



Boarding Life at AIS-Salzburg

The Boarding Program Experience

BOARDING IS AN EDUCATION IN ITSELF

At AIS-Salzburg, learning continues after the final class of the day. Living in an international community gives students daily opportunities to become more independent, responsible, resilient, considerate, and confident.

I. Boarding Program Overview

For over 50 years, AIS-Salzburg has been a small, independent, college-preparatory boarding school, with more than 85% of our students living on campus. As a true boarding school, we provide a comprehensive secondary education for students in grades 7 through 12 that combines academic rigor with a healthy, active lifestyle and the extraordinary experience of living in the heart of Europe.

The best way to describe our school is “familiar.” We are a family of students, teachers, resident-care staff members, and administrators who work together to create a close-knit community—one that becomes family-like and, for our students, a true home away from home. We know each other. We know our students not simply by name, but as individuals—their personalities, interests, strengths, challenges, and aspirations. Our students, in turn, know the adults who teach, support, guide, and care for them. These relationships extend beyond the classroom and residence halls into every aspect of daily life at AIS-Salzburg.

This familiarity creates a strong sense of belonging whereby students are encouraged to be themselves, to participate, to take responsibility, and to contribute to the community around them. At the same time, they know that there are people here who notice when they succeed, recognize when they are struggling, and are ready to offer guidance when it is needed. For a boarding school, this is especially important. Education here is not limited to what happens in the classroom; it encompasses the whole experience of living, learning, and growing together. The result is an environment that is personal, supportive, and genuinely connected—a place where students can feel known, valued, and at home.

Boarding life is an integral part of the AIS-Salzburg educational experience. The program is designed to develop independence, self-discipline, responsibility, respect for others, and the habits needed for academic success and positive community living. Students are expected to take increasing ownership of their time, commitments, rooms, relationships, and decisions while supported by a professional resident-care team.

This balance of freedom and structure is deliberate. The aim is not simply to supervise students outside class, but to help them learn how to live well with others, manage themselves responsibly, and prepare for the greater independence of university life.

COMMUNITY · INDEPENDENCE · RESPONSIBILITY

These three ideas are at the center of residential life: belonging to a close community, earning greater independence, and learning to use that independence responsibly.

II. A Small International Community

AIS-Salzburg is intentionally small and distinctly international. Approximately 85 students representing 25 to 30 nationalities attend each year, with about 80% enrolled as full-boarders and another 5% as five-day boarders. Enrollment is deliberately kept below 100 students, preserving a scale at which students can know one another well and adults across the academic and residential programs can know students as individuals. With an overall student-to-staff ratio of approximately 3:1, personal attention is not an aspiration but a fundamental feature of daily life at the school.

This combination of size and structure creates an unusual degree of familiarity. Teachers see students throughout the academic day, while a separate resident-care staff provides supervision, guidance, and pastoral support outside the classroom. Because these two groups work closely together, a student is not known only by academic performance or by behavior in the residence halls, but more completely as a developing young person. Strengths can be encouraged, difficulties recognized early, and guidance provided with an understanding of the individual behind the grades.

The international character of the community is equally intentional. No single nationality constitutes a majority of the student body, and students arrive from across Europe and from countries throughout Asia, Africa, North America, and other parts of the world. Diversity at AIS-Salzburg is therefore not something encountered occasionally through special events or international days; it is part of ordinary life.

Students share classrooms, meals, dormitory rooms, activities, excursions, study halls, and free time with peers whose languages, customs, assumptions, and experiences may be very different from their own. Living and learning together turns internationalism from an abstract educational ideal into a daily experience. Students learn to listen to different viewpoints, communicate across cultural and linguistic differences, compromise, resolve ordinary disagreements, and reconsider assumptions they may previously have taken for granted.

In a community this small, students cannot simply retreat into anonymous groups of people just like themselves. They learn how to live alongside one another, how to accommodate differences, and how to contribute to a community in which everyone has a place. These are important elements of growing toward independence and maturity, and they complement the academic preparation students receive in the classroom.

The result is a community that is both remarkably diverse and remarkably close. Students leave AIS-Salzburg having formed friendships across national and cultural boundaries, often maintaining those relationships long after graduation. Just as importantly, they leave with greater confidence in unfamiliar environments, a broader understanding of the world, and the experience of having belonged to a genuinely international community.

III. A Day in the Life

Life at AIS-Salzburg is busy, and deliberately so. The weekday rhythm combines a full academic program with tutorials, athletics, activities, free time, dinner, and supervised evening study, giving each day a natural momentum of its own. There is always something to do, somewhere to be, or someone to spend time with, and students quickly discover that boarding-school life is very different from simply attending school and then going home.

