



# The Philosophy of Boarding at Souls

## How is boarding organised in boarding schools?

Boarding schools basically have two options when it comes to organising boarding facilities. One school of thought houses the students in a horizontal organisation, the other is vertical.

## What does this mean?

- **Horizontal**  
Students live in houses with students of a similar age. Senior Secondary students may live together as their needs may be perceived as different to Junior Secondary students and vice versa.
- **Vertical**  
Students live in their House with a cross section of ages

*At Souls, we are very much in favour of the Vertical organisation*

## Why do we prefer a vertical organisation?

There are numerous reasons. They include:

- Studies (and our experience) show that most bullying that occurs between students occurs within a year level, rather than from older student to younger, so vertically organised dormitories have less bullying.
- Older students usually provide good role models. We want our Year 7s and Year 8s to be saying to themselves - "I want to be like that Year 12 student". A Year 12 student seems so grown up and mature to your average 12 year old, and we believe that by creating a situation where they have day-to-day contact with the older students brings greater independence and resilience more quickly. (Of course, this only works if our Year 12 students and Year 11s show the necessary maturity and leadership. This is the school's responsibility to ensure that this occurs).
- In horizontally organised dormitories younger students do not interact as much with the older ones and the leadership that develops within the dorm is usually given by whichever Year 9 or Year 8 student is the dominant personality. There are few students to provide the role modelling. We would rather have our Year 9s being led by a Year 12 student than the dominant Year 9 personality.
- More so than later years, Junior Secondary students are mainly in the same class all day. They see a lot of their friends and fellow boarders. In horizontal organisations, they also live with them after school. In a vertically organised dormitory, students have a little more space. Although they will still be with friends, they spend more time with other ages and the "hothouse" effect of lots of Junior or Secondary students living all day every day in each other's pockets is lessened.
- Vertically organised dorms offer more opportunities for leadership for older students.
- Vertically organised dormitories develop great "house spirit". Organisation of house teams and events is much easier and students develop a real sense of belonging to their house very quickly. We want all our boarders to feel that they belong. Immediately you walk into a dorm as a Feetham boy or a Chad girl you have a sense of belonging.



**How are our houses organised?**

- At Souls, we have six boarding houses – Alban, Becket and Chad house our girls and Feetham, Page and Ramsay house our boys.

**How are students allocated their bays or rooms?**

- Within each house, students of similar ages are kept together. This way “lights out” can be at different times, for different ages.

**Does it really matter?**

- No. Both systems work, and for some schools a horizontal system of Senior and Junior dorms works well. At Souls, the vertical organisation works best for us.

What matters most is the quality of the care. It does not matter which system is used as long as the quality of care is as you would want it for your children.

With all of our supervision being provided by adult residential staff and teachers rather than some adults and some university students, Souls is in a great situation to offer the best of boarding for our students.