BOARDERS' HANDBOOK 2026-27

WELCOME TO BG BOARDING

Dear New Boarder,

We are so pleased you have decided to become a boarder at Bilton Grange and we are looking forward to welcoming you to the BG boarding family in Earle House.

We hope this guide will provide you with most of the answers to your questions as well as giving you a little insight into the many things you can look forward to as a boarder at BG.

If you have any questions after reading this guide, please get in touch and we will be very happy to help.

Happy reading!

Mrs Luard
Lyon Houseparent
Head of Boarding

Mr Potgieter
Fisher Houseparent

CONTENTS

Welcome to BG Boarding	**2**
Getting ready	**4**
What you can and can't bring	**5**
Who will look after you?	**6-8**
Settling in	**10**
Health	**11**
Typical Day at Bilton Grange	**12**
Form & Sections	**13**
What happens apart from lessons?	**16-17**
Staying Connected	**18**
Invitations to Friends' Homes	**19**
Community Guidelines and Ethos	**20-21**
Weekends	**22**
Bullying	**23**
Going home	**24**
Useful terminology	**25**

GETTING READY

This may be your first time as a boarder or maybe you've done it before, however, don't worry! Read this section carefully so that you can be fully prepared.

Take a look at the list of items that you need to bring with you.

Please ensure that all of your belongings are clearly named:	
2x Bath Towels	1×Duvet (optional for Flexi boarders)
Toothbrush	1×Pillow (optional for Flexi boarders)
Toothpaste	2×Duvet and Pillow Covers
Shower Gel	1xSuitcase
Face Wash	One smart outfit for candlelit suppers
Shampoo	Underwear x 4
Conditioner	Dressing Gown & Slippers
Deodorant	1 or 2 x 'home' casual outfit
Hairbrush/Comb	1 x 'home' casual shoes
Reusable water bottle	Teddy Bear/Blanket (optional)
2 x Pyjamas	Reading Book

You will need all your uniform and sports kit too, which is purchased through School Blazer. The full uniform list is on the Parent Portal.

Other things that boarders like to bring, but are not essential, include:

Bedside Clock	Music
Photos of Family and Friends for pinboard	Mobile Phone (stored by staff in locked cabinet)

If you want to know if something is allowed, please do ask us.

WHAT YOU CAN AND CAN'T BRING

Here are some guidelines about what you can and cannot bring with you.

Mobile Phones
All boarders are allowed to bring a mobile phone if they wish. These will be stored in the phone lockers for safe keeping and they can be used in the house on a Tuesday and Thursday evening to make or take a call. At this end of this time the phones are returned and the lockers are locked. There are also landline phones in the house for your use.

Pocket Money
Boarders will be provided with a sensible amount of pocket money each weekend for the various trips or school visits. This will be in the region of £5-£10 per trip but on certain occasions, this might be a little more. There is no need to send any money in to school. This will be collated and then added to the end of term bill. If your child needs further funds for travelling or other reasons, please email boarding@biltongrange.co.uk.

Tuck/Food
Boarders should not bring any tuck, sweets or food into the school or house - all snacks and treats are provided at school so that we can manage allergies safely.

Travel Wallets and Money
All wallets and money that are carried by our boarders to and from their homes will be collected in and stored in a safe on arrival to BG. If travel money is required for half-term or holidays, please email boarding@biltongrange.co.uk.

Passports & Tickets
For overseas boarders, passport and tickets will be stored in a safe and secured location.

Electronics
You may bring an electronic game device/tablet if you wish. These will be collected by the boarding team and kept safely. Devices can be used on Sunday mornings. All items must be clearly named. Please do not bring electric hot water bottles, heaters, kettles, or similar items - these are not allowed in bedrooms for safety reasons.

Jewellery
Girls are allowed to wear a pair of stud earrings and all children may wear a watch - no smart watches please. You can bring some extra items of your choice for use at the weekends.

WHO WILL LOOK AFTER YOU?

Mrs Luard

Mrs Luard is the Head of Lyon House (Girls) and also the Head of Boarding at Bilton Grange. She lives in a house attached to the main boarding house with her husband, Mr Luard, and their three children - Casper, Otto, and Eliza. As well as looking after the boarders, Mrs Luard teaches Science. She loves skiing, snowboarding, playing squash, and enjoying a good board game. She's often found on the sidelines of the sports fields, cheering on the boarders.

E-mail: cmal@biltongrange.co.uk

Mr Potgieter

Mr P is the Head of Fisher House (Boys) and lives in a house attached to the main boarding house with the soon-to-be Mrs Potgieter. He works across school life as a sports coach, an English teacher, and the Head of Rugby at Bilton Grange. When he's not with the boarders, he's usually out on the pitch playing rugby himself. Mr P is known for his kind, calm nature, and brings a steady, reassuring presence to the boarding house.

