

2024 | 2025



**BOARDING LIFE
HANDBOOK**

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Message from the Deputy Head of School



Dear QMS Parents and Guardians,

As educators striving to prepare students for the realities and challenges of an unknown future, a high-quality boarding experience can offer so many opportunities for individuals to develop character, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness. Navigating the complexities of adolescence with many other students requires numerous qualities, such as perseverance, compassion, and respect. At QMS, we seek to create cultures and environments that help develop key behaviours and habits that will give students an advantage in life.

Living so far from home and learning a new culture can be challenging; however, our team of boarding staff are in place and willing to support. The importance of relationship building cannot be underestimated; both between staff and students and between staff and parents. As we operate *in loco parentis*, we hope to create strong partnerships that yield significant personal development and growth for your children.

In our efforts to create capable, confident and connected people, we hope that your children will enjoy the boarding house environment, build lasting relationships, and discover a sense of purpose in life that will provide direction in the coming years.

With an emphasis on wellbeing, our Director of Boarding and House Directors, along with their support teams, are excited to provide guidance and role modelling to your children, and to build relationships with you, their parents and guardians. Please use the resources available to build constructive and meaningful relationships with our boarding team as they will take a keen interest in your children's development this year.

We look forward to the invaluable journey boarding life provides.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ander Monro', written in a cursive style.

Ander Monro
Deputy Head of School



1.0 Program Goals

1.1 Core Behaviours

Curiosity; Bravery; Kindness; and Open-Mindedness

In order to personally develop and build self-confidence, we ask that students embrace these core behaviours. Being curious is a foundational quality of any meaningful learning, and in Geoghegan House and Denny House this is no different. We invite students to explore their own values, perspectives and characters, and seek to learn more about the people with whom they live. Understanding different perspectives and preferences is integral to learning about how to live with other people and to develop a better sense of oneself.

Living away from home can present numerous challenges and requires a brave spirit to overcome fears associated with challenge. We know that through the network of peers, student leaders, and boarding staff, we have the knowledge and experience to help all students develop tools that will help them overcome their fears and promote personal growth. The courage to try new things is one element of a boarding experience that is so important, and there will be plenty of opportunities for this.

Kindness requires a level of respect and manners that results in a sense of compassion for others' wellbeing. To create an environment that is hospitable and welcoming, especially at the end of a long, busy week, is absolutely crucial to making QMS feel like a home away from home.

With all the new experiences and opportunities—not to mention the culture shift—we ask all students to embrace the notion of being open-minded; open minded to other people, to new systems and to new adventures. This ties in with and links back to curiosity and learning. If we keep an open mind, it is amazing how we can change our pre-conceived perceptions and discover new interests or passions.



2.0 Boarding Staff and Resources

2.1 Staff

Each boarding house has a House Director (HD), Assistant House Director (AHD), Boarding Assistant (BA), as well as supporting Student Assistants (GAP students) and interns. During the week, teachers will come into the house to provide supervision and guidance. Together through the leadership of the HD, these teams collaborate to ensure that the environment, culture and care are optimized for the student experience. We also have our Health and Wellness staff who provide health and wellness support as required.

Our Boarding Team:

Director of Boarding – Wes Plater

Geoghegan House Director (HD) – Jessica Lyric

Geoghegan Assistant House Director (AHD) – Cristina Mir Baucells

Geoghegan Boarding Assistant (BA) – Katie Colosimo

Denny House Director (HD) – Rob Jones

Denny Assistant House Director (AHD) – Marlene Donaldson

Denny Boarding Assistant (BA) – Noah Charles

Junior Boarding Coordinator – Rowena Jones

International Boarding Coordinator – Qing Li

School Nurse – Mindy Swamy and Tara Raymond

Senior School Counsellor – Alison Bowden, Rubeena Sandhu and Darlene Tully

Transportation Coordinator – Mavis Weatherbee



Wes Plater, Director of Boarding: Wes was born in Duncan, BC and raised in Williams Lake, BC. He was lucky enough to attend Shawnigan Lake School and went on to obtain a Bachelor of Education Degree at UVIC. His teaching career has revolved entirely around the boarding aspects of school life (24 years). Wes has had several roles in various schools including being a House Director, Assistant House Director, Social Studies teacher, PE teacher and Rugby coach. He is excited to be a part of the QMS boarding team and looks forward to continuing to build and develop the boarding program. Beyond his professional life, he cherishes family time, fishing on the West Coast, and exploring the world through travel. Wes Plater's contact details are: wplater@qms.bc.ca 1-250-732-5317



Jessica Lyric, Geoghegan House Director: Jessica was born in St John, New Brunswick and raised in Shawnigan Lake, BC. She is excited to bring a sense of family to the boarding house because her boarding house in high school felt like an extension of her family. She is also eager to start some new traditions and to help understand each student as an individual. She has lived in France, England and the US, and has taught ELL for many years as well as students from all around the world. Jessica holds a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education (both SFU) and Master of Educational Technology (UBC). She also has a Film Foundation diploma from Vancouver Film School. She is TESL certified and is First Aid qualified. Her hobbies include reading, writing fiction, singing, playing with her daughter, and critiquing film and TV shows. Jessica's contact details are: jlyric@qms.bc.ca 1-604-226-2488





Rob Jones, Denny House Director: Rob was born and raised in a small village in rural Wales. Rob is a passionate Rugby coach and outdoor enthusiast. He gained his A-Levels at The Bishop of Llandaff Church of Wales High School before heading to London where he gained a Bsc (Hons) degree in Sport Science, Geography and Environmental Issues. From there he went back to Cardiff and completed a Post Graduate Certificate of Education in Physical Education. Rob spent the first few years of his career teaching at a small Island school off Penzance in England, where he taught PE to both high school and primary aged students. In 2004 he made the move to New Zealand and has spent the last 20 years teaching at Feilding High School. Rob has been a Sports Director, House Director and Head of Physical Education, but most important of all a parent to four daughters. He is very excited to be joining QMS with his family and not only giving his family a life changing cultural experience but also being able to help shape and grow both the Denny Boarding House and the rugby program at Queen Margaret's School. Rob's contact details are: rjones@qms.bc.ca 1-250-732-4612



