



PRESTFELDE

## **BOARDING POLICY**

### **BOARDING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE**

Prestfelde School has one Boarding House: Prestfelde House. Prestfelde House currently accommodates all boarders, with the upper floor being dedicated to boys and the middle floor to girls. Each floor has its own washroom facilities for boys and girls, and one dorm on the girls' floor is an en suite.

Prestfelde House has its own dedicated Housemistress who is resident each evening and night as well as assistant House Tutors. When the Housemistress is not on duty, her evening duties are covered by House Tutors who are also qualified teaching staff employed within the school. The Head of Boarding resides in Prestfelde Flat, which adjoins Prestfelde House, and he/she is always accessible on boarding nights.

Flexi boarding at Prestfelde allows for a steady introduction to boarding for those pupils who will later move on to full time boarding in their future schools and gives them the opportunity to board up to three nights a week as their confidence increases. As well as offering the opportunity to experience boarding life, boarding at Prestfelde House offers families crucial wrap around care.

At present the number of boarders is on the increase and on some nights the house is nearing capacity. With a large refurbishment taking place in 2022, the boarding offer will be enhanced dramatically, including an increased capacity of beds on our girls' floor.

A floor plan of the houses can be found in the health and safety document and the school's prospectus highlights the boarding ethos of the school.

**The following are the principles upon which boarding in this school is based:**

- Boarding provides a happy, caring environment that meets the needs of everyone and provides opportunities for personal development.
- Boarders can approach any member of the school community, confident in the knowledge that they will be treated and respected as an individual.
- Boarders will develop greater independence as they take greater responsibility for themselves, others, and their environment.
- Boarders will develop leadership qualities and the ability to work as part of a team in a boarding community.



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- Boarders will receive equal opportunities and respect, regardless of ethnicity, culture, gender, or disability.
- Boarders will develop intellectually through well-structured prep with access to staff and other pupils in an atmosphere that values effort and provides positive encouragement.
- Boarders will participate in a rich and exciting extra-curricular programme, developing a range of new skills.
- Boarders will work, play and relax free from abuse, intimidation, harassment and bullying.
- Boarders will benefit from a structured organisation to the day and the importance of making sensible and constructive use of leisure time.
- Boarders will follow a discipline policy that demands high expectations in terms of personal behaviour, and they must accept the consequences in cases of misconduct.
- Boarding provides opportunities to develop spiritually, culturally, morally, and socially.
- Boarding will provide an environment that is, as far as possible, free from physical hazards and dangers of any sort.
- Boarding will provide accommodation that is comfortable and is suited to the needs of boarders, according to age and maturity and provide adequate levels of privacy.
- The Boarding House will develop and maintain channels of communication with parents, to ensure there is a partnership regarding the support and development of every boarder.
- It is our expectation that boarders at Prestfelde House will become kind and respectful citizens, excellent team workers, confident self-managers, and achieve even greater success in their schoolwork. Boarding must be a partnership between adults and children based on mutual trust and respect, and it should be acknowledged that it is not a commodity that suits every individual.

## **BOARDING HOUSE ETHOS**

Prestfelde House is designed to operate on the principle of an extended family. Older pupils, and especially the Year 8s, are given responsibility for some of the supervision of younger pupils and for other various tasks within the house, but this is monitored closely. The House Mistress will appoint 'Dorm Leaders' each night, giving all pupils the opportunity to develop their leadership abilities. The Head of Boarding and the house team are expected to, and do, get to know their pupils, and provide the support, guidance and encouragement that they need at any given time.



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### **BOARDING CAPACITY**

- **28 boys**
- **12 girls**

\*Note that this is set to increase in 2022 to upwards of 50 beds.

### **PASTORAL CARE OF BOARDERS**

#### **PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE**

The boarding community follow the schools anti-bullying policy, and this is held centrally and can be referred to at any time. This is reinforced and explicitly taught in morning chapel services, during school PHSE lessons, at various points throughout the wider whole-school curriculum, and through participation in 'National Anti-Bullying Week' which usually occurs annually in November.