E-mail: nap@biltongrange.co.uk

Mrs Blackford

Mrs Blackford is the Assistant Houseparent and another resident within the boarding house. She lives there with Dr Blackford, their two boys, Archie and Oscar, and their little dog, Willow. Alongside her role in boarding, Mrs Blackford is also the Head of Middle School, so she's a real expert in pastoral care. She's always ready to listen, support, and help the boarders navigate day-to-day life at Bilton Grange.

E-mail: hlb@biltongrange.co.uk

Mrs Wilkin

Mrs Wilkin is one of our Head Matrons. She keeps the boarding house running smoothly day in day out. She oversees the practical side of life in the house - from uniforms and travel logistics to all the day-to-day details that help everything run like clockwork. Mrs Wilkin is kind, calm, and wonderfully organised, and she brings a warm presence to the boarding house.

E-mail: boarding@biltongrange.co.uk

Ms Widdowson

Ms Widdowson is our other Head Matron. She also lives in the boarding house with her two daughters and her little dog, Simba. Along with the team of matrons, she helps to make sure the boarders are organised, happy, and well looked after each day. Ms Widdowson brings a friendly, supportive presence to the house and is on hand to help the children with whatever they need.

E-mail: boarding@biltongrange.co.uk

Mrs Gunn

Mrs Gunn is our onsite nurse in school. She will see to all your cuts and bruises as well as coughs and colds. She is a qualified nurse who is very experienced working in the boarding school environment. She knows how to look after injured or hurt pupils. Mrs Gunn and her family live on the school site and she is in regular contact with the boarding team.

E-mail: cgunn@biltongrange.co.uk

WHO WILL LOOK AFTER YOU?

Earle House Tutors
There are a dedicated team of onsite teaching staff – Boarding Tutors - who support the boarding team and the boarding community in the evenings every week.

Team of Matrons
There is also a wonderful team of regular matrons in the house who are all there to support you.
The matrons will help you with any day-to-day problems and make sure you are well looked after.

E-mail: matron@biltongrange.co.uk

Mrs Slater

Mrs McDonald

Mrs Latham

Mrs Briggs

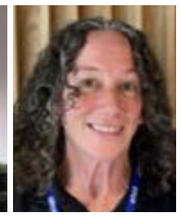
Mrs Fisher

Mrs Dodwell

Mrs Roberts

Mrs Stalmach

Mrs Pendleton


Mrs Tennant

Mrs Oliveira

Gap Students
There is also a team of Gap Students who are regularly in the boarding house. They support the boarding community throughout the week and weekends and are always there to support you – or perhaps play a game or have a natter!

These are the people who have a specific role within the boarding side of school life at Bilton Grange, but really, everyone - teachers, matrons, kitchen staff, cleaners, receptionists, other pupils - all take part in making Bilton Grange a friendly and supportive place where you will never feel alone and where someone will always be there to listen and help.

SETTLING IN

When you arrive at Bilton Grange, you and your family or guardian will be met and welcomed by Mr Jones, Mrs Luard, Mr Potgieter and the Boarding team. You will first meet your Form Tutor before being taken over to Earle House where the boarding team and our fantastic matrons and gap students will show you which room you will be staying in and where you can put all of those things you packed.

The main areas of Earle House are:

Sleeping Areas:	Communal Areas: (Ground Floor)
1st Floor Blue - Girls	The Hub
1st Floor Yellow - Girls	Fish Tank
1st Floor Red - Boys	Lyon's Lounge
2nd Floor Green - Boys	Hideout
	The Slide
	Earle Dining Room
	Laundry
	Matron's Room

All the rooms are very similar and the one you are placed in will depend on your age and who will be looking after you. Usually, all the boarders in a room will be from the same year group at school, so you are likely to be with your friends, and if you don't know anyone yet, don't worry - you will do very soon!

When you arrive, as well as being placed in a dorm, you will be introduced to your 'boarding buddy'. This will be someone who has boarded before and will help you to get the hang of the routines and rules of the boarding house - they will take you on a tour of the school so you know where things are.

HEALTH

We have a very caring school nurse called Mrs Gunn. She is in every day and if you are feeling ill or are injured, she will always help you. Working alongside her we also have the matron team that support Mrs Gunn throughout the day. So if she is not around then one of them will be on hand to help.

At night

We have a night matron who stays awake all night while you sleep. If you need her, all you have to do is press the call button in your room.

