



# Ellesmere

Co-ed 7-18 Day and Boarding



**Welcome to  
St Oswald's House**

## Welcome to St. Oswald's House

Welcome to St. Oswald's House for students in Sixth Form – Years 12 & 13. The House is made up of:

Housemaster / Housemistress	Mr J Underhill & Mrs J Underhill
Assistant Housemistress	Ms L Killen
2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Housemistress / Overnight Cover	Mrs N Welti
Tutors	Mrs J Evans Mrs L Edwards Mrs D Walker-Smith Mrs C McClelland Mrs M Reynolds
Housemother	Mrs A Slack

### St. Oswald's Overview

Since September 2013, we (Mr Jim Underhill and Mrs Jenna Underhill) have enjoyed the privilege of running St. Oswald's together as Housemaster and Housemistress. Along with Mrs Slack, we look forward to running the House again from September 2023 and providing as much support to each individual as they require in order to enjoy the challenges of Sixth Form life and for them to succeed academically, personally and socially.

Our key aim is to try and foster the personal independence that has become synonymous with St. Oswald's girls over the years and that will be so crucial for life beyond Ellesmere College. St. Oswald's will be home to approximately 50 pupils from all walks of life and from all corners of the globe. Most of the pupils are boarders (some of whom go home at weekends) but there are a good number of day girls too.

The majority of rooms in the House are singles; all have washbasins, desks, desk-lamps and storage facilities. The House has a recently refurbished large lounge area, an extended kitchen/dining-room, a small sitting-room, laundry and a good provision of bathroom facilities.

You will have access to a member of staff at all times. During the day our Housemother (Angela) looks after all domestic affairs but the tutors and we visit regularly and the House is a busy place. In the evenings either we, or one of the boarding tutors, will be on duty and there is always someone on call through the night.

You will have a personal tutor who is your first port of call for all academic and pastoral matters and you will expect to establish a firm relationship with him or her. You will also have a lot of contact with your Housemaster and Housemistress who will oversee everything that goes on in your school life.

The House also has a House Captain and two Vice Captains who are assisted by a Committee made up of day and boarding, upper and lower sixth girls. These are very important to the smooth running of St. Oswald's in that they assist with organisation and liaise between staff and girls on minor matters. They

also help plan social events! It is our belief that the success of the House depends ultimately on the initiative, organisation and attitude of those who live in it; so please feel free to make your mark! If there is something that we don't do and you think we can do it – we will try.

We have a son, Harry, who will be sixteen when term starts and a daughter, Anna, who is twelve. Both are at Ellesmere College and they love the School.

Bess the Border Terrier will also be lurking somewhere in the background so those girls who may fancy a dog walk (or two) will be more than welcome. The House is an extension of our own family but, of course, also allows girls their space and freedom that will be so crucial to success at Ellesmere College.

Our House motto is to “be kind and brave” and we ask the girls to be honest with themselves and others, help each other and try their best each day. If we can all manage those three overarching aims then all the rest should follow....

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### Settling In

Some girls adapt to boarding life straightaway but others take a little longer. The site itself is big and, even though you were taken on a tour on your preliminary visit, you will not remember where things are but don't worry there will be plenty of people to guide you.

The early part of the first week of term is dedicated to an induction course for new sixth form students so you will not find yourself thrown into lessons as soon as you arrive. Although you will have met the other girls on the first night, these sessions will introduce you to the other students and all the school's routines. You will also be given time to ensure that you have chosen the right course of study. This induction course is a lot of fun and it will give you an excellent opportunity to start to make friends because many of the activities you undertake are designed to introduce people to each other.

Of course, from time to time, you might feel a little homesick. During the day you will probably be too busy for this to disturb you but you can help yourself in the evenings in a few ways:

- Take every opportunity to chat to others, keep busy and try to join in as many activities as you can.
- Too many phone or virtual calls home can make the situation worse – an email or even a letter is often more helpful.
- Chat to whoever is on duty and the girls in the Upper Sixth. You will probably be surprised to find that the person who now seems so confident once felt exactly as you do now.
- Make a cup of tea- even if you don't drink it, the galley is always a very sociable place!

