



# British School Basics

## Know Before You Enrol

Attending a British school can be a wonderful opportunity for your child to experience the culture while in the UK and your children are entitled to a free education through the state school system, but there are some *key differences* of which you should be aware before making this decision.

1. School places are limited and granted based on priorities, so you are not guaranteed a place at your preferred school. You might be assigned to any school with available space in your “catchment area” (local area where you live.) State schools are free, but tuition is charged for private/independent (also called “public”) schools. Some faith/church schools are state-funded.
2. Free transportation is not guaranteed and you are responsible for ensuring your child gets to and from school, which may require purchasing a bus pass or driving yourself. There are no laws for drivers to stop for a school bus and vehicles may drive around a stopped bus, so children need to be aware of the dangers of crossing the road.
3. The school year is longer, but with more breaks during the year. The year is broken into 3 terms with week-long breaks in the middle of each term, 2-week breaks at Christmas and Easter holidays and a 6-week break for summer. Some holidays do not align with American holidays, so your child may not be off when you are, and vice versa. You are expected to follow all the policies of the school, including attendance. *Fines may be assessed for unauthorized absences.* Following are the 2022-2023 Term Dates for local councils:

<b>Cambridgeshire/ Peterborough:</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Term Start</b>	<b>Half-Term Break</b>	<b>Term End</b>	<b>Term Break</b>
	Autumn	1 Sep	24 Oct-28 Oct	21 Dec	22 Dec-3 Jan
	Spring	4 Jan	13 Feb-17 Feb	31 Mar	1 Apr-16 Apr
	Summer	17 Apr	29 May-2 Jun	19 Jul	20 Jul-31 Aug
<b>Northamptonshire:</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Term Start</b>	<b>Half-Term Break</b>	<b>Term End</b>	<b>Term Break</b>
	Autumn	1 Sep	24 Oct-28 Oct	16 Dec	19 Dec-2 Jan
	Spring	3 Jan	13 Feb-17 Feb	31 Mar	3 Apr-14 Apr
	Summer	17 Apr	29 May-2 Jun	21 Jul	22 Jul-31 Aug

4. Uniforms are required and each school sets their own standards. All uniform costs will be at your own expense and no funding or reimbursement is available for purchasing these.
5. Mandated *schooling* goes through Year 11/Age 16 at which time students take exams for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). After GCSE, students must participate in some form of *education* until age 18, which may include continued schooling at a Sixth Form/College for Advanced Level (or “A-Level”) classes or vocational courses which may require tuition, apprenticeships, employment or volunteering. Keep in mind that credits may not transfer to American high schools or be accepted for US college applications.



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If you decide that a British school is the right place for your child, start by researching local schools. Schedule a tour and review the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills Department (OFSTED) report at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/> You can compare schools at <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>

Most children attend the school in their immediate local "catchment area," providing there is space. This school is called the catchment school. Every school serves an area of streets or villages, but sometimes this is different for church schools. Parents have a right to ask for a place at a different school. This is called a 'preferred' school. However, it may not be possible to obtain a place if the preferred school is full - this is the overriding factor. If your catchment area school is full then the education office will find you a place at the next nearest. Schools are not able to vary the government's regulations on class sizes.

Once you settle on your top school choices, submit an "in-year admission application" for enrolment through the Local Authority Council website in which you live/reside. You will need proof of address for the application. The Council websites below have all the information for their schools and will guide you through the process:

- Cambridgeshire: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/apply-for-a-school-place>
- Peterborough: <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/school-admissions>
- Northamptonshire: <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/school-admissions/Pages/default.aspx>

Contact the **School Liaison** if you have more questions or would like more information:  
DSN: 268-3232      Comm: 01480 843232      [schoolliaison.alconbury@us.af.mil](mailto:schoolliaison.alconbury@us.af.mil)