#### **CHILD PROTECTION**

Prestfelde School's aim is to provide the very best care for the pupils entrusted to us. We aim to ensure that every pupil is happy at school and feels that they have a productive part to play in the boarding house and in the school. All staff at the school are given regular training in Child Protection matters and the Head of Boarding is also Deputy DSL. All pupils are encouraged to speak to a member of the house team, a member of the Senior Management Team, a member of the Health Centre Team or any member of staff if they have a problem or become aware of another pupil who has a problem.

The school operates its own Health Centre, with a trained nurse on duty during the school day. The school doctor is available to see the pupils by arrangement. Pupils also have access to local public medical facilities. Pupils with emotional problems are carefully monitored and, when necessary, are referred to our Mental Health and Wellbeing Officer. They will be carefully assessed and where necessary will be referred to the local Child and Adolescent Medical Health Service (CAMHS) office.

Relevant phone numbers for Child Line, NSPCC, Samaritans and ISI are displayed prominently in the boarding houses:

- Child Line 0800 1111
- ISI 0207 600 0100
- NSPCC 0800 800 5000
- Samaritans 116 123
- The Children's Commissioner 0800 528 0731

The boarding community follow the school's Safeguarding Policy. (See the Safeguarding policy on website.)



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### **INDEPENDENT LISTENER**

As described within the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, the *Independent Listener* is a person outside the staff and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. The Independent Listener reports directly to the Head of Boarding and Deputy Head Pastoral.

Prestfelde has a system whereby any child who wishes to talk to an independent adult about personal problems or concerns at school can do so. Details of our Independent Listener are displayed around Prestfelde House, including the Wellbeing notice board, and within all boarding dormitories. Independent Listeners will visit the school several times throughout the year to make themselves known to staff and boarding pupils.

The Independent Listener is expected to follow all policies and procedures driven by the *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, (DfE, 2021 – all parts), *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, (DfE, 2018) and the *National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools* (DfE 2015).

It is a fundamental value of the school that we help our students to remain safe and healthy, enabling them to continue to access their education without stigma or exclusion. Hence all staff at Prestfelde School, including boarding staff, are committed to ensuring our pupils are safe and feel they have someone to talk to. Further information about the job/person specification, safeguarding responsibilities, and processes and procedures are set out in **Appendix 1**.

### **COMPLAINTS**

#### **COMPLAINTS BY BOARDERS**

The boarding community follow the school's complaints policy for parents, children, and other interested parties. This policy is held centrally and can be referred to at any time. The children also have direct access to two independent adults, the Independent Listener and one of the school Governors, as well as the school Chaplain. Furthermore, the children can access numbers and websites for Childline and the N.S.P.C.C. amongst others.



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### **COMPLAINTS BY BOARDERS PARENTS / GUARDIANS**

The Deputy Head (Pastoral) and the Head of Boarding are the first port of call for complaints regarding boarding. However, as with the rest of the school, access is always available to the Head, Chaplain or School Governors (see the school complaints policy). There are posters on the noticeboards around the house highlighting the policy and those who can be contacted for help.

### **ACCESS TO TELEPHONES & EMAIL**

The boarders have access to a telephone at all times and can use it to ring either family members or the respective parties in the event of a complaint. This telephone is located in the Matron's Office (our daytime Medical Centre) and is a private space for pupils to use. The boarding house is a no-mobile phone zone, in line with our whole-school policy, however they do all have Chromebooks/laptops for use in prep, which can be used to access emails. All electronic devices are taken in by the House Mistress before bed and stored safely in the Matron's office.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The boarding environment endeavours to give each child regardless of creed, colour, religion, gender or disability equal opportunities to all boarding house activities. Prestfelde House is undergoing an extensive renovation to ensure there are equal opportunities for boys and girls to board. (See the schools Equal Opportunities Policy.)