Qing Li, International Boarding Coordinator: Qing Li was born in Inner Mongolia, China, and spent her childhood in Xin Jiang. She graduated from high school and university in Tianjin, where she received a bachelor's degree in teaching. She taught high school after graduation, then moved to Quebec in 2003 where she taught Chinese to children and adults. Later, Qing received a certificate in Tourism from Concordia University. Qing moved to Vancouver Island at the beginning of July 2017 and started working in the boarding house at QMS at the end of August the same year. She has certificates in First Aid and Mental Health First Aid. She likes to learn as much as she can about as many boarders as she can. She is often amazed and touched by the stories they tell that have shaped their lives so far. She feels truly fortunate to be a small part of the boarders' teenage years. Qing's hobbies are photography, table tennis, badminton, calligraphy and walking in nature. She lives in a rural setting with her husband, Ken and Millie the cat. Qing's contact details are: qli@qms.bc.ca 1-250-886-0798

Health and Wellness – The QMS nursing, counselling, and athletic therapy staff focus on keeping our students healthy. It is important to communicate all medical history or concerns with our health team to ensure we provide the best care for your child. When required, the QMS nurses communicate with community medical professionals such as physicians, dentists, physiotherapists, etc. Our counsellors help connect students and their families with other professional services as needed. We are pleased to assure parents that the Cowichan Valley is home to a large team of highly qualified health and wellness professionals. QMS is located across the street from a large full-service hospital.

The nurses can be reached at: nurse@qms.bc.ca

School Assistants (GAP Students) – These young people are generally 18–21 years of age, English speaking students from various countries. They are part of a program which involves spending a part of or a full year at QMS before beginning their university studies. They assist young students in the classroom and boarding staff in the boarding house.



2.2 Communication

Healthy, constructive communication is the key to successful relationships, and we encourage our staff to build positive relationships with parents, updating them on student success and learning. If you have an academic concern, please contact your child's Faculty Advisor, and thereafter, for any concerns, please contact their HD.

2.3 Technology Resources

Wi-Fi Access, Laptop Computers and Cellular Phones

Wi-Fi access is available throughout the boarding house. All students are expected to bring their own laptop (please see the [School Handbook](#) for details). Students with international cellular phones must ensure the phone is "unlocked" before coming to Canada. Locked cellular phones will restrict Canadian cellular activation plans and could result in very expensive options. Please provide boarding staff with your child's cellular number and advise them of any changes to cellular phones or numbers, both domestic and international throughout the year.

Students in Grades 6 to 10 will have to hand in their technology in the evening.

2.4 School Store

The School Store sells uniform items and may be able to order specialty sizes upon request. All uniform items, with the exception of runners and dress shoes, are available in our on-campus School Store. Please see the required uniform item list available in our [School Handbook](#) or on our website qms.bc.ca.

Students whose parents have given prior authorization may charge School Store items to their account. Parents are asked to indicate their child's School Store charging privilege on the School Store Permission Form include with the fee invoice from the Finance department, or by sending an email to accounting@qms.bc.ca.



3.0 Boarding Daily Routines

Students will have a morning sign-in with an adult before heading to breakfast. Thereafter they will head to classes, returning at the end of the school day to prepare for tutorials, sports, arts, activities, or service. Students will sign-in with an adult before dinner, which is served between 5:30pm and 6:30pm, and then there will be homework time, followed by free time, followed by bedtime.

3.1 Schedules

General School Day

6:30am–7:00am	Wake up	
7:00am–7:15am	Breakfast Sign In	
7:00am	Breakfast	
7:50am	Leave Boarding House	
8:00am	Classes begin	
3:00pm	Classes end	
3:00pm–4:00pm	After-school academic help with teachers	
3:30pm–5:00pm	Sports, Clubs or free time. (Boarders may sign out to go off-campus if approved by boarding staff)	
5:40pm–5:45pm	Dinner Sign In	
5:30pm–6:30pm	Dinner in Glide Hall	
6:45pm	Prep Study Time begins	
8:30pm–9:00pm	Snack in the Atrium	
8:30pm	Grades 6–9	Technology Hand-in
9:00pm	Grade 10	Technology Hand-in
9:30pm	Grades 6–9	Lights Out
10:00pm	Grade 10	Lights Out
10:30pm	Grade 11	Lights Out
11:00am	Grade 12	Lights Out

Weekend Routine

As posted in Houses by the HD

11:00am–11:15am	Brunch Sign In
11:00am–12:00pm	Brunch
5:30pm–5:45pm	Dinner Sign In
5:30pm–6:30pm	Dinner

Weekend Leave

Students requesting a weekend leave must submit a REACH request by Wednesday at 9:00pm. Before departure, they must sign out with boarding staff and sign in upon return.



3.2 Young Boarders Program Grades 6 to 9

Our Young Boarders Program recognizes that our Junior School boarders in Grades 6 to 7 and Senior School boarders in Grades 8 to 9 require additional attention. Because of their age, boarding staff spend more one-on-one time with them to help with their daily learning and living. Areas of focus for our Young Boarders include:

- More supervision, both on and off-campus
- Organized and supervised age appropriate weekend activities
- Personal hygiene and self-care
- Developmental support (social and emotional)
- Organizational skills
- Individual academic support
- Technology supervision
- Healthy lifestyle choices (friendships, food, exercise, etc.)

3.3 Free Time

Boarders have grade appropriate free time throughout the week. Students may use their free time to join athletic teams, complete homework, access the fitness studio, attend academic tutorials or music lessons, visit the Equestrian Centre, etc. All boarders must sign out if they leave the boarding house. This information is posted throughout the House. Extra sign-out hours must be approved by boarding staff.

