



WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

ALL ABOUT BOARDING





Where everyone feels at home

Westminster is the only ancient London school to occupy its original site and has a long history as a boarding school.

Welcoming both day and boarding pupils, it is a happy, busy and purposeful place with a lively boarding community of almost 200 boys and girls.

Living within the School's premises has many benefits. It allows pupils to take full advantage of the extended evening programme of concerts, plays, sport and lectures, as well as the many supervised trips to academic and cultural events held across London.





A boarder's typical timetable

From 7.50am



Breakfast is served for boarders in the medieval College Hall – originally the dining room of the Abbot of Westminster.

4.15pm



Tea is available for boarders and day pupils in College Hall or Grant's Dining Room. Between tea and suppertime, Lower School Activities (LSAs) take place and meetings of school societies are arranged. Every pupil in Years 9 and 10 is expected to do at least two LSAs every week. Options vary, but include Bookbinding, Bridge, Drama, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Football and Robotics.

6.00pm



Supper in College Hall is served for boarders and also for day pupils who have an evening activity such as a play, concert or lecture.

Seven reasons to board at Westminster

Superb pastoral care

The Housemaster along with the House team, made up of a live-in Matron, Resident Tutor and House Tutors, are always on hand to support pupils in all areas of their personal development.

Family atmosphere

Each House has a strong sense of community, allowing long-standing friendships to flourish.

Evening activities

There is a wide variety of organised evening activities in the School's Sports and Music Centres with concerts, plays, lectures and trips out.

Prep

Structured time for prep every evening between 7.15pm and 9.00pm helps pupils to complete their academic work in a quiet, studious and mutually supportive atmosphere.

Good food

Breakfast, lunch, tea and supper are prepared and served in College Hall and in the Purcell's and Grant's Dining Rooms. There is plenty of choice to suit all tastes.

Friends

It is relaxed and fun and boarders spend a lot of time with their friends. They can also see their family at weekends and can go home for special occasions.

No commute

Mornings and evenings are less stressful when no travel is involved. There's more time to socialise, to study and it is easier to be organised.

7.15pm



For boarders, study time or prep commences in their Houses or the Library. It is a structured session of independent learning, every evening, with the support of Housemasters and Tutors.

9.00pm



Prep ends, after which pupils may meet and talk, play pool or table tennis, or continue their academic work. A programme of activities is arranged every evening in the School's Music Centre and Sports Centre. For many boarders the end of formal prep is not the end of study for the day.

10.00pm



Pupils return to their Houses unless they have permission to attend a family celebration or to go, with a group organised by a member of staff, to a play or concert. Bed times vary according to the age of the pupils.

Home from home

A pupil's House becomes like an extended family. It is the space in which pupils spend much of their leisure time and provides the basis for many friendships.

"Your House becomes more like your second home, and before you know it - you'll forget you were away from your first"

Kaushal, Year 12 pupil

Every Westminster pupil belongs to one of the 11 Houses, named after people historically connected to the School. Boys join us at 13+ and both girls and boys can join the co-educational Sixth Form at 16+.

Six of the Houses accommodate boarders, while the remaining five are for day pupils.

In addition to the activities of the wider School, every House has its own community life. Either the House as a whole or smaller groups from within it work together to stage concerts, put on plays and musicals, compete in sporting competitions, or organise social outings and events.



"Pupils express delight in how the School has encouraged them to explore beyond the boundaries of what they might have thought they could do."

ISI Inspection Report





Where friendships form

Boarding allows pupils to make the most of all the activities Westminster has to offer, while enjoying more leisure time with their friends and getting to know pupils from outside their classes and year groups.

The boarding houses provide comfortable rooms and relaxed social spaces. Younger boarders share a large room with two or three others. Pupils in the Sixth Form (Year 12) and Remove (Year 13) have their own rooms. There is a strong sense of community between the Houses as well as within each House, because all the boarding buildings are situated around Little Dean's Yard – with the exception of Purcell's just a minute's walk away.

Purcell's is a girls-only boarding house; College, Grant's, Rigaud's, Busby's and Liddell's are mixed boarding houses. Apart from College, our Scholars'

House, all Houses have day pupils too – boys and girls. All year groups are represented in each House.

Like the day Houses, each boarding house has a Housemaster, responsible for the pupils' welfare, and, in addition, a Resident Tutor and Matron. Members of the House tutorial team are on duty in the evenings.

Boarding is in term-time only and most of our boarders also go home at weekends, although some of our over-16 pupils choose to remain at the School and make the most of all that London has to offer on a Saturday and Sunday.

“Boarding at Westminster completely changes your sixth form experience. The friends you make become a family away from home, and the boarding community is in general very tight knit. It’s also super fun.”

Veronica, Year 13 pupil



Weekend boarding at Westminster

For those pupils who board at Westminster full time, there are plenty of opportunities to relax, explore the city or have fun with their fellow boarders.

Owing to Westminster’s location at the heart of London, weekend boarders have access to an unmatched choice of restaurants, shops, cinemas, galleries, theatres and so much more. All this variety right on their doorstep allows our full-time boarders to make the most of their independence and pursue their own interests. There is also a steady stream of suggestions coming from staff about upcoming events and new locations, to help foster that independence and curiosity.

Much like during the week at Westminster, the School’s catering provision is very popular amongst weekend boarders. The Sunday morning brunch on offer each weekend is a particular hit, especially the waffle pop-up stand! The catering team also hosts a range of themed suppers at weekends, focusing on international cuisine in all its eclecticism.

The School operates on a combination of House-specific and whole-community events for weekend boarders. The pupils have an input into the form these activities take; which have in the past included House pizza-making evenings with a custom-built outdoor pizza oven, karaoke, a clay modelling night, salsa dancing, rounders and other group sports, restaurant outings and many more activities besides. At the end of each term, Housemasters and Tutors often hold boarders’ outings, as a way of celebrating the time spent together before pupils depart for the Exeat.

Although this provision for weekend activities is regular and encouraged, the weekends at Westminster are primarily opportunities for pupils to relax at School with their friends. There are areas designed for boarders to listen to music together, watch movies, play board games and relax. After a busy week at School, this is often exactly what pupils need to wind down.





“Kindness is a key characteristic of the School’s ethos.”

ISI Inspection Report



Care and support

Boarding houses have a dedicated Matron and all pupils have access to our welcoming Health Centre, run by an experienced Nursing Sister, visited regularly by the School’s GP and with the full-time support of the School Counsellor.

Pupils can also talk through particular problems with other members of staff who are trained in counselling, and senior pupils are trained as Peer Supporters to provide additional support and advice.

In addition to comfortable bedrooms, boarding pupils enjoy their own leisure spaces, study areas and dedicated places to relax, socialise and study. The combined support of a pupil’s Housemaster, Tutor, House, the School’s Chaplain and the wider school community is invaluable in ensuring the wellbeing of all pupils and to help them not only to make the most of their time at Westminster but to develop and flourish as individuals.



Frequently asked questions

Q. Can I come on a tour of a boarding house?

A. Yes, we are happy to arrange a tour led by the Housemaster. There are regular tours of the boarding houses and many families choose to visit more than one House. Please note, it is not always possible to arrange a boarding house tour on the same day as a general tour of the School.

Q. Can I try boarding?

A. There are opportunities for pupils who may be interested in boarding to try it for a week, subject to a room being available. Arrangements are usually made through Housemasters.

Q. Do I have to decide whether or not to apply for a boarding place at the time of registration?

A. For 13+ applicants, the answer is no. In fact, it is not unusual for the final decision to be delayed until a boy is in his final year at preparatory school. It is also possible for a boy to switch to boarding having started at Westminster as a day boy.

16+ (Sixth Form) applicants must notify us whether they wish to apply for a day place or boarding place when registering for entry.

Q. Can I express a preference for a particular boarding house?

A. Yes, we will always aim to respect any preferences indicated. We cannot, however, guarantee that a candidate will be allocated the House requested.

Q. Can I board during the School holidays?

A. No, unfortunately this is not possible.

Q. Can I stay at School at weekends?

A. All boarders in the Lower School, up to the age of 16, go home every weekend. Some Sixth Form boarders stay at School at weekends, but the School is typically quiet on Saturday nights.

Q. Can I board at Westminster if my parents live abroad?

A. Westminster is not a suitable boarding school for pupils below the age of 16 whose parents live overseas. We do welcome overseas boarders in the Sixth Form, but they must have guardians with whom they can stay at 'Exeat Weekends' or when they are unwell.



“Pupils develop very high levels of self-confidence, self-reliance and resilience.”

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WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

How do I apply?

Boarding is popular and pupils are strongly encouraged to board from the start of their time at the School. If you did not indicate a boarding preference on your registration form, just let the Admissions Department know by email that you would like your child to board.

For more information or to arrange a tour, please contact the Admissions Department on 020 7963 1003, or email registrar@westminster.org.uk

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