Secondary School FAQs

Years 7-11

Summary of Year 7 School Places

	Tailored Boarder	Flexi-Boarder	Day Student
Applications	Register with OSH through our online portal **AND** complete the Local Authority CAF		
Entry requirements	Boarding interview and school reference	Boarding interview, school reference and academic, sport and/or music assessment	No assessment or interview
Hours	Routinely stays overnight (number of nights to be determined) but can have exeats when needed	Can arrive for breakfast (7am) and stays until at least 6:30pm Monday to Friday. Can stay later. Stays over up to 4 nights per term	Arrive in time for registration which starts at 8:25am and finish after lessons at 3:45pm
Boarding facilities	Full access to all boarding facilities with own dedicated bed, storage and study space	Full access to boarding facilities Monday to Friday. Locker and desk to use for prep time etc., but not a dedicated bed	Access to day student common room and opportunity to rent a locker
Meals and activities	All meals and majority of activities included in boarding fees	All meals Monday to Friday and majority of activities. Not at weekends unless utilising one of their four sleepovers per term	Can opt in to purchase school lunch each term and take part in trips that are organised as part of the school day, but there is no option to buy-in to evening and weekend trips or to stay overnight
Boarding fees	Yes – £14,205 pa (£4,735 per term) for 2026/27	Yes – £7,102.50 pa (£2,367.50 per term) for 2026/27	None
Breakfast/come in early Monday-Friday	Yes		No
Lunch Monday-Friday	Yes		Yes, if purchased for that term
Lunchtime clubs and activities Monday-Friday	Yes		
Tea & toast after school	Yes		No
After school clubs	Yes		Can take part in school representative activities as part of competitive sports team, orchestra/choir or academic-related activity
Prep (Homework)	Supervised prep after school		Prep at home
Supper Monday-Friday	Yes		No
Evening boarding activities Monday-Friday	Yes		No
Weekend boarding activities	Yes	Yes	No
Weekend meals	Yes	Only if one of their four sleepovers per term	No

Are you an independent school?

No. OSH is a state school and we are very proud of this fact. It is one of 34 schools in the country that offer a boarding education within the state system. We share, with all good schools in the state and independent sectors, a belief in high standards of achievement and discipline, and a commitment to providing an excellent education in the broadest sense.

Why does the School have 'hospital' in its name?

The School was founded in the seventeenth century, when the term 'hospital' indicated a charitable institution rather than a medical one. Hospital meant 'hospitality', or board and lodging. We retain the traditional name as part of our unique heritage and because we are a boarding school.

Where is OSH located?

The School is based in the West Midlands, in the town of Stourbridge. We are about 15 miles from Birmingham City Centre and there are excellent rail connections from the local station which is only few minutes' walk away from the School. We are also very close to the motorway network and just a 30-minute drive from Birmingham International Airport, or two hours from London Heathrow.

Is OSH open to both boys and girls?

Yes, both boys and girls can join OSH in Years 7 and 12 as either Tailored Boarders, Flexi-Boarders or Day Students. Girls joined our Sixth Form in 2004, and 2021 was the first year girls joined in Year 7. As of September 2025 OSH is a fully co-educational school.

Boys and girls have separate boarding houses and neither can go in the others' boarding houses. They share outdoor recreational facilities and the two main dining halls. Lessons are taught together excepting in PE/Sport, where they are in single sex classes.

Do you have a catchment area?

No, we welcome students from all over the world so long as they are eligible. It is the responsibility of the parents of foreign national children to check that their children have a right under their UK entry conditions.

Is OSH a selective school?

We are a partially selective school.

- Tailored boarders and Day students are not assessed academically or on aptitude
- Flexi-Boarders may come to us via three routes:
    - An academic test
    - An assessment for aptitude in music
    - An assessment for aptitude in sport
- All boarders, both Tailored and Flexi-Boarders must be assessed as suitable to board and we make this assessment based on a short interview, taking up a reference from their school, and considering any other information provided by parents or the Local Authority or that comes to our attention.

How many school places are there for Year 7 students?

There are 180 places in Year 7 split between boarding and day categories as follows:

Tailored Boarders		35 places for boys and 35 places for girls
Flexi-Boarders	Academically selected	24 boys and 24 girls
	Aptitude in music	4 boys and 4 girls
	Aptitude in sport	4 boys and 4 girls
Day Students		23 boys and 23 girls

What is the difference between Tailored Boarding and Flexi-Boarding?