3.4 Academic Support

Prep Study Time

Prep study time is a mandatory quiet study period which takes place on school evenings between 6:45pm and 8:00pm. Please try to avoid contacting your child during Prep Time unless it is an emergency. It can be disruptive to their studying time as well as the other students around them.

Academic Help

QMS faculty members offer general academic support in tutorial and during prep study time. All students are encouraged to use this time to ask questions and clarify assignment expectations from their subject area teachers.

Tutors

If a student requires additional support with their school work, we recommend hiring a professional tutor. Parents may request extra tutoring support through the Post-Secondary Counselling Office. Self-arranged online tutoring schedules must be pre-approved by the House Directors to avoid conflicts with community events.



4.0 Welcome to your Room

Welcome to our Boarding House

You and/or your child will be greeted at the main entrance upon arrival to our campus. Staff will show your child to their room.

4.1 Room Assignment

Currently, we have two Boarding houses: Geoghegan House, which is currently assigned as a Girls' House and Denny House, which is currently assigned as a Boys' House. We strive to create environments in which boarding students can develop their own self-awareness, self-expression and skills for relating with others. If there are students for whom gendered boarding assignments may not be the ideal fit, QMS will strive to create a boarding option that meets the student's needs.

The House Directors assign rooms and roommates each year based on previous years and matching student profiles and grades. Most of our rooms are double rooms, many with bunk beds. Our Young Boarders can have up to four students in one large room. Single rooms are assigned to senior students or student leaders as available. Furnishings include a mattress, pillow, built-in desk area, closet area and dresser drawers.

Sharing a room with another student will be a new experience for many students. Learning to share space takes a lot of conversation, consideration and respect. Staff will support students through this transition and address any roommate issues or concerns that appear. It is important that parents support staff during this transition time so all boarders can settle quickly to their new environment and routine.

Room changes are at the discretion of the House Directors. Changes to rooms could involve many other students (and families); therefore, patience and understanding is the best solution when working through roommate issues.

Your support will help your child feel confident in learning new life skills as they adapt to living with other students around them.

4.2 Room Decoration

Students are responsible for maintaining the condition of their room, including the furniture. Rooms can be decorated individually by each student, but all material must be appropriate and not offensive to others. Any inappropriate pictures or words will be removed. Our local fire regulations state that no more than **20%** of the walls can be covered. Staff members provide each student with "sticky tack" (a gentle wall adhesive) to use when putting pictures on the wall. No tape is allowed as it takes the paint off the walls, and pins or tacks cause too much damage. Students may be billed for damage to their room and furniture for actions such as writing on desks, walls, chairs or beds.

4.3 Room Cleanliness

Each student is responsible for keeping their room tidy. Sharing space means learning to organize belongings and to respect the other student(s) in the room. Your child is responsible for making their bed, vacuuming the floor, putting their clothes away, removing garbage and any other tidiness needed to maintain an enjoyable space to live. Housekeeping staff DO NOT clean bedrooms but do clean the common areas such as hallways, stairs, bathrooms and common gathering spaces. Student rooms are inspected each school day.



Boarders are not permitted to use any sort of hair dye in their room, the bathrooms or common areas. Hair dye stains everything it comes into contact with. If carpets, furniture or other boarding house items are stained or damaged, the fees for cleaning or replacing these items will be charged to the students' family account.

4.4 Personal Belongings

In addition to all toiletries, casual clothing, outerwear and school uniform, here is a basic list of what your child will need to bring or purchase upon arrival:

- One (1) small laundry bag for delicate clothing items such as socks, bras and underwear
- One (1) large laundry bag for large items
- Two (2) bath towels, face cloths, hand towels
- Bedding for twin size bed—bottom sheet, top sheet, blanket/quilt, and pillowcase
- Sleepwear (including a bathrobe and slippers)
- Flip flops for wearing in the shower
- Flashlight and batteries (for night-time emergencies)
- Canadian Safety Association (CSA) approved electronics as needed such as laptops, tablets, cellular phones

All items and clothing must be clearly labelled with the boarder's name in English.

Please note:

- Students are expected to wear the school uniform during school hours and to official functions as required. Uniform details are listed in the [School Handbook](#) and must be purchased at the School Store.
- Casual dress may be worn after class time, on weekends and on holidays. We ask that students wear appropriate clothing. Students are not allowed to wear revealing clothing or items promoting alcohol, tobacco, drugs, foul language or sexual connotations.
- Suitable clothing for formal occasions should be packed.
- A bathing suit will be required for PE class and some boarding life activities.
- Boarders traveling to and from the School at the beginning and end of a holiday or on a weekend leave must wear "respectful casual dress."
- Pajamas and any sleepwear should be respectable.

Dresser and cupboard space is limited, we ask students to keep their personal items to a minimum.

The School is NOT responsible for lost or stolen property. Students are asked to ensure all valuables are locked up in the lockable cupboard provided in their room or given to boarding staff for safe keeping. (See [Section 8.4](#) for more information.)

Students are NOT to keep large amounts of money in their room. HDs have a safe-box available where money can be securely stored. It is impossible to replace lost or misplaced money.



Items NOT permitted in Rooms

- Candles, liquid wax, matches, lighters, incense or other strong-smelling room fresheners
- Cooking or heating equipment (such as electric kettles or hot plates)
- Refrigerators or freezers
- Televisions
- Large stereo or electronic gaming systems
- Pets of any kind
- Hair dye

4.5 Room Searches

Safety and the overall wellness of all our students is important. The House Directors will direct and monitor any necessary student room searches, with or without the student present, should there be concern of any possible illegal action, involvement, or wrongful behavior that may affect the safety or well-being of our students. Reasons for room searches could include, but are not limited to, possible possession of alcohol, drugs or suspicion of theft.

