

Boarding



Welcome

Welcome to boarding at RIC. We're so happy to be on this journey with you! Whether this is your first time away from home or you're already familiar with boarding life, we're glad you're here.

Boarding at Rochester is about more than just where you live; it's about living, learning, and growing together in a safe, friendly, and supportive environment. This handbook is your guide to life as a boarder. You'll find an A-Z of helpful information to support you in settling in, knowing what to expect, and understanding how we do things as a community.

If you're new to boarding, don't worry you will be fully supported! We'll give you a full tour, introduce you to the key people who are here to help you, and explain daily routines so you feel comfortable and confident. You'll also be paired with a friendly buddy who can help you find your way around and answer any questions.

And remember, there is always someone available if you need support or just want to talk.

We're here to help you succeed, explore new opportunities, and enjoy every step along the way. Let's make it a brilliant experience together.

We are committed to providing you with a boarding experience where you:

- live and learn in a safe, secure and positive environment
- thrive in a caring atmosphere
- have clean and comfortable accommodation
- are well fed
- are able to talk to a member of staff or an independent contact about any issue or concern
- receive as much attention as you need
- are happy and well looked after
- have the opportunity to express your wishes
- are respected

RIC Values

We live by our college values of:

- Inclusivity
- Creativity
- Excellence
- Sustainability
- Independence
- Aspiration



Attendance and Academics

You are expected to attend all scheduled lessons unless you are unwell and have been signed out of school by the medical team. Good attendance helps you keep up with your studies and make the most of college life.

Registration is compulsory every day and begins at 08.45. Your houseparents and Director of Studies will help you establish positive habits for attendance and study. If any concerns arise, we will speak with you and your parents or guardians to support you in attending all registration sessions and lessons.

Punctuality is important. Students must arrive on time and be prepared for every lesson, with suitable stationery and equipment. Teachers will record lateness, which will be passed on to your Director of Studies.

As part of your induction, all boarding students participate in a study skills programme designed to help you build effective study habits. Throughout the year, you will also take part in sessions focused on developing advanced thinking skills.

We encourage students to miss as little study time as possible and book flights home during vacation periods only.

Study Hub is dedicated time for effective study, supported by Resident Tutors (teachers who live in boarding). These tutors offer subject-specific help and general academic guidance. Boarders in the Lower School must attend Study Hub on Sunday evenings, while other sessions are open to all or may be assigned by your Director of Studies.

Study Hub runs Sunday to Thursday from 19.00 until 21.00 in Room 26, the upstairs computer room in New Court. It is a great opportunity to complete homework, ask questions, get feedback, or take part in workshops.

Term Dates

	Start	End
Term 1	Thursday 3 September 2026	Friday 11 December 2026 at 1pm
Half term break	Saturday 17 October 2026	Sunday 1 November 2026
Term 2 (Yr 7-10 and 12)	Wednesday 6 January 2027	Thursday 25 March 2027
Term 2 (Yr 11 and 13)	Wednesday 6 January 2027	Friday 2 April 2027
Half term break	Saturday 13 February 2027	Sunday 21 February 2027
Term 3	Monday 12 April 2027	Wednesday 7 July 2027 at 1pm
Half term break	Saturday 29 May 2027	Sunday 6 June 2027

Boarding Arrival Dates

Term 1: Boarding opens at 10am on Tuesday 1st September

Term 2: Boarding opens at 10am on Tuesday 5th January

Term 3: By arrangement with boarding staff

Half Term Breaks - Boarders may stay at the college during mid-term breaks. However, students in Years 11 and 13 or 14 may be required to attend extra lessons. Always check with your Subject Tutors / Director of Study before booking travel.

Winter Break - Boarders are not permitted to stay at the college during the winter holiday.

Spring Break - Boarders may stay in accommodation during the spring break. Speak to your houseparent if you would like to remain at the college.

Summer Break - Boarders cannot stay at the college during the summer holiday. Students in Years 11, 13, and 14 may leave after their final exam. All other students must remain until the end of term.



