



Strong friendships are often fostered in Moor Park's boarding houses

ASK THE EXPERTS

How do we prepare as a family for boarding school?

We ask five boarding-school teachers to answer this all-too-relatable query



Toby Dunham, Head of Boarding, Moor Park School, Shropshire

Beginning your boarding journey is an exciting milestone, but it's perfectly natural to feel a few nerves about being away from home for the first time. At Moor Park, we understand this transition and encourage children and their parents to connect with the House Parents early on. The House Parents play a central role in each boarder's daily life and are a vital source of comfort, guidance, and support. Getting to know them in advance can make all the difference in helping your child feel more at home from day one.

There's often talk about encouraging independence before boarding school begins, but in our experience, independence comes naturally over time. There's no need to rush it. In fact, placing too much emphasis on self-reliance beforehand can make the idea of boarding more overwhelming than it needs to be.

Our advice? Make the most of the summer holidays. Spend quality time together. Laugh, explore, and create memories, as these are the stories your child will proudly share with new friends and their boarding family. That's the best preparation of all.



House Parents play a central supportive role in Moor Park boarders' day-to-day lives

Darrell Harding, Head of Boarding, Kingswood School, Bath

Starting boarding is a wonderful new chapter, and a bit of preparation goes a long way in helping your child feel settled. If you can, pay a visit to the school and the local area, especially somewhere as picturesque as Bath, to build both excitement and familiarity.

At Kingswood School, we encourage pupils to throw themselves into all aspects of boarding life, from evening and weekend activities to friendships that often last a lifetime. Parents can support this by fostering independence at home, chatting through daily routines, and helping their child know what to expect.

It's also well worth getting to know the boarding staff early on, whether in person or over a Zoom or Teams call – It helps to put faces to names before term begins.

And finally, don't forget to label everything clearly! With thoughtful preparation, your child will be well-placed to thrive from day one.



The boarders at Moor Park enjoy an atmosphere that feels not unlike a family home, with lots of extracurricular fun

Tom Elphinstone, Senior Deputy Head, Brambletye, West Sussex

Starting boarding school is a big adventure – and preparation can make all the difference. Begin encouraging small steps towards independence at home: let your child put away laundered clothes, pack their own sleepover bag, and take on simple chores. Talk openly about the exciting aspects of boarding and gently address any worries they might have.

At Brambletye new pupils have 'shadows' to help them navigate the first few weeks. Ask the school to connect you with another family for a pre-term meet-up – it can be hugely reassuring. Order uniform and items from the packing list in good time. Packing together can build excitement and confidence; include photos, posters and a favourite teddy.

Establish a good bedtime routine before the holidays end and look at the school staff list together, discussing who they can turn to for support. Finally, stay positive – nerves are normal, but your confidence will help your child embrace the opportunities ahead.



Brambletye offers full, weekly and flexi boarding for pupils in years three to eight

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