



'The UK Boarding Schools Specialist'

Q&A on British Boarding School Types

So what types of independent schools are there in Britain?

In the independent sector, whereby schools are not supported by the state and parents are required to pay for their children's education and boarding fees, there are four main types of boarding school:

1. **Preparatory Schools**, commonly referred to as 'Prep Schools', are for pupils aged 7 (or sometimes younger if the school has a pre-preparatory section) to 11 or 13. In effect, pupils enrol in order to be 'prepared' for senior school. The vast majority of prep schools are co-educational though approximately 60 cater exclusively for boys and another 40 accept girls only. Some prep schools send their pupils onto a select range of senior school while others have associated links with a senior school to which the majority of their pupils progress. Many schools offer boarding mixed with day pupils and only a small number operate for boarders only.
2. **Senior Schools**, typically cater for pupils aged between 13 and 18 (Year 9 to Year 13) though many commence enrolment from the age of 11 (Year 7). The main, but not necessarily only, entry points are 11+, 13+ and 16+. Like prep schools, senior schools may accept boys or girls only or operate as co-educational. Some also offer a combination of single sex and co-educational teaching, which is known as the 'Diamond Model' and designed to support the different learning needs of male and female pupils.
3. **Independent Sixth Form Colleges**, accept 16+ pupils or Sixth Form Level (Year 12 and 13) only, and are dedicated to supporting students preparing for final exams and entry to university. They tend to be co-educational and are popular with both local and international pupils wanting a bridge between school and university. They offer the same qualifications as found in boarding schools, as well as university foundation programmes, and use an intensive tutorial style of teaching (small-group teaching and regular testing). Many of the tutors are qualified as examiners or have written textbooks and are proven educational thinkers. Colleges are usually fully residential with similar sporting and cultural facilities to those found in a boarding school while others are day schools with pupils living in a college-owned shared house or with a host family.
4. **International Study Centres (ISCs)**, are for pupils not yet ready to join a boarding school's mainstream. They are usually set up on the grounds of a boarding school and offer courses (1-2 years in length), very small class sizes with specialist teachers and place a heavy emphasis on the development of English language skills. ISCs also prepare pupils for day-to-day boarding school life, help them overcome cultural barriers and how to function effectively in a foreign learning and living environment.

So what types of independent schools are there in Britain?

Yes, absolutely and AIBC Thailand will only partner with schools that have applicable accreditation and/or come under the formal approval of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) umbrella. At the Prep School level, the leading professional body is the Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS) and at the Senior School level there are three key bodies; Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC), the Girls' Schools Association (GSA) and the Independent Schools Association (ISA). These bodies make sure that all aspects of the education offered - academic, pastoral, financial and administrative - are maintained to a high standard.



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Independent Sixth Form Colleges have their own membership scheme, run by the International Council for Independent Education (CIFE) and inspections are routinely carried out by the Department of Education, the British Accreditation Council (BAC) and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI).

International Study Centres are members of the British Association of Independent Schools with Boarding Students (BAISIS) and primarily fall under the inspection and accreditation requirements of ISI, the Council of Independent Schools and the British Council (since they attest for the quality of teaching of the English language).

What about State Boarding Schools? Can I enrol my child in one?

There are approximately 40 boarding schools maintained and funded by the state but unfortunately, places are only offered to UK and select EU residents.

Can I enrol my child in a British Independent School as a day student and board with relatives or a guardian?

In short, yes! It's a popular option for families with relatives residing in the UK or those wanting their child to experience a home stay. There are of course pros and cons to consider and as such, we would be happy to sit down with interested families and discuss these at length to ensure an informed decision can be made.