Behaviour

We expect everyone to behave respectfully and responsibly. Our community values kindness, maturity, and consideration for others. These values apply in boarding houses, classrooms, around college, online and during any off-site activities supervised by staff.

We welcome students from many different backgrounds and cultures. At RIC, it is important that we treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves. By behaving in a thoughtful and appropriate way, we create a positive, welcoming environment for all.

When behaviour does not meet expectations, you may be spoken to by your Director of Studies, House Parent or Head of Boarding. In more serious cases, the College follows a four-step disciplinary process. This is designed to help students reflect, improve, and make responsible choices, while maintaining a safe and respectful community. The behaviour policy is available on the school website.

Verbal warning

Parents/Carers will receive (email) notification of the warning.

Written warning

Parents/Carers will be contacted by the student's Director of Study and/or the Head of School. The student will be issued with a copy of the written warning and this will also be forwarded to the parents/carers.

Final written warning

Parents/Carers may be asked to come into college to see the Director of Study and a Vice Principal/Head of School.

At this stage, the parent/carer and student will be advised that any further breaches of college rules and regulations may result in a suspension or permanent exclusion.

The student will be issued with a copy of the written warning and this will also be forwarded to the parents/carers.

Suspension/Permanent exclusion

Not all behavioural issues can be amended or remedied by pastoral processes or other consequences within the College. In these circumstances suspension and permanent exclusion are sometimes necessary. The decision to permanently exclude a student is not taken lightly. It usually follows a number of disciplinary offences and the student and their parents/carers will have been warned that this may occur. Depending on the seriousness of the offence it may, however, be appropriate to move directly to suspension or permanent exclusion.

A student's behaviour outside College can also be considered grounds for a suspension or permanent exclusion (Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).

Appropriate sanctions, including loss of free time or suspension/exclusion may be enforced at any stage of the disciplinary process. Appeals against any disciplinary decisions made by the College are governed by the Complaints Procedure.



Community

Our boarding community is diverse and welcoming. You will meet people from many different backgrounds, nationalities, and beliefs. We encourage you to embrace opportunities to make friends, share experiences, and contribute to an inclusive environment built on mutual respect.

At RIC, students are grouped into boarding communities. Each community is supported by dedicated houseparents who are available 24 hours a day to provide care, guidance, and communication with families. These staff are the first point of contact for any concerns or questions.

Our communities are based in both on-site boarding houses and nearby residential properties. Each has a lead team of houseparents. The contact details, including phone numbers and email addresses for each community are given to the students and parents when they arrive

In addition to our boarding community, we also have a resident community, which is available for Over 18s living independently in supported houses near the college. The Resident Community is designed to support older students as they prepare for the transition to university or independent living, giving them more responsibility, including managing their own curfews. While residents live with more freedom, they continue to benefit from the full support structure offered to all boarders. These homes are fully furnished and equipped with everything needed for independent living, including kitchenware, bedding, laundry facilities, and appliances. Weekly housekeeping is included. Residents also access all meals, clubs, medical services, and Study Hub sessions. This community offers a supportive step towards university or independent living, combining independence with structure and care.



Dining

All meals at Rochester are provided by Holroyd Howe, who offer a wide variety of nutritious and balanced dishes, including vegetarian, vegan, halal, and gluten-free options. Please speak to your houseparent or the Catering Team if you have any allergies or specific dietary needs.

Boarders in Dickens and Gordon/Finland Houses eat in the New Road House canteen, while students in Star Hill, Northbank, and the Resident Community use the Star Hill canteen. A 'horsebox' also offers sandwiches and snacks at lunchtime.

Canteen Hours

Monday to Friday

Breakfast: 7.30 – 8.40am

Lunch:

Years 9 & 10: 12.00 – 12.30pm

Year 11: 12.30 – 12.55pm

Sixth Form: 1.00 – 2.00pm

Dinner: 5.30 – 7.00pm

Weekends

Breakfast snacks are available in house kitchens

Brunch: 11:00am – 12.00pm

Dinner: 5.00 – 6.30pm

Boarders are expected to eat at least two meals a day in the school canteen. Menus operate on a three-weekly rotation and are clearly posted.