### Day-to-day information

Most of the information which follows is applicable to both day and boarding girls, not least because day girls usually find themselves boarding for at least a night or two during their time in the sixth form. However, at the end of this booklet, you will find some information that is specifically aimed at those who travel to College on a daily basis.

## Getting Ready to Board

You will find it much easier to settle in if you are properly prepared. Here are a few helpful hints:

### School Uniform

You will have been given a copy of the clothing list and, of course, it is best if you arrive with everything required but don't worry if you have to wait for an item from the College shop. There will be time to sort this out. Remember to bring a regulation suit (see the uniform list provided), with knee length skirt or full length trousers and matching jacket - and make sure you purchase a school tracksuit and full school uniform.

### Casual Clothes

After lessons and on weekends, you will want to change out of your uniform so make sure you bring a range (but not too much- storage is not extensive!) of clothing to suit all weathers and the sorts of activities you think you will be doing.

### Hair, Make-up, Jewellery and General Appearance

St. Oswald's girls usually look very smart. Light make-up and two pairs of plain, small earrings/studs are permitted in the ear lobe; hair should be tied up during the working day if it is long enough and not dyed or styled in any extreme way. Nail-polish or nose rings/studs are not allowed. We are proud of how we look and want to set the standard for the College so please get this right!

**Please can all girls bring a small cosmetics tray, to allow them to easily remove cosmetics from their bathroom area each week, assuring surfaces are properly cleaned.**

### Laundry

All clothes must be sent to the school laundry and be clearly named. However, the House has a couple of washing machine, driers, irons and washing lines for you to wash your own small and delicate items, this is for occasional use only. You will need to bring a pop up laundry bag with your name on it. You do not have to bring your own sheets and duvet covers but some girls like to; if you do we recommend two sets and they absolutely must be clearly named.

### Electrical Appliances

Of course, you will want to bring some electrical items with you such as a hairdryer, laptop, mobile phone charger etc but for safety reasons please make sure you have the correct UK adapter. Please note that fans, kettles, heaters and rice cookers are not permitted in boarding rooms for fire safety reasons.

### Valuables

You will, no doubt, have some things which are valuable, either in terms of their cost or because they are particularly special to you. The college cannot accept responsibility for these things but you can do a few things to prevent them from going missing or to help them to be returned to you if they do:



- Make sure that items are clearly named
- Keep them in the lockable drawer or other space within your room
- Give them to your Housemistress/Housemaster for safe-keeping
- Bring a small padlock for your lockable space and we can offer a key to your room.

### Money

Girls tend to manage their own money through a bank account and, if you do not already have one, we will make it easy for you to open one in an Ellesmere branch. You should not keep large sums of money in your room – if you need to have cash, we can look after it.

All Sixth Formers may have their own bank accounts for their personal finance. Currently, there is a Post Office in Ellesmere. If you prefer, we can bank any pocket money in the St. Oswald's bank account and give it to your daughter upon request.

St. Oswald's House  
Ellesmere College  
Ellesmere  
Shropshire  
SY12 9AB

### Contact with the Outside World

Girls will have a mobile phone and overseas students often find it more economical to buy a British sim card. All rooms in St. Oswald's have wireless network access so emailing or using Skype or FaceTime to contact friends and family is easy.

We encourage contact home but we do emphasise though that any problems 'in House' should ideally come to us directly rather than via parents from home (we are trying to develop young adults after all) and – given the rise of social media – we also have phone etiquette at certain times where we expect all girls to try and talk face-to-face.

Your daughter will be able to send and receive e-mails at school.

### Fire Drills

One of the most important routines as far as safety is concerned is what happens if the fire alarm sounds. The correct procedures must be taken even if you suspect that the alarm is ringing for a practice evacuation. Rules are displayed on the House notice-board and in several key places around the buildings. They will be explained to you but you must make sure you know exactly what to do.

