

A photograph of three young men in a room with large windows. The man on the left is wearing a white shirt and looking at a silver laptop with the Apple logo. The man in the center is wearing a dark hoodie with a white stripe and is holding an open book. The man on the right is wearing a dark hoodie with a red and white logo that says "SAMURAI" and is leaning in towards the other two. They are all smiling and appear to be engaged in a collaborative activity.

Inside Boarding

BEDFORD SCHOOL



Bedford is a boarding school, first and foremost, with boarders and day boys alike benefiting from the strong boarding ethos. With 250 boys and around 40 staff living full-time on-site, the boarding community gives a heartbeat to the school in a way that nothing else can. The school lives, and permanently.

Whilst over 80% are from the UK, boys at Bedford School represent over thirty different nationalities which gives us a truly global outlook, something which equips boys well as they move forward in their lives.

Boarders make up around a third of the population of the Upper School, and their presence sets the tone for much of what drives the school.

From a practical perspective, the working week is longer, with Saturday school being integral. This extended week affords greater time to explore the countless opportunities that just would not be possible in a day school environment. It also allows for the school day to be less frantic and more evenly paced for the boys, which results in a calmer and more productive environment.

Our staff are appointed not only on their ability to teach and inspire in lessons but also on their commitment and drive to get involved with the wider curriculum beyond the classroom. We believe passionately that the interaction between teaching staff and boys outside the classroom is what makes our school environment and community so special. We are blessed with outstanding facilities, but it is the people, and the way in which they interact with the boys, who make Bedford such an excellent school.

Extending that involvement into the evening and across weekends means that staff really do get to know boys well and thoroughly understand what makes them tick. The bonds formed through time spent together, both inside and outside the classroom, lead to enhanced pupil/teacher relationships, providing benefits far beyond those achievable in a purely day environment.

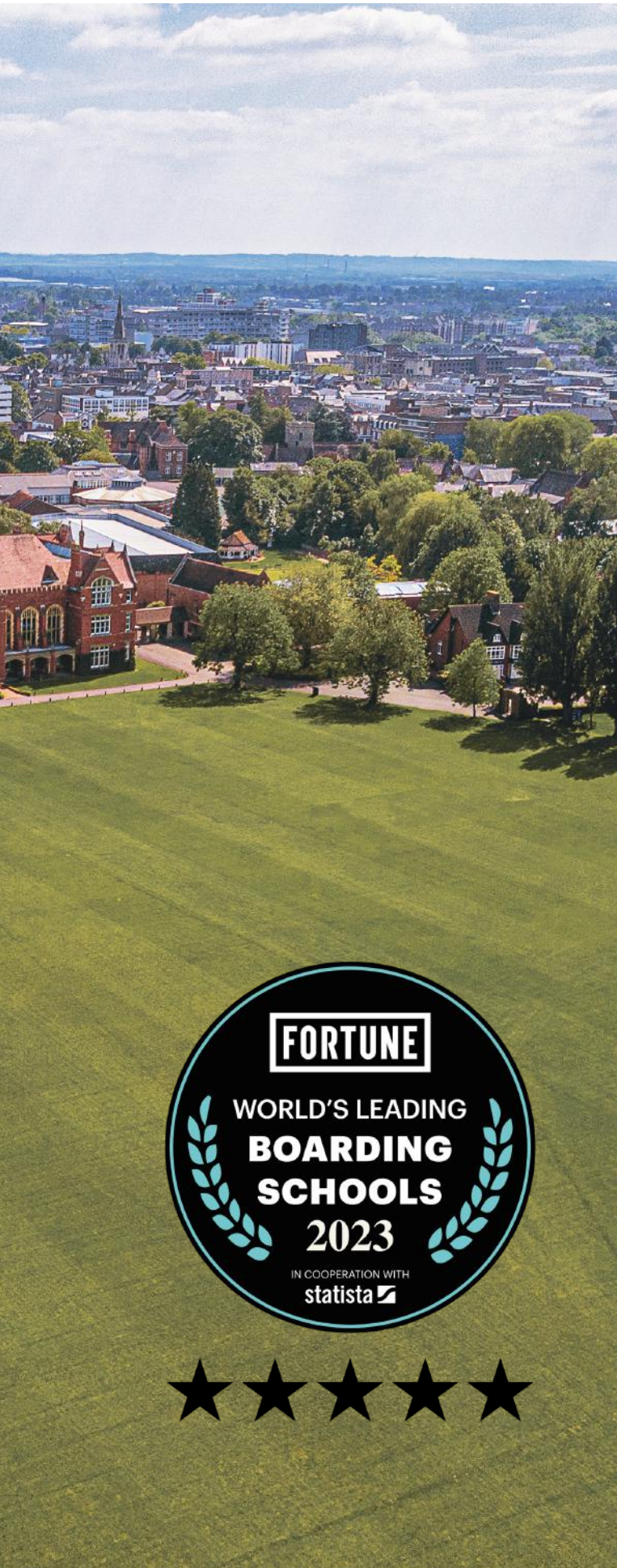
We look to nurture each and every boy as an individual. Every child is different and should be celebrated for his own uniqueness. With our specialist knowledge of boys, of living with them 24/7, we have a real understanding and consequent ability to get the best out of all of them. And above all we want them to enjoy their time with us, to love their childhood because they only get it once.