Snacks are available in house kitchen. Each house has a Food Representative who helps order snack boxes, and students are encouraged to share suggestions for menu ideas. You can also join the Food Committee to help shape future menus in collaboration with our catering team.

We regularly host International Food Evenings, cooking activities and themed meals. Students can help design the menu and participate in food-based events.

Takeaway or food delivery is allowed on Friday and Saturday evenings only and must be arranged in agreement with your houseparent. Food delivery is not allowed during the school day.

Boarding houses have kitchens or small kitchenettes equipped with kettles, microwaves, and toasters. Some also have ovens and cookers for meal preparation. Water fountains are available across the site, and kitchen facilities are locked overnight for safety.



Emergency Procedures

Your safety is our top priority. From your first day, you will be shown emergency exits and learn what to do if the fire alarm sounds. You must leave the building immediately using the nearest safest exit and remain silent whilst the register is taken so we can account for everyone quickly and safely. Fire drills and safety checks are held regularly to ensure everyone knows how to respond in an emergency. We also occasionally practise lockdown and evacuation procedures as part of our standard safety routine.

Boarding houses are fitted with internal fire bolts to help keep bedroom areas secure. These can still be used in an emergency so you are always able to exit safely. Before bed, make sure you have everything you need like water, medication, or anything to help you settle in for the night.

Keep all fire doors closed at all times. They should never be propped open. These doors are designed to protect you by stopping fire from spreading. While they do close automatically and can be loud, please try to close them quietly to avoid disturbing others.

CCTV is in place in kitchens and at building entrances to support safety and security. Always follow instructions from staff during an emergency and never tamper with safety equipment.



Friendships

Making friends is a big part of boarding life. Be open to meeting people from different backgrounds and support each other through the ups and downs. Respect, kindness, and laughter go a long way in making everyone feel at home. Throughout the year we will promote lots of activities to help you build positive relationships.



Getting involved

There is always plenty to do at RIC. You can join sports, movie nights, crafts, clubs, trips, and more. Or simply relax with friends in one of the common rooms. Whether you prefer something active or more low-key, there is always an opportunity to take part, have fun, and maybe try something new.

If you have ideas for new clubs or activities, speak to your houseparent or Boarding Senate representative. You can also join the Food Committee or suggest ideas for the activity programme.

After-School and Evening Activities

Every day after 4.00pm, a variety of activities are available through school. In the evenings, Residential Tutors run clubs from 7.00 to 9.30pm alongside Study Hub. Some clubs are student-led, giving you a chance to share your own interests.

Study Hub

Study Hub runs Sunday to Thursday in the upstairs computer room in New Court from 7.00 to 9.00pm. It is supported by Resident Tutors who are available to help with homework, academic support, and workshops. Lower School boarders must attend on Sunday evenings.

Trips and Outings

Midweek Trips: Theatre shows, musicals, and other cultural experiences (sign up via ORAH).

Weekend Trips: Every weekend offers at least one trip to an activity or destination. Suggestions are welcome—just speak to your houseparent.

Local Area Activities

To find information on activities, clubs, associations and venues in the local area, speak to your houseparent if you have a specific interest.



Health

Your health and wellbeing matter to us. Our College Medical and Wellbeing Team includes a Registered Nurse, a Nursing Assistant, a Counsellor, and members of the pastoral and safeguarding team. All students are asked to share any medical needs before joining so we can make the right arrangements to support you. This might include helping with medication, attending appointments, or offering mobility support.

When you arrive, you will have a medical check as part of settling in. The Medical Team is based at 23 Star Hill and is available every day during term time from 8.00am to 4.00pm on a drop-in basis. Your houseparents are trained in first aid and can give you over-the-counter medication if needed.

If you would like to speak to a counsellor, confidential sessions can be arranged by emailing Tanya at tanya.adolpho@rochester-college.org.uk.

In addition to our in-house team, we can also connect you with external services if specialist support is needed. Your houseparents are always a good place to start if you feel unsure or need advice.

You will also see posters around the college showing who our First Aiders and Mental Health First Aiders are, so you always know who to turn to.