### **HOUSE SANCTION AND REWARDS**

The Boarding House follow the school's behaviour policy and have a range of rewards and punishments for good and bad behaviour. As far as possible, the Head of Boarding and House Parents act in loco parentis and, like all good parents, provide a caring, supportive environment for the children in their care. Prestfelde house follows Behaviour policy of the school, with the emphasis on encouragement and reward, rather than punishment. Behaviour expectations are on display around Prestfelde House and in dorms.



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### **HEALTH CARE/HEALTH RECORDS**

The boarding house has a Housemistress dedicated to their needs in the evening and medical centre staff during the day. All boarding staff are First Aid trained. The school has medical facilities for those in need of it. Matron and the Housemistress keep records of the boarders' individual medical records, including allergies, medication and so forth. These are kept confidentially on iSAMS. The sick bay facility can be staffed 24 hours a day and our Day Matron (a qualified nurse) and the Housemistress can monitor children who are admitted. If a child displays symptoms of Covid or any other contagious illness such as Norovirus, the child's parents will be called and asked to collect them. Where this is not possible, the child will be isolated from other boarders in our designated sick bay and will be monitored and cared for throughout the night by the House Mistress.

### **ACTIVITIES/FREE TIME**

The House staff provide a wide range of activities on a weekly basis, and these include competitions, clubs, on site/off site activities and free time etc. The boarders are informed at the start of term of 'fixed clubs' and there is a short announcement of the activities each evening after supper. A boarding activities overview is posted on Firefly and circulated each week on the school newsletter. Parents can book their child in to boarding evenings via SOCS up to a term in advance. In the summer, the boarders have access to the cricket nets, tennis courts, football fields, adventure playground etc. During winter and spring there is an activities room, the gym, an indoor pool, and the house itself.

### **SECURING BOARDERS VIEWS**

Boarders have meetings with the House staff in which their views on certain procedures / activities within the house are reviewed and discussed. There is a termly questionnaire sent out to pupils to complete during form time with their tutors, and a suggestions box outside the boarders' lounge. There is at least one boarder present at all school council meetings.

### **DORM LEADERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a flexi-boarding school, Prestfelde House can have different pupils in every boarding night. As such, we have a 'Dorm Leader' each night who is selected to lead their dorm, promoting good behaviour, ensuring processes and procedures are following and modelling excellent behaviour in the boarding house. It is also an expectation that year 8/senior school boarders take on leadership/monitoring roles throughout boarding activities and within the house itself. Senior pupils are expected to help the younger children and have



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a general awareness of tasks which need to be carried out, such as night-time and morning routines.

### **CARE OF POSSESSIONS**

Boarders are provided with a designated spaces in their bedroom, including the drawers underneath the “box beds” for possessions. Valuables can be given to the House Mistress to be locked away in the Matron’s office for safe keeping. Boarders may bring a large variety of items from home. For security, boarders are asked to limit the number of valuable items that they bring into school.

### **INDUCTION OF NEW BOARDERS**

Pupils who are new to boarding can register their interest via our Firefly Boarding page. This will then prompt a telephone/zoom/face-to-face meeting with the Head of Boarding or House Mistress. New boarders will then be invited into Prestfelde House for a rigorous induction (see **Appendix 2**), including a tour, an introduction to boarding routines, a health & safety briefing, and a meeting with the boarding team. New boarders are given a ‘shadow’ who will often be an experienced boarder. The Head of Boarding, House Tutors and House Mistress will provide all necessary support to any new boarder. Many pupils starting boarding at Prestfelde are existing day pupils, or those who have ‘tested the water’ with flexi boarding through various taster days, starting in year 2. The induction process, as a result, is usually straight forward and easy to manage. A boarding induction ‘refresher’ is given to all boarders on an annual basis or as the Head of Boarding/House Mistress see appropriate.

