

## **'Taking the plunge: life in a British boarding school'**

A school built in the 19th century with uniforms whose design most likely remained untouched since. Palms planted with little dents from constantly clutching onto the umbrella that proves useless against the erratic wind. Monotone days with hours spent hammered to the desk, buried in books. You see the picture, you see the snapshot.

Yet I dare to say no. That is not the life in a British boarding school, certainly not mine. Well, except for the uniforms, that is indeed correct. Nonetheless, I have enjoyed every second of studying in Britain, each one out of the 22,032,000 and counting seconds I have thoroughly loved.

My days here have a rhythm, perhaps even a little groove to it as well, and I can't waste any of it. I mustn't let the sweet melody slip away. When I get tired, it is the same type of exhaustion I feel after relentless dancing. As soon as my feet step off the parquet the yearning to go back awakens me and I am ready to give it my all again. Forget the wobbling legs.

In the course of a meticulous dive into the five subjects that I chose at the beginning of this school year, my devoted teachers guide and support me. Smaller classes with a maximum of 15 pupils give the teachers plenty of space to answer any of our questions no matter how scrutinous mine tend to be. The opportunity to focus only on Biology, Chemistry, Maths, English and Business assures me that I am spending my days purposefully. Hard work is inevitable and although I do occasionally find my mind immersed in textbooks, boarding has put me into a handful of more challenging places that were utterly out of my comfort zone. If you are asking for examples my top picks are muddy puddle baths during an assault course or swimming in an ice-cold river while white-water rafting. But my point is - we are having fun, a lavish amount of it.

It is such a treat to be surrounded by like-minded people whom I am so blessed to call my best friends. Twelve different nationalities currently live under the same roof as me (and that is only one-fourth of our boarding community!). Sometimes it feels like I have already travelled the world just by listening to their stories. Each of us grew up watching different TV shows and were brought up by various roots of culture but if I am ever homesick, they are the ones who comfort me the best. If I am ever cold, it is their hugs that warm me up the best. If I get lost, their navigation skills are mediocre *at best*, but they do always make sure to meet me halfway. I feel dauntless with my Armenian pop star friend, English tennis champ and German jaw-dropping rhetorician. Glorifications aside, there is not a single day I am not grateful for them. Truly. They have taught me so much that a mere "thank you" could never be enough. So, I made them 80 spring rolls during a Vietnamese cooking night. Hopefully, I am debtless now.

The truth is, at times I pinch myself but nothing changes. It is not a dream that I am living. All these pencils, watercolours, inks and crayons. So many opportunities with a single canvas, countless tools and unlimited tales - all on the very same page forming this life, my life in a British boarding school. Can you finally see the picture?