If for some reason you cannot reach her, there are phones downstairs where you can call for help, or contact the Head of Boarding. All the contact numbers you need are just by the phones so don't panic, you don't have to remember them.

Doctors

Bilton Grange is linked with Rugby School and now have the support of a local doctor at the Revel Surgery. If you need to see someone then Mrs Gunn will organise an appointment for you and she or one of the matrons or even head of boarding will take you along.

Opticians or Dentist

Here is another part of home life that Bilton Grange will look after. If you have broken your glasses or chipped a tooth, we have links with the opticians and dentist and can get you sorted really quickly. So, you may not be at home but we will look after you in the same way.

TYPICAL DAY AT BILTON GRANGE

Just like other schools, Bilton Grange has a timetable for lessons, sports and activities, but because it is a boarding school Bilton Grange also has times for things like having breakfast and going to sleep. The table below shows you what a typical day at Bilton Grange looks like. There is not any detail about lessons because you will be given this information by your Form Tutor. Although this is the basic plan of what happens, some days can change, for example for special occasions or trips.

7:00am – 7:15am	Wake up & get dressed
7:20 – 7:30am	News Headlines in the Hub
7:30am	Breakfast
8:00am – 8:30am	Form rooms for registration
8:30am – 4:30pm	Lessons/Games/Activities
4:45pm – 5:45pm	Prep Time
5:45pm – 6:45pm	Options
6:45pm – 7:15pm	High Tea
7:15pm – 7:45pm	Free Time/Chill/Calls in Earle House
7:45pm – 9:00pm	Snack/Bedtime Routine/Lights Out
9:00pm	Everyone off to sleep (we hope!)

	Upstairs	Bed / Reading Time	Lights Out
Juniors & 3rds	7:30pm	8:00pm	8:15pm
4th Form	7:45pm	8:15pm	8:30pm
5th Form	8:15pm	8:30pm	8:45pm
6th Form	8:30pm	8:45pm	9:00pm

FORMS & SECTIONS

Forms

Everyone at Bilton Grange is placed into a form group, and you will have a Form Tutor who looks after you during the school day. Your Tutor will help you organise your timetable, show you which rooms to go to for lessons, and help you work out which teachers you have for each subject.

If you need a little extra help in class, your Tutor will speak to your parents and our Learning Support department, and you may see one of our brilliant specialists once a week.

As you get older, the subjects become a bit more challenging, and in some lessons you will be placed into sets that match your pace of learning. You will also begin preparing for Common Entrance and scholarship exams. Your 6th Form Tutor will guide you through this, along with the boarding team — so there's no need to worry.

Sections

Alongside your form group, you will also join a Section (our version of a house system). This is where pupils from all year groups come together to take part in activities, competitions, and team events. When you start as a Junior, you join the school as a Hobbit. After your first term, there is a special 'sorting ceremony' where the Bilton Flag places you into your Section — a bit like in Harry Potter! There are four Sections:

- **Cheadle** (Green)
- **Oxburgh** (Yellow)
- **Alton** (Blue)
- **Westminster** (Red)

If you join the school further up, you will be told your Section before you arrive.

WHAT HAPPENS APART FROM LESSONS?

As you can see, days are busy at Bilton Grange. Lessons and team sports take up a big part of the school day, but because we're a boarding school, there are also lots of things to do after lessons finish. The activities on offer change from term to term and year to year, but there is usually a great range of Options to choose from on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings.

Wednesday and Saturday evenings, and Sundays, work a little differently and usually include more free time - see page 22.

Below are some examples of what a boarder's Options might look like:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
BG Adventurers	Drama Club	Free Time	Football or Ballet	Water Polo	Film and Popcorn	Drayton Manor

Here are some examples of activities and options that might be on offer throughout the week:

Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
Boarding House *Full and Weekly Boarders Only*	Boarding House *Full and Weekly Boarders Only*	Boarding House *Full and Weekly Boarders Only*	Boarding House *Full and Weekly Boarders Only*
Rugby Skills and HIIT *Year 6 & 7*	Brownies & Guides	Fencing *4:45 – 5:45*	Creation Stations
Swimprovers *(beginner/intermediate swimmers)*	Wide Games	Badminton	Coding Club *Year 6, 7, 8*
BG Adventurers	Board Game and Strategy Club	Art and Photography	DT – High Fliers *by invitation only*
Music Makers	Tennis *Year 6, 7, 8*	Tennis *Year 4-8*	Chess
Rounders	Lego Clinic	Athletics	Beekeeping
Sports – High Fliers *by invitation only*	Swim Squad *(advanced swimmers)*	Golf Club *Year 5-8*	Athletics
Maths Clinic *by invitation only*	Dramarama – High Fliers *by invitation only*	Scuba School *5:45 – 7:00*	Cricket Nets *Year 7 & 8*
Tae Kwon Do		Ballet Class 1: *5:25 – 6:05* Class 2: *6:05 – 6:45*	
Choristers Catch Up	*Choristers Catch Up*		

Options in red incur an extra cost.

