



THE ORATORY  
PREP SCHOOL

Curiosity | Kindness | Wisdom

# BOARDING

WEEKLY | FLEXI-BOARDING | FULL



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# Welcome from the Head of Boarding



Welcome to The OPS Boarding House, where a world of excitement, challenges, camaraderie, and personal growth awaits you!

As the Head of Boarding, I am thrilled to extend my warmest greetings to each and every one of you. My wife, Mrs Cooke, our two sons (Nicholas & Nathan) and I are eagerly looking forward to welcoming you into our vibrant OPS Boarding community!

Life at The OPS Boarding House is nothing short of extraordinary. Here, we believe in fostering an environment that not only encourages academic excellence but also emphasises the importance of fun and adventure.

From the moment you step through our doors, you will be embraced by a diverse range of activities and expeditions that will broaden your horizons and create unforgettable memories for you and your housemates. Our boarding community thrives on camaraderie, where lifelong friendships are forged. You will find that our boarders come from all corners of the globe, bringing with them unique perspectives and backgrounds, enriching the cultural tapestry of our house.

Together, we learn, grow, and support one another, making every day an exciting journey.



# Welcome from the Head of Boarding

One of the core values we promote in the boarding house is independence. Whilst you will be part of a supportive and nurturing environment, we also encourage you to discover your strengths and passions, pushing your boundaries and embracing new challenges.

The boarding house team is dedicated to guiding and empowering you throughout this process, ensuring that you develop into confident and capable individuals.

Our range of activities and expeditions is extensive, catering to a variety of interests. Whether you are an outdoor enthusiast eager to explore the wonders of nature, an artist seeking inspiration, a sports enthusiast looking to excel, or a curious mind yearning for knowledge, you will find a place to thrive here. From educational excursions to thrilling adventures, you will have ample opportunities to discover and nurture your talents.

At The OPS Boarding House, we believe in a holistic approach to education. It is not just about academics; it is about personal growth and developing a sense of responsibility towards oneself and the community. The experiences you gain here will not only prepare you for academic success but also equip you with valuable life skills that will serve you well beyond your time with us.

As you embark on this exciting chapter of your life, know that The OPS Boarding House will be your 'home away from home'. Together, we will create memories, overcome challenges, and build lasting friendships. We cannot wait to meet each one of you and witness the remarkable journeys that lie ahead.

Welcome to The OPS Boarding House, where enjoyment, camaraderie, and personal growth intertwine to create an unforgettable experience. We are delighted to have you join our family, and we eagerly anticipate the bright future that awaits you!

**Mr Matthew Cooke, Head of Boarding**



# Our Boarding Philosophy



The Oratory Prep School aims to provide a safe and healthy boarding environment where each pupil is encouraged to reach their full potential of their talents.

Boarding should, where possible, reflect family life. In line with the broader aims of the school, the Boarding House is a community where every pupil matters, and in which all can develop confidence and self-awareness, as well as respect the cultural and religious diversity of their fellow boarder.





Whichever boarding option your child chooses, they will be warmly welcomed into The OPS community.

## Boarding Options

Boarding is an integral part of school life, providing a hugely popular, enjoyable, and enriching experience for children in Year 3 (age 7) upwards. Children have the option of full, weekly, or flexible boarding to suit each family's individual needs:

**Full Boarding:** Boarders spend the entire term with us, visiting guardians or relatives during holidays. At weekends, they have a busy and exciting programme of activities.

**Overseas Pupils:** We welcome children from a wide range of countries. A child may come for a term as a 'taster' experience before joining for a year or more.

**Weekly Boarding:** Many of our parents take full advantage of our weekly provision particularly in preparation for boarding at senior school. Their child arrives on Monday morning and returns home on Friday evening.

**Flexi-Boarding:** Flexible (flexi) boarding is in demand; children can board for just a few nights each week or for the odd night here and there.

**Taster Experiences:** Children interested in boarding at The OPS are invited to attend a 'taster' experience, including an overnight stay in our boarding house. If your child is unable to attend a 'taster' experience, we organise personalised virtual/in person tours of our school and boarding house with opportunities to talk to our Headmaster, the Head of Boarding, teachers and pupils.



# Boarding Life

Our boarding house, located in the main school building, is divided into distinct areas for boys and girls, providing space for up to 50 pupils.

Within the boarding house, the Head of Boarding has overall responsibility for the pupils in our care, assisted by a Deputy House Parent, House Mother, resident teaching staff in the evenings, a school nurse and GAP Assistants.



## Facilities

Each room, varies in size, catering from three up to eight children, with full, weekly and flexi boarders living and mixing together. Rooms are also separated into different year groups and pupils have the opportunity to personalise their space with family photos and personal items and even bring in their own bedding, if they wish to.





