BOARDING SCHOOLS — GUIDE

First term checklist for boarding parents

A practical handover plan for care, communication, packing, money and the first school break.

Updated November 10, 2026

The aim is a clear handover. Your child should know where to go, who to ask and how to reach you. You should know who is responsible when a routine changes.

The questions below are planning prompts, not universal school requirements. Use the school's current instructions as the working list.

Before travel

Confirm the arrival place, house name, collection arrangements and emergency number. Ask who meets the child if a flight is delayed. Keep the school address and contact information available offline.

For international travel, check immigration documents separately. DHS says US student reporting must follow the start date on the Form I-20. GOV.UK describes the living arrangements for a UK Child Student. Use those official instructions where they apply; do not infer permission from a school booking. Sources: DHS, Getting to the United States and GOV.UK, Where You Will Live , fetched 2026-11-10.

Care handover

Use the school's secure process to share health information, medicine instructions, dietary needs and emergency contacts. Ask who receives the information and how the boarding house can access it out of hours. Ask how appointments, consent requests and illness are handled.

Agree a support contact for learning or language needs. Check the first meeting is arranged. Ask how the child can request help privately if the usual contact is away.

Packing and daily routine

Request the house's current packing list. Label clothing as directed. Confirm storage, laundry, bedding, chargers, device rules and what the school supplies. Avoid buying a device until the school confirms its specification.

Talk through the daily route from the room to meals, lessons and activities. Ask about alarms, lost keys, missing laundry and what to do after lights out. Small practical uncertainties can make a new place feel harder to manage.

Communication

Agree a contact routine with your child that fits the house rules and time zones. Ask the house team how parents should raise a routine question, a wellbeing concern and an urgent safety

issue. Save those routes separately.

Let the child describe events before offering a solution. If a concern repeats, record what happened and contact the responsible staff member. Do not promise to keep a safety issue secret from staff who need to act.

Money and the first break

Confirm how spending money works, who can approve extras and where bills are sent. Ask about optional activities before agreeing to them. Keep a record of permissions.

Check the actual term calendar and every house closure. Oundle's term dates page, for example, publishes arrival and departure information for its own groups. Another school's calendar is not a safe substitute. Source: Oundle, Term Dates, fetched 2026-11-10.

Confirm where the child will stay during the first break, who collects them and how the school records handover. Keep the plan with the return travel details. Review what worked with your child before the next term.

Frequently asked questions

What should we pack?

Use the current house list. Ask about bedding, laundry, devices and items that are not allowed before buying anything.

What should we do if the child wants to come home?

Listen without arguing. Ask what happened, agree a next contact and speak with the house team. Raise an immediate safety concern through the school's emergency process.