OUR BOARDING COMMUNITY

UWC South East Asia provides a distinctive learning programme, comprised of five interlinking elements: academics, activities, outdoor education, personal and social education and service. Together, these five elements provide a rich learning experience for our diverse student body. When students join our boarding community, they have an opportunity to extend that experience further.

The boarding experience is a culturally rich one, providing a supportive international family for our students. Its caring environment nurtures self-discipline, self-management and leadership skills, and is true to the mission of the UWC movement to make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

With over 45 different nationalities represented in the boarding community, and over 80 in the student body as a whole, our students readily gain the international exposure and understanding that is central to the UWC experience. Our boarders not only gain insights into many different cultures, but also discover a deeper appreciation of what is special about their own.

Life in the boarding community is enriched by UWC national committee and other scholars who are resident in the boarding houses. Scholars are students from all over the world who attend the College on a full scholarship. They are selected on the basis of both their academic ability and their commitment to the UWC mission and values. The scholars contribute much to the rich and diverse life in our international boarding family. The College hosts over 60 scholars across Grades 8 to 12 on both campuses.

Such is the richness of their experience here, and the strength of the friendships formed, many boarders find it difficult to leave our community at the end of their schooling. The lasting links established across the world are a demonstration of both their life-defining experience while at UWCSEA and their identity as global citizens of the 21st century. UWCSEA’s boarding experience prepares young people for university life and beyond, equipping them with the confidence, independence and social skills they need to be successful.
Advantages of Singapore

Boarding in Singapore opens a wealth of travel and cultural opportunities. UWCSEA’s programmes take full advantage of being located in a global hub, while the College’s ethos expects students to explore the cultural diversity offered at both the College and in the region.

A comprehensive orientation programme, held the week prior to the start of classes each academic year, is the first in a series of opportunities designed to foster friendship and community spirit. Many activities, such as sport and music, take place on campus, and there are a host of nearby recreational options such as sailing, bicycle and exercise trails, libraries and parks. Singapore’s size and excellent transport systems make it easy and safe to explore the entire island.

UWCSEA provides a ‘closer-to-family’ option for many of our boarders who come from, or whose families are based in, the Asia region. Singapore has a vibrant and varied expat community, and expatriates from over 80 nationalities make up the majority of our student community.

Therefore, most of our students, day or boarding, understand both the challenges and opportunities of living in a new country. The school community is naturally geared to understanding and providing support for students as they adjust to living away from home, possibly for the first time. Being closer to family also means more frequent visits; this is especially important for younger boarders and their parents.

Student experience

Boarders are expected to contribute to the boarding community by showing individual initiative, and are encouraged to get involved in a range of diverse activities. As in any family, there are some guidelines and general regulations, designed to allow a group of people to live together in a supportive community that has high expectations of all its members. The boarding house routines ensure students have a balance between academic and leisure pursuits, resulting in time dedicated towards homework and towards other pursuits such as sport, music or service. Specific time is set aside for study each day; all students have an allocated space that they can personalise to support their own programme of study.

Involvement and participation are central to boarding life. There are many opportunities to contribute to UWCSEA’s boarding activities, which are as diverse as they are stimulating. The programme of events and outings held both on campus and around Singapore includes cultural talks, in which boarders introduce the rest of the community to their countries and cultures, as well as themed evenings, movie nights and thought-provoking discussions and presentations, which provide boarders with the chance to hear different perspectives and share ideas.

Many students adapt to boarding life right from the start, but we recognise that for some students it can take a little longer to settle in. In both cases, we actively support our students in establishing themselves as part of our friendly and caring boarding community. Our boarding house staff proactively support our boarders, encouraging them to make the most of the opportunities offered by the College and to participate fully in both the educational programme during the week and in the life of the boarding house.

“It surprised me how easy it is to study in the boarding house. At first, my impression was that you couldn’t concentrate with everyone else around. However, in this community everyone respects each other, and everyone wants to learn. Boarding life makes it simpler. When you don’t know how to do something, you can always ask your friends for help.

