



'The UK Boarding Schools Specialist'

School Visit Questions

Asking the right questions during a school visit can make all the difference in the decision making process. The following set of questions have been devised to ensure you are better informed about key aspects of the school and how these could affect your child. Some will be more relevant than others to your circumstances so should be used as a guideline only.

Boarding Life and Pastoral Care

- What is the breakdown of full, weekly and flexi boarders? How many boarders in my child's age group are in school during a normal weekend? Can I see a typical weekend programme?
- How is the pastoral welfare of the pupils monitored and how are parents kept informed?
- Can boarders choose between staying in-school or with their guardian during exeats and or half-term holidays?
- What medical arrangements does the school have in place? How often is the doctor timetabled to make house calls?
- What is the school's policy on mobile phones and screen time? When will I be able to call my child?
- What flexibility is given to boarders over the weekend of leaving the school's premises?
- What are the school's policies on alcohol, smoking and drugs? Is the school facing any particular problems in any of these areas at present?
- What do pupils and staff think about the food on offer? Do pupils have an input into the choice of menu? How do boarders supplement their eating requirements?
- What is the school's policy on relations between students and how is this monitored?

Finance & Governance

- Are the tuition fees likely to increase every year and if so, why? What extras can I typically expect to pay?
- Do you offer a sibling discount?
- Do you offer discounts for tuition fee payments paid in advance?
- How often does the Board of Governors meet?
- How long has the current Head been in place and how long was the previous Head in place for?
- Does the school have a master plan?



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Academic Standing

- What are the school's entry requirements and is my child likely to obtain a place?
- Can we see the academic results for the last 3 years and a list of school leaver destinations?
- What percentage of teaching staff are Oxbridge graduates and Russell Group graduates?
- What is the breakdown of British to International Students? Does the school place a cap on the number of pupils from each nationality?
- Does the school cater for students with EAL needs?
- Does the school employ a full-time careers counsellor or advisor? How often are appointments scheduled with pupils?
- Does the school offer continuous progression from the Prep School into the Senior School? Is this progression guaranteed or conditional?

Further Considerations and Suggestions

- While appreciating the long distance travelled and the time/cost invested, try to limit the number of school visits to a maximum of five in order to avoid confusion. This will also allow comparisons to be made and help establish what it is exactly you are looking for and not looking for.
- Be sure to book an individual visit and not a place on an Open Day when it can appear rehearsed. The lack of individual attention also reduces the number of opportunities to ask the questions you may want to ask and visit specific areas of the school
- Visit during term time when schools are at their busiest and most active.
- After each visit and while everything's still fresh, set aside some time to debrief the experience with your child. Share your impressions and what you did and didn't like, the members of staff you met, how the pupils came across and whether they seemed happy, the state of the facilities and boarding house(s) and whether you had a positive vibe throughout the visit and/or what your gut told you. Did the pupils appear well-mannered, did they open the door for you and/or stand to attention when visitors entered the classroom?

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