Academic, social, athletic, and residential life flow into one another, filling the days with both responsibilities and opportunities. Yet within this busy schedule there is still time to relax, spend time with friends, and enjoy the independence that comes with living away from home. One of the comments we hear surprisingly often from our students is how quickly the time passes: weekdays become weekends, weekends become months, and before long another school year has gone by. That sense that “time flies” is perhaps one of the best indications of how full and engaging life at AIS-Salzburg can be.

Time	Typical Weekday
07:30	Breakfast and preparation for the day
08:30-15:35	Academic classes, with morning break and lunch
15:35-18:00	Free time, tutorials, sports practices, meetings or other commitments
18:00-18:45	Dinner
19:00-21:00	Supervised evening study hall
21:00 onward	Quiet residential time and preparation for the next day
22:00 / 23:00	Lights out according to grade level

Wednesdays include physical education at the Rif Sports Center as part of the school schedule. Older students may have approved individual study time later in the evening, while younger students have an earlier lights-out time to protect the sleep needed for academic and social engagement.

IV. Independence and Responsibility

Independence at AIS-Salzburg is earned through responsible behavior. Boarding students normally have weekday free time after classes and may leave campus within approved areas when their daily responsibilities have been met. Parents determine the level of independent travel permission, and students sign out, state their destination and expected return time, and sign back in before curfew.

The connection between responsibility and freedom is intentional. Attendance, homework, study hall, room condition, dress, punctuality, lights out, and participation in required activities all affect a student’s eligibility for off-campus privileges. Students therefore experience a practical lesson in cause and effect: greater freedom follows dependable choices.

Residential expectations also teach everyday life skills—time management, budgeting, keeping a shared space orderly, communicating honestly, meeting commitments, and asking for help early when something is unclear or difficult.

V. Living on Campus

All boarding students live together in the main school building, the historic Marienbad, a roughly 200-year-old building that forms the heart of the AIS-Salzburg campus. The residences, classrooms, dining areas, administrative offices, and other principal school facilities are therefore all under one roof or immediately at hand. For boarding students, this creates an unusually convenient and familiar environment: no student is more than a few minutes from a classroom, meal, tutorial, meeting, or evening study hall. School and home are not separate places requiring a daily commute; they are parts of the same small campus community.

The residential areas occupy three floors of the Marienbad. Two floors are reserved for girls and contain a total of 22 student rooms, the majority of them doubles. The boys' residence occupies a separate floor with 16 rooms, approximately half doubles and half triples. Every student room has its own en suite bathroom with shower, giving students a degree of privacy and convenience that is not always typical of traditional boarding-school accommodation. Many of the rooms have also been renovated in recent years, combining the character of the historic building with comfortable, modern residential spaces.

Roommates are normally placed together with consideration for age and grade level, and sharing a room is an important part of the boarding experience. Students learn to accommodate another person's habits and schedule, communicate when difficulties arise, respect shared space and privacy, and take responsibility for the condition of their room. Beds are made, desks and floors kept orderly, belongings stored appropriately, and rooms secured when unoccupied. School housekeeping staff support students by maintaining the common areas and providing regular room cleaning, including bedding changes, vacuuming, and bathroom cleaning. The expectation, however, is not that students are simply looked after: they share responsibility for making their rooms comfortable, orderly places to live.

The physical arrangement of the school also contributes significantly to the sense of community described throughout this program. Students encounter one another throughout the day—in the residences, classrooms, dining areas, corridors, study halls, and common spaces—and resident-care staff are nearby and accessible. Meals, dormitory meetings, informal conversations, and the ordinary routines of living together create many of the moments in which friendships develop and the school gradually begins to feel like home.

At the same time, living on campus does not mean being isolated from Salzburg. A public bus stop is located directly in front of the school, with frequent and safe public transportation connecting the campus to the historic city center in approximately 10 to 15 minutes. As students earn appropriate independence and fulfill their responsibilities, Salzburg itself becomes part of their everyday environment. They can meet friends in town, visit cafés and shops, walk through the Old Town, attend activities, or simply become increasingly comfortable navigating the city in which they live. The result is an appealing balance: students have the security and familiarity of a small residential campus while one of Europe's most attractive and culturally rich cities is only a short bus ride away.