4.6 Laundry Services

Each boarder is responsible for having all of their uniform and clothing clearly labelled with a permanent black marker or a label. It is each boarder's responsibility to ensure that their laundry is done regularly and not allowed to pile up.

Free laundry services are provided on-site twice a week by our housekeeping staff. A schedule is posted in each hallway.

Students also have the option to do their own laundry in one of the student laundry rooms.

Housekeeping staff will not be responsible for color fading, shrinkage, damaged, or lost clothing articles. Housekeeping will also assist in coordinating dry cleaning services as needed (dry cleaning expenses will be billed to the student's school account).

4.7 Electronic Devices

All electronic devices (laptops, tablets, cellular phones, iPods, cameras, etc.) **must** be clearly labelled with the student's name. Students are expected to follow the [QMS Technology Use Policy](#) guidelines as outlined on our School website at qms.bc.ca. Wi-Fi is available across campus.

Students in Grades 6 to 10 are required to turn in all electronic devices before bedtime to ensure a good night's sleep. At times, we find this action is also needed for older students who require support in managing their electronic usage.

4.8 Summer Storage for Returning Students

Limited storage of personal items over the summer months will be provided for registered returning students only.

QMS will store a maximum of three (3) small boxes per student. Standard size boxes (18 cm X 18 cm X 16 cm), along with labels, will be available at a cost to the student. More than three (3) boxes must be approved by the House Directors.



Packing and shipping personal items home is the responsibility of the parent and student.

If your child withdraws from QMS before the end of the school year, either they or their parents are responsible for packing all of their belongings. If this is not possible, and a member of the boarding staff must clean out the room, charges may apply. Costs would include the preparation and shipping of **non-replaceable** items only. Replaceable items will be donated to local charities.



5.0 Healthy Living

Your child's health and wellness is important to us!

We promote healthy living and encourage our boarders to learn how to make important personal decisions regarding their own health and wellness. Our health services team works closely with our staff and faculty in supporting and encouraging healthy lifestyles for our boarders. We remind our students of the benefits of exercise, proper nutrition and quality sleep. We also support our boarders as they learn to manage stress effectively, choose supportive friends, and take quiet time to self-reflect.

5.1 Homesickness

Being away from family and familiar routines can sometimes bring feelings of homesickness. This is normal and our boarding staff are prepared to help ease the transition, providing extra care to boarders who are experiencing temporary feelings of sadness. Staying connected with family, bonding to new friends in boarding and staying in a positive routine can help overcome these feelings quickly.

5.2 Food and Nutrition

Our staff will discuss the importance of nutrition and healthy food choices with boarding students. Our Food Services department supplies quality food choices for breakfast, lunch and dinner. All meals follow the Canada Food Guide and include the necessary proteins, fruits and vegetables and whole grains to maintain good health. Snacks are also available after school and in the evening. Our healthy food selections reflect local and seasonal cuisine here in British Columbia.

There are two cafeterias on campus: *Glide Hall*, named after our former Headmistress Margaret Glide, and *Karin Quinn Hall*, named in memory of a past parent. Meals are prepared by our Food Services staff and served buffet style in both dining halls during meal times.

Special dietary needs can be accommodated. Please share any dietary information on the annual Health Reporting Form or email the nurse: nurse@gms.bc.ca

5.3 The Importance of Exercise and Sleep

Exercise provides energy and health to the body and mind. We encourage all boarders to participate in walking, running, weight training, team sports or other scheduled fitness classes. The School Athletics program offers sports such as volleyball, basketball, golf, soccer, rugby, badminton and equestrian riding.

Sleep is vital to our health. Sleep helps the body and mind recover from the busyness of the day. Limiting healthy sleep can affect learning, emotional and physical health, as well as healthy decision making. Enough rest and sleep will support the happiness and success of each boarding student.

5.4 Illegal Drugs, Smoking, Alcohol, Sex

Teen life is a time when independence and personal choices are tested. We recognize the challenges of peer pressure and have clear policies and an immediate response to the rare issues involving alcohol, drugs and smoking.



Our campus is a *tobacco and drug free* campus (including vapour and e-cigarettes) and students are taught about the health dangers and addictions of these substances. British Columbia is known for its clean fresh air and outdoor living. Laws regarding smoking areas are very strict in protecting others from the harms of secondhand smoke or vapour. It is illegal to purchase alcohol, cigarettes or cannabis when under the age of 19. Because we care about your child's health, we take this seriously, and severe action can result should a student choose to participate in the use, sale or possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco or vapour products, cannabis or e-cigarettes. If a student turns 19 years of age while boarding in our boarding house these rules and expectations still apply, even if they are of legal age in British Columbia.

Sex is a natural topic of curiosity for many teenagers. Under our Health and Wellness Program, students learn in the classroom about sex and sexual relationships. This information is intended to promote healthy conversation keeping family values, religious beliefs and personal responsibility in mind. While exploring sexuality and consensual sexual activity is a normal part of developing one's identity, engaging in sexual behaviours can distract and detract from the positive learning environment QMS strives to create. While in the care of the school, it is expected that QMS students refrain from engaging in sexual behaviours. This applies to time spent on school grounds, in school buildings and while participating in off-campus and extracurricular activities.



6.0 Health Centre

Our Health and Wellness staff are here to support the health of our students. It is essential that the Annual Health Reporting form is completed before your child arrives at QMS. This will be sent out to all parents/guardians. Our School Nurse and Nurse Practitioner will conduct an initial health assessment for all new non-BC resident boarding students upon arrival. This assessment provides us with the information we need to best support your child. Please be open and honest about the health of your child and encourage them to come to the Health Centre if sick or injured.

We request that all routine health care, such as dental cleanings and medical check-ups are completed at home when school is not in session.

The School Nurse is in the Health Centre from 7:15am to 5:15pm on school days and is on-call during evenings and weekends. If a student is not feeling well, they will be monitored by the School Nurse and boarding staff. As needed, the nurses will arrange appointments with other health professionals, such as nurse practitioners, physicians, dentists, physiotherapists, optometrists, and mental health professionals. Parents are welcome to email the nurses at nurse@qms.bc.ca with any questions or concerns.