We have common rooms for everyone's use where they can relax, play on the games console or watch a movie. We also have a games room where children can play air hockey and use the pool table. Alongside this, there are quieter areas which allow for more private personal reflection and study. All meals are taken in the main dining room allowing great social interaction between pupils and the boarding staff.

Boarders have set times when they have access to their personal electronic devices to contact their family and friends. These are kept securely locked away during the day and after lights out to ensure that use is at an appropriate time.

Every Wednesday night is 'Device Night' when pupils have up to an hour on their devices in the boarding house to email home and receive incoming calls. If they don't have their own phone, we have devices available.







"Our boarding house is small enough for each pupil to feel well known and large enough to allow a variety of personalities to flourish."



# A Typical Weekday



From Monday - Friday, a boarders' day starts at 7.00am when they get up and go to the main dining room for breakfast at 7.30am.

The school day starts at 8.20am (registration) and lessons end at 5.00pm. There are mid morning and mid afternoon breaks as well as a long lunch break for outdoor play each day.

Lessons commence at 8.30am. Lessons include English, Maths and the three Sciences (Physics, Chemistry and Biology) from Year 6 as well as lessons in History, Geography, RE, Art, Design & Technology and Drama. There are also lessons in Forest School and Swimming with opportunities to be involved in early morning Swim Squads.



The After School Activity Programme runs from 5.00pm - 6.00pm every evening, except on Wednesdays, due to sports fixtures. After School Activities range from Swimming, Tennis, Futsal, Maths Challenges, Drama, Coding Club, Art Club, Science Club Debating, Bee Keeping, Cookery and Current Affairs, and activities vary each half-term.

Some activities are seasonal, for example Rowing, Cricket and Golf are mostly in the Summer term and some activities are not included in the school fees.

Supper is served at 6.00pm followed by study time, under the supervision and guidance of staff. This is followed by an evening activity programme and boarders are able to use the school's facilities (indoor pool, theatre, ICT suite etc.) after day pupils have left.

Bedtime is between 8.30pm and 9.00pm.



# A Typical Weekend

On Saturdays, the day starts with breakfast at 8.00am before boarders partake in our popular Newman Programme. Each week, around 100 pupils, including day pupils, choose to participate.

The Newman Programme begins with a Prep (homework) session from 8.30am - 9.30am, then an Enrichment Talk, followed by two hours of modules ranging from exploring entrepreneurship, leadership skills, interview skills, mock trials, science and art clubs and multiple sports.



Matches are played most Saturday afternoons. After this, the boarders take part in exciting activities.



During weekends, boarders also make the most of our facilities, such as the sports hall to play a range of sports and our indoor 25 metre pool to have fun swims. With 65 acres of land, boarders love spending time outdoors, exploring our woodlands, playing outside on our numerous fields, on-site adventure playgrounds and cycling around the grounds. Catch-up calls and face-time with family and friends are built into the weekday evenings and of course at weekends, including the ever-popular movie nights and games nights.



On Sundays, boarders can sleep in and then attend Mass (either in school or in our local church) with a roast dinner and activities in the afternoon. We offer a variety of trips, for example, trampolining, ice skating, rock climbing, bowling, National Parks, shopping in Oxford and Reading, cultural trips - all favourites that feature regularly throughout the term.





**“Almost all parents and staff who responded to the questionnaire felt that the boarding environment helps pupils’ progress because of the support given by duty staff and because of access to Saturday enrichment activities available to boarders, and all older pupils, if they choose.”**

ISI Report 2021





# Joining Our Boarding Community

From the moment you join our boarding community, you become part of our family. Whether it be celebrating birthdays or celebrating the heritage of our diverse mix of international pupils through themed weeks, our aim is to ensure all members of our boarding community feel included.

For our new boarders, children will receive a boarding handbook, a hoodie and they will be partnered up with a buddy to help them settle into school and boarding life. Our Head of Boarding also liaises directly with tutors on a regular basis to ensure pupils are progressing well with their academic studies.

Boarders take part in our special points system, where children earn points for their dormitory by doing good deeds, for example, keeping their room tidy, being kind to others or helping a fellow pupil with their study. Once they have earned a certain amount of points, they can spend these on a chosen activity or a special treat.



# What to do if...

## Your child is feeling homesick?

At any age, living away from home can be an exciting time, full of new opportunities. However, we recognise that homesickness can occur when moving to a new and unfamiliar environment.

### Top Tips for Children

Our top tips for dealing with homesickness:

- Do something fun, like hanging out with your friends
- Keep in touch with family and friends back home
- Make your bedroom an extension of your home
- Talk to someone - this can be a member of staff, a friend, or your new buddy.

