

2023

TOP SECRET



Boarding Prospectus
By the boys, for the boys

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Introduction

The Boarding Community at Reading School is a fantastic and eventful place in which to live.

We have around 80 boarders from Years 7-13 in two boarding houses, East Wing and South House.

Living as a boarder in Reading School provides a friendly and welcoming environment for all ages within the school and we boarders are writing this so you know what to expect in advance! You might be a bit scared of boarding but there's no need. Everyone looks after each other here – a bit like brothers and it's certainly the case that everyone wants to help you out. We reckon we study better than if we lived at home and have more fun too!



In this guide we have tried to give you a backstage pass on how stuff works, so you know more clearly what to expect when you arrive.

Also we've written a bunch of 'top tips' giving some useful advice. We hope all this helps you prepare for life @Reading School!

Top Tip

Read this guide and get your parents to email in advance if there's anything you're not sure about.

Need to know

Each Boarding House is run by a Housemaster – they live on site and are pretty much always available!

Mr Lloyd runs South House and Mr Sanchez runs East Wing.

Top Tip

Listen to the Prefects! They actually have some pretty solid advice and know exactly how you're feeling in those first weeks after you arrive!

They are both extremely nice and live in the boarding houses too. If you are ever in trouble go to the prefects first, but do speak to the Housemasters if you are ever worried about anything!

There are also Deputy Mistresses and House Tutors who all have a duty day each week. That means that they run clubs, supervise your homework time, run various activities and put you to bed. They are all teachers in the school and you will get to know them very well. They will always carry the duty mobile (the number is printed everywhere - you should always have it in your contacts on your mobile just in case you need to contact a member of staff).

If you feel unwell, inform one of our Matrons or the member of staff on duty as soon as possible. The Matrons are pretty cool - Nikki in East Wing and Karen in South House. They are really easy to chat to (but Karen can't sing!). They give medicines or treatment when we're ill.

If you are worried about anything, having a hard time in school or missing your family there are many people you can talk to. The older boys, the staff and the Matrons can support you and they'll always be there if you need to talk to somebody.

Each house has a bunch of prefects and a House Captain. They take a lot of responsibility and are always willing to give advice, help with homework or have a chat.

Settling in

For most people settling into an unknown environment can be hard. Many questions can be asked such as: “Where do I go for lessons? Will I get lost? Will I be late? Will I get punished for being late? What’s the routine?”

Really there is nothing to be worried about. You’ll actually find you settle in by around the second week and you’ll have the routine sorted. There is no need to be anxious or lose sleep over settling in; it’s a piece of cake!

When you start you’ll have an older boarder who looks out for you (usually they’re senior prefects) and meets up from time to time to check on you. Tutors also check you are on top of homework and remind you to pack your bag the night before, as well as helping you get to know the rest of the boys in the house.

You’ll also have a buddy from the year above who will help you when you start so if you have a difficulties, they’ll help you out.

The boarding houses aren’t that big so it won’t be too long before you know it like your own home and you know all the other boarders by name too.

We think it’s wise to get to know as many of the other year groups by joining in the evening clubs and activities, it’s the best way to make friends outside your year.

Top Tip

Always try and nab the bottom bunk if you are in a dorm with bunks because it makes Big Laundry so much easier!



The Daily Routine

Although occasionally it changes, this is the normal daily routine.

There are three bells in the morning. The bell rings at 07.00. This time the Housemasters and Deputies will go round and make sure you're awake.

The best thing to do is to sit up when they come round and say that you're awake in the most energetic voice you can do. When they leave, try not to go back to sleep! – you may try to sleep through it but you're mobbed by other boys asking you if you have a spare tie. The refectory doors open at 07:30 and breakfast ends at around 08.10.

You have to be in for breakfast at 07.45 for notices, so don't be late or you'll get a sanction such as having to help with wake-ups the next day! You can leave breakfast any time after 08.00 once notices are done and you can clean your teeth, play pool or chat with your friends. Normally younger boarders have more energy than older ones – and if you find it easy to wake up on time you can go for a shower from 07.00 – but don't be too noisy or you'll make the lazier boys grumpy! It is a good time to check you have everything you need for the day, because after registration we aren't allowed up to our rooms until the end of school!

