



ROYAL
BALLET
SCHOOL

SETTING THE STANDARD

BOARDING PRINCIPLES & SUITABILITY

SEPTEMBER 2025

Boarding Principles

At The Royal Ballet School, we strive to create a caring, supportive, and positive environment where every student has the opportunity to flourish artistically, academically, socially, and emotionally. Boarding plays a central role in this vision, offering an inclusive “home from home” where students feel safe, secure, and valued as individuals. Within this setting, we aim to nurture self-confidence, a sense of responsibility, and mutual respect, helping our young people to grow into compassionate and resilient members of their communities, both within school and beyond. Open and regular dialogue between staff, students, and parents is at the heart of this partnership, ensuring that we work together towards a shared goal: the wellbeing and success of each student.

Boarding at The Royal Ballet School is, above all, a community enterprise. It depends on the goodwill, kindness, and consideration of every member, and on the willingness of individuals to embrace compromise and shared responsibility. By contributing positively to the life of the boarding house, students help to create a warm and supportive environment in which everyone can thrive. Our commitment to inclusivity means we seek to support each child in their individual journey, recognising and celebrating the diverse strengths they bring to the community.

We also recognise, with care and honesty, that boarding may not always be the right fit for every student. While the vast majority of our students adapt well and flourish within our houses, there may be very rare occasions when, after careful consideration, the school concludes that the boarding environment is not in the best interests of a particular student or the wider community. Such decisions are never taken lightly and will always be approached with compassion, sensitivity, and in liaison with parents. The following sections of this document set out in more detail the circumstances in which this might arise and how the school will work with families to navigate such situations.

Suitability for Boarding

While our pastoral staff are extremely experienced and have guided many students on their journey through the School boarding at the Royal Ballet School provides a series of unique demands based on our setting and boarding environment. While understanding our obligations under The Equality Act 2010 this policy sets out the criteria and considerations the School will use to assess whether a student is suitable for boarding. It recognises the School’s responsibility to safeguard all students, ensure the welfare of the whole boarding community, and operate within the limits of its staffing and resources.

Scope

This policy applies to all students who are applying for or currently hold a boarding place. It complements the School’s admissions, safeguarding, and SEND policies.

Principles

The School aims to make boarding accessible to students where it can meet their educational, social, emotional, and health needs safely and effectively.

Decisions will balance the individual needs of the student with the welfare and safety of the wider boarding community.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with additional needs, where practicable and within the School's resources.

Criteria for Fit for Boarding Assessment

1. Behavioural and Social Needs

A student may be unsuitable for boarding if:

They have a pattern of persistent or unacceptable behavioural difficulties that cannot be managed safely within the boarding environment.

Their behaviour presents a significant safeguarding risk to themselves or others.

They require levels of supervision or support that exceed the School's staffing capacity, including 1:1 overnight care or continuous adult monitoring.

There is clear evidence of aggression, violence, or bullying behaviour that compromises the safety and wellbeing of peers.

2. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The School welcomes applications from students with SEND. However, boarding may not be appropriate if:

The student's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) includes requirements the School is not equipped to meet (e.g., specialist therapeutic provision, intensive support in boarding beyond existing staffing levels).

The physical layout of boarding facilities cannot safely accommodate their needs (e.g., accessibility or supervision issues).

The level of personal care or medical support required exceeds the expertise of boarding staff or available healthcare provision in boarding.

3. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Boarding may not be suitable where:

A student has significant mental health difficulties requiring specialist intervention not available within the School.

There is a high risk of self-harm or suicide that cannot be safely managed within the boarding environment.

The student's mental health needs significantly impact their ability to live harmoniously with peers, or place an unreasonable demand on boarding staff.

Their attendance in boarding may exacerbate their condition.

4. Medical and Health Needs

A student may not be fit for boarding if:

They require complex medical interventions or treatments that boarding staff are not trained, have the confidence, or authorised to provide.

They have a health condition with unpredictable acute episodes requiring immediate medical response that cannot be guaranteed in a boarding setting.

Medication management needs exceed the School's capacity to deliver safely and consistently.

5. Impact on the Boarding Community

In assessing suitability, consideration will also be given to:

The potential impact on the wellbeing, safety, and experience of other boarders.

Whether the level of support required would detract significantly from the care and supervision of other students.

Assessment/Review Process

Review (before attendance): Information provided at application, including medical forms, school reports, and any professional assessments.

Review (post attendance): Information provided by external agencies that come to light after entry to the school. Information provided by boarding staff at the school which may include support capacity issues, behavioural and/or safety concerns, safeguarding matters, impact on the boarding community.

Further Enquiries: May involve meetings with parents/carers, healthcare providers, or external professionals to understand needs.

Risk Assessment: Conducted where concerns exist about safety or support capacity.

Trial/Assessment Period (if appropriate): A time-limited trial may be offered to assess suitability in practice.

Decision: The Academic & Pastoral Principal reserves the right to decline or withdraw a boarding place if the School cannot reasonably meet a student's needs or safeguard the community.

Reasonable Adjustments

The School will consider all reasonable adjustments, within its resources, to enable a student to board safely. However, adjustments cannot compromise the care of other students, or require resources beyond those available.

Ongoing Review

The School will regularly review the needs of boarding students.

If a current boarder's needs change and exceed what can be provided, alternative arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers.

Communication

Decisions will be communicated sensitively to parents/carers, with a clear explanation of the factors considered. The School will, where possible, assist families to identify alternative options.

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