It is our belief that every boy should be *happy and successful*, in that order, and our strong boarding ethos is fundamental to achieving this result.

James Hodgson

Head Master





Top Six Boys' Boarding School *in the World*



Bedford School was delighted to not only be named among Fortune's 'World's Leading Boarding Schools' for 2023 but to also be awarded five stars, placing the school not just in the top 250 schools covered by the report but in the global top 100 and one of just six boys' boarding schools in the world to have achieved such a rating.

The prestigious guide compiled by Fortune (one of the oldest and best-known media brands in the world) in collaboration with Statista, the international data and market research company, is designed to help globally-mobile families choose the right school. The guide was compiled using information gathered over recent months from parents, alumni, educational advisors, heads and admissions staff worldwide.

James Hodgson, Head Master, said, "This accolade is testament to the consistent hard work and high standards achieved by our entire school community. Following the honour of being named Independent Boys' School of the Year, we are thrilled to now receive international recognition, as awarded by parents, staff, agents and alumni from across the world. We are truly delighted and take shared pride in this prestigious award."



The Value of Boarding at Bedford

Bedford is a values-led school, and nowhere is this more evident than in the boarding houses. The school stands for responsibility, integrity, curiosity and endeavour, all underpinned by kindness. And it is kindness that is emphasised the most. Inclusion and allyship are encouraged at all times, with boys being taught the importance of this in every relationship, both inside and outside the school.

Each house is a tight-knit community with a team of Housemaster, Assistant Housemaster, House Tutors and Matrons, all of whom are dedicated to ensuring the boys in their care thrive. Tutor groups meet daily and Housemasters and Matrons are also available each day, giving boys the opportunity to discuss their progress and raise any academic or pastoral issues. Housemasters work closely with each boy's tutor and stay in regular contact with parents. This close communication aids the development of pupils and promotes safety and wellbeing for all.

Boarders live with this larger team around them every day, and families are encouraged to see the boarding house as an extension of every boy's family at home, 'a home away from home', thereby providing a greater number of supporting and significant adults in each boarder's life. Across the school, an unusual system of 'twinning' is in place, which links each boarding house to a day house and encourages friendships to grow between boys as they share strong bonds and invaluable experiences.

Importantly at Bedford, boarders are boarders, and whether they are full, weekly or flexi, they remain part of the boarding house with the same Tutor and Housemaster at all times, and full access to the house. In this way, the house community is strengthened, with bonds between boys even when they spend part of the week at home.