### Academic and Extra-Curricular Activities

Ellesmere College offers many extra-curricular activities and there is bound to be something which appeals to you. Take the opportunity to try something new or to improve your skills and deepen your interest in something you have done in the past. Your tutor will help to explain the various choices.

We place pupils in a Competitive House and in the many competitions – academic, sporting, musical and dramatic - you will be part of a huge team. If you have never been involved in this sort of thing before, you will find it a lot of fun!

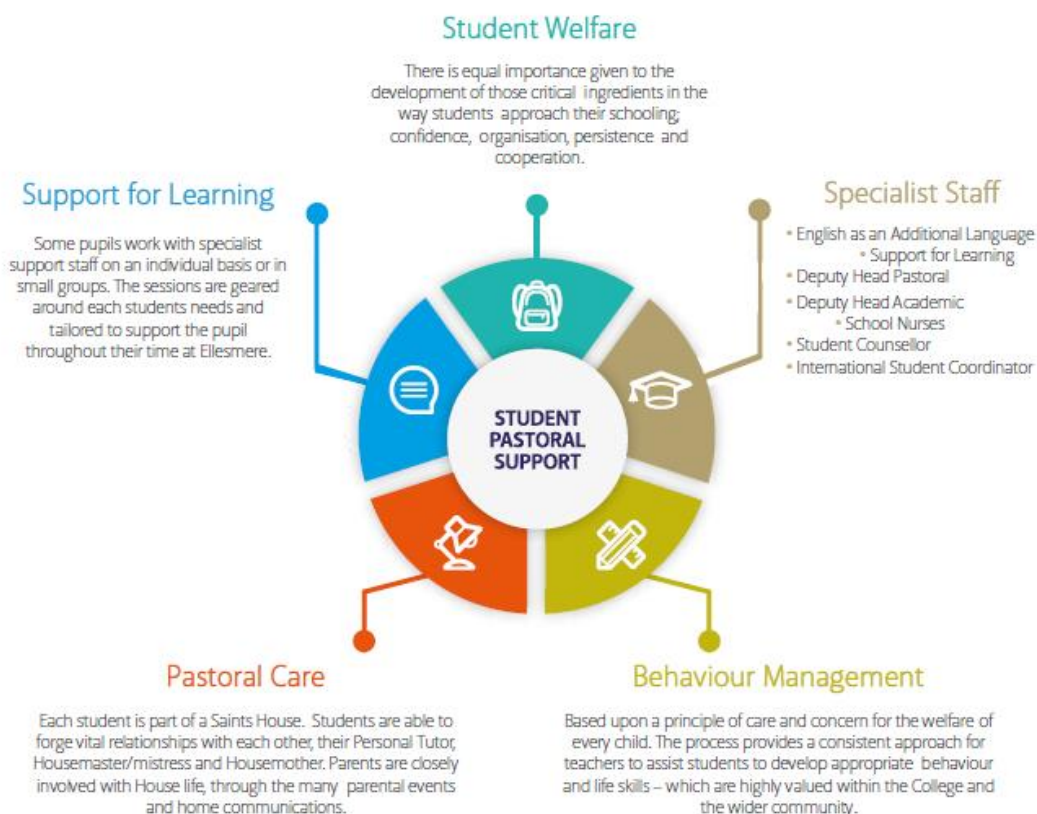
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## Pastoral Systems

Your tutor will be an extremely important person for you during your time here. She will advise you on all academic and personal welfare matters. If you are having problems managing your time or resolving conflicting interests you should speak to your tutor. This person will get to know you extremely well and, when the time comes to move on to the next stage of life will help you apply to university or with any other plan you might have.

Tutors are normally in touch with your parents or guardian at least every half term, so encourage your parent or guardian to reply to their emails: it does help!

## Pastoral Care



### Additional Support

On occasions, you may feel in need of some additional support either emotionally or spiritually. The school has a Counsellor and a Chaplain to meet those needs. You can approach the Chaplain directly and visits to the Counsellor can be arranged through sick-bay or by your Housemistress/Housemaster.