A Tailored Boarder can stay at School for all or some nights in each week of term, including weekends. How many nights they stay, and which nights they stay, is agreed by parents with the Housemaster. It doesn't have to be the same nights each week, we know there will be occasions and reason for Tailored Boarders to go home from time to time, for example to attend specific sports training or clubs outside of school. Our approach to boarding is tailored to meet the needs of busy families. It can be adapted to fit around their working lives, allowing an integrated family life alongside and offering all of the benefits of boarding life. It gives the freedom to decide whether to stay over or to come and go, before and after the school day, to fit in with home life.

A Flexi-Boarder does everything a Tailored Boarder would do, with the exception of staying over regularly at the School. Flexi-Boarders are required to stay at the School up to 4 nights per term. Monday to Friday they can arrive for breakfast, take all of their meals at school, have access to the boarding house before school, break times, lunch time and after school, they do their prep at school, and can take part in the co-curricular life of the boarding community. Their day then sees them tend to arrive at school from 7am in time for breakfast and leave at 7pm in Year 7, but this generally gets later as the student gets older. They can also participate in weekend boarding trips if they wish and sign up in advance.

How much are boarding fees?

Tailored Boarding fees for the 2026/27 academic year are £14,205 per annum which can be paid termly or monthly. Flexi-Boarding fees are £7,102.50 per annum which can be paid annually, termly or monthly.

Fees are reviewed annually and published by the start of the Summer Term for the following September.

Are OSH fees effected by Labour's plan to add VAT?

No. This is because as a state boarding school, the UK government pays tuition fees for pupils, therefore there is no cost for education at OSH. The fees we set cover boarding activities. Boarding fees are classed as a non-business activity, therefore VAT is not chargeable.

Do Flexi-Boarders get their own bed space and desk?

Flexi-Boarders will get their own locker but not a dedicated bed, as they do not sleep in school each night. They are provided with a desk to use for prep time etc.

How often can Flexi-Boarders stay over and how can we organise this?

Flexi-Boarders can stay up to 4 nights per term and nights need to have been agreed with the Housemaster in advance.

Where can I find out what the Flexi-Boarder assessment comprise?

Our website explains how the academic assessment is made and what the aptitude assessments for music and sport are made up of. Go to www.oshsch.com/admissions.

When do the assessments take place, how do I know if my child has 'passed' and when do we get the results?

Flexi-Boarder tests and assessments generally take place early in October. Parents will be informed when dates are set.

There is not a pass or fail mark for any assessment. Students' scores are ranked in order of performance and all the ranked lists are sent to the Local Authority for them to offer places in that rank order. For each type of assessment there is a list for girls and a list for boys.

If your child attends the early October session you will generally get the results shortly before half term (although this may vary slightly) but you will have your child's rank in time for you to make your choices on the Local Authority CAF (Co-ordinated Admissions Form).

The Local Authority will work down each list until they have allocated all of the Flexi-Boarding places to the highest ranked students AS LONG AS parents have named OSH on the CAF and all other admin has been correctly submitted.

What happens if we are unable to come to the Flexi-Boarder assessment session.

If you registered for a Flexi-Boarding place before the deadline and your child is ill on the day of the assessment you must notify us via email (admissions@oshsch.com) of the cancellation before the time of the assessment. We will offer one alternative session before the Local Authority deadline.

If your application to the School is made after the deadline date your application may be deemed a late application (please see our Admissions Policy on our website for details about late entries). We will still offer an alternative session but this may not be before you have to make your choices on the Local Authority CAF, and it is likely to be dealt with by the Local Authority after all on-time applications have been dealt with.

If my child did not rank in the top 24 for an academic place (or in the top 4 for music/sport), could they still get a Flexi-Boarding place?

Many parents have previously assumed that if their child was ranked below the number of places on offer then they would not be offered a place, but this is not the case. It regularly happens that offers are made to applicants further down the rankings. This is because some children take the assessments and may rank highly, but their parents do not put OSH as their first preference, or indeed any preference, on the CAF or because they come to OSH perhaps as a Day student instead. Some children also take multiple assessments and usually select the place in which they rank highest.

We cannot say how far down the list we are able to go each year but, as an indication only, last year students ranking in the mid 40's were offered academic Flexi places. The year before was similar.

How do I register for a school place?

It is important that for **Year 7 places** parents:

a) Firstly, register with the School using the online portal housed on the School's website

AND THEN

b) Register their preference on the Local Authority CAF. If OSH is not on your CAF you cannot be offered a place

For places in other school years parents must register with the School using the online portal housed on the school website.

Where do I get a CAF from?

Your child's primary school will provide you with a CAF. It must be completed by 31st October, any forms after this date are treated as late entries.

Please note: OSH is only one choice on this form, even if you have applied to us for more than one type of place. When you have submitted your CAF we will let the Local Authority know the order you have put on the School's registration form for Tailored Boarding/Flexi-Boarding/Day places.