STAYING CONNECTED

Telephone Calls

In the evenings, boarders have a set time for phone calls. On Tuesday and Thursday evenings, they can call home between 7.15pm – 7.45pm using their own mobile phones. On other days, parents can call in, or boarders can make and receive calls using the House phones (there are six phones in the house). The boarding house numbers are listed in the school calendar.

You must remember to make your calls before bedtime so that you can settle down quickly and get a good night's rest. If you ever find this difficult, just speak to one of the boarding team.

If you need to contact home urgently during the school day, the School Receptionist will help you. In the evening or at night, the boarding staff will be able to assist - they have copies of all the contact numbers your parents have provided.

Pupils with families in different time zones may pop back to the boarding house during Tuesday and Thursday morning break to call their parents instead (10.20am – 10.50am.)

Apart from these times, mobile phones are not allowed in school during the day.

E-mail and Facetime

E-mails are another great way to keep in touch with your family. You can use the school computers to send and receive e-mails, as long as you follow all our e-safety rules.

Sending a Letter or Card

There's nothing quite like receiving a handwritten letter or postcard in the post. Parents and grandparents often treasure these for years. You are welcome to write letters or postcards as often as you like — just ask the boarding team, and they will post them for you.

INVITATIONS TO FRIENDS' HOMES

Sometimes your school friends who are day pupils or weekly boarders may invite you to a party or a sleepover at their home on a Saturday evening or Sunday. They might also invite you to join them for an Exeat weekend. If this happens, you are welcome to ask for permission to go.

To make this possible, your parents must give written consent, and your Houseparent must also approve the visit. A quick email from your parents usually makes the process very straightforward and helps everything get sorted quickly.

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES AND ETHOS IN THE BOARDING HOUSE

As a boarder, there are guidelines you will need to follow in your Boarding House. In the Boarding House there is a Code of Conduct which we follow so that everyone's experience can be as peaceful and happy as possible. A common-sense approach should be adopted by all with a view to harmonious community living.

Rewards and Sanctions

During the school day, pupils can earn credits for working positively (BG Learner Profile Points) and for showing the school values (BG Value Points). These can be awarded for lots of reasons: helping staff or other pupils, working hard, showing kindness, or producing excellent work. Minors and support notes are given for misdemeanours, and their purpose is to help you get things right if you haven't made the best choices.

In the boarding house, we use a more relaxed version of this system because the setting is more like home. However, we still expect everyone to behave kindly and respectfully, as this helps make the house a happy and positive place for everyone. If you make poor choices, you might lose some TV time in the evening or be asked to head upstairs a little earlier. But most often, a good conversation with your Houseparent about what happened, and how we can prevent it happening again, is more than enough. We expect all boarders to be helpful, supportive, and considerate. Good behaviour is recognised and rewarded, both individually and as a dorm.

Lyon and Fisher Awards: These are awarded each term to the winning dormitory. There are 8 different areas for which you are awarded points and it's a team effort.

RAK Awards: Random Acts of Kindness or RAK awards are given to individuals who do something helpful, supportive, encouraging or in a caring manner without being asked. These acts of kindness are picked up by the staff who report them digitally so they can be collated and used to select a winner each half term. The winner earns a piece of BG boarding merchandise! The more RAK reported, the better the odds of winning!

Working Hours

Staff and day pupils aren't able to pop back to their bedrooms during the working day, and the same applies to boarders. For this reason, we ask that you don't go over to the boarding house between **8.15am and 5.45pm**. If you genuinely need something from the house, please speak to a member of the boarding staff, who will be able to help you with whatever you need.

Your Voice

Suggestions on how to improve any aspect of boarding life are warmly encouraged, and these will be noted by the House staff and passed on to the School's Senior Leadership Team. As well as informal conversations and House meetings, you also have a suggestions (voice) box, a twice-termly Boarders' Council, and the School Council, where you can raise any concerns, complaints, or ideas.

6th Form (Year 8)

When you are in 6th Form at Bilton Grange, you are given certain responsibilities and privileges. For example, we regularly hold 6th Form Socials, where you can enjoy playing snooker, table tennis, and sampling some edible treats in the Hub. These events are organised by the Houseparents and the boarding team.