If you are unwell during the school day, you may be cared for in the sick bay by the Nurse or Medical Assistant, with access to separate toilet and washing facilities. Most boarders who are unwell are cared for in their bedrooms with the support of Pastoral Assistants during the day and houseparents in the evenings and overnight. If the Medical Team signs you out of lessons, they will contact your parents or carers to let them know.



Internet Use

Wi-Fi is available throughout the boarding houses. Use devices responsibly and be mindful not to disturb others. All students are required to sign the College's Acceptable Use of IT policy when they start. This outlines the expectations around using technology safely and respectfully.

The College has filtering and monitoring systems in place to support your safety while using the school Wi-Fi. You will also receive online safety education as part of the curriculum so you can make informed, responsible choices online



Judgement free

We celebrate who you are. Whatever your background, culture, beliefs, gender, or identity — you belong here. Our boarding community is a space where you can be yourself with confidence and pride.

We are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone is valued and accepted. If you have a concern or feel uncomfortable at any time, know that you can speak to a trusted adult and you will be listened to



Key People

You are never on your own at RIC. From day one, you will be introduced to the people who are here to help you. For students under the age of eighteen, there is always a houseparent living in the same house and they are available every morning, evening and weekend to support you. Academic and support staff are also here for you during the school day. When you arrive at the college, you will be introduced to your houseparents

for your community and given their contact details. While each community has specific houseparents, they and the senior staff are available to support all students. Your houseparents are here to make sure you are safe, well, and happy and are available to boarders twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. They are trained in first aid and medication administration and are always ready to help, just like family. Overnight staff are awake and on duty throughout the night and can be contacted at any time.

Each student is also assigned a Director of Studies. They will meet with you bi-weekly to reflect on the previous weeks, prepare for what is ahead, and support you with academic and personal goals. They also serve as a main point of contact for your parents or guardians.

You are also supported by your Resident Tutors, the pastoral team, and sometimes your guardian or agent. If you ever feel uncomfortable sharing a concern with staff at school, you can speak to our [Independent Listener, Helen Rose](#). She is available Monday to Friday from 7 to 8 pm on [07483 376 652](#).

All staff who work in boarding have been carefully checked and trained. Only the right people are here to look after you.



Laundry

Laundry services are available to all boarders. You will receive two laundry bags and have a scheduled laundry evening once a week. This is displayed on a poster in your room. On your designated day, please take your bags to the designated drop-off point between 7.00 and 8.00pm. The Housekeeping Team will check in your items and have them ready for collection the following evening.

Please wash your clothes regularly. Fresh bed linen is provided and replaced every week. If you need help with laundry or stain removal, just ask your houseparent.



Maintenance

If you are ever unhappy with something in your room or notice a problem anywhere in your house, speak to your houseparent. They will report it directly to our maintenance team, who will visit the area and aim to fix the issue as soon as possible.

It does not have to be a big problem, tell someone if you need a new light bulb, if your chair squeaks, or if you need extra coat hangers. If you feel too hot or too cold, something breaks, or you think something could be improved, let us know. Accidents happen and we are here to help make things better quickly and safely.



Needs & Concerns

Your needs matter. If something is bothering you whether it is a personal issue, something in your room, or a concern within your house please talk to someone. You can speak informally or make a formal complaint, and you will never get in trouble for speaking up.

We take every concern seriously and always aim to resolve things quickly and fairly. Most of the time, boarders are encouraged to raise concerns with their houseparent or any member of the boarding team. If a formal complaint is made, it will be passed to the boarding leadership team who will follow the College's complaints procedure. Key policies are all available on the college website, additional policies can be provided on request.

Suggestions for improvement are also welcome. Your voice helps us make boarding better for everyone.



ORAH

We use ORAH to record leave permissions and check-ins. All students are required to sign in and out using the ORAH app, and follow the permissions system to ensure their whereabouts are known at all times.

Daily Registration

Weekdays: Breakfast registration and dinner

Weekends: Brunch and dinner

Room checks for all boarders



Off-Site Passes

Local area off-site passes may be requested, subject to approval by houseparents, depending on the age of the student.