VI. Academic Support After Class

The academic and boarding programs are closely connected. Faculty members contribute to the boarding community through tutorials, study halls, extracurricular activities, and excursions, while Resident-Care Staff supervise study halls, meals, evening life, weekend activities, travel, and student welfare. This cooperation allows academic, personal, and social development to receive consistent attention throughout the year.

Each full-time instructor offers after-school tutorial assistance to any and all students between 15:45 and 17:00. Students are free to come in during these afternoon office hours to gain assistance, review material presented, or review for an upcoming test, quiz or other assessment. If a student's grade drops to below 70% (C-) the instructor may require that the student participate in tutorial sessions during these office hours. Assistance, academic guidance, and support are always available to each student.

Each full-time instructor offers after-school tutorials between 15:45 and 17:00, giving students regular access to individual assistance, review, and preparation for upcoming assessments. Students may attend voluntarily, while teachers may require tutorial attendance when a student's grade falls below 70% (C-). Academic assistance is therefore built directly into the rhythm of the school week and readily available when students need it.

SCHOOL DOES NOT END AT 3:35

For a boarding student, the adults who support academic progress and the adults who guide residential life are part of one connected school community.

VII. Activities, Athletics and Weekends

Weekends are one of the most distinctive—and often most memorable—parts of the AIS-Salzburg boarding experience. After the structure of the academic week, the pace changes, but life remains active. Full-boarders choose from a varied program of healthy, recreational, cultural, and social activities designed to get students out of their rooms, away from their screens, and involved with one another and the world around them. On any given weekend, the choices might range from hiking, skiing, snowboarding, swimming, cycling, or other outdoor challenges to films, arts and crafts, games, sporting events, museums, concerts, and cultural outings. The variety is intentional: weekends should provide time to relax and have fun, but they should also encourage students to try something new, stay active, spend time with friends, and make use of the extraordinary setting in which they live.

The current program requires full-boarders, with the exception of seniors, to participate in at least three weekend activities, although students are welcome to join more. The requirement is an important part of our healthy-lifestyle philosophy. Boarding-school weekends can otherwise contain a great deal of unstructured time; at AIS-Salzburg, we want students to use some of that time actively and socially. The program also makes Salzburg and its surroundings an extension of the campus. A weekend might mean hiking above the city, attending a local sporting event, visiting a cultural attraction, or heading into the Alps. In winter especially, skiing and snowboarding become a regular feature of boarding life, with five ski days and a four-day winter excursion included in the

boarding program. Living in Salzburg means having remarkable opportunities close at hand, and the weekend program is designed to ensure that students actually experience them.

Competitive athletics add another dimension to this active community life. AIS-Salzburg participates in the Danube Valley Athletics Conference (DVAC), competing against other international schools in the region in sports that include boys' soccer and girls' volleyball in the fall and boys' and girls' basketball in the winter. Competition brings with it practices, travel, teamwork, school spirit, and the opportunity to represent AIS-Salzburg beyond campus. Athletics also bring the wider school together. The annual Basketball Jamboree, hosted by AIS-Salzburg since 1990, welcomes international-school teams from across Europe and turns the RIF Sports Center into a gathering place for the school community. Sports Day does something similar in the spring, when students, teachers, administrators, and resident-care staff are divided into teams for a full day of competition, ranging from basketball, volleyball, and soccer to track-and-field events and lighter competitions. These occasions are about more than winning: they create shared experiences, school spirit, friendly rivalry, and many of the stories students remember after the year is over.

VIII. Excursions and Travel

Travel is an important part of the AIS-Salzburg experience and, for many students, one of the great advantages of attending boarding school in the heart of Europe. Twice each year, the regular school routine gives way to major fall and winter excursions, while shorter weekend and overnight trips provide additional opportunities to explore Austria and neighboring countries. These journeys are more than sightseeing trips. Students visit museums, galleries, historic sites, cities, and natural landmarks; navigate unfamiliar surroundings; share meals and experiences with classmates; and enjoy an increasing degree of independence within the structure and supervision provided by the resident-care staff. In this sense, travel becomes an extension of both education and boarding life—broadening students' knowledge of Europe while developing confidence, adaptability, and the practical skills that come from learning how to travel responsibly.

The destinations themselves are remarkably varied. Recent excursions have taken students to cities such as Berlin, Venice, Prague, Paris, London, Munich, Innsbruck, and Klagenfurt, while previous programs have included Athens, Geneva, Budapest, Corsica and other European destinations. A weekend trip might involve exploring a Christmas market and skating outdoors in Munich, touring a famous football stadium, hiking or sightseeing in another part of Austria, or simply discovering a new city with classmates. On a recent overnight trip to Klagenfurt, for example, students cruised on Wörthersee, viewed Carinthia from a 100-meter observation tower, and visited a park featuring miniature versions of famous landmarks. One student's reflection captured an equally important purpose of these trips: the experience provided an opportunity not only to discover more of Austria, but also to get to know new classmates.