### Complaints Procedure

If you are unhappy about anything, there is a procedure for you to follow and this is clearly displayed on the House notice-board.

### PSHE

Personal, Health and Social Education plays an important part in your education. PSHE days are held at regular intervals in the school year and cover a wide range of topics which should be of interest to you.

### Child Protection

There are a number of dedicated staff for safeguarding, including the Head of Sixth Form, Dr Gareh, along with both Deputy Heads, Dr Chatterjee and Mrs Pritt-Roberts. If you have any concerns about your own or any other pupil's safety, you can contact one of them directly, or through your House.

### Discipline

Ellesmere College has very high expectations of behaviour from its pupils. As with any community, rules are necessary for its smooth running and the happiness of all. There are clear policies about smoking, alcohol, drugs and sexual behaviour that are displayed in the House. In St. Oswald's, as with the other Sixth Form Houses, we work on the principle that the girls deserve our trust and their independence, whilst we expect common sense and responsibility in return.

### Weekends

There are no lessons on Saturday mornings but frequently there are sports fixtures which involve quite large numbers of girls. If you are not involved in sport, this is a good time to relax, get some work done, read the papers or walk into Ellesmere and do some shopping.

Activities are organised which take students off-site to places such as Chester, Manchester, Liverpool. There are also cinema trips and visits to other places of interest. Girls often have a lie-in on a Sunday and there is a more flexible approach to breakfast/brunch/lunch, which aims to please everyone.

Again, there are sometimes organised outings and many of the sports facilities are open for casual use. If you tell us early enough – and we get the necessary parental consent – we can also help you sort your own travel to suitable destinations if you are on top of your work.

If you are a weekly boarder and wish to go home for an evening, this is no problem as long as you make us aware in advance and we receive parental consent.

### Exeat Weekends

Midway through each half-term in the Michaelmas and Lent Terms the College has an Exeat weekend when boarders often go home. If girls are unable to go home, they may organise a stay with friends and/or Guardian (subject to appropriate Guardian responsibility). If they plan to spend the weekend in one of the towns or cities within reach of Ellesmere in order to take advantage of the cultural opportunities offered by these larger centres then a guardian must take full responsibility for their care. For this they will need written permission (email is fine) from a parent/guardian in the week prior to departure. We encourage girls to try and get 'off-site' if possible as the Exeat weekends are designed for some rest and relaxation in the middle of a busy term.

### Holiday Leave

Girls leaving the UK to return home for holidays on the last day of term and arriving back at the start of a term must provide the following details well in advance of departure: flight number; flight time; airport; terminal and destination. We recommend students or parents email these details to [st.oswalds@ellesmere.com](mailto:st.oswalds@ellesmere.com) as soon as they are known. Earlier departures are obviously detrimental to your academic progress and are unlikely to be authorised by the College. **Please be aware that you may not leave the College before 6am to catch a flight except for the last day of term.**

### Chapel Services

Ellesmere College is a Christian foundation and all pupils are expected to attend regular services. We believe that, at the very least, it will provide a crucial focus for quiet reflection throughout the working week.

### Medical Issues

**It is very important that you make us aware of any health conditions on arrival so we can ensure that duty staff and Sisters in College are aware.** Surgeries are held each day by the sisters and the visiting doctor. The times for these are posted on the house notice-board but there is a member of the medical staff on call at all times. Ellesmere College also has a sick-bay where you might be expected to stay in order to be looked after if you are unwell.

### Information for Day Girls

If you are using school transport, the coaches arrive at about 8.20am; if you are being brought in by car you should aim to arrive at the same time. Registration takes place in the day-room at 8.30am and every morning we have a brief meeting so that information can be shared. This is also a good time to catch up with your personal tutor. If you have gained permission to drive into College you must hand in your car keys to your Housemother who will look after them until the end of the working day or week.