Waiting list

You can ask to go on our waiting list even if you did not choose OSH on your CAF.

Does the School have aims for boarding?

Old Swinford Hospital aims to maintain a boarding community that ensures the safety and welfare of all boarders in an environment where they can be both healthy and happy and which supports their learning. With an extensive and varied extra-curricular programme, peer mentoring and pastoral support structure every boarder should have the opportunity to thrive, be healthy in mind and body, and achieve. Boarders will enjoy a gradual increase in independence within a supportive and caring environment to enable them to develop as individuals whilst growing up in a well-ordered community.

How can I find out about financial support for boarding?

The website www.educational-grants.org will take you to a list of charities that may be able to assist and our Finance Department may also be able to put you in touch with other potential sources of support and advice.

In addition, our Foundation, depending upon the circumstances, do consider applications for grants towards boarding fees for students who have a particular need to board but where the family's financial resources cannot meet the full boarding fee. Applicants for Foundation assistance must be British citizens resident in the UK. Awards from the Foundation form no part of the admissions process and applications for these awards are not processed by the School.

Do you award scholarships?

No, as a state school we are not able to do this. Our Foundation has some financial support for students who have a boarding need, and parents and families may apply for bursarial support, but this would not cover the entire boarding fee.

Do you offer support to Forces families?

If you are entitled to claim the Forces' Boarding Schools Allowance (Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA)) you will be pleased to know that our school is on the approved list. Please note that Forces children could also be eligible for three free return journeys a year to visit their parents serving on accompanied tours overseas. OSH has much experience in the education of children from a Forces background. Indeed, our incoming new Headmaster is a former Royal Marine.

Are there any additional boarding costs I should consider?

We try to keep extra costs to a minimum and in a lot of cases these are optional services such as individual music tuition, arranging for dry cleaning, certain trips and activities. and transport costs at the end of term.

The items we do charge for include replacement ID cards, transport to medical and dental appointments, work experience risk assessments, and a nominal contribution toward materials costs for food technology, art and design & technology. There is a full list on our website www.oshsch.com/fees.

What is the difference between a Day place and a Boarding place?

A Day place is different to a Tailored or Flexi-Boarding place because the school day is significantly shorter, and Day students do not stay overnight, for supper, or for evening activities. For those students who gain Day places at OSH, their day will normally start at morning registration at 8:25am and finish after lessons at 3:45pm. Whereas Boarding students, Tailored or Flexi, generally have much longer days, arriving from 7am when they haven't stayed in and often leaving late into the evening.

At what times will Day students be at school?

All students must arrive in time for registration which starts at 8:25am. Their day will normally finish after lessons at 3:45pm.

Do Day students pay fees?

Day students do not pay boarding fees however they may, for example, opt to take individual music lessons, rent locker space, purchase printing credits, or opt-in for school lunches for a termly charge.

The items we do charge for include replacement ID cards, work experience risk assessments, and a nominal contribution toward materials costs for food technology, art and design & technology.

There is a full list on our website at www.oshsch.com/fees.

How likely is my child to get a Day place?

Our Day places are usually oversubscribed and places are offered based on the oversubscription criteria in our Admissions Policy.

After looked-after and previously looked-after children the next priority in the oversubscription criteria is feeder schools. We have three feeder schools: Oldswinford C of E, Pedmore C of E, and St James C of E in that order. In recent years we have not had capacity to take all of the Day applications from the feeder school category.

Can my child leave the school premises at lunch time?

No, students must remain in the school during the day, which includes lunch time. Students who wish to have school lunches can opt-in to buy these. Payment for school lunches is via the Evolve payment system and should be done at the start of each term. Day students my chose to bring a packed lunch if they wish. Tailored and Flexi-Boarders do not need to bring packed lunch as their meal are included in the boarding fees.

Day students who pay for their school lunch will eat in the main Dining Hall. Day students who bring a packed lunch will eat in the Harris House Day Centre.

Will Day students have somewhere to store their belongings during the day?

Day students can rent locker space and details of how to do this will be given in the school joining instructions upon gaining a place.

Can Day students stay after school?

Day students cannot attend boarding activities and clubs. They can stay after 3:45pm if they are participating in activities that require them to represent the School, e.g. part of an OSH sports team or music ensemble, or attending an academic-related club such as Public Speaking, Drama or STEM Club although these activities are more likely to take place during lunchtime.

CCF is available to all students, including Day students, from Year 8 and similarly they may all start their DofE Bronze in Year 9 if they wish.

Day students may take part in trips that are organised as part of the school academic activities, but evening and weekend trips are for Boarders and they are not open to Day students.