### **CATERING**

School catering continues to be maintained at a high standard for our boarders, prepared by a team of experienced and skilled catering staff/chefs. The food is designed in line with the school’s health eating standards, and boarders are exposed to a variety of flavours from around the world. Boarders are consulted on their views of the boarding menu and regularly review/fed back to our Head Chef. Pupils are fully catered for, including breakfast, lunch and supper, and are not required to prepare any food for themselves in Prestfelde House. All allergies and intolerances are catered for.

### **ONEROUS DEMANDS ON BOARDERS**

The Head of Boarding and the form teachers liaise over the workloads of the pupils in their care. A staff meeting to discuss pupils takes place weekly where matters concerning individual pupils are discussed. The boarding staff



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are aware of the demands made of every pupil in their care and intervene when they feel the pupils may be overburdened by work or events.

### **PASSING ON OF INFORMATION**

Due to the flexible nature of Prestfelde's boarding, it is important that information is passed between the staff on duty in the house on different evenings. Information is communicated via Class Charts and an evaluation sheet is completed at the end of each boarding night, which is signed and reviewed by the House Mistress. Any discipline, behaviour or pastoral matters are logged on Class Charts by the duty House Parent/duty staff member. Pastoral concerns are automatically alerted to the Head of Boarding, Form Tutors, Head of Year and Deputy Head Pastoral and brought to the attention of all school staff (if necessary) during daily staff briefings. In some cases, a meeting will be called with the Pastoral Team. All boarding staff are also teaching staff, making the communication process easy.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Prestfelde School is a 'home from home' for our boarding pupils and therefore considerable care is taken to ensure that:

- The Head of Boarding and the team get to know pupils and, as far as possible, their parents as quickly as possible.
- Parents receive regular updates on their child's progress.
- Parents are informed of any problems that their child might be having and encouraged to work with the school to resolve those issues.
- Parents inform house staff if they become aware of any problems with their child.

Parents can contact the Head of Boarding or House Mistress on email, school telephone, or the boarding mobile at any time.

### **FIRE PROTECTION**

Prestfelde House has a clear procedure for evacuation in the event of fire. Regular fire evacuation practices are carried out and timed. The House Mistress /Head of Boarding has a list to hand in the event of an evacuation which includes the number and people in each dormitory.

At the start of each term the pupils are informed of the fire evacuation procedure and a practice is carried out. This process is repeated on the arrival of any new boarder. The Prestfelde boarding house is located over three floors and this presents obvious evacuation difficulties. However, there are two main secure staircases and dormitories are instructed on their nearest route. The pupils leave via the nearest stairs and meet under the covered way



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where they are registered by the boarding staff. As part of the bedtime routine, pupils are instructed to remove any trip hazards so that evacuation is safe.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The Boarding House follows the school's Health and Safety regulations and carry out all the actions dictated by the policy.

Boarding staff complete a risk assessment for all activities where there is any risk involved, including all off-site activities. Risk Assessments are carried out by House Parents on duty and uploaded to Evolve for evaluation by the Deputy Head Pastoral and the Bursar. A risk assessment is carried out termly for Prestfelde Houses (the building), and/or when any new additions/refurbishments are made. When visiting an off-site provider, the provider's own risk assessments are obtained and uploaded to Evolve, together with the House Parent's own risk assessment.

A self-evaluation/audit is carried out regularly by the Head of Boarding and House Mistress using the BSA self-assessment toolkit to ensure the safety of all boarders and boarding staff.

### **SUPERVISION OF BOARDERS**

#### **STAFFING**

Prestfelde House is staffed each evening by the House Mistress (who resides in the main Prestfelde House) and a House Parent. The Head of Boarding also lives on site and is always on-call. In the case of an emergency, there are bells on both the boys' and girls' floors that will ring in the House Mistress and Head of Boarding's accommodation.

#### **STAFF ILLNESS**

With the Head of Boarding living on site, and House Parents/Deputy Head Pastoral living in proximity, there is adequate cover in case of illness.