The school recently conducted an extensive independent research study to understand more of what boarding at Bedford brings to boys (both now and for their futures) as well as to their families. Boys (boarders and day boys, current and Old Bedfordian), staff, parents (both boarding and day) and prospective parents all took part. The findings are outlined in the pages that follow. Each provide you an understanding of what boarding brings to boys at Bedford academically, on a co-curricular level, to their families and for their development, both at school and beyond.

'Inside Boarding' Talk

Head Master, James Hodgson, and Independent Researcher Jo Reid help to 'lift the lid' on boarding and answer many of the questions regularly asked by families.



Enhanced Academic Offer

As boarders, boys have the benefit of their Housemaster, Assistant Housemaster and Tutors on hand in the boarding house to provide a wealth of professional guidance and advice on their prep and studies.

They can also access specialist subject tutoring in the house on weekday evenings to discuss and work through specific academic problems or develop areas of study further. Additional academic sessions are also available to boarders in the library each week along with talks from external speakers to enhance their subject knowledge.

Each night, prep time is set aside for boarders, which, with everyone working simultaneously, results in greater focus amongst all boys, something that works particularly well in the run-up to exams.

Boys can also tap into the first-hand knowledge and experience of the older boys in the house, and study with their peers, both of which they recognise as extremely helpful and motivating.

“You *learn* how to work hard without it being an effort.”

Upper School boarder

“Boarders think they probably do more of what’s considered ‘*improving*’ or ‘*productive*’. They feel more purposeful in how they use their time.

Jo Reid, Rising Sun Research



“Having friends to hand seems automatically to make *boys engage* in activities that are more social and less insular or solitary.”

Jo Reid, Rising Sun Research



Limitless activities and opportunities

With no daily commute, boarders enjoy more relaxed evenings with plenty of time to do the things that they enjoy, even when a couple of hours are taken over for prep.

With the logistics of getting to and from school removed, they can participate in more activities, both formal and ad hoc. From the school's many clubs and societies to the plethora of activities laid on just for them, boarders enjoy film nights and friendly house competitions such as the Boarders' Games, trips out such as go-karting and zorbing, sightseeing and cultural visits to places such as London, Oxford and Cambridge, specialist sports coaching, the annual Boarders' Spring Dinner, informal music practices and a host of other opportunities.

They make full use of all the school's facilities and specialists to follow their passions, enjoy social activities with their friends or simply unwind.

With the opportunity to do as little or as much as they would like, the boys enjoy an unparalleled sense of ownership and control of their lives, within the comforting structure of the boarding day.

As boarders, boys not only become a part of their boarding house family but also part of the wider Bedford boarding community. Each day the boarders eat together in the Dining Hall, enjoy time together in the evenings and unrestricted access to each other's houses. Through regular year-group and house-based activities, such as laser tag and water sports, boys form strong bonds and friendships with boys of all ages and cultures, that last far beyond their years at school.

"There will *always* be ten other people who want to do what you want to do."

OB boarder

A Typical Boarder's Day



Development as people

Boarding offers many advantages for boys as they learn to develop as people, and in particular through the challenging teenage years.

Living in a house with older boys too, they have many different role models to look up to and learn from. From a young age, they are given responsibilities within their boarding family, practical and meaningful roles to add value to the community in which they live.

They are taught kindness and respect for others, quickly learning tolerance and to find common ground where they need to, in order to live comfortably alongside others from many different backgrounds. And with boys from many different cultures and nationalities, they are afforded a global outlook that they would not otherwise have access to.

On a more practical front, boarders quickly learn to be organised, to manage their time effectively and to plan ahead – something which their parents often remark upon when they return home for the holidays.

They learn to think for themselves and develop their independence from an early age – lasting skills which serve them well as they grow throughout the school.

“We are absolutely committed to embedding kindness and a culture where *every single pupil is valued* and can grow into the man he is supposed to be.”

James Marriott, Senior Boarding Housemaster

“I’d tell anyone – it’s not just something you do from 13-18 . . . *boarding stays with you* and goes with you everywhere afterwards, even more so than day school.”