After breakfast you have lesson 1 at 08.20 and from then on you're pretty much a day boy until 15.25. You'll probably have to leave the boarding house at around 08.15 to be in lesson 1 for 08.20 – don't be late, boarders get really told off for being late because we've not got an excuse!

At 09.55 we have break where you can either have toast in the boarding house or food in the refectory. There are other snacks too like cookies and bagels... mmmm. Lunchtime is at 12.40 and we get food from the refectory. One of the cool things about being a boarder is that you can get your food back to the house and catch up with your friends, or speak to Nikki and Karen while playing a game of pool!. You have to use your finger print but a main meal with either a salad or a pudding is free. The final two lessons of the day start at 13:50, straight after form time and end at 15.25.

After that you are free to do anything you want to, for example, you can go to the hospital shops, the Triangle (made up of Co-op, a fish & chip shop and a Chinese takeaway) or town (to look round the shops or meet up with some friends/girls – this is mainly for the older boys

Top Tip

The bell rings at 07.00, but if you find it difficult to get out of bed in the morning, you can wait for a member of staff to wake you up at around 07.15.

but it is good to know!). You can only go to town when the Staff say yes. Or you can stay at school, whether to play football, cricket, rugby or any other activities on site. Some of us like to read or play games in the common rooms – but it's always good to go to at least one organised club a night, it's great to do something different every day.

Dinner starts at 17.30. After dinner you are free to do anything you want until 18.15 when you do your prep. Prep runs from 18.15 – 19.45. Make the most of this time – or you'll find yourself getting behind and you'll have to catch up when everyone else is having fun.

Then you have Prayers, which is a meeting where announcements are said and any house-related questions are answered. After Prayers again you have free time or a club.

Bedtimes are as follows:

For Year 7s bedtime begins at 21.15. For Year 8s bedtime is at 21.30. For Year 9s bedtime is at 21.45. For Year 10s bedtime is at 22:15. For Year 11s bedtime is at 22.45.

Seniors (Sixth Formers) have to be in their rooms by 23.00. If you're in a younger year and you haven't quite got to sleep yet keep quiet while the staff are patrolling!

Top Tip

Pack your bag before bed so that you'll be organised and ready for the next day as soon as you wake up – it saves a load of early morning stress!

Don't exhaust yourself by staying up too late – but most staff are ok with us whispering for about fifteen minutes after lights out. In the summer, when exams are over, the routine changes slightly. Prep is only from 18.15 to 19.15 and bedtimes are moved to the time of the year above but you will find out more when the time comes.



Food

Both boarding houses eat together for all three meals of the day, with a large choice of meals. We now even have the option of eating with the day boys for lunch.

For breakfast, we have cereal, toast and porridge available daily, as well as a cooked breakfast or

a pastry. A firm favourite is Wednesday when we always have a Full English! There's unlimited toast, fruit and cereal – but you're expected to just have one cup of fruit juice. Probably to save bills at the dentist!

At lunchtime you can just grab a snack from the 'grab and go' if you want so you can keep playing with your mates.

Dinner is everyone's favourite meal of the day, mainly because of the delicious assortment of puddings. The most popular ones include cake and crumble. That's not to say that the main courses aren't delicious too. Older boys get really cross if the younger boarders throw any food away – so be sure to only get the portion size you need!

Top Tip

Always arrive in enough time to have dinner first, so you can get the biggest choice of seconds.



Weekends

If you have a school rugby, football or cricket match on a Saturday morning you can stay over Friday night but otherwise, we will go home by 6pm on Fridays.

Staying over on a Friday is just like any other week day but we're not expected to do any homework after school and the evening is slightly different. Tea is usually a take away and after that we choose a movie to watch later. Bedtimes aren't as strict.

There is no schedule for waking up but the house is locked at 10.00 on Saturday. Breakfast is available in the house kitchen but don't expect anything massive – normally yoghurts, croissants and cereal.

