



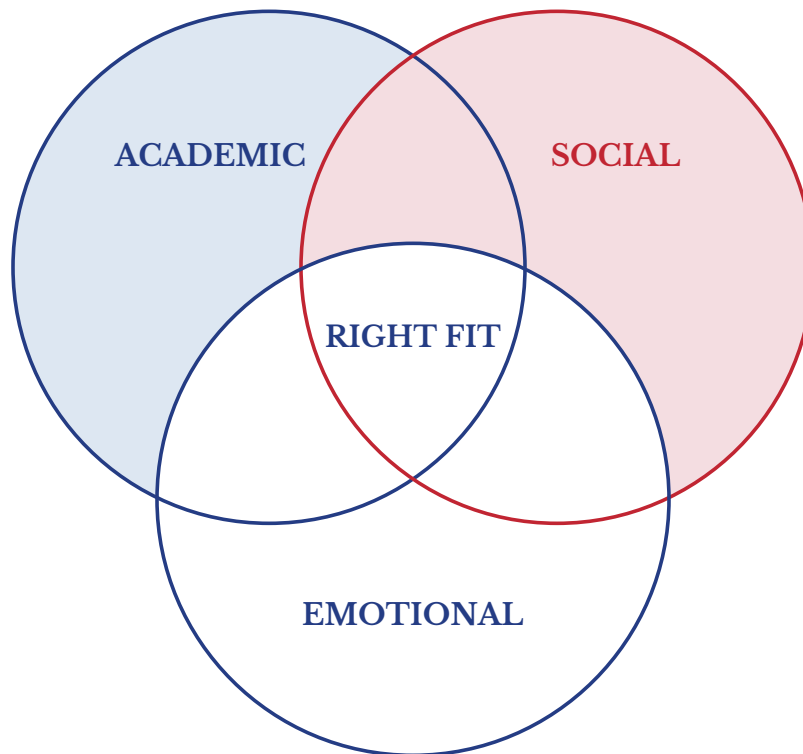
VIRGINIA & JENNIFER BUSH & ASSOCIATES

INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS SINCE 1975

The Boarding School Parents' Handbook

25 Essential Questions for Finding the Right Fit

Use our guide during campus visits and admissions interviews.



• School Culture & Community

A student can succeed almost anywhere academically. Where they eat, laugh, make friends, and feel comfortable being themselves often determines whether they truly flourish.

- What type of student thrives here—and who might not?

- How would students describe the culture in three words?

- How does the school help new students feel like they belong?

- How diverse is the student body—not just geographically, but in interests and backgrounds?

- How do students spend their weekends?

VJB Consultant Tip: Listen for consistency. If students, faculty, and admissions officers all describe the school in similar ways, you're probably getting an authentic picture of the community.

• Academics

This is about support, not rigor. Many families instinctively ask, "How hard are the classes?" when the more important question is, "What happens when my child needs help?"

- How accessible are teachers outside of class?

- What happens if a student starts to struggle academically?

- How are advisors involved in a student's academic progress?

- What academic support services are available?



VJB Consultant Tip: Great advising can make all the difference. A trusted advisor often becomes the first person a student turns to when school—or life—gets challenging.

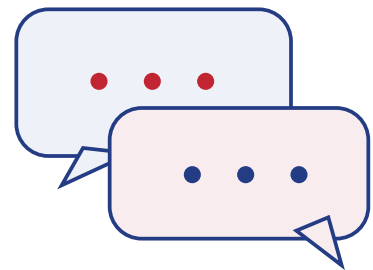
• Student Support & Wellness

Something many families overlook is that boarding schools don't replace parents—they partner with them while helping students grow.

- How does the school help students manage stress?

- How are roommate or peer conflicts handled?

- How does the school communicate with parents while encouraging independence?



VJB Consultant Tip: Independence doesn't happen overnight. Great boarding schools know when to step in, when to step back, and how to help students build confidence along the way.

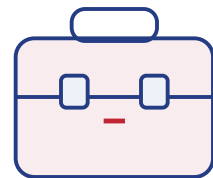
• Residential Life

Campus is more than a place to learn—it's where students become responsible, build friendships, and develop independence.

- What role do dorm parents play?

- What does a typical weekday and evening look like?

- What are the expectations around technology and phones?



VJB Consultant Tip: Pay attention to the little things—mealtimes, evenings, weekends, and technology policies. These everyday experiences shape a student's happiness far more than families often expect.

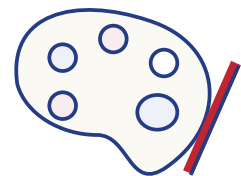
• Athletics, Arts & Activities

Boarding school is a chance for students to discover new interests. Many graduates say their favorite activity was something they had never considered before arriving on campus.

- Can students easily try something new and participate in multiple activities?

- What opportunities exist for leadership and student initiative?

- How are beginners welcomed into programs?



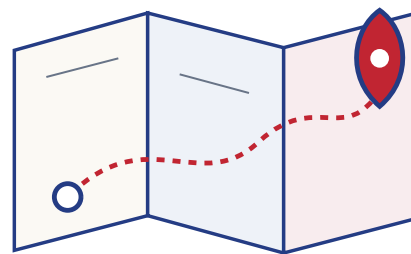
VJB Consultant Tip: A busy student isn't always a happy student. Look for a school where students have the freedom to explore their interests without feeling overscheduled.

• College Counseling

A successful college process begins long before senior year. The strongest outcomes are built through years of thoughtful course selection, involvement, and personal growth.

- When does college counseling begin?

- How does the school help students discover colleges that fit them?



VJB Consultant Tip: Every graduating class is different. A school's college list tells only part of the story; what matters is whether students are finding colleges that fit their individual goals and interests.

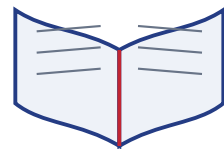
• Student Perspectives

The most helpful student conversations are not the ones with perfect answers—they're the ones where students speak openly about both what they love and what they would change.

- What surprised you most after arriving?

- If you could change one thing about the school, what would it be?

- What do you wish you'd known before enrolling?



VJB Consultant Tip: Encourage your child to ask these questions too. Their impressions of the students they meet may be one of the best indicators of whether a school feels like the right fit.

• Questions to Ask Yourself

Take the rankings, reputations, and opinions of others into consideration—but let your child's needs, personality, and goals guide the final decision.

- Can I picture my child thriving, not just succeeding?

- If this school weren't famous, would I still love it?



VJB Consultant Tip: Reputation and prestige can matter, but fit matters too. The right school is one where your child will be excited to participate, connected to the community, and supported in reaching their goals.

- **Notes**

Why Families Work With VJB

For more than 50 years, VJB & Associates has helped families navigate the boarding school admissions process with precision and confidence.

Our team of highly trained and experienced consultants have built trusted relationships with schools and have guided hundreds of families and students to find the best school fits where they can achieve success..

We believe successful boarding school admissions begins with understanding the child—not just the application. That's why our support includes:

- Knowing your child
- Creation of personalized school lists taking into account who the child is socially, emotionally and academically
- Deep knowledge of boarding schools in the U.S.
- Application timeline management
- Interview preparation
- Essay critiquing
- Advice on standardized testing
- Experienced and honest guidance throughout the admissions process
- Individualized support from your first conversation through enrollment and beyond

Because choosing the best school is about more than getting in—it's about finding the community where your child will feel the most confident, challenged and supported in order to maximize their true growth potential.

Book your complimentary consultation at www.virginiabush.com