OB boarder





Skills for the next stage

Boys who have gone on from boarding to university often talk about the smooth nature of the transition and how they feel their experience of living away from home whilst at school prepared them with plenty of useful skills.

They feel they have had a 'practice run', a soft start where they have been fully supported as they gain the necessary skills for independent living.

Boarding has provided them with a strong work ethic and the ability to plan their time – a skill that goes a long way in the relatively unstructured world of university.

Importantly, they are also accustomed to living in shared accommodation, often with people they don't know well and they have the skills to cooperate and manage differences in close quarters.

"You can spot the guys
who went to boarding school
- they're not fazed by the
whole experience, they just
hit the ground running."

OB boarder

Family life and boarding

Parents sometimes worry that the boarding house will become a boy's 'new family', somehow taking the place of the close relationships he has at home. The reality is that rather than losing anything, a boy's family simply becomes larger. The boarding house works *in partnership* with a boy's parents to deliver the best experience and outcomes for him as a whole. Contact is informal and frequent and opportunities to visit are many – parents are always welcome at the boarding house, be it for a specific event, or simply just to visit and take their son out for a pizza in the town.

From the family's perspective, there are also benefits to consider. Not only does boarding help to provide continuity for boys whose parents work long hours or regularly change location, but it also ensures that the time spent together as a family at home is quality time. By removing some of the challenges of everyday family life, families have the luxury of simply enjoying time spent together.

House spirit

What makes Bedford Bedford, is the house spirit. Boys of all ages describe the feeling of being part of an extended family, of pride in the house, of celebrating each other and coming together.

“Bedford has a real family feel to it,
I feel as comfortable at school and in the
boarding house as I do at home.”

Lower Sixth Boarder

“People love their house and feel a great
sense of pride towards it. The amount
of people who regularly wear house kit,
demonstrates this. People are quick to
volunteer to represent the house and love
to say they are part of their house.”

Year 10 Boarder

“By the time I pick him up
on a Saturday he’s usually done all his work, and I
don’t even have to worry about doing his washing –
it’s all been taken care of, so I can just
enjoy him.”

Boarding parent





Burnaby House



Pemberley House



Phillpotts House



Redburn House



Sanderson's House



Talbot's House

Our Houses

Our Boarding Houses are at the heart of life at Bedford School.

Burnaby, Pemberley, Phillpotts and Talbot's houses are situated on the boundaries of the school estate, while Redburn and Sanderson's occupy sites in a leafy suburban area just five minutes' walk from the school.

Full, weekly and flexi boarders are spread across all six houses. Flexi boarders in Year 11 and above live exclusively in Burnaby, with those in Years 9 and 10 boarding in the other five houses.

Each of our six Upper School boarding houses offers boys a true 'home from home'. Each house is distinctive, a genuinely warm and welcoming community with a character of its own.

We invite you to take a look inside at any point. Tours are readily available and can be booked through the Admissions Team.

Boarding options

Full boarding

Boys board at school seven days a week but return home or to guardians for holidays.

Weekly boarding

Boys board during the week but leave for home on Saturday once their sporting commitments have been completed. They then return to school either on Sunday evening or on Monday morning.

Flexi boarding

Boys board for either two or three nights per week, selected from either the first half (Sunday to Tuesday) or the second half (Wednesday to Friday) of the week.

Boarding at Bedford in Numbers



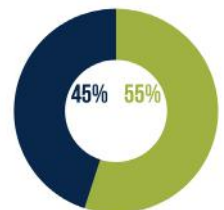
**SIX UPPER
BOARDING HOUSES**



**250 FULL, WEEKLY &
FLEXI BOARDERS**



**30 DIFFERENT
NATIONALITIES**



**INTERNATIONAL BOARDERS
UK BOARDERS**

Burnaby House

Burnaby House is named after Lord Frederick Burnaby, a 19th-century soldier and adventurer who attended Bedford School. It is home to around 35 boys and offers flexi, weekly and full boarding. It is centrally located on the school estate, making it the closest house to school.