Our School Counsellor is available for those emotional times when life seems stressful or challenging. The counsellors support students in making choices that reflect personal growth, self-awareness, stress management, and other strategies that assist the student through times of need. Our counsellors also co-ordinate community resources when additional support is needed.

Our Athletic Therapist is trained in the assessment and rehabilitation of injuries. The Athletic Therapist provides on-site care during our athletics programs and rehabilitation treatment as needed, and works with the nurses to arrange for more advanced care if required.

6.1 Vaccinations

Please send a copy of your child's vaccination record in English with your child or email it to the nurse.

We only provide vaccinations to QMS students at the direct request of their parents. Please email the nurses if you want any vaccinations for your child. The nurses will reach out to parents of Grade 6 & 9 students to verify if you want them to get the routine BC vaccination program.

If your child is not immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases for whatever reason, the BC Medical Health Officer may require that they not attend classes or fully participate in school programs in the event of a community outbreak.

6.2 Medications

All medications are stored in the Health Centre, except as allowed by the nurse. This is for the safety of all students.

Students should NOT bring any medications to school. If a student needs regular medication, please contact the nurse with details as soon as possible. Medications should be prescribed by our QMS medical provider and



obtained through the Health Centre unless other arrangements are made with the nurse. If prescription medicine is required by a student, the cost will be charged to the student's account.

The Health Centre is fully stocked with over-the-counter medications to treat minor injuries and illnesses. There are first-aid and emergency supplies in multiple locations on campus, including in our fully stocked Health Centre. These items are issued to students by a nurse or boarding staff at no additional cost.

6.3 Health Insurance

QMS will arrange for health insurance for boarding students who do not have Canadian residential status (citizenship or PR card holders). This is included in the fee invoice. Students will receive coverage through the British Columbia Medical Services Plan (MSP) after 3 months in BC. Private accident and emergency insurance will cover students from their arrival in Canada until MSP coverage starts.

Students must have a valid study permit to be enrolled in MSP. If no valid study permit is available, additional fees for private medical coverage will apply and will be charged to the student's account.

Canadian students (citizens or PR card holders) are responsible to arrange for their own Health Insurance. The nurse can help Canadian students apply for coverage.



7.0 Community Building & Social Time

7.1 Boarding Activity Program

Community Building Activities

Fun and engaging activities are arranged throughout the year to connect boarding students with boarding staff in a relaxed and playful environment. The focus is on community building, our school values, service, and personal health and wellness. These events expand student engagement in the arts, create opportunities for broader friendships and create student bonds across grades. It helps students feel connected, valued and a part of their new home. **All boarding students are expected to remain in the boarding house and participate in these important scheduled activities.** Our community activities include:

- House Outings and Events
- Community Dinners (including Cultural Dinners)

Community Sport or Club Activities

Students may join many activities in the local Duncan community such as swimming lessons, dance lessons, archery, tai chi, music and more. These activities can be arranged through our House Directors. Fees and transportation costs associated with these local community organizations can be charged to your credit card on file once your permission is received.

Other Off-Campus Activities

Students can participate in the planning of individually requested activities throughout the year. Our House Directors encourage students to share their ideas with them. These activities can be initiated by students, or by staff, for student enjoyment. Individual fees associated with these activities will be applied to participating student accounts. These individual activities can include events such as:

- Vancouver, Victoria or Nanaimo day trips
- Musicals or theatre productions
- Organized competitions (i.e., dance, sports, etc.)

If your child has a special event or activity they would like us to consider, please encourage them to speak with our House Directors.

Cultural Dinners

Throughout the school year, students and staff come together to celebrate the various countries, cultures, languages and cuisine of our boarders. These dinners are an opportunity for our community to share food, customs and dress from around the world.

Family Group Meetings

All boarding students will meet regularly with their family group along with their student leadership. This is an opportunity to build support, make weekly announcements, discuss community concerns, plan friendly hallway group competitions or activities, and share in student successes and recognitions.

7.2 Student Leadership

There are many opportunities to be a student leader at QMS. We encourage all of our students to seek out opportunities as this will support their individual growth and enhance their experience. Here are a few of the leadership opportunities available in the boarding house:



- Head of House
- Deputy Head of House
- Sustainability Captains
- Duty Captains
- Activities Captains
- Junior Boarding Captains
- IT Captain
- Media Captain
- Equestrian Captain
- Celebration Captain

7.3 Social Time

Social time is important for teenage development. However, boarding staff members recognize that it is still important to guide young students in their choices and to encourage healthy activities and play. We strongly encourage our boarders to develop stronger bonds with our community through participation in campus activities and creating friendships with day students and their families. We also welcome parents to encourage their child to take advantage of the multicultural opportunities that QMS offers to forge cross-cultural connections. Those connections provide a friendly atmosphere to practice speaking English.

Common Rooms

These are rooms where boarders can visit together, watch TV and play games. The Denny Commons Room is one of the largest of the common rooms in the boarding house where students can gather throughout the week.

Visitors

All visitors must sign-in with boarding staff in the Boarding House entrance (the Atrium). We ask students to be respectful of their roommate and visit in common rooms if possible. Visiting parents and/or family members must sign in with boarding staff to let them know you are on campus.

Weekend Leaves – Day Student and Family Visits

We encourage day families to host our boarding students on weekends. All activities that our students will be participating in must be under the supervision of the host parent. All QMS rules, including the non-use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs, apply both on and off-campus. Student safety is always our top priority and the House Directors, along with boarding staff will use their discretion when approving Weekend Leave activities. For more information on travel arrangements with regard to a Leave, please see the [Section 9.3](#) in this handbook.

- **Day Student Family Visits**

The House Directors will help organize student requests and speak directly with the day family extending the invitation. This is another way of supporting your child to enjoy our local community and to surround them with other caring adults.