### **NIGHT SUPERVISION OF BOARDERS**

During boarding nights, there is access to several members of staff, including the Head of Boarding, the House Mistress, and House Parents. In addition, the site manager lives in Prestfelde Bungalow in case of emergencies.



## **PRESTFELDE PROBLEMS PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC**

### **PERSONAL**

Prestfelde House has a range of adults in place to help the children emotionally and to care for the children's needs. The children should be able to approach any member of the house staff with any problem or indeed, or can speak to a trusted member of staff, including the school Chaplain. All children in school have a Form Tutor to whom they can turn if they need help. Furthermore, all children meet with their Form Tutor twice a day during the school day. If the pupils wish to discuss their problems outside of school, access is available to the Independent Listener, via a telephone number, with whom they can discuss their issues. There is also a 'Tell an Adult' button on Firefly, where pupils can alert the DSLs/pastoral team to any issues or concerns.

In addition, the children have quick access to the phone number and websites of the N.S.P.C.C. and Childline.

### **ACADEMIC**

Academic problems that are identified on a boarding night will be first supporting initially by the Head of Boarding, Housemistress and/or the House Parent. If it is deemed necessary, boarding staff will communicate with the Form Teacher / Subject Teacher to support the pupil. Parents will be informed of any academic issues that arise problems and suitable interventions will be put in place. All boarders attend prep sessions between 4pm and 5.30pm, where they are supported by the duty staff member, who is a member of the teaching staff.

### **REGULATORY COMPLIANCE**

Prestfelde works hard to ensure that it meets all the regulatory requirements set out in the National Minimum Boarding Standards and in other relevant legislation. Regular checks are made to ensure that appropriate Health and Safety standards are met in all aspects of school life. The school is subject to regular inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate to ensure that all regulatory requirements are met or exceeded. In addition, termly self-assessments and audits are carried out by the Head of Boarding and House Mistress.

### **MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Head of Boarding is responsible to the Head for the smooth and effective running of their boarding house. In practice they report directly to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who is responsible for pastoral care in the school. Regular House meetings are chaired by the Head of Boarding and attended by the



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Deputy Head (Pastoral) and are used for promulgation of information and discussions about topical issues or any pastoral concerns in the boarding house.

### **PAPERWORK**

- **FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURE**
- **HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES**
- **BOARDING SCHOOLS NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS DOCUMENT**
- **PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE POLICY**
- **BEHAVIOUR POLICY**
- **STAFF EMPLOYMENT MANUAL**
- **BOARDING HANDBOOK**
- **FIRST AID POLICY**

### **RECORDS**

- **BEHAVIOURAL CONCERNS IN THE BOARDING ENVIRONMENT on Class Charts**
- **HEALTH RECORDS FOR BOARDERS on Isams**
- **RISK ASSESSMENTS in the Boarding File and on Evolve**

**(Reviewed January 2022  
Next review January 2023)**



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

#### Independent Listener: Main Areas of Responsibility

Under the direction of and in consultation with the Head of Boarding, the Independent Listener will be required to note the following:

- o Take into account the school's views on the pupil's needs, as well as the pupils wishes and views
- o If contacted by a pupil, they should provide an opportunity for them to talk through problems and issues in a safe and non-discriminatory manner
- o Encourage the pupils to participate in decisions affecting them
- o Keep accurate and confidential records bearing in mind some pupils' wish to remain anonymous
- o Safeguarding and child protection issues arising from conversations with pupils should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) either directly or via the Head of Boarding who is a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
- o Provide feedback to the Head of Boarding for reports, reviews and other meetings
- o Work in a child centred manner, being clear about confidentiality and where boundaries lie.