Burnaby House's motto is "Value Everyone, Thrive Together," highlighting the importance of the boys' wellbeing and a positive boarding experience.

The team at Burnaby House are dedicated to providing excellent care, making it a nurturing 'home away from home.' Respect and mutual support are key values in the house, creating a safe and happy living environment. The house culture encourages boys to reach their full potential, develop their character and excel in all areas.

Leisure activities for boys at Burnaby include outings to go-kart tracks, water parks, paintball venues and trampoline parks. They also enjoy outdoor cooking events such as 'steak night' around a fire-pit in the garden when the weather is good. Friday night 'pizza night' and weekly awards ceremonies are also popular traditions.



Boarding offers boys a first taste of independence, whilst in a *supportive and caring* environment.



Mr Rees, Housemaster

Mr and Mrs Rees have been the Burnaby Houseparents since 2023, living there with their two young children.

Burnaby is twinned with Bromham Day House

Pemberley House

Pemberley House, established in 1904, is the largest of our boarding houses and is conveniently located just a short distance from the school gates. Over the years, many generations of boys have called Pemberley home, including comedian, Al Murray, who attended the school from 1977 to 1986.

The core values of respect, kindness, and involvement are deeply embedded in the house culture. Boys are encouraged to appreciate one another and the shared benefits of living in a community.

Pemberley House has its own house hymn, *Guide me, oh Thou Great Redeemer*, often sung in the common room.

Boys at Pemberley enjoy regular trips to Box End Water Park, the Quarry Theatre (the school's own theatre), bowling and go-karting.

What really made the difference for me was the supportive culture that the house had to offer. . .everyone of all age groups was *friendly and welcoming* to one another which made settling in so easy."

Year 9 boarder



Mr Taylor, Housemaster

Mr and Mrs Taylor run the house, living there with their two young children and their greyhound, Misty.

Pemberley is twinned with Crescent Day House

Phillpotts House

Phillpotts is situated on the edge of the school estate, a five-minute walk from the main building, yet far enough away for boys to feel 'out of school'.

Notable alumni include politician Paddy Ashdown, who attended the school between 1952 and 1959. The house values are centred around the motto "Do the right thing."

Phillpotts has its own basketball court and has exclusive access to some of the school's tennis courts, located conveniently at the bottom of the garden. The only neighbours are the Head Master and the Prep School Headmaster, who do not mind the sounds of boys playing during their free time.

Every Friday, the boys enjoy a hot supper prepared by Mrs Bury and the 'Man of the Week' is announced. Boys nominate each other for acts of kindness or notable achievements for this award.

"If someone told me I would be singing for all I'm worth in the House Singing Competition, I would have laughed. But I did.

And I loved it."

Lower Sixth boarder



Mr Bury, Housemaster

Mr and Mrs Bury have been running the house since 2022, along with their field spaniel, Dougie.

Phillpotts is twinned with St Cuthbert's Day House

Redburn House

Redburn House celebrates both individual and group achievements. Boys are encouraged to take every opportunity Bedford School offers, allowing their unique qualities to shine. The house operates under two principles: 'work hard, play hard' and 'do the right thing.'

The diverse careers and successes of Redburn's alumni are a reflection of the many opportunities available. Among the most famous is England cricketer Sir Alastair Cook, who attended the school from 1998 to 2003.

Mr and Mrs Marriott make the house feel like a 'home from home', with boys often joining them for dinner, in what is affectionately known as 'Come Dine with the Marriotts,' and there are opportunities for boys to develop baking skills for charity cake sales.

The house is located off-site, making the walk back after school feel like returning home. It is just 300 metres from the River Great Ouse in one of Bedford's most desirable areas. Nearby Bedford Rugby Club provides Friday night entertainment.

"Everybody's successes are heard at Bedford.

Every week in the house we have a 'Success Friday' where we come together to celebrate successes we have had during the week."

