

Information about Boarding for families

What is a boarding school?

A boarding school is a school where children study and live during term time. **Full** boarding is when the child returns home for the school holidays. **Weekly** boarding is when the young person returns home for weekends too.

What is the difference between a 'state' and 'independent' boarding school?

A 'state' boarding school is a 'regular' school, but where the children can also live in their boarding houses during term time. There are around 32 state boarding schools in the UK, but they are not spread equally across the UK. Local Authorities fund the education element, while Buttle UK will fund the boarding element. State schools do not have admissions exams.

An 'independent' boarding school (also known as 'private') is where both education and the boarding element need to be paid for. Because of this, independent boarding schools are much more expensive than state schools. Independent schools need pupils to pass academic admission exams.

Buttle UK's preference is to place a young person in a state boarding school, but when this is not an option, then consideration will be given to independent boarding schools.

Why does Buttle UK fund boarding school places?

When there are difficult situations at home that are not improving, a boarding school can sometimes offer a good alternative for a child and their family. It means that the child can focus on their studies away from home, but still remain in the care of the family. Boarding schools also offer lots of opportunities for children to be with other children socially, and can provide a good support system to help with good wellbeing

What age does my child need to be?

Buttle UK's boarding programme only funds secondary education. This is young people aged 11 to 16 (Year 7-11 in England and Wales, P7-S4 in Scotland, or Year 8-12 in Northern Ireland). Our funding usually comes to an end at the end of GCSE's or Scottish National 5.



Emotionally I am 100% better now he is at boarding school. This has helped my mental health so much. I think he has grown up so much and gained considerable amount of confidence.

Who looks after my child when they are at boarding school?

During school-hours, a young person is looked after by teachers, just like in an ordinary school. Outside school hours, there is a 'house parent' who lives on site and who is there to look after your child.

Younger boarders will probably share a bedroom or dormitory with other children in a 'boarding house'. Younger pupils will also often have a 'buddy' and many schools have pupil volunteers to help younger pupils settle in.

You can talk to your child at any time outside of school hours, just like any school. If there is a need for you to be contacted during the school day, the school will sort this out. Each school has their own policy regarding the use of mobile phones.

To find out what young people have told us boarding school is like, please see this short video:

<https://buttleuk.org/top-tips-for-boarders-2/>

Will I have to pay anything for my child to go into Boarding?

The cost of education, food and accommodation is usually covered by Buttle UK, the school and sometimes other charities or the Local Authority. They can also sometimes contribute towards the cost of essential items such as uniforms, laptops and educational school trips.

You are not usually required to contribute to fees, although you may be asked to contribute if your finances allow you to do so, or if your circumstances improves during the course of the grant. You will be asked to complete a Renewal Form every year and let us know of any changes to your family or finances.

You will need to continue to pay for all other costs of raising your child, such as travel to and from school, items for the home, everyday clothing and school holiday activities. There might be some trips, activities and costs that are not essential to your child's education you may be asked to fund.

“ We have seen an improvement with her behaviour both at school and at home, however, she does still exhibit some behavioural challenges which are to be expected given the difficult situation he is in. We have seen some improvement in her behaviour and she was awarded boarder of the week which boosted her confidence

Where will my child go to boarding school?

You do not need to have chosen a boarding school when you make an application to us – we can help you find a suitable school. We aim to find places no more than 1.5 hours from the family home so that your child can more easily go home when needed and for holidays.

We choose schools with Good or Excellent reports for the Boarding element. We also want schools to provide a good level of education. We prioritise placing children in schools where there is an emphasis on good pastoral support rather than academic or talent achievements.

Whilst we work with families and schools to find the right place for a child, ultimately, the decision about whether a child can be offered a place at a boarding school is a decision made by the school. Boarding schools will need different sources of information such as previous school and health reports to help them decide whether their school is the right school for your child. You as a parent also need to decide whether the school is right for you and your child - it will be a big part of your life for several years.

“ She has struggled to settle at school, however her support network has been consistent in their response. I feel that I have been strong and showed that her education is very important. There have been challenges but they have been overcome and she is now settling better

How do I know if going to boarding school is right for my child?

Your child needs to want to engage with education for a place to succeed, and they need to be able to cope with being away from home, their family and support network for long periods of time. Most boarding schools will offer trial days/weekends/week to help a child decide if the school is right for them.

Boarding might not be suitable for some children. There are a number of reasons for this, and it might relate to one-off incidents or patterns of behaviour which mean they may not cope in a boarding environment. For examples of when a boarding place may not be suitable, please see our website:

<https://buttleuk.org/apply-for-a-grant/support-for-boarding/>

What happens if a boarding place fails?

Sometimes a child starts and then decides they aren't happy in boarding school. Or, because of their behaviour, the school decides boarding is not a safe option for them. If that happens the child will leave the school and you, as parent/carer, will have to talk to your Local Authority to find a local school place. This can mean homeschooling or time out of school because of the challenge of finding a place at late notice.

What should I do if I think boarding is right for my child?

Buttle UK supports around 12 children into a boarding place each year. Please visit our website <https://buttleuk.org/apply-for-a-grant/support-for-boarding/> to see if your circumstances meet our criteria for support.

If you feel it does, speak with your Support Worker who will need to make the application on your behalf. You also need to speak to your child to see if a place in a boarding school is something they would want to consider. We aim to assess applications as quickly as possible, but the application process can take several months. We will ask about the circumstances at home, and request financial evidence (bank statements) from you and others with parental responsibility, and other supporting information along the way. We prioritise our funding for families most in need.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss our Support for Boarding programme, please contact Katie Wood on 020 7798 6233, or visit our website at www.buttleuk.org

“ He has settled into boarding and I have not had as many negative behaviour reports. He is now on ADHD medication which is helping his focus in class. He joined Cadets twice a week. At school and at home, we have noticed a marked difference in him since joining.