The school day lasts until 5.30pm and coaches leave promptly at this time. However, there will be occasions when you will want, or at times be required, to stay later for cultural events or social occasions. If the house is full we will not have rooms free but we have a small number of "put-you-up" beds which can be made up in the day studies provided you have given some advanced notice to house-keeping. We try hard to establish excellent relationships between day and boarding girls and the more opportunities there are to



mix the better. It is always good when boarders are invited home for weekends with day-girls and, provided permission is given by both sets of parents, this can always be arranged.

If you are unable to attend College for any reason it is important that a parent or guardian emails or calls to let us know the reason for your absence, preferably before lessons start so that our register is correct.

### Final Thoughts

Perhaps you have already been a boarder in St. Aidan's or in another school. Perhaps your parents, brother or sister were boarders and you have some idea of what it will be like or perhaps you are the first in your family to have the experience. Perhaps you have been educated in another country and perhaps English is not your first language. Perhaps you are really excited about the prospect of staying away from home or maybe you are actually a bit scared.

Whatever situation you find yourself in, the chances are that someone else will be feeling very similar to you and there will always be someone to turn to when you want to discuss what is happening and what you are going through. You must always be sure to ask for help whenever you need it and, in this booklet you should find the answers to many of your questions and also the names of those people who are at hand to support you.

St. Oswald's aims to provide a safe, welcoming environment for you to work in, somewhere you can feel at home with friends or when you are on your own. We hope you will be able to flourish here as an individual and also as part of the community and that you will achieve your potential both academically and socially so that when you leave for the world outside school you will be more than ready to face all its challenges.

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### Contacting St. Oswald's

Your daughter's tutor will guide her through her academic life at Ellesmere. Their Housemaster and Housemistress are your first point of call for pastoral matters but she will also establish firm relationships with Housemothers, Ms Killen and Mrs Welti - both of whom are on duty regularly in the evenings and are very much a part of the St. Oswald's team. She will also get to know Dr Tom Gareh, Head of Sixth Form, especially in the run-up to university and other applications in the Upper Sixth. Dr Chatterjee, Deputy Head Pastoral, is our Child Protection Officer.

### Telephones:

- **Main House office: 01691 626539** (this is the number to call from 9.15am until 5.30pm. It is our main House office and, unless we are teaching, we will either pick up or access voice mail)
- **Lower Office extension: 01691 622321 plus ext 269** (during term time, there is always someone on duty from 5.30pm and in the House after 6.30pm and either a tutor, Assistant Housemistress or either of us will be answering calls until 10.50pm).
- **Housemother: 01691 622321 plus ext 269** (it is also possible to contact Housemother during the day between 8am and 2:30pm or to leave a message. Voicemail will operate after 8 rings if we are unavailable to answer the telephone).

Urgent messages should not be left on voicemail – in such circumstances if you have not been able to speak to either of us directly, please ring the school switchboard (01691 622321) and leave a message with a receptionist who should be able to make contact with us or our Assistant Housemistress.

The House mobile telephone number is 07391 251695 (reception can be poor so email is often the best way to reach us).

House Email: [st.oswalds@ellesmere.com](mailto:st.oswalds@ellesmere.com) (Please email any absence to this email address– ideally 24 hours in advance.)

Sick Bay: [sisters@ellesmere.com](mailto:sisters@ellesmere.com)  
01691 622321 x 229

Reception: [reception@ellesmere.com](mailto:reception@ellesmere.com)  
01691 622321