Does OSH have a house system?

There are currently three senior boys' boarding houses Foley, Foster and Potter Houses for Years 8-13, and one junior boarding house Prospect House for Year 7 boys. There are two girls' boarding houses: Dudley for Years 7 and 8, and Baxter for Years 9 to 13. Each house has a boarding house team made up of a Housemaster, a Matron and a team of Boarding Tutors. Sixth Form students are encouraged to act as mentors to the younger students.

We also have houses for competitive and representative sports, events and competitions, separate from the boarding houses, so that all the School community can join in.

Do Day students have access to boarding houses?

No, Day students do not have access to boarding accommodation but they do have use of their own common room for break and lunchtimes in the Harris House Day Centre.

How does the School integrate Day students?

Through shared tutor groups, our tutorial programme, lessons, curriculum trips and visits, school council and representative activities such as sport and music. Day students will be very much part of school life at OSH.

My child has SEN, how do you support them?

We have allocated resources within our SENCo team to provide support for students but we do not have any additional staffing to help on a one-to-one basis unless your child has an EHCP. This means that most pupils with SEN will be supported by Quality First Teaching in the classroom and by their teachers.

My child has a dietary requirement, can this be catered for?

Yes, absolutely. Approximately 10% of our students have some kind of dietary need, please make this known on your registration form.

What is a typical OSH student like?

There is, of course, no such thing as a typical OSH student but we are pleased that those who visit the School often comment on their genuine friendliness and the fact that they are clearly very proud of their School.

Can I visit the School and would I be able to meet staff?

You are welcome to visit the School on any of our open events or by appointment for a boarding tour. Depending on the timing of your visit you will have the opportunity to meet members of the Senior Leadership Team, teachers and boarding staff, who as a team are responsible for the education, safeguarding and welfare of OSH students.

Is there a free bus service to OSH?

OSH does not provide a bus service. The School can be easily accessed via public transport and is a short walk away from Stourbridge Junction train station. Students may be eligible to apply for a 16-18 travel pass from their Local Authority. The pass will allow students to purchase child rate tickets for travel to and from OSH.

What are the timings of the School day?

Breakfast starts at 7:20am and finishes at 8:00am. Day students arrive between 8:10 and 8:25am

Registration and/or assemblies are 8:25–8:45

2 lessons until 10:45am when we have break until 11:05am

2 lessons until 1pm when lunch starts

Lunch is from 1-150pm

2 more lessons from 1:50pm to 3:45pm

Day students go home at 3:45pm

4pm evening activities for Tailored and Flexi-Boarders

5:15pm prep (homework)

6:15pm supper

7pm more evening activities for Tailored and Flexi-Boarders, plus second prep for Seniors

8:30pm start of the bedtime routine for Year 7, progressing by 15minutes for each year group

Can my child join in school years other than Year 7?

Our traditional school entry year groups are Years 7 and 12, however you are welcome to apply for entry into other school years. These places are dependent on capacity. Parents must register with the School using the online portal housed on the school's website www.oshsch.com/admissions

How do you define Boarding Need for admissions?

Boarding need is one of our priority oversubscription criteria for boarding places. If we have to use oversubscription criteria and you feel your child has a boarding need, you should provide evidence of that need. In determining whether or not they consider that a particular candidate has boarding need, the Governors will review each application on its own merit. In each case, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians/carers to provide the information required to enable the Governing Body to decide. In particular, the names and contact details of a person from whom the School may seek corroborating evidence must be given.

Please note, the boarding need criteria we set out is for admissions purposes. It is not necessarily the criteria used by other charities or the Foundation in determining boarding need for the purposes of making any grant towards boarding fees and each source of support will apply their own criteria in assessing grants.

Examples of boarding need for admissions purposes may be:

a) The main parent/carer is a member HM Armed Forces, is serving with a UK Government Department or international government body of which the UK is a member on terms which may include deployment overseas or frequent changes of posting within the UK, or is employed by a UK based company where they are required to frequently travel overseas or be resident overseas.

b) The candidate is the subject of a voluntary agreement between the Governing Body and a Local Authority or Charitable Trust to provide a boarding place for reasons of boarding need.

c) The candidate is in the care of a grandparent or other person, whether or not a relative, other than their natural parent, step-parent or adoptive parent.

d) The primary home is in a remote rural location where appropriate education is not available within a reasonable daily travelling distance and therefore lack social interaction with children of a similar age.

e) The main parent/career has been diagnosed with a medical or psychological condition which seriously impairs their ability to care for the candidate.

f) The candidate or their main parent/carer has been the victim of a serious crime or family circumstances, or reasonably fears that they may become the victim such an act.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list and is in no order of priority.