### Top Tips for Parents

We even have some top tips for parents:

- Offer encouragement, whether this be making new friends or trying new experiences
- Send a care package to remind them of home
- Stay in touch - you are welcome to send letters/postcards/Amazon deliveries to the boarding house

## Your child is feeling unwell?

Should a pupil become unwell, our Head of Boarding will be available to help with any medical issues. Our School Nurse, is also available on site during the school day and she also liaises with the local GP in case a visit is required.

## Your child needs advice or support?

Pastoral support is at the heart of what we do, offering a nurturing and supportive environment for all our boarders. Our staff are always available should children need a friendly face to chat to, including an Independent Listener. Year 7 and 8 House Monitors are also on hand to provide support in a number of ways.

Boarders are also able to share their ideas, feelings and concerns through weekly boarding meetings. We also conduct a survey each term to collate pupils' feedback.



Just remember, it's okay to miss home and here at The OPS, we are all here to help.





# Supporting Our International Pupils

We are a UKVI Child Student sponsor and accommodate pupils of all nationalities. International pupils join our school throughout the year and we offer short term placements ranging from a few weeks to a few years.

**Before joining the school:** Children will be invited to attend a 'taster' experience either in-person or virtually. As well as getting to know our school, this helps us to get to know you and your child, their interests and talents. If English is not your child's first language, we arrange informal virtual assessments with our Head of English As an Additional Language (EAL).

We make every effort to assist families who require Child Student visas to study in the UK. Once a place has been accepted, and compliance regulations have been met, we issue Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) documents. Our Registrar provides support throughout the visa application process.

**EAL Support:** All EAL pupils are assessed by our specialist EAL teacher and individual learning plans are created. If additional support is required, an EAL Teacher will be in touch to discuss a bespoke plan at an extra cost. The school has a track record in preparing pupils where English is their second language for a range of senior schools, including Abingdon, Eton, Marlborough College, Stowe School, The Oratory School, and Wellington College.







**“The staff are experts. I leave my children knowing that they will be stretched, supported and developed in every way possible.”**

*Armed Forces Parent*



# Key Information

**Half Terms and Holidays:** During half terms and holidays, all boarders are required to vacate the school and return the night before term starts.

**Pocket money:** We recommend bringing approximately £70 a term; money will need to be handed over to the Head of Boarding and allocated as necessary.

**Laundry:** We wash clothes every day - please ensure all items are clearly named.

**Tuck Food:** Boarders can bring some tuck food with them which we will store safely. **Please note that we are a nut-free school.**

**Drama Lessons:** These form part of the curriculum and are taught weekly. Specialist LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) tuition is approximately £200.

**Music Lessons:** These form part of the curriculum and optional instrumental music tuition in most instruments is available, at an additional cost.



**Insurances:** Optional insurances are available on our website. Personal Accident Insurance (including dental) is compulsory and within the school fees.

**Uniform:** Typically, uniform costs between £500 and £600 to purchase. However, for short term boarders, we may be able to provide good quality second hand uniform, including sports kit, on loan, at a cost. Please contact the Registrar for further details.

**Chromebooks:** All pupils are required to have Chromebooks - in some cases, these can be loaned out from the school.

**Travel:** If you need to book a taxi service, we can provide details of relevant companies. Once booked, details needs to be passed to the Head of Boarding so that we have a record of the information.





# Keeping In Touch

The Boarding House can be contacted via the following ways:

## Email

[boarding@oratoryprep.co.uk](mailto:boarding@oratoryprep.co.uk)

## Phone

+44(0)118 976 6916

## Whatsapp Number

+44(0)7730 306355

To keep up to date with the latest news from the boarding house, you can follow us on Instagram: [@opsboarding](https://www.instagram.com/opsboarding)

Parents/Guardians will be automatically signed up to the weekly Bulletin, sharing weekly school news and pupil success.





# Key Items To Bring

The most important thing is to make sure all your belongings are labelled with your name on it.

## Clothes

- School Uniform
- Pyjamas (2 sets)
- Dressing gown
- Slippers
- Trainers
- Three sets of play/casual clothes
- Semi-smart wear for church
- Underwear including socks
- Warm waterproof coat
- School shoes
- Wellington boots

## Toiletries

- Wash bag
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Shower gel
- Shampoo & conditioner
- Comb or brush

## Additional Items

- Towels (x2)
- Water bottle (x2)
- Drawer organisers
- Pencil case with stationery
- Any medication (inhaler etc)
- Any personal electronic devices

We provide all bedding.

If you have a favourite duvet cover and pillow case, by all means, bring it and make sure it is labelled with your name.





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For more information about boarding at The Oratory Prep School, please contact our Admissions department via [admissions@oratoryprep.co.uk](mailto:admissions@oratoryprep.co.uk) or call +44 (0)118 976 6924