Winter brings a particularly distinctive dimension to travel at AIS-Salzburg. Skiing and snowboarding are a major part of boarding life, with five ski days and a four-day winter excursion included for boarding students. The 2026 winter excursion, for example, took students to Zell am See, where the primary focus was skiing and snowboarding in one of Austria's best-known Alpine regions. For students who arrive with experience on the slopes, these trips provide the opportunity to pursue a sport they already love; for others, they offer the chance to learn something that is deeply connected to life in Austria.

Perhaps most importantly, these experiences accumulate over time. A student may arrive at AIS-Salzburg having traveled very little independently and graduate having explored cities and regions across Europe with friends from around the world. Along the way, students learn how to pack for a trip, keep to a schedule, navigate public spaces, manage spending money, look after their belongings, respect different customs, and balance freedom with responsibility. They also return with the shared stories, photographs, inside jokes, and memories that become part of the fabric of boarding-school friendships. Europe is not simply something our students study from Salzburg; during their years at AIS-Salzburg, they have the opportunity to go out and experience it together.

IX. Salzburg as Our Campus

Salzburg adds an educational dimension that cannot be reproduced inside a classroom. Historic streets, museums, concerts, markets, cafés, riverside paths, lakes, and the surrounding mountains become part of everyday experience.

Few boarding schools can offer students both the familiarity of a small residential campus and daily access to a city like Salzburg. Historic streets, museums, concerts, markets, cafés, riverside paths, lakes, and the surrounding mountains become part of students' everyday experience. The city and its Alpine surroundings offer opportunities for hiking, cycling, skiing, cultural exploration, and recreation throughout the year. Living here also asks students to become comfortable using public transportation, interacting in another language, understanding local customs, and finding their way confidently in an environment beyond the school gates. In this sense, Salzburg itself becomes part of the education.

X. Health, Well-being and Safeguarding

A boarding program must provide both opportunity and protection. Resident-Care Staff are responsible for the supervision, welfare, and daily life of boarding students outside the classroom. They monitor wellbeing, encourage responsible decision-making, communicate with parents and teachers, and provide structure during meals, study halls, activities, excursions, and travel.

AIS-Salzburg maintains a Health Coordinator, a trained Child Protection Team, and a 24-hour emergency contact. Dormitory meetings address health and wellbeing, study skills, online safety, healthy relationships, school expectations, public-health matters, and community responsibilities. Students are encouraged to speak with resident staff, the health team, counselors, teachers, or another trusted adult whenever they need support. The goal is not to remove every difficulty from adolescent life. It is to make sure students encounter normal challenges within an environment where adults know them, notice changes, and can respond appropriately.

XI. The Boarding Graduate

The boarding program is successful when students leave not only with memories and friendships, but with habits and qualities that prepare them for university and adult life. Through residential life at AIS-Salzburg, students are encouraged to become young adults who can:

-  manage their time, work, belongings, and personal commitments with increasing independence;
-  live respectfully with people from different cultures, languages, and backgrounds;
-  balance academic work, recreation, friendships, health, and personal responsibilities;
-  communicate openly, resolve differences constructively, and compromise when necessary;
-  contribute positively to a community rather than simply benefit from it;
-  use increasing freedom with sound judgment and accept the consequences of their choices;
-  care for themselves, their rooms, shared spaces, and the wellbeing of others;
-  adapt confidently to travel, unfamiliar environments, and new expectations;
-  ask for guidance when needed and use support responsibly;
-  approach university life with maturity, resilience, confidence, and self-discipline.

READY FOR MORE THAN UNIVERSITY

The academic program prepares students for what they will study next. The boarding program helps prepare them for how they will live.

A community that becomes home

Recent alumni reflections published by AIS-Salzburg repeatedly return to the same themes: the unusual closeness of a small school, the friendships created by living together, the influence of teachers and resident staff, and the lasting confidence that comes from studying abroad. One alumna described the school as a family away from home because students shared classes, dorm life, weekends, trips, and everyday experiences together.

That is the distinctive promise of boarding at AIS-Salzburg: a rigorous education and an international life experienced at the same time. Students arrive to attend school in Salzburg. Over time, the community, responsibilities, friendships, and experiences make it feel like home.

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