Weekend and Overnight Passes

Day passes for areas beyond the local community can be requested via ORAH. Approval is based on reason, schoolwork, parental consent, and conduct.

Overnight passes must be submitted by Wednesday evening. These are only granted when staying with a known adult aged 25 or over, with parental permission, and are subject to approval by the Director of Studies if requested during term time.

Always speak to your houseparent if you are unsure about ORAH guidelines or need help submitting a request.



Parents and guardians

We work in close partnership with your parents and guardians to support your success and wellbeing.

Communication is open, transparent, and ongoing. We welcome any observations, questions, or updates they wish to share, and we are always here to provide reassurance, especially for those who are far from home.

You are encouraged to call, message, or video chat with home whenever you like. There is Wi-Fi, phone access, and spaces where you can relax and stay connected. Your houseparents will confirm contact details with families when you join your community.

Parents and guardians will receive periodic updates and are expected to approve passes using the ORAH system. Their partnership with the boarding and academic teams helps ensure the best outcomes for you, both personally and academically.



Questions

If you have a question, idea, or something on your mind, speak to your houseparent, Director of Studies or any member of the boarding team. Your opinions are valued and your concerns matter.

You can also share your thoughts anonymously using the suggestion boxes in boarding houses. Regular house meetings give everyone a chance to raise ideas and make boarding even better for all of us.

[Click here](#) to see the answers to some additional questions that you might have.



Routines

Daily boarding life follows a shared rhythm to support your wellbeing and success. Morning wake-ups, meal times, and study periods help structure your day.



Safeguarding and support

We are committed to keeping you safe. Speak to a trusted adult if something feels wrong. Safeguarding policies and procedures are in place to protect you, and your wellbeing is always a priority.

The college has a dedicated Pastoral and Safeguarding Team based in Star Hill. They are experienced in helping students who feel unsafe at school, in the community, or at home. You can also contact them directly by emailing kayleigh.simpson@rochester-college.org.uk.

You will find posters in your boarding house with more information about who to contact and how to access support. These posters also include contact numbers for First Aiders, Mental Health First Aiders, and helplines for external services.

The Student Support Website, created by students and the Safeguarding Team, has lots of useful resources to help you stay informed, safe, and supported.

The Pastoral and Safeguarding Team are here not only to respond in times of difficulty, but to offer daily support and guidance. They can help with peer relationships, romantic relationships, mental health, and anything that affects your happiness or wellbeing. There is no judgment, only care. We can support referrals to external agencies if needed, and help create a safe and comfortable space for you within the college.

For yours and the college community's safety everyone is required to wear their lanyard during the school day. Please ensure you have this on you at all times.



Transport and Travel

We are here to help with your transport needs. Whether it is a visit to friends or family or an appointment, we can help make arrangements and ensure your journey is safe and organised. For international students, we can arrange pickups and returns to and from the airport.

The local train station is just a 10-minute walk from the college and has good links to London. Boarding staff will show you how to use public transport and navigate the area confidently.

There is no car parking available on site so please bear this in mind if you plan on bringing a car. If you need to travel, speak to your houseparent in advance to arrange permission and transport.



Use of boarding spaces

Your boarding house is your home, and we want it to feel cosy, welcoming, and safe. Each bedroom is equipped with a comfortable bed, study area, desk lamp, and chair. Some rooms have en-suite bathrooms, while others share a bathroom with no more than three people. You are welcome to decorate your room with posters and personal touches. Your bedroom is personal to you, and you will be allocated an individual key to keep safe. Key members of staff also have access to your bedroom using master keys but will always knock and ensure you are ready before entering.

We expect you to keep your rooms neat and tidy, there will be room checks by your houseparents to ensure

that your room continues to be safe and free from hazards. You should not have kettles, rice cookers, oil burners, candles, lighters, vapes or other restricted items in your room. If found, they will be removed by staff and returned at the holidays as appropriate. Let your houseparent know if there are any issues with your room so we can help resolve them quickly.

