




ROYAL NATIONAL CHILDREN'S SPRINGBOARD FOUNDATION

SELECTION CRITERIA

We run three programmes through which we identify, prepare and support children and young people facing challenging circumstances to secure and thrive in a fully-funded bursary place within our network of accredited boarding schools:

- i. Children and young people who are **