Moving To England From The USA

Just The School Pages

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USA vs UK School Years
Mapping Chart

One of the first things to learn how about a US vs UK school is how the school years, or more commonly referred to as 'grade' in the States, are different. Kindergarten in the US is Year 1 in the UK, and so the mapping of US to UK school begins.

American System			British System	
School Phase	What It's Called	Age	School Phase	What It's Called
Pre-School	Nursery	3-4	Lower School	Nursery
Pre-School	Nursery	4-5	Lower School	Reception
Primary School	Kindergarten	5-6	Lower School	Year 1
Primary School	1st Grade	6-7	Middle School	Year 2
Primary School	2nd Grade	7-8	Middle School	Year 3
Primary School	3rd Grade	8-9	Middle School	Year 4
Primary School	4th Grade	9-10	Upper School	Year 5
Primary School	5th Grade	10-11	Upper School	Year 6
Middle School	6th Grade	11-12	Secondary School	Year 7
Middle School	7th Grade	12-13	Secondary School	Year 8
Middle School	8th Grade	13-14	Secondary School	Year 9
High School	9th Grade/Freshman	14-15	Secondary School	Year 10
High School	10th Grade/Sophomore	15-16	Secondary School	Year 11
High School	11th Grade/Junior	16-17	6th Form/College	Year 12
High School	12th Grade/Senior	17-18	6th Form/College	Year 13

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International Schools

England

These are popular non-boarding schools for girls and boys from kinder through Grade 12 (note exceptions) that offer instruction in English and focus on American or British curriculum. A spotlight indicates my notes from an in person school tour.

ACS International School

Early Childhood to Grade 12
Follows American curriculum; options for students to take PSAT, SATs, and IB courses.

ACS Hillingdon
Hillingdon Court, 108 Vine Lane, Hillingdon, Middlesex, UB10 0BE, UK

ACS Egham
London Road (A30), Egham, Surrey, TW20 0HS, UK

ACS Corbham
Portsmouth Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1BL, UK

https://www.acs-schools.com/

ASL - The American School In London

Kindergarten to Grade 12
Follows American curriculum; options for students to take AP courses and SATs. The IB program and UK exams are not options.

One Waverley Place, London, NW8 0NP

https://www.asl.org/

ASL Visit Notes

Impression: large campus, entirely American, top-notch facilities, very high security
Concern: lacks British immersion experience, minimal opportunity to develop a British accent, or to learn about UK history (if important to you)

TASIS - The American School in England

Early Childhood to Grade 12
Boarding option for 13-18 year olds
750 Students
Follows American curriculum; options for students to take AP and IB courses.

Coldharbour Lane, TW20 8TE England

https://www.tasisengland.org/

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International Schools
England

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Dwight London School

Early Childhood to Grade 12
Follows British curriculum

6 Friern Barnet Lane, London N11 3LX

https://www.dwightlondon.org/

DLS Visit Notes

Impression: charming, nurturing, very small, intimate learning environment, dated facilities
Concern: small nature of the school would not provide enough social interaction and sport options for my extraverted son

ISL - International School of London

Early Childhood to Grade 12
Follows British curriculum

139 Gunnersbury Avenue London W3 8LG, UK

Old Woking Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 8HY, UK

https://www.isllondon.org/

Oaks International School

(formerly Cambridge International School; CIS)
2-11 years old
10-16 kids per class / 100 kids total in the school
Follows British curriculum

Cherry Hinton Rd, Cambridge CB1 8DW, UK

https://www.oaksinternationalschool.co.uk/

CIS Visit Notes

Impression: earthy, very small, primarily students of Cambridge professors
Concern: combines year groups due to some years with too few students to dedicate a classroom (combining year groups was a CIS practice, so this may no longer be in practice but a question to ask)

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International Schools
England

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Southbank International School

Early Childhood to Grade 12
Follows British curriculum

3 Campuses in London: Hampstead, Kensington, Westminster

Southbank Hampstead, 16 Netherhall Gardens, London NW3 5TH

36-38 Kensington Park Road, London W11 3BU

63-65 Portland Place, London W1B 1QR

https://www.isllondon.org/

If you can't do international, but seeking more than a UK state school...

Consider a British private school:

1. British curriculum
2. International feel - demographics, languages, curriculum coverage
3. Typically less expensive than an international school
4. Boarding & non-boarding private school options
5. All girl school, all boy school, or co-ed options
6. Field trips that offer life skills & European immersion experiences
7. Academic, sports, & music/arts balance
8. RESPECT, manners & even dining etiquette
9. Confidence, independence & social skills at an early age
10. Climbing trees...letting kids be kids

If a British private prep school is at the top of your list, be sure to read more about what it's like in this blog post: British Schools vs. American Schools

Search for private schools using the postcode of where you may live.

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UK School Questions

Interview Checklist

Print a copy for each school visit.

1. Admission deadline dates _____
2. Is there a waitlist? Timing? _____
3. Ofsted rating _____
4. School hours _____
5. Year groups covered:
    a. boys _____
    b. girls _____
6. Class size _____
7. Demographic/diversity breakdown _____
8. List of subjects as part of core curriculum
    a. _____
9. Extra courses available after school (dance, theatre, music etc)
    a. _____
10. Athletics / sports / clubs available _____
11. Personal computer required? OS: _____
12. Before or after-school programs _____
13. Tutoring options _____
14. Mandatory exam or in-person evaluation to enroll? _____
15. Field trips by year group, obligations to attend (if any), and related costs:
    a. _____
16. Fees:
    a. annual tuition (how many terms) _____
    b. transportation (bus, train) _____
    c. school supplies (pencils etc) _____
    d. books _____
    e. school uniform _____
    f. before/after school programs _____
    g. course special electives _____
    h. tutoring _____

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3 Top Tips To Getting In

You Found **THE** School. Now what?

There are 3 tips worth trying to secure a spot(s) at the UK school you really have your sights on - particularly if you missed the registration deadline, seeking an 11+ or 13+ spot, the class is fully subscribed, or super competitive in general:

1 Email The School Headmaster / Headmistress

Email the headmaster or headmistress of the school as soon as possible. Include your background, information about the kid(s), and any relevant information that will help influence further dialog.

Offer to meet or conduct an interview virtually. Be patient but follow-up if you don't hear back within 1 week. If you do have a virtual meeting, conduct your school research. Follow the school's social media accounts and be prepared to talk about current topics so it's clear to the decision maker you are seriously vested.

2 Make It Personal

Include a family photo in your communications to the headmaster/headmistress. Assign visual faces to the admission request. If your child excels in a sport or hobby, send videos or other media that showcases your child's talent.

3 Have Your Current School Email The School

Request your current school principal to email the UK school. Establishing a US school to UK school referral and recommendation is the best kind. This way the UK school has immediate information on your child's all-around performance, and this kind of recommendation is THE BEST.

A combination of 1 & 2. Emailed the headmaster, sent photos & consistently followed up.

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Keep calm and go to the library.

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets