

## School Agreements

2025-2026

### Introduction

Brockwood has a special atmosphere, arising from the beauty of the surrounding nature and the unique intentions of the place. This atmosphere is created by everyone who lives here; through the silence with which we start our days, the way we dress, talk, treat each other, clean the school, look after our rooms, and study. Each person who lives at Brockwood contributes to this atmosphere through their actions.

Over the years of the school's existence, a set of basic agreements has been developed in order to help create and maintain the special learning environment that we all find at Brockwood. Being a small school community where we not only learn but also live together, it is essential that those basic agreements are being respected without a sense of resistance or negotiation. Brockwood is a very warm and caring place, and it is our view that this atmosphere should not be taken advantage of, and that students have to be responsible for their own actions.

The agreements are shared with prospective students and their parents prior to coming to Brockwood and they are asked to consider them carefully, gain their own clarity, and for students only to join the school if they are willing and comfortable to adopt a way of living in line with the agreements for the duration of their time at the school.

Returning and older (16+) new students are expected to play an active role in upholding the agreements and in helping younger or newer students in understanding Brockwood's ethos and agreements.

The agreements are always on display on the school notice board, and can be found in the Student Handbook that all students receive at the beginning of the year. Time is also given in the first 10 days of the year to explain and familiarise students with the agreements and the ethos of the school.

### School Agreements - overview

Please find below and overview of the agreements:

- Begin the day with the morning silent meeting and be on time for all school activities
- Assist in caring for the school and for each other
- Care for your health, cleanliness and appearance
- Adopt a vegetarian diet throughout the term and eat meals at agreed times and places
- Develop a programme of studies that you apply yourself to
- Respect wing agreements and remain in your bedroom at the end of the school day
- Refrain from exclusive relationships and sexual activity
- Avoid all forms of smoking, alcohol, vaping, and other harmful substances
- Limit the use of electronic media to agreed places and times

## School Agreements - detailed explanation

Below each agreement is explained in detail.

### Begin the day with the morning silent meeting and be on time for all school activities

To begin the day with a sense of order and ease we start together at an agreed upon time with our Morning Meeting, a 10-minutes period of sitting together in silence. Spending time in silence allows us to observe and learn about our own inner world, and better understand the movement of our thoughts and feelings. We ask that everyone arrive and leave the Morning Meeting quietly.

Students are expected to wake up early enough to complete their morning routines and be fully prepared for the day before the Morning Meeting begins. After the Morning Meeting, breakfast is served, followed by Morning Jobs where students participate in cleaning tasks to help care for the school.

We expect our students to be on time for all school activities including communal duties (rota, duty, morning jobs), classes and meetings (floor meetings, school meetings, etc.).

### Assist in caring for the school and for each other

Brockwood becomes a home away from home for our students, and we want them to develop a feeling of care and responsibility for the place. This gets expressed in practical ways such as cleaning the house (morning jobs), washing dishes (rota) and assisting with duty, as well as through taking an interest in and helping fellow students and staff whenever needed. Full, punctual and reliable engagement with these activities is expected of all students.

As students grow at Brockwood, they should naturally develop a feeling of care and an increased awareness of what needs to be done to take care of the place. This is an essential part of being at Brockwood and learning to look beyond one's own self-centred concerns.

In this spirit, we also expect students to take excellent care of their rooms, as well as the school's equipment, grounds and property (such as IT equipment, sports equipment, furniture, gardens).

### Care for your health, cleanliness and appearance

Taking care of one's health and well-being is an essential part of being at Brockwood and therefore we consider it important for students to eat well, get sufficient sleep and take regular exercise. Students are supported in this through our daily and weekly schedule: the regular sports and movement activities, the wholesome food provided all day, and the bedtime at the end of the day, are all put in place to support a healthy development. It is our intention to encourage students to develop their own sense of responsibility and care, which

has implications for their health and well-being, as well as being aware of the unhealthy habits they may have acquired.

To encourage a healthy atmosphere and the breaking of detrimental habits, students are not allowed to consume coffee and caffeinated energy drinks at Brockwood, and the school strongly discourages the consumption of junk food. Possession or distribution of large amounts of unhealthy (ultra-processed) food is not permitted.

We encourage students to reflect on their appearance and to understand the origin of the choices they make regarding clothing, jewellery and hairstyle; recognising that Brockwood is simultaneously a 'home', a place of work and an international school in which many cultural norms have to mix harmoniously with a sense of order. This requires a sense of flexibility to adapt as well as respect for the environment one is in.

Our dress code is '**tidy casual**' and we ask students to follow the guidelines outlined below which reflect sensitivity to living with others and within our particular context.

- **Considerate clothing:** Students should wear clothing that is considerate of the school's diverse and communal context, and avoid outfits that are overly revealing or extreme in style, such as very short skirts, dresses or shorts, low-cut tops, see-through fabrics as well as extremely tight, torn or damaged clothing.
- **Footwear:** Shoes should be appropriate to the activity (e.g., sports, classroom, outdoor work). Being barefoot, wearing flip-flops or slides is not permitted inside the main school buildings and classrooms. Certain areas are designated shoe-free zones.
- **Outerwear:** Hats, hoods, and sunglasses should be removed when indoors.
- **Accessories and piercings:** Jewellery and accessories should be modest and not disruptive. Only studs and discreet ear/nose piercings are allowed. Septum and other visible body piercings are not permitted. For safety reasons, students may be asked to remove jewellery during certain activities such as sports, and students are not allowed to pierce themselves or others while at Brockwood.
- **Hair:** Hairstyles should be neat. Extreme haircuts and unnatural hair colours should be avoided.
- **Tattoos:** Getting tattoos while at Brockwood is not permitted.
- **Messages and Images:** Clothing with printed messages, pictures, or graphics that are obscene, offensive, or promote illegal activities or violence is not allowed.

We want students to understand that those guidelines are not moral judgments on particular types of clothing, but reflect the context of the school; staff will always aim to maintain the dress code in this spirit - friendly, non-judgmental and matter-of-fact. Students at Brockwood are encouraged to choose clothing that makes them feel comfortable while being respectful to the context and the other members of the school community.

## Adopt a vegetarian diet throughout the term and eat meals at agreed times and places

The school adopts a vegetarian diet out of respect for living beings, consideration for the impact of our diet on the planet, and in keeping with the original intentions of the founders of the school. In line with this, all students are expected to maintain a vegetarian diet throughout the term time, including on school related trips and activities, and weekend visits to local towns.

The school provides a well-balanced and varied menu to meet the nutritional needs of everyone within a vegetarian diet. For some this may require an adjustment to previous eating habits and as a result, we ask families who are unfamiliar with the vegetarian diet to do detailed research before joining the school so these adjustments will be minimal. Early in the year, the school organises introductory activities about (vegetarian) nutrition for new (or all) students in order to help them be aware of essential elements of a healthy, vegetarian diet. The Healthy Living course and ATWAM programme provides ample information on nutrition to the young students, so they develop a sensitivity towards the impact of food on the body and mind.

We ask all students to eat all main meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) in the school's Dining Hall together with the whole school community. Eating together is an important part of living in a community and maintaining good relationships with students and teachers, which is why isolated meals in bedrooms or other areas of the school are not allowed at Brockwood.

## Develop a programme of studies that you apply yourself to

The intentions of Brockwood's approach to teaching and learning are for the student to develop a sense of interest and responsibility; to apply this sense to their academic studies and everyday conduct; to discover what they love to do; and to infuse into their studies the question of right livelihood and their place in the world.

Students at Brockwood are expected to take on full responsibility for their own learning, engage in their full programme of activities and make active use of the resources available. They are encouraged to find their own motivation and engage with their chosen fields of study without relying on rewards, comparison and competition.

At the beginning of the school year, students develop their study programmes with the guidance and assistance of a student adviser. Together they work on developing a balanced study programme. Once the timetable for the whole school is completed and courses begin, students are expected to commit to punctual attendance of classes, meetings, sports activities, study halls, presentations of their work. They will also be expected to follow through on their programme and commitments, and to complete the work required in order to get the best out of their educational experience here.

## Respect wing agreements and remain in your bedroom at the end of the school day

At the beginning of the year, the wing times (quiet time, floor check time and room time) and wing agreements will be explained to all students.

At the end of the busy days, students are expected to help create and maintain an atmosphere where their neighbours on the wing can experience a calm and restful night and not be disturbed by noise and activity.

Students are not allowed to be outside of their wings after floor check time, and not outside of their rooms after room time. The reason for this is to respect the context of living in a school, for students and staff to have some quiet reflective time at the end of the day, to get adequate sleep, and to establish a healthy rhythm for the study/working week. The school also has a duty of care which requires that we know where students are and that they are safe and secure after nightfall.

As a mixed-gender school, we aim to create an atmosphere in which healthy relationships can occur without too many restrictions. Most school activities happen in mixed-gender groups, and during their free time, students can mingle freely in the common areas of the school (such as the Sitting Room and Cloisters Sitting Room). However, to protect the feeling of privacy in the boarding areas, boys are not allowed to visit girls' wings and vice versa.

## Refrain from exclusive relationships and sexual activity

While we recognize that a wide variety of relationships, including very close ones, may naturally form between students in a setting like Brockwood, we encourage students to be mindful and avoid relationships that may create a sense of exclusion from the community, lead to overdependence on another, or disrupt their studies and communal responsibilities.

As an international boarding school, we want students of all ages to feel safe and comfortable here. If couples form, we ask them to keep public displays of affection discreet and respectful of others, and not to isolate themselves from the rest of the school community. Sexual activities between students are not allowed at the school or during school-related activities. Additionally, materials or pictures that are sexually explicit or inappropriate are not allowed.

Learning about relationships and sexuality is an important part of life, education and self-understanding. Society and media often put a great emphasis on sexual imagery and behaviour in a way that may not be conducive to the well-being of a young person and to a healthy sense of sexuality. We would like our students to meet this part of life carefully and intelligently; questioning their own conditioning (ideas, behaviour, images) and considering all the issues carefully.

While the nature of the school set-up does not support exclusive student couples and sexual relationships, we are not interested in repressing or condemning sexuality. We want instead to support students in inquiring into and learning about the nature of healthy relationships. As

with all aspects of life, it is important to be willing to question our own drives and behaviour in relationships.

### Avoid all forms of smoking, alcohol, vaping, and other harmful substances

The use of substances for the purposes of entertainment, relief, stimulation, or because of a habit or addiction, is common in large parts of the world. We are aware that many young people get exposed to these substances while growing up and might come from backgrounds where these behaviours are normalised. Along with specific education on the topic, Brockwood offers a warm and healthy environment that enables students to feel comfortable in avoiding the use of substances, and to learn to resist the pressures that exist around them.

Drinking alcohol, smoking, vaping, using nicotine pouches, and any form of involvement with drugs (buying, bringing in, passing on, consuming) are not allowed at Brockwood, or during school-related activities. Engaging in these activities at Brockwood, or aiding other students in doing so, is highly detrimental not only to the individuals involved but to the whole school community, and will be taken very seriously.

In order to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all students, we ask applicants with pre-existing habits or addictions to seek treatment or support, and overcome their habit or addiction before applying to join the school.

At Brockwood, we wish to encourage good health, clear thinking and self-understanding and we feel that the use of these substances does not support these aims. The school provides an opportunity for a lifestyle that is free, open and enjoyable in many ways, and for us to preserve the special atmosphere of the school, we must insist on these restrictions. Therefore, students must be committed to this lifestyle and support others in living this way at the school. We also expect parents to wholeheartedly support this commitment. For more details, please refer to the school's *Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs Policy*.

### Limit the use of electronic media to agreed places and times

As part of an all-round education, we feel it is important to question and discover the right place of technology and screen devices in our lives and at Brockwood. Today's powerful technologies can easily take over and prevent us from using our time and energy in other ways. Passive entertainment, the pressure of instantaneous social contact through social media (via laptops, smartphones, tablets, etc.), and overreliance on artificial intelligence can be an obstacle to developing interests and talents, good relationships, study habits, community responsibility, attentiveness and presence, and a sense of reflective quiet.

The school provides ample access to computers and other devices for purposes of research, education and communication, while the use of personal devices is discouraged or restricted to limited times and spaces in order to support full engagement in school life, and to encourage students to make good use of their time and energy.

- All personal screen devices brought to the school by students have to be registered before/at the start of the year (or whenever a new device is bought/obtained during the school year).
- Smartphones (and smartwatches) will be collected on arrival day and should not be used by students anywhere on the campus. On Saturdays, students will have access to their smartphones for purposes of communication with family and friends.
- Use of personal laptops and tablets will be restricted to exceptional cases which need to be requested and agreed upon before the beginning of the school year.

The school reserves the right to limit individual student's access to school devices, the internet, social media platforms and/or artificial intelligence tools if they are seen to use them excessively or inappropriately.

Movie watching is only permitted on weekends (from Friday evenings) via specific school computers.

For more details on the above points and on other devices, please refer to the school's *Technology, Internet and Devices Policy for Students*.

## School Agreements - expectations for students

For the smooth running of the school community and to establish a warm, safe atmosphere and natural, positive relationships between students and staff, we consider it essential that students understand, observe and respect the agreements. If a student does not respect the agreements (as indicated by their actions) then it will not be possible for them to stay at school.

Students are always welcome to ask questions and approach staff should they have any doubts about any of the agreements. Students also have plenty of opportunity to gain clarity on the agreements during the admissions process, the induction period (first 10 days of the year), and during weekly core group and floor meetings.

Older and returning students are expected to have a good understanding of the agreements, play an active role in upholding them and help younger students understand the school's ethos and agreements.

More information about our approach to student behaviour can be found in our *Behaviour of Students Policy*.