Year 9 boarder



Mr Marriott, Housemaster

Mr and Mrs Marriott have been leading Redburn House since 2019, living there with their two young daughters and Barney the dog.

Redburn is twinned with Paulo Pontine Day House

Sanderson's House

Sanderson's is nestled in the same leafy area as Redburn, a seven-minute walk from the school. It is the smallest boarding house, offering a warm, supportive environment. The house has a large garden and is close to the River Great Ouse, Bedford Blues Rugby Club and local shops.

Sanderson's teaches boys to relate to others, regardless of their background. They are shown respect, listened to and given a solid foundation to succeed. Notable alumni include Tim Bouscarle, co-founder of Chilly's water bottle company.

The boys enjoy regular house trips to places such as Xscape Snozone and occasional outings for burgers at Five Guys.

The house motto is 'Work hard and do the right thing.'

"The pride shown by the boys in their school is second to none and is what makes this such a special place to work!"



40 BOARDING STAFF
LIVE ON-SITE



Mr Midgley, Housemaster

Leading the house are Mr and Mrs Midgley, who live there with their two sons, and Ozzy, a retired guide dog, along with Domino, the cat.

Sanderson's is twinned with Ashburnham Day House

Talbot's House

Talbot's is the oldest boarding house, centrally located on the school estate and a short walk from the town centre. It has large gardens, providing plenty of space for cricket and football, and even an orchard.

The house is rich in tradition; for House Singing, a red and white striped jacket is always proudly worn by the conductor, and their annual House Christmas Quiz is a highlight of the year.

'We value everyone' is the house motto, and each year they vote for 'Man of the Year,' awarded to the boy who best embodies these values.

'Steak and Smash Burger' masterclasses and go-karting are popular activities. The house holds annual pool and table tennis championships, with the winners' names displayed on the honours boards in the common room, affectionately known as 'The Barn.'



"Our son has grown a lot at Talbot's and he loves to live there. We really like that the door to your house is *always open for him.*"

Talbot's Parent



Mr Wise, Housemaster

Mr and Mrs Wise have been leading Talbot's since 2021 and live there with their three young children. House dogs, Chadwick and Riley, are regular visitors, much to the boys' delight.

Talbot's is twinned with St Peter's Day House

FAQs

How are new boarders helped to integrate into the school community?

Before boys start at Bedford School, our Boarding Housemasters get in touch, usually on a Skype or a Teams call, to introduce themselves, and we warmly encourage parents to join this call.

In the June ahead of starting, boys join us for an Induction Day. During the day, boys meet their Housemaster, house staff and some of the boys from the house in person.

When boys first arrive at the boarding house, they are welcomed by senior boys, who also help them to settle in. Every new boy to the house also has a student buddy to help him to find his feet and get used to the new routines.

During the first few weeks of term there are lots of house activities from Fourth Form trips to house competitions, which all help boys to feel a valued part of their house community.

What support is there for international boarders whose first language might not be English?

Our English as an Additional Language (EAL) Co-ordinator meets with boys who speak English as an additional language to explain how lessons will work and the support that is available. Boys receive tailored EAL lessons and ongoing support throughout their time at school, as needed.

Will I get regular updates about my son from his boarding team?

Yes, parents receive a formal bulletin from the Housemaster at least once every half term. Parents also receive frequent informal emails about their son's activities and achievements, such as emails about his performance in a concert, a good piece of work or an act of kindness – all of which keep parents connected.

How do tutors and teachers keep me up to date with my son's progress?

In addition to regular emails from Housemasters, there are written reports and Parents' Evenings to discuss boys' academic progress and co-curricular activities. We can also arrange Skype or Teams calls, if there is a need to discuss anything in more detail.

How can I stay in touch with my son?

As boarders, boys have free time during lunch, after school from 4:15pm to 7:00pm, after prep finishes at 9:00pm and on weekends when they can receive calls.

Parents are also very welcome to visit whenever they happen to be in Bedford.