- **Out-of-Town Travel**

Many students enjoy going to Vancouver or Victoria to visit family or friends. At QMS, we have strict guidelines when it comes to “out of Duncan” weekend requests and staff will do everything possible to make sure your child is staying with appropriate adult supervision (a person over the age of 25) and is well cared for. Full time boarders are required to fill out a **Weekend Leave Request** using our student management system called ‘REACH,’ asking permission to leave campus. If the House Directors or



Director of Boarding are not comfortable with the request, the request may be denied.

- **School Attendance Expectations**

Academic attendance is important for academic success. Parents are asked to schedule appointments when classes are not in session. Should it be necessary for your child to take time away from class, please request permission for absence from the Director of Boarding as well as the House Directors.

Student Cooking

On weekends, students may wish to cook the occasional meal or snack for themselves. Kitchen access is limited on weekdays. Students are responsible for ensuring the kitchen area and all dishes are cleaned and put away properly following use.

Bringing Food into the Boarding House

On Fridays and Saturdays and during extended weekends, students are permitted to order food. They may also purchase ingredients and prepare their own meals. Regular meals will still be provided in the dining room in Glide Hall. Food is not to be stored or eaten in bedrooms due to health and safety concerns.

Sleepovers

Sleepovers are a fun way to spend time with friends. Students can sleep over in each other's room on Friday or Saturday night if their request has been granted by boarding staff prior to 9:00pm that evening. It is up to the discretion of the boarding staff as to whether sleepovers will be approved. Boarding staff members grant sleepover requests based on respectful and co-operative behavior, clean rooms, homework completion, health and wellness of the student, and any other general expectations that need to be considered. Requests for sleepovers involving students in a known romantic relationship will not be granted. Sleepovers can be cancelled should student's behavior become intolerable for other students or staff.

Sleepover guests are to bring their own bedding and are to sleep in the extra bed in the room. If necessary, the guest may need to sleep on the floor if an empty bed is not available. Only one person per bed please!

Birthdays

We hold monthly group birthday celebrations throughout the school year including birthday cake.

7.4 Banking and Spending Money

Boarders are learning about personal finances when they open their own bank account and learn how quickly money can be spent! This is a great life lesson and can provide an opportunity for further conversation between parents and their child. Most debit cards from other countries work in Canada (please be sure that they are Interac, Plus, Visa or Cirrus compatible). By using debit cards, parents can directly deposit money to the bank account for their child's use.

Being responsible and safe with money is another lesson to learn. Each student has a lockable closet, drawer or safe in their room to keep small amounts of money and valuables. Lost money cannot be replaced; therefore, it is important that our students use their lockable closet daily. Other personal items, large amounts of cash and travel documents shall be stored in a safe-box with the House Directors.



8.0 Safety and Security

8.1 Custodianship

All boarding students must have a guardian representative living in Canada, who are able to give consent and sign waivers on behalf of the student's parents.

House Directors can approve low risk activities throughout the year if the parents/guardians have signed the waiver at the beginning of the year. For any high risk activities, the House Directors will invite parents/guardians to sign Informed Consent and Acknowledgment of Risk Forms or Waivers when necessary.

If the House Director does not have enough information or does not feel safe or comfortable with a request, permission may be denied. We are familiar with our country and customs and will always do what is best for your child.

8.2 Student Conduct & Disciplinary Action

Queen Margaret's School prides itself on being a community built on trust, mutual respect and honesty. Our school expects all students to be good role models to others, both on or off campus. Mutual understanding and accountability are values we want our boarders to exhibit within our community. It is important to learn appropriate social skills and behaviours and to understand that consequences are attached to choices made. The school expects parents and guardians to be supportive of these QMS conduct policies and encourages parental involvement at all levels.

Minor consequences will be dealt with individually with the student and according to the individual situation. The goal is for the student to learn, understand and choose to participate in healthy choices and behaviours. In addition, students will come to recognize how others are impacted by their decisions.

Bullying or harassment of any type is unacceptable. This includes, but is not limited to, verbal, emotional, cyber, physical and sexual threats of any kind. Students making negative comments or actions toward another person will be spoken to, with the experience highlighted as an opportunity for growth and learning. If negative student behaviours continue, escalating disciplinary actions will occur.

Distribution or possession of any illegal products or drugs is considered a very serious offence. We care about the health of our students and the influence these choices have on other students. Our commitment to a safe, non-threatening and nurturing community dictates that illegal behaviour will be dealt with swiftly and seriously.

Behaviour that brings disrespect to the School, both on and off campus, will result in disciplinary action as needed, including suspension and/or expulsion from the School at the discretion of the Head of School.

Sexual misconduct is also strictly prohibited. We endeavor to create a safe learning environment for all by offering age-appropriate learning opportunities for students and staff on consent and boundaries, and by responding to disclosures of sexual misconduct promptly and with diligence.



On-Campus Suspension—“Gated”

Students who have not adhered to the boarding house guidelines may be given an on-campus suspension (“gated”) for a specified period of time. An on-campus suspension means the student is not allowed to go off-campus, to receive visitors or have a sleepover.

Suspension

For serious misbehaviour, a student may be suspended from school (internally or externally) for a period of one or more days. This sanction can be imposed by the Deputy Head of the School upon consultation with the Director of Boarding and Head of School. Off-campus homestay may be necessary; the cost will be charged to the student’s school account. Teachers will use discretion to determine marks for assignments overlapping the time period of the suspension. Field trips and/or extra-curricular activities will not be permitted, even if this causes problems for affected teams or clubs.

In the case of out-of-school suspensions, a boarder may be returned to the parent or guardian for the imposed period of time. They may not attend school or visit specific school premises. All tests and assignments must be done upon the student’s return.

Appeal Process

The Head of School is responsible for running the day-to-day operations of the School. This includes all matters pertaining to student discipline. In the event that parents disagree with the final decision of the Head of School, a special procedure for a formal review exists. The Federation of Independent Schools Association (FISA), of which QMS is a member, has identified a qualified person to act as an ombudsperson for member schools. Parents are advised that the ombudsperson is available to conduct an impartial review of the process carried out by an independent school that led to the decision in question. To initiate this process, parents can request further information through the Head of School.

Complaints

Complaints related to boarding should be submitted in writing to the Deputy Head of School and/or the Director of Boarding. A written response to the complaint will be given within 24 hours of its receipt, even if the initial response is simply outlining the investigatory process that will need to happen.

8.3 Off-Campus Privileges

Safety is a word your child will hear many times while living in the boarding house, regarding both personal safety and property safety. Signing out is mandatory for every activity that takes place **off-campus**. It is our highest priority, and we want each person to learn to be responsible for their own safety and aware of each other’s safety and well-being.

Students in Grades 6 to 8 may sign out according to the posted schedules, in pairs or groups, but never alone, and must remain with the same person(s) unless they have special permission from boarding staff. Grades 9 to 11 students may sign out and travel alone across the street to 7-11, CANCO Grocery or the Fish Bowl Cafe. For those wishing to travel downtown, they must travel in pairs. All sign-outs are based on meeting daily priorities, room tidiness, academic responsibilities, and always consider personal safety. Boarders will sign in and out with a boarding staff member prior to leaving campus and upon return. It is the staff member’s responsibility to know the location of every boarding student at all times.



Grade 12 boarders are permitted greater privileges regarding sign-outs as they learn about accountability, safety, independence and personal responsibility.

Insurance

The School does not provide insurance coverage for student belongings in the event of theft, loss or fire. We strongly recommend that parents check homeowner policies to ensure coverage on their child’s possessions (including electronics) while living at the School.

8.4 Campus Security

Throughout the day and evening, boarding house doors have restricted access and visitors must enter through the Atrium office. At night, doors are alarmed to notify staff of any entries or exits. Our private security officers patrol our campus between the hours of 10:00pm–6:00am. For special events, we can request additional security as needed.

8.5 Emergency & Safety Plans

Safety is important to us. We follow British Columbia fire regulations and provincial laws as well as the School’s emergency protocols and procedures. Together, we practice emergency and safety plans both at School and in the boarding house. These include earthquake drills, fire drills, and lock-down drills. Most staff are trained with current Level One First Aid. Information regarding our school emergency procedures can be found in our [School Handbook](#).

8.6 Emergency Contacts

If you need to contact staff or your child for an **URGENT or EMERGENCY** situation, please see the telephone numbers below:

Wes Plater	Director of Boarding	wplater@qms.bc.ca	1-250-732-5317
Ander Monro	Deputy Head of School	amonro@qms.bc.ca	1-250-732-8515



9.0 Travel and Holidays

All weekend leave and school holiday leave requests must be done by the student in the REACH program to be approved by parents/guardians and finally by their House Directors and/or Director of Boarding.

9.1 Travel Documents

Students must arrive with valid passports and a current study permit that are valid for the entire school year (September 1–June 30 or January 1–June 30 for mid-year entries). All travel documents, including passports, study permits, separate entry visas and any other necessary travel documents, must be kept with our House Directors. These documents will be stored securely in a locked, fireproof safe.

International Student Guardianship Canada (ISGC) can support families with the processing of study permits that need renewal while attending Queen Margaret's School.

9.2 Arrivals and Departures

When booking your child's flights, please remember to also book connecting flights between Vancouver (YVR) and Victoria (YYJ) or Nanaimo (YCD) airport. *Vancouver is NOT the final destination.*

New boarding parents/guardians, please inform the Transportation Coordinator (mweatherbee@gms.bc.ca) as well as the House Director and/or Director of Boarding of your child's complete arrival and departure plans so that all transportation connections from the BC Ferry terminals (Swartz Bay, Departure Bay and Duke Point) or airports (Victoria and Nanaimo) can be arranged. Please inform us if you or a family member plan to travel with your child.

Returning boarding students, please submit all travel plans in the REACH program for approval.

SPECIAL NOTE: If your child's travel plans change, just prior or during transit, please notify the House Directors and Transportation Coordinator immediately. These changes could include flight numbers, dates/times, ferry sailings and/or the name of designated family members who will be dropping-off or picking-up your child. Please ensure your child has a communication device such as a cell phone with them during their travels. This device will allow us to connect with your child to confirm their location, or to initiate emergency protocols if they do not arrive at their destination as scheduled.

At holiday breaks and year end, it is expected that STUDENTS DO NOT DEPART until after the last school exam and/or final activities and the Speech Day assembly. **Any necessary early departures** must be requested to and approved by the Junior School Principal or Deputy Head of School. It is important that your child is here for all year-end celebrations and recognition assemblies. This will help complete their year socially as well as finish their academic requirements.

9.3 Weekend Leaves—Travel Requests

Travel must be approved by the House Directors. Should a student request travel during a school day, the Junior School Principal or Deputy Head of School must also approve the student missing classes. Any overnight and weekend leaves are limited to Friday and Saturday or other non-school nights.



All boarders who wish to leave the campus overnight must submit a request in the REACH program by Wednesday of that week, before 9:00pm. The host family or family friend must also approve the request which states they are aware of the request and will be present for supervision during the stay. They can do this when they receive an email through REACH for the requested leave. All boarders must return to the boarding house by 6:00pm on Sunday, unless prior permission has been given by the HDs.

Our House Directors arrange weekend travel requests once they have been approved through REACH. They will also ensure that students who require transportation on weekends, travel in a QMS vehicle to the appropriate location. All students must return from the Lower Mainland on the 12:45pm Horseshoe Bay Ferry or the 3:00pm Tsawwassen Ferry. A QMS vehicle will meet the returning students at the pre-arranged location to bring them back to the boarding house. If your child cannot or does not meet these scheduled trips established for the weekend leaves, boarding staff must be notified before the scheduled pick-up time. The student may require public transportation or a taxi to return to the School at their own expense.