Each boarding house also has a Boarding Ambassador - a pupil who has shown themselves to be a positive role model for the younger boarders and someone others can look up to.

WEEKENDS

Saturdays
There is rarely a quiet moment at Bilton Grange. Boarding life is busy and we are proud of the huge range on offer. As well as the large choice of activities and Options during the school week, weekends are fun filled whilst also allowing time for some much-needed free time. This can include some independent time for relaxation as well as some activities such as:

Ball games
Playing in the house
Climbing trees
Feeding the chickens
Exploring the wild gardens
Playing on the adventure playground
Getting lost in a book
Relaxing in the games room (pool, table football or just chill and watch TV)
Sending emails to family and friends

The day usually ends with a film night (with edible tuck or popcorn!) in the boarding houses before heading off to bed.

Sundays
Sunday begins with a nice long lie-in followed by a full English or American breakfast in pyjamas. There is then a little more free time before heading off for a fun outing or activity in the afternoon. Sunday outings/activities may include:

Paint Balling
Cinema
Home Day
Bowling
Ice Skating
Ninja Warrior
Warwick Castle
Climbing wall
Shopping
Theatre

BULLYING

We dislike it when children are unkind to one another, although we understand that in any family or community there may be times when people upset others. The key thing to remember, especially in a boarding community, is that there are lots of people you can talk to who are ready and able to help.

Nobody at Bilton Grange should be hurt or upset by anybody else. Someone who hurts or upsets another person persistently is a bully. As a child at Bilton Grange, it is important that you learn how to get on with others, whether they are your closest friends or not.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to any kind of bullying or unkindness within the school and the boarding houses. Bilton Grange is a friendly, happy school, and everyone needs to work together to keep it that way. If someone is unhappy, we believe it is the responsibility of all of us to try to make things better.

If you have any worries or concern at school, you could choose to speak to:
A Form Tutor
A Houseparent or Teacher
A Matron
A School nurse
A friend
An older boarder or boarding ambassador
A Gap student
The Head of Year
The Headmaster

You may prefer to talk to someone outside of school. You could choose your parents, your relatives, a friend – there are always people willing to listen.

GOING HOME

Believe it or not, after some time boarding at Bilton Grange you will want to take a break and recharge your batteries. This will help you to be at your best in the classroom, on the sports field and when playing with your friends. There are 3 main kinds of breaks or holiday each term:

Exeats

These Exeats are weekends when all pupils go home or to their guardians.

They normally begin at lunchtime on a Friday and finish on Sunday evening, when boarders return to school (although occasionally this may be on a Monday during the Summer Term).

There is usually one Exeat each half term.

Half-Term Holiday

This is a longer break and, as the name suggests, it occurs every half-term — roughly six weeks into a term.

Half-term holidays normally start at 4.00pm on a Friday.

End of Term Holidays – Christmas, Easter & Summer

These are the longest holidays when most children will return to their homes.

They usually begin after any end-of-term event or occasion e.g. School Carol Service.

Boarders should remember to:

- Tell the boarding team who is picking you up and at what time.
- Inform the boarding team **who is picking you up** and **at what time**.
- Inform the boarding team **when you will be returning** — for example, on **Sunday evening** or **Monday morning**.

A member of the boarding team will contact your parents about these arrangements, but if you already know the details, please share them with us as soon as possible. It helps us keep everyone safe and organised.

USEFUL TERMINOLOGY

Word	Meaning
Exeat Weekend	A weekend at 'home'. School closes and everyone leaves for the weekend. Sometimes called 'Leave-Out' weekend.
Tovey Tuck	Mr Tovey's sweet shop, so good it can rival Willy Wonka!
Fall In	Gathering of the entire community, usually in the Gallery or Dining Room.
BG	Shortened name for Bilton Grange.
Advent Term	The autumn term from September to December (sometimes known as the Michaelmas Term in other schools).
Lent Term	The spring term from January until March/April.
Trinity Term	The summer term from April to July.
Prep	Homework – work set by teachers to be completed independently during timetabled hours.
Dorm	Short for Dormitory – a bedroom shared by several boarders.
Tutor	Each pupil is placed in a form class with others in their year group. Your form tutor runs the form class and can help you with any issues in the daytime.
Matron	A member of the boarding staff – looks after boarders and boarding house. Washes clothes, supervises teeth brushing, gives out medicines, listens to troubles...
Section	As well as a form class you will also be put into a Section (equivalent to a house system) – this is where members of the school of all year groups come together and work together as a team.

THE FIRST STEP IN THE
ADVENTURE OF LIFE