Boarding boosts all areas of your life—more friends, more sports, more fun!”

Gordon Tse, Singapore (East)
Boarding life: a student perspective

“So, how is boarding life?” is a question that we are usually asked and that we are never able to give a proper answer to, simply because it is impossible to describe this unique experience in a few sentences. Cooking dinner together in the kitchen, swimming with your friends after dinner, running desperately from the guardhouse to the lobby to get our sign-in cards as we are about to miss our curfew, are all things that characterise our everyday lives very well.

The most amazing thing about being a boarder is that you never feel alone. When you go down to the common room, there is someone to talk to. No wonder we barely make it to class in time in the morning—it is not easy to go to bed early with so many friends around! Among the 130 boarders living in Senior House [now Nelson Mandela House] there is always someone to turn to if you face a difficult exercise with logarithms or if you just need help with choosing what to wear for a special occasion.

Most of us come from thousands of miles away. It is our very first experience of being away from our family and friends and the environment that we are used to. We are really lucky; living in the boarding house is something that helps us feel that despite the distance there is a community that we truly belong to. Starting from the activities on Orientation Week, organising the International Evening, and the wonderful trip to Desaru, have all been experiences that have made our community stronger.

Students come here from different cultures with different values, habits and traditions. Being a part of this community gives you the opportunity to get a better understanding of the diversity of the people. Just try going to the common room on a Saturday night. You will see people juggling, playing the guitar, singing, painting the wall or learning how to count to 20 in Korean. It is a lively community with amazing and versatile people who are happy to share their skills, and their understanding of the world. I’m happy to be a part of it.”

Evelin Toth, Hungary (Dover)
Dover Campus
There are two boarding houses on Dover Campus: Kurt Hahn and Nelson Mandela Houses, accommodating nearly 200 boarders from Grades 8–12. The custom-built rooms accommodate four students, offering living space and en suite bathrooms.

East Campus
Tampines House is easily recognisable; at 14 stories it is the tallest building on the campus. The accommodation is split according to the grade level of the students. As they progress into the higher grades, students move from shared rooms (quadruple, triple or twin bedded rooms) into single bedded accommodation, affording greater privacy and independence. Bathrooms are shared per floor.

Security
While Singapore has a well-deserved reputation as a safe and welcoming country, security in the boarding houses is a priority. The boarding houses are self-contained buildings located away from the main part of the school on each campus. Security guards control access to both campuses 24 hours a day, and additional checks in and around the boarding house ensure the safety of our boarders.

Meals
Boarders are provided a healthy, balanced diet with a variety of food catering to different tastes, religions and cultural preferences. Halal catering is available. A communal, cafeteria-style kitchen allows boarders to socialise over meals, while pantries and kitchens in the boarding houses enable residents to make a hot drink or snack between meals or while studying.

Medical care
A well-resourced College clinic with qualified nursing staff is open during the day. A qualified doctor also visits the clinic regularly to provide medical care. Hospitals near both campuses and world-class medical and specialist centres provide easy access to further treatment if necessary.

Boarding options
UWCSEA’s boarding option is for full residential boarding; there are no options for weekly or ‘day’ boarding. Students can join the College as boarders from Grade 8 (age 13) to Grade 11 (age 17). Day students are able to apply to transfer into the boarding house if the need arises.

Admission
Students are accepted into the Boarding Houses after an interview process. Families apply for a place in the UWCSEA boarding programme and are allocated to the most suitable campus, based on the interview with and profile of the student. The student is committed to remain a boarder:
• for one full academic year, in the case of Grade 8 to Grade 10 students
• until the completion of the IB Diploma Programme, in the case of Grade 11 students

Please contact Admissions for further information on applying to our boarding programme. The Admissions team will be pleased to assist, offer a tour of either campus and provide more information:
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