

## **DIRECTOIRE DES SURVEILLANTS**

### (Housemasters' Handbook)

1a. Housemasters are directly responsible for the application of the rules of the House vis-à-vis the pupils. In doing this they will serve as examples to the pupils by their faithful adherence to those of the rules which also concern them. They would not have the right to demand compliance from others if they were unable to demand it of themselves.

1b. Their vigilance must be frank and open. They must avoid that insidious type of vigilance, detested by the pupils, which takes pleasure in discovering faults. Vigilance born out of charity has nothing to do with setting traps for the children; it is active always and everywhere in order to forestall the temptation and even the very thought of wrongdoing.

2a. Housemasters cannot have themselves replaced on a duty without the consent of the Superior. They will always take pains to arrive first for any activity which they are to supervise. If a housemaster foresees that he will be delayed by some important business, albeit only for a minute, he will inform the Superior who will have him temporarily replaced.

2b. Housemasters leave the study hall last and follow the pupils when they go to the chapel, the playground, to the refectory or to the various activities at which they are expected by the Superior or one of the teachers. Conversely, they will be the first to leave the above-mentioned places and will lead the pupils to the study hall.

## **AUTHORITY**

Nothing is more important for the housemaster than to have his authority firmly established. He will succeed in this not only by giving his pupils a positive impression of his knowledge; even more surely will he win their esteem by his wise and considered actions, his constant and temperate firmness, his great openness with those who are the most reasonable, and especially, and one cannot recommend this too highly, by the fact that he speaks little and always to the point. Usually those teachers who talk most are listened to least.

4. The housemaster should not content himself with the pupils' esteem; he should be aiming for their affection, at least that of the majority. He will win it, not by indulgence and closing his eyes to their faults and failings, but rather by making them understand that he is devoted to them and only wishes what is best for them. He should share in their triumphs and tribulations, showing an interest in their health and in their hobbies and, if he is obliged to reprimand and punish them, he should let them see that it pains him to have to take such extreme measures. There is no more cogent advice for a housemaster than that he should have a truly Christian affection for his pupils.

5a. The housemaster will not allow a pupil to leave his place without permission. The only ones who will have that permission will be those whose duty it is to open and close the windows etc. Sometimes, in order not to disturb the study himself, the housemaster will make himself understood by his eyes and by signs.

5b. He will not tolerate any insolence, but, rather than disturb the study by protracted discussion, he will leave the guilty party to say his piece and then have time to think about it.

5c. The obtaining of perfect silence in the study hall is a key to success; with care, it is obtainable. Housemasters will be most careful to remove anything which might be a source of distraction to the pupils. Depending on the weather they may leave the windows open, but never the doors.

6. In establishing where the pupils will sit in the study hall, housemasters will choose the most apt placings in order to avoid trouble; they will place directly in front of themselves the most negligent and fickle characters. They will confound those little tricks that the pupils use in order to chat without being detected and to send notes to each other, either about their work or whatever is going through their minds at the time. These notes are passed under the desks or hidden in textbooks which are then blatantly passed around. Chatterers usually hide behind piles of books if the housemaster allows such piles to be built.

## **7a. SUPERVISION OF THE PUPILS' WORK**

It is one of the housemaster's duties to ensure that the pupils are writing their homework correctly and that they are applying themselves fully to their tasks.

The housemaster will walk around the study from time to time to make sure that no-one is reading or doing anything else besides the set homework and that no-one is working too fast or too slowly. If the pupils' work is badly done; badly written or badly spelt, he will have the work done again, either in recreation time or in free study.

7b. The housemaster will take particular care that the pupils do not learn "by heart" punishments during study.

7c. The housemasters will mutually inform each other and the teachers for the greater good of the pupils they have in common.

7d. Teachers must dedicate themselves in the fullest measure to the task of giving the pupils a taste for study and a longing for what is good. They will be fully conversant with all those innocent ploys one can use to get the best out of the pupils whilst letting them get away with little.

## **8a. PUNISHMENTS**

A punishment is only effective to the degree that the recipient realises that he deserves it and that the teacher is not acting unjustly or capriciously. The punishment should be proportionate to the age and nature of the pupil and to the degree of malice in the offence. A badly judged punishment embitters or discourages instead of correcting.

8b. A teacher should never pursue a pupil's every last fault; this is guaranteed to harden them to any reprimand or punishment without in any way correcting them.

9a. There are those who punish faults in their pupils which are really their own; faults which their vigilance, diligence or Charity should have prevented. A teacher who is conscientious in his duties will need to punish less than others, and it will seldom be for a Serious Offence.

9b. The observant teacher will know his pupils' characters and will be sensitive to the best way of approaching each one. He will create and use with discernment and by degrees, an infinity of small punishments which will forestall the need for more serious and humiliating punishments. He will know, for example, that there are some timid and well brought-up pupils for whom the slightest reproach, a slightly raised voice and sometimes just a look can be real punishments.

9c. To correct others, he can curtail their play, put them in silence during a recreation, give them some extra work to write out, or, even better, to learn by heart; he can make them walk a designated area, alone and in silence, or can deprive them of some small privilege etc.

10a. If a pupil refuses to accept a punishment, the housemaster, without disturbing the study by sending the offender out, without any force and particularly without striking the pupil, will refer the matter to the Superior.