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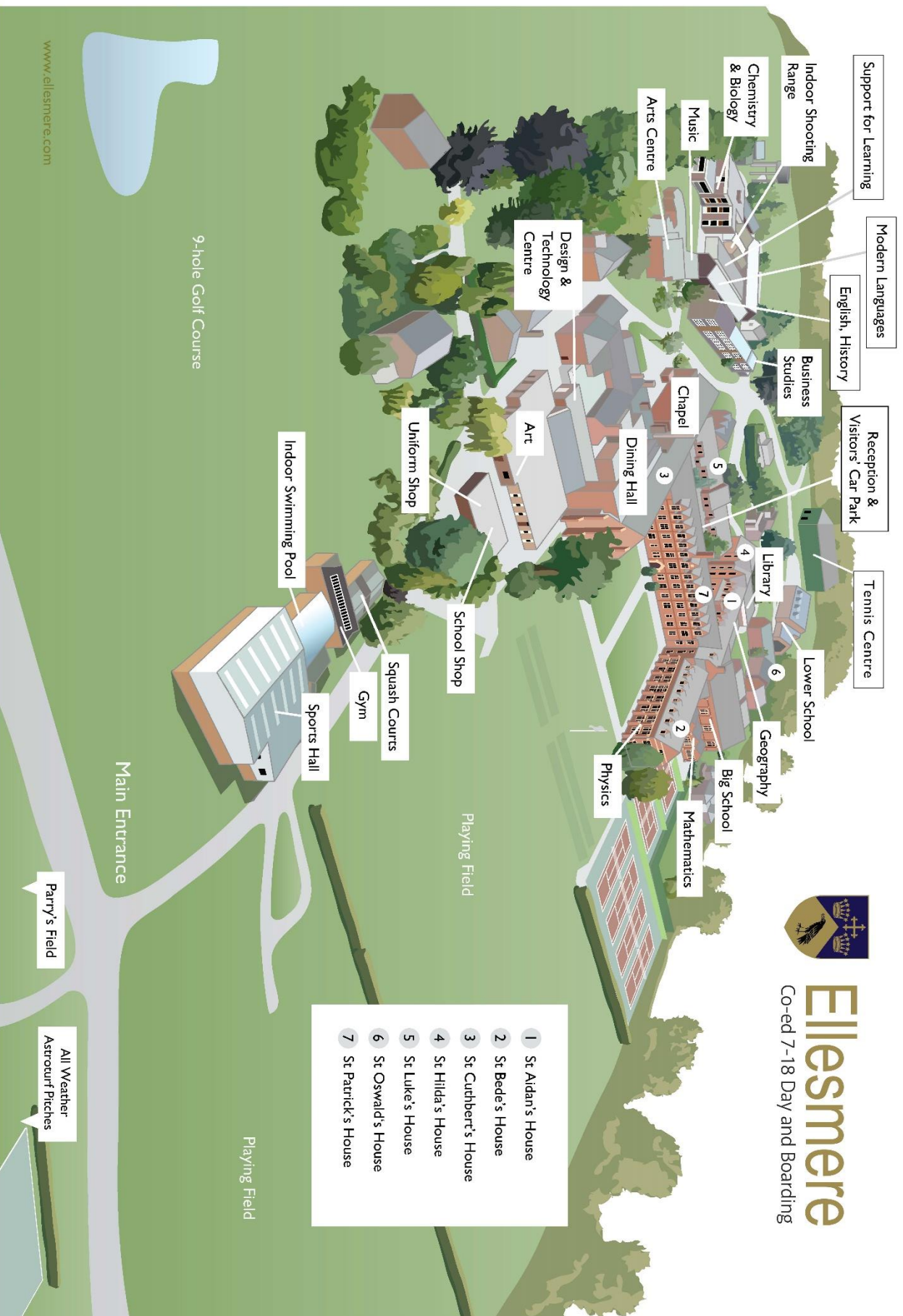
And Finally.....

This might seem a lot to take in but you will be surprised by how quickly all this information will be familiar to you. Remember that there is always someone on hand to help out with a problem, answer a question or simply to chat. St. Oswald's is a very warm and friendly House which inspires intense loyalty from its girls; we will try our very best to make you feel welcome and hope that you will settle in as soon as possible.

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For more insights into Ellesmere College, follow us on:  
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**Ellesmere**  
Co-ed 7-18 Day and Boarding

- 1 St Aidan's House
- 2 St Bede's House
- 3 St Cuthbert's House
- 4 St Hilda's House
- 5 St Luke's House
- 6 St Oswald's House
- 7 St Patrick's House

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