All transportation to and from the school will be billed to the student's School account, including any missed scheduled pick-ups.

9.4 Chaperoned Boarding Trips—Long Weekends and Term Breaks

Boarding staff provide organized and chaperoned trips throughout the school year during long weekends or holiday breaks. These trips may include places such as Vancouver, West Edmonton Mall, Seattle, Whistler, and one major international overseas trip during Spring Break.

Each trip is optional, requires parental consent, and the charges are applied to a credit card on file. The cost of each trip depends on the number of students participating, the location, activities provided and exchange rates.

9.5 Boarding House Closures

The boarding house is closed for the three-week Winter Break, the two-week Spring Break, and summer holidays. All boarders are required to be off-campus during these breaks.

Parents are encouraged to book flights early to ensure travel dates fall within the designated holiday dates. All students are expected to remain in School until dismissal on the last day of each term. Any special requests for early departure must be made in writing to the Director of Boarding. The boarding house remains open for all other holiday weekends.

Extended Holidays

Students are not permitted to miss classes for extended holidays. Please arrange family holidays and events within the posted School Calendar, which is accessible on the QMS website qms.bc.ca. Unexcused absences in the Senior School will disqualify students from receiving Merit Roll, which is pre-requisite for Honours or Honours with Distinction standing.

9.6 Holiday Homestay

If you require Holiday Homestay placement, please contact the Director of Boarding who will connect you with International Student Guardianship Canada (ISGC). The deadline to request Holiday Homestay for Christmas Break is **Friday, November 15, 2024** and the deadline to request Holiday Homestay for Spring Break is **Friday, February 7, 2025**.



9.7 Use of Taxis

Local taxi companies are used for transportation to and from the school for local shopping, events, etc. Students are expected to pay for taxi costs directly with the driver. If two or more students share a taxi ride, the total amount should be shared equally.

An alternate transportation company that the School recommends is:

Encore Limousine Service: 250-710-3928 or encorelimousineservice@shaw.ca.

9.8 Use of Personal Vehicles

QMS boarding students are not allowed to have or use a personal vehicle while enrolled and living on the QMS campus. In very exceptional circumstances, permission from the Deputy Head of School may be given to a boarding student to bring a vehicle for a specified period of time, but that vehicle should remain parked in an approved location and the keys given to the House Director.

9.9 QMS Transportation Charges

Scheduled transportation is organized to and from the ferry terminals, to and from the Victoria and/or Nanaimo airports, and for weekend Victoria shopping trips. School bus and driver rates for transportation are as follows and will be applied to the student's School account:

	Victoria (including Airport)	Victoria Ferry Terminal	Nanaimo (including Airport)	Nanaimo Ferry Terminal
QMS Scheduled Transportation ~ Minimum 5 students, charge per student	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
~ Below minimum of 5 students, total cost shared among # of students	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
Unscheduled Transportation	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150
Excess Trip Time Charge**	\$30/person per additional hour	\$30/person per additional hour	\$30/person per additional hour	\$30/person per additional hour

**Trips to and from the destination are scheduled to be completed within 2 hours. Additional hours required will be charged at \$30 per person.

Transportation will be scheduled between Friday at 3:00pm and Monday at 8:00am. Unscheduled transportation outside these hours must be approved in advance.

If school transportation is not available, the student/parents will be responsible for booking and paying for their transportation. An alternate transportation company that the School recommends is:

Encore Limousine Service: 250-710-3928 or encorelimousineservice@shaw.ca.



10.0 Working Together

Parents and staff have the same goals for each student: to be academically challenged and successful, to learn to be socially responsible, to grow and learn about self and others, to be happy and healthy and to be a contributing and valued citizen of the world.

To support these goals, we must work together. This means communication is very important. There will be times when we need to compromise and sometimes decisions may affect not only your child, but all other students and families. Building a community is about trust, accountability, commitment and dedication. Together, we are stronger. Together, we will see your child flourish!

We welcome you to ask questions, provide insight and discuss situations. We understand it is not easy being far away and not physically close to your child, but we ask that you trust we are here to support their growth and ability to be a strong and confident leader.

Welcome to the QMS Boarding Life Program!



11.0 Major School Dates Calendar

Please note that students are not permitted to leave classes early for travel purposes, unless given prior written authorization from the Junior School Principal or Deputy Head of School.



QMS MAJOR SCHOOL DATES 2024–2025

<p>September 2024</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30						<p>Aug. 31 Returning Grade 12 Boarders and Boarding Leaders Arrive</p> <p>Sept. 2 New Boarders Arrive</p> <p>Sept. 2 Labour Day (School Closed)</p> <p>Sept. 3 Returning Boarders Arrive</p> <p>Sept. 3 Senior & Junior School New Student Orientation Day</p> <p>Sept. 4 First Day of Classes, Kindergarten & ECE Gradual Entry</p> <p>Sept. 30 Truth & Reconciliation Day (School Closed)</p>	<p>January 2025</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	<p>Jan. 6 Professional Development (ECE Closed)</p> <p>Jan. 7 Classes Resume</p> <p>Jan. 31 Mid Term Break (ECE Closed)</p>							
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<p>Boarding House Break Details</p> <p>Christmas Break</p> <p>Dec. 18 Boarding students depart</p> <p>Dec. 19 Boarding Houses close</p> <p>Jan. 6 Boarding Houses open and boarding students arrive</p> <p>Spring Break</p> <p>Mar. 12 Boarding students depart</p> <p>Mar. 13 Boarding Houses close</p> <p>Mar. 30 Boarding Houses open and boarding students arrive</p>	<p>May 2025</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	<p>May 16 Professional Development (ECE Closed)</p> <p>May 19 Victoria Day (School Closed)</p>																																																		
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