#### Safeguarding Responsibilities:

- o To know the identity of the Schools Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy.
- o Proactively be alert to indicators of potential safeguarding issues and report these immediately in accordance with the school's procedure.
- o Be aware of the Schools Safeguarding Policy and to follow its requirements.
- o Attend training relating to Safeguarding of Children provided by the school if required.
- o Engage in safe practice and professional conduct to safeguard children to mitigate against the potential for misunderstandings or situations being misconstrued.



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- o The school is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and expects the same from its volunteers, employees and representatives.

### **Job Context**

- o The Independent Listener must be child focused however sympathetic they may be to other points of view. The function is to compliment the work and activities of the boarding staff and parents.
- o In bringing this autonomous perspective, the Independent Listener must behave in an anti-discriminatory manner. The Independent Listener is not expected to accept unquestioningly what those responsible for the child tell them is in the child's interests, but should remain open-minded and foster a healthy scepticism.

### **Knowledge Experience and Training**

The Independent Listener should have qualities, skills, experience and/or qualifications in other settings that enable them to undertake work in a professional capacity with children. These may include:

- o An understanding and empathy of the needs of school age children and adolescents
- o An understanding and appreciation of the difficulties caused by living away from home
- o The ability to work flexibly with a variety of adults and children
- o An understanding of Good Care Practice and Principles
- o An appreciation of the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and the National Minimum Standards and other relevant legislation
- o Qualifications/experience in counselling or other relevant disciplines.

### **Problems and Decisions**

The Independent Listener will consult and work with the Head of Boarding (and the DSL where required), boarding staff and the pupils. They will work within all school policies and procedures. All grievances or disputes should follow the procedure and guidance within the Schools Policy.

### **Duration of Post**

The initial arrangement would be for a period of 12 months, after 12 months the arrangement will be reviewed by the Head of School, Head of Boarding and the DSL. However, if for any reason an Independent Listener is unable to continue with the role, they should contact the Head of Boarding as soon as is reasonably practicable.



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## Notes on Independent Listeners

The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS) requires the school to identify at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. The role is voluntary although reasonable expenses for travel may be agreed in advance.

The following procedure is to be followed in any appointments:

- o Appointment procedures will be required to follow the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools standard 14 on Safer Recruitment standards
- o The position is subject to the usual DBS, child protection, welfare and 'whistleblowing' requirements
- o Offer an appropriate role description (this document) and briefing/induction
- o Be clear that the position is independent of the main lines of school management, but still subject to the school's specification and organisation
- o Ensure Independent Listener knowledge of 'school norms and expectations'
- o There should be an awareness of perception of Independent Listeners other roles (e.g. police officer, governor, doctor, vicar, counsellor, local dignitary)
- o There must be clear rules on confidentiality – and duty to breach if the event of disclosure or if informed of safeguarding risks pupils, there must be no absolute guarantee of secrecy



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## Appendix 2

### Prestfelde House Induction Checklist

<b>Fire drill and Health &amp; Safety</b>	
<b>Organising dorms at bedtime in case of emergencies</b> i.e., shoes by bed, all trip hazards removed etc.	
<b>Behaviour expectations:</b> see checklist in Prestfelde House	
<b>Speaking to an Adult:</b> Who to speak to if you have any concerns, issues, worries etc.	
<b>Contact numbers:</b> Child Line, Independent Listener etc.	
<b>Pupil Voice:</b> pupil suggestions box	
<b>Emergency bell:</b> doorbell at the end of the corridor on both the boys' and girls' floor links to Miss Vallonchini and Mrs. Keogh-Jones' houses	
<b>Use of technology:</b> no mobile phones in any year group. Laptops and Chromebooks (seniors) allowed but handed in to Miss Vallonchini after supper	
<b>Night-time/morning routine</b> i.e., bedding etc.	
<b>Tour of Prestfelde House</b> (for pupils brand new to boarding- Miss V to do this on an ad Hoc basis)	
<b>Dorm leaders:</b> one pupil nominated as room leader (prefect) each night. This will be chosen based on behaviour and pupils demonstrating leadership qualities	