10b. If the matter is urgent, he can ask the Superior to come to the study hall: he can be sure that he will always be supported, but it would be a great shame if he needed to be supported as a result of being at fault himself, either through imprudence or an excess of zeal.

10c. If a housemaster fears that an embittered pupil might make his offence worse by being awkward, it would be wise and charitable to suspend the punishment in order to give the offender time to realise its justice; this delay, far from eroding the housemaster's authority, can only strengthen it.

10d. Mass punishments may only be employed if all the pupils in that particular area are guilty; these cases will be rare if the teacher is vigilant.

11. A housemaster should always be obviously less eager to pursue offences against his own person than offences in other areas. If, for example, someone were to play a trick on him, he should not appear too upset or affected by it: that would be playing into the hand of the perpetrator. If he finds out who is guilty, he should either get someone else to punish him or, even better, he should point out to the offender the error of his ways and let him know that taking revenge would be very easy. But instead of taking revenge he should say, "I forgive you since the offence was against me". Such obvious moderation is always much more effective than the most severe punishment.

12. Every teacher must be on his guard against favouritism. He will find that there will be some boys who will strike him as totally repulsive. These have the first call on his charity, since they have the greatest need of it. On the other hand, there are others, pleasant and well-behaved, who seem to call out for signs of his favour. Let him beware! If he gives free rein to his feelings it will cause problems for the children concerned and lead them to complacency.

13. Among the dangerous types of boy one can find in a boarding school, the housemasters must particularly seek out and report to the Superior as soon as possible:

a) those who spread a spirit of insubordination and revolt among their companions,

b) those who would mock and torment their companions because of their wisdom and piety,

c) those who, by their vulgar conversation and in other ways, might attempt to offend against their companions' innocence.

14. Teachers' vigilance in the matter of pupils' morals must be continual, active and painstaking, but it must be at the same time unexaggerated and discrete since any ill-advised action in this area could be as dangerous as negligence.

### **RECREATIONS AND WALKS**

These are times calling for careful attention and hard work on the part of the housemaster. During recreation the duty master will make sure that all doors are correctly closed. He will forbid all forms of horseplay, wild running about, arguments and flanging matches, vulgar or dangerous games, the formation of gangs, singing and chanting. He will take the most careful measures to ensure that his pupils are never in darkness when they arrive in the common rooms or the study hall.

In order to avoid the problems of particular friendships, secret conversations and boys wandering off alone, the housemasters will take steps to ensure that a general air of gaiety is prominent during recreation. They will encourage participation in games by the obvious interest they will show in them and by their applause of those who show an obvious skill in them. They will never permit games to be played for money or similar gain; they will ensure that those freedoms allowed in recreations never degenerate into such familiarity as might diminish the respect in which they are held. On walks, they will never permit any pupil to leave the group, even on the pretext of visiting his parents.

### **CLEANLINESS AND SIMPLICITY**

The housemasters will often encourage the pupils to be clean. When they check from time to time, they will ensure that the pupils are keeping their clothing and linen in good order. The youngest pupils need to be checked as a mother would check them, to see if they have changed their bedclothes, if their clothing is torn or if their shoes are in need of repair, if they have washed their hands, if their fingernails are cut and if they are going to bed fully clothed, etc.

Teachers will take every effort to ensure that the pupils do not get a taste for show, frivolity or affectation in their clothing and that they avoid the precious tone and manner of "young lords".

### **NEW PUPILS**

New pupils in a boarding school have the right to particular attention from the housemasters. For their part, the housemasters will see to all their needs and will entrust to some of the better behaved pupils the task of explaining to the new arrivals the rules of the house. They will also reprimand those who are thoughtless enough to try and tax or mystify the newcomers with their explanations.

### **CONVERSATION**

Teachers will not tolerate the use of dialect in conversations between pupils, neither will they allow, even in casual conversation, the use of vulgar and trivial expressions. They will correct any faults which are made in language or in pronunciation. They will forbid unpleasant jokes, base tomfoolery and any tone of scorn or caustic humour.

### **HEALTH**

Among the other things that a housemaster must do in order to safeguard the health of his pupils, he must take particular care that they do not drink cold water or sit in a cold place immediately after taking exercise. If a pupil stays in bed in the morning claiming to be ill, the housemaster will inform the Superior so that he may judge the condition of the pupil.

### **PARENTS**

It is one of the teacher's essential duties to maintain in the pupils' hearts the feelings of tenderness and gratitude which they owe to their parents. The teacher will often remind the pupils of what their parents are doing for them. He will tell them how guilty they would be before God, and how wretched in the eyes of men, if they were to upset their parents by their ingratitude or bad behaviour. He will make sure that all pupils write to their parents from time to time, and that the youngest pupils write as often as their parents would wish.

### **PIETY AND APOSTOLATE**

The housemaster must make sure that the short prayers which are said before and after study are said with recollection. Anyone who allowed the pupils to say their prayers in a careless and hurried manner whilst arranging their books and looking in their desks would give a very negative impression of his own intelligence and virtue.

22. All in all, a teacher worthy of his profession is not satisfied by making himself a model for his pupils and a constant invitation to perfection. He will also watch over his pupils; he will watch the manner in which they fulfil their religious duties. Filled with the all-pervading truths of salvation he will speak to them always with zeal and kindness, like a good father to his own children. He will take advantage of circumstances and of such moments as arise to give them general and particular advice; he will encourage them, plead with them and will do everything in his power to form them in the paths of virtue.