As a parent, how can I get involved in house life?

The school's social media channels are a good way to keep updated about school life. We also encourage parents to follow their son's boarding house on Instagram to see and engage with house activities.

The Upper Bulletin is sent every Saturday morning in term time and provides important information and updates for the coming week, while a weekly newsletter for parents called The Week looks back at the week with a roundup of stories from around the school every Friday afternoon.

Parents are always welcome into school to watch fixtures, productions, concerts and attend Parent Partnership events – these are all listed on the school website. We appreciate that coming into school for overseas parents is not always possible, so we aim to provide live links to events, whenever possible. However, whenever they can, we encourage parents to visit the school for events, to meet staff and other parents and build relationships.

How many boys will my son share a room with?

As boys progress through the school, they generally move into smaller rooms with fewer boys. In the Fourth Form, boys typically share a dorm with three or four others, helping them to build those initial all-important friendships. In the Lower Sixth, they usually share a double room, and by the Upper Sixth, they often have a single or double study room. However, the number of boys to a room can vary from house to house.

Which activities can my son take part in during the evening and weekends?

In the evenings, there is a weekly programme of activities in the Sports Hall, including badminton, basketball and football. Boys can also use the Fitness Centre and the weights room, while the Music School and Library are open to boarders until 9.00pm three nights a week.

Regular inter-house and in-house boarding competitions are held each term, many of which take place in the evenings.

Each boarding house organises trips once every half term, such as paintballing, go-karting and visits to adventure parks. We also run Sunday trips based on boys' feedback, including trips to Thorpe Park, Christmas shopping in Cambridge, shopping at Bicester Village and day trips to London.

Do boarders get any 'down time'?

Yes. As boarders with no commute, boys have plenty of free time. Boys finish the school day at 4.15pm and can choose to relax or join clubs and societies. Their Housemaster will encourage them to find a healthy balance between the two.

Boys also have more free time from 9.00pm after prep until lights out. Boys often enjoy a game of FIFA, watch some TV together or play board games, which are becoming increasingly popular.

Where do boarders stay over Exeat weekends?

All boarding houses stay open over Exeat weekends, so full boarders can stay in the boarding house, rather than having to travel to a guardian or host family for the weekend.

Flexi and weekly boarders usually go home, but they can stay in the boarding house for an additional charge, if they wish.

How many house staff are there and how are they trained?

All Housemasters complete a Boarding Schools Association (BSA) qualification and regularly update their training, and each is supported by a live-in Assistant Housemaster with similar qualifications. All staff are also First Aid trained.

Each house also has a team of Matrons who take care of the house during the day when the boys are at school. They look after boys when they are unwell and help the boys with their daily needs. Additionally, there is a team of cleaning staff, a laundry assistant and a handyperson in each boarding house. Together, they form a supportive team that knows and supports the boys.

What happens if my son is unwell?

If a boy is unwell, he is assessed by the Assistant Housemaster and encouraged to go to school, if possible. If a boy is too unwell, he stays in the house under the care of the House Matron, and parents are advised. If necessary, he will be taken to our on-site Health and Wellbeing Centre. All boarders are registered with our local GP surgery, with access to same-day or next-day appointments. If a boy is too unwell to stay in the house, we will suggest that parents or guardians come to collect him.

Can I choose my son's boarding house?

We ask parents to trust our knowledge and understanding of what is best for each boy, taking into account his interests, hobbies and nationality to provide him with a rich and diverse boarding experience. If you have a family history with a particular boarding house, we will try to place your son there, but this is dependent on availability.

Next steps

If you would like to find out more about full, weekly or flexi boarding at Bedford or to register an interest in boarding for your son, please contact our Admissions Team by calling **+44 (0)1234 362216** or emailing [*admissions@bedfordschool.org.uk*](mailto:admissions@bedfordschool.org.uk)

We are always happy to discuss availability and arrange a private visit to a boarding house, with the opportunity to discuss the Bedford boarding experience with a Housemaster.



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