There are three large common rooms across campus, as well as plenty of outdoor spaces and gardens where you can relax and spend time with others. Common areas like lounges and kitchens are for everyone—please tidy up after yourself and be considerate of others. These shared spaces are ideal for relaxing, chatting and building friendships.

You may also use classrooms for quiet study outside lesson time. Students are welcome to invite guests into communal areas and must sign them in so houseparents are aware they are on site. However, only residents of each house are permitted in the bedroom areas. These areas are secured behind locked doors or are located on upper floors away from main entrances.

We make sure boarding houses remain secure at all times, with staff available during the day and overnight. If anything ever worries you or does not feel right, speak to a member of staff—we are always here to help and support you.



Valuables

We provide a lockable small safe in your bedroom to store your valuables. You will be shown how to keep your belongings safe, but we recommend not bringing anything you would be heartbroken to lose.

The college does not usually hold personal items throughout the year. However, passports and travel documents can be stored securely by the Admissions Team.

Students are encouraged to have their own bank accounts, though the Finance Department can store money if needed. At the end of the year, personal items can be stored on site over the summer, clearly labelled and returned to you when you come back.

Students can receive post and parcels during term time. Please have any items addressed to:

[Rochester Independent College, 37 Star Hill, Rochester, Kent ME1 1XF.](#)

If you live in the Northbank Campus you can have your parcels delivered directly to:

[Rochester Independent College, 209-217 High Street, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1HB.](#)

Deliveries to the main campus can be collected from the Star Hill office from 4.00 pm. Items not collected will be delivered to your boarding house by staff. Please do not order high-value items unless necessary. If you are unsure about ordering something, check with your houseparent first.



Worship

We support students of all faiths and beliefs. A reflection room is available at Northbank for quiet prayer or personal time. During Ramadan, we make arrangements for fasting students, including access to house kitchens for out-of-hours meals. If you have specific religious or spiritual needs, please speak to your houseparent so we can support you appropriately and respectfully. Speak to your houseparent to find the locations of various places of worship in the local area.



Xtras

From extra opportunities to extra support, there is always something more on offer. You can take part in work experience or volunteering opportunities, complete optional courses like TEFL, and suggest new

clubs or activities. We also support student-led initiatives; past clubs have included crochet, film club, pool competitions and Dungeons and Dragons. Buddy systems and peer mentoring help foster friendships and support across years. These extras enrich your experience and help you grow personally and academically. Take part, get involved, and help create even more experiences that make your time here special. These enrich your experience and help you grow.



Your Voice

You have a voice in how things work at RIC and we want to hear it. You can share your thoughts during house meetings, by speaking to a member of staff, or by popping ideas into the suggestion box whenever something comes to mind. We also send surveys throughout the year to gather your feedback. If there is something you would rather discuss privately, we will always make time to listen and support you.

Your opinions can help shape real change across the college. The Student Council meets regularly to discuss ideas, feedback, and ways to improve boarding life.

The Council works with staff to action suggestions and help plan events like the Christmas party, awareness campaigns, and charity initiatives. Meetings also give staff the chance to update students on progress made in response to student requests. Whether it is a big idea or a small suggestion, your voice matters.



Zero Tolerance

We do not tolerate bullying, discrimination, drugs, or harassment. Everyone has the right to feel safe and respected. We deal with problems fairly and help you grow from mistakes.

The College's Anti-Bullying Policy guides how the boarding team responds to issues. Prevention starts with strong relationships, understanding our students, and keeping up with social dynamics. Staff are trained to notice concerns early and respond with care and consistency.

There are several ways you can report bullying or concerns. You can speak to your houseparent, share your thoughts through community surveys, attend check-ins, speak to the Pastoral and Safeguarding Team, raise the concern anonymously through the WHISPER app or visit counselling drop-ins. All reports are taken seriously, and your wellbeing is our priority.

Boarding Community Contact Details

Dickens Community - +44 (0)7576 641066

dickens@rochester-college.org.uk

Star Hill Community - +44 (0)7480 581039

starhill@rochester-college.org.uk

Northbank Community - +44 (0)7955 315691

northbank@rochester-college.org.uk



Come as you are,
leave as you want to be



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