make sure you are organised and keep you room tidy. Bring some money in case you need something in emergency. Always respect prefects; they have the authority to punish you ! Keep on top of your work by doing your prep every night and keep your folders organised. If you fail to do prep or are late for lessons, be honest and accept the punishment." Daniel Roofe*

## **Safety and Security (personal, money, documents , electrical items, etc)**

There is much detail in the Pastoral Care booklet about the security of personal possessions, labelling of clothing and equipment etc, that does not need repeating here, save to say that Howson's has an very good record for safety of boys' belongings. Each boarder, however, must have a lockable tuck box or equivalent to keep his valuables in. A cheap and easy solution is a plastic mini tool box from a DIY centre. I suggest a combination lock not a key / padlock. I am very happy to look after, in my study, any items of value for your sons, and would expect to have all of their passports and money over £50. The Resident tutor is happy to run a house bank / pocket money system for those boys who prefer to have access to cash or do not have a bank account or debit card. The boys are impressed upon to keep their rooms tidy, the first step in ensuring they know where their stuff is and that it is safe.

The boys do not need alot of spending money while at school. Apart from the occasional trip into town and the school tuck shop – Dave's Diner – there is not much to spend money on, and too much money can cause problems amongst groups, but of course this is entirely up to you. I can always give the boys money and it be charged to the parents' fee account. This is a common way to arrange weekly pocket money.

## **Clothing & Equipment**

When the boys are in school uniform, I will expect them to be clean and smart at all times, especially in their shoes. The boys do not need a huge wardrobe of home clothes, they do not get a great deal of

wear. Obviously, a boy's general appearance is very much a working partnership between parents and school. Detailed guidance is again given in the Pastoral Care booklet, but I hope you will find me supportive of any 'dress' rules you insist upon with your sons at home .

Matron has a store of spare clothing – uniform, sports stuff and so on – if any boy, day or boarder, happens to be in need of something, and she can arrange with the school shop for new clothing to be bought. Please remember to label everything ! This is especially important of home clothes if they are to go in the school laundry system

*“Why I would always choose Howson's again is because the friends you make here will be your friends for life.” Markus Buck, School Prefect*

In addition to the kit list that the school has provided you, I would recommend that the boys also bring with them, for their studies, a hole-punch, a bed-side light and perhaps a multi-socket electrical adaptor, especially if they are bringing both a laptop and a 'phone.

### **House and Parent Partnership**

Especially for boys new to the school, the first few days and weeks of the new school year can be daunting at times. It is the primary role of the house staff to look after the boys well and to help them settle in as quickly and happily as possible. Key to this of course is communication between house staff and parents, and I hope that you will feel you can contact me by any means you wish, whenever you like. I will generally be in my study and locking up the House until 11.30 pm most evenings, so please do not feel unsure about calling late into the evening if something is bothering you ! Matron is equally happy to take your calls – please use us ! My phone receives email too, so please use my mobile number in the first instance : 07900 605801

I hope that this booklet has given you a flavour of life in Howson's. You are more than welcome to visit the House and your boys; please come in to see a member of staff, especially if you collect daily, rather than sitting in the car.

*“What makes Howson's Howson's is the atmosphere: from the excited bustling that comes from the kitchen at break, with vigorous fights over who gets the first cheese toastie, to the united feeling that comes early in the school year as Howson's prepares to rule the school at the annual House Music! Or maybe it's that weekend feeling, the one that draws a bond between all the individuals that stay that weekend. Then again it could be playing croquet on the freshly mown lawn in the long days of summer – the gentle tranquillity of the moment inspiring you to victory against your peers. Whatever it is, Howson's is a great House with a great atmosphere.” Adam Partridge*

Warmest Regards,

Alan Stromberg Howson's, August 2016

*This document can be found electronically within the Howson's webpage of the school website*