Whenever you leave the boarding house you need to sign out on the ipads. This is very important you do this because we need to know who is in the house. Honestly – this is probably one of the most important rules and staff do enforce it harshly – but if we're good and everyone signs in and out really well for a decent length of time, sometimes Mr Lloyd or Mr Sanchez will buy us pizza!

At the weekend it's worth taking some exercise books home to show your parents, so they know how you're getting on. Make sure you're not too tired, as it makes your parents think that boarding is not so good! Parents always want to know how the week has gone, so make sure they sign up to the boarding Twitter and Instagram account. That way they won't have so many questions to ask!

Top Tip

You can always stay over at the weekend and watch a movie with your mates in Big Dorm.

Prep

As in any normal school, we are given prep (or homework) during the day. We have 1.5 hours after dinner in which we are supervised by staff. There are 3 levels of prep supervision. The A group are supervised all the time in the prep room, the B group work in a classroom with access to laptops but less supervision and the C group can work in their own rooms. If you have good reports and your mentor thinks you are organised then you can move up to the next group. Every so often the senior on prep duty visits to check to see if you're actually working, though.

Make sure you focus getting one task at a time and prioritise the bigger and more urgent assignments done first. You should always be prepared to give up part of your evening if an urgent task isn't done. 1.5 hours is almost always enough in the first couple of years, but be ready to work extra hard to prepare for exams in May.

Top Tip

If you can, try and get homework done on the night it is set. This honestly saves loads of time and worry!

Make sure you bring a book to read in case you finish everything.

It's a good idea to email your teachers sometimes if you need extra help with a task or don't understand – but if you're scared of that ask a boarding prefect or a member of staff. Some of the staff run special sessions to help with any problems in their subject – for example Maths clinic. Honestly, it's not great fun, but it's better than getting a detention!



The Older Boys

The older boys have a lot of responsibility in the boarding houses. They're super involved and great role models! They expect appropriate respect.

Top Tip

Respect the older boys and they can help you out with things (e.g. tricky Music prep).

Every year a new House Captain will be appointed by the younger years of the house. The House Captain gets a much bigger room. But he is also in charge of organising house events such as football, chess, tug of war and more.

All boys will have an academic house tutor. This tutor is a member of staff and checks up on your year group every week. They will help you with school and go through your report at the end of the year.



The Staff

Here is a quick run-down of some of the Boarding staff:

Mr Lloyd

Mr Lloyd is in charge as Housemaster of South House and lives on site with his wife and his daughter, Ottilie. He is pretty chilled and is always helpful when it comes to English or football.

Mr Sanchez

Mr Sanchez is the East Wing Housemaster. He is a fantastic Head of West House, Spanish and PE teacher and always tries to do what he can for us as a Housemaster. He lives with his wife and his son, Bruno. He needs his sleep so don't make noise above his house!

Top Tip

Try and stay on the good side of staff as that gives you extra brownie points if there are treats going.

Miss Stratford

Miss Stratford is the Deputy in South House. Miss Stratford is our History teacher and a real athlete! She runs awesome canoeing and paddle boarding sessions!

Mme Fondu

Mme Fondu is the Deputy in East Wing. By day Mme Fondu is an awesome French teacher and by night she checks on us during prep if we need help or a chat. Mme Fondu organizes the most amazing trips that you can imagine!

Karen

Karen is the Matron in South House. She's nice, but don't let her sing AT ALL COSTS! Also, label your laundry or she might lose it!

Nikki

Nikki is the backbone of East Wing and is really good if you're ill. She's pretty organised and does room inspections every day, so you better keep things tidy!

Kathy and Eva

Kathy and Eva are our laundresses. Make sure your clothes are all named to make their life easier! They are very important for us and help us to look smart!

Rewards and Sanctions

There are many rewards and sanctions in the boarding house, awarded by either seniors or staff. Merits can be given for lots of things like behaviour, good school work, helping other boys and community work.

Top Tip

Scrounge for as many merits as possible... it's always worth a shot.

The rewards are pretty good, from a pizza and film night in the Senior Common room to a cinema trip! Definitely worth it!

good

The year with the most merits per person after every half-term will receive an evening treat.

This means either a movie in the Vue cinema in Reading or movie and pizza in the boarding house – it's a pretty epic reward really for not too much work!

There are also a few sanctions, the main one is community service where the staff on duty will ask you to do something that benefits the whole house - often cleaning the kitchen! More serious is Early Report, which is when you have to be outside the Housemaster's house by 07.00. After that it is Early Bed, so your bedtime is moved earlier, and the staff on duty will decide when your bedtime is moved to. Next is Gating, a very serious punishment, this is when you aren't allowed to leave the school grounds. Possibly the worst is House Gating, when you can't leave the boarding house except for meals and prep.

Staff can give any sanction but they don't give out that many, they prefer to give merits!

You don't really need to worry about sanctions – just keep to the rules, look after your mates and don't make too much mess! Pretty much as long as you are safe everyone is happy and you won't get sanctioned – so just be sensible!



Activities

If you're a sporty guy, then we have plenty of activities for you to enjoy, such as cricket nets, football, basketball, fitness sessions and some of our own games like ghost and cornerball.

If you just want to have a bit of a laugh and some

fun, we have volleyball and softball which are always very enjoyable and amusing as we often make complete fools of ourselves.

However, if you're not particularly into sports then we have chess club, art club, cooking and board games club as well as music practice space and tons of computers. Clubs change throughout the year based on popular demand and there are more outdoor clubs in the summer when the evenings are light.

One of the coolest things about clubs and activities is that we have a say on them. The Student voice team lead by Miss Stratford will have termly meetings to change, adapt or introduce new clubs, so if you have new ideas, please share them!

Top Tip

Always try and convince your mates to join in with activities as they're way more fun with more people!



Town

We are allowed to go into town in groups of 3 or more, but we need to inform the member of staff on duty. We mainly go straight after school and arrive back at school just before dinner. There are many things you can do in town.

You can go to the Oracle, go shopping or go to the cinema. To get to the station you have to go through town too. It is about 15 minutes' walk away.

Top Tip

Don't be late back from town; it's not worth the punishment! A good idea is to time how long it takes to walk in and use that as a basis for when to leave.



Trips

In the Boarding House we go on up to 6 trips per year one per half term. For example, last year we played bowling and laser quest, and went ice skating, and water-skiing.

Top Tip

Boarding trips are awesome but remember to bring your own cash for extras i.e. paintballs and snacks

We also went to see a show in London at Christmas and we went paintballing in the summer which was epic! You will love it when you get to pummel your Chemistry or Maths teacher with 200 paintballs...it's our way of getting them back!

Mme Fondu is the one in charge and is always amazing organising stunning trips for us, so make sure you say thank you to her!



Special Occasions

Special occasions in boarding, such as birthdays, are always celebrated in some way if they fall within term time. We are allowed to go out with friends to the cinema or to have a meal with our family. Also extensions can be given by members of staff so you can finish a movie you may be watching or a TV show like The Apprentice.

Top Tip

Birthdays are always celebrated in boarding but you get major kudos for bringing in a cake!

Sometimes special clubs are put on if we've been especially good. At Christmas a large three course meal is hosted in which old boys return and staff tell stories. It is also the time when the Christmas Play is performed by the new boys – that's a chance to take the mick of the staff and is epic!



Uniform

The school uniform is a shirt, a house tie, a grey jacket and grey trousers. You are expected to wear it to breakfast, but you can change into your own casual clothes straight after school.



Top tip

Hang your uniform up after school or it'll get well messy and you'll end up permanently scruffy (I was like that for three years!!!)

Top Tip

Make sure you bring a laundry bag as it means that you just need to stuff all your dirty stuff in and the staff will be impressed with how tidy your room is!

Laundry

We have our own laundresses in boarding, Kathy and Eva, so washing gets done daily. You put all your socks and undies in a laundry bag and then in to the laundry bins downstairs. Other clothes get separated in to darks and lights to go in the laundry. Big laundry is every other Wednesday morning. This is where the whole house puts their bedding in for washing. Be sure to have all of your clothes labelled clearly. This makes them come back to you much quicker!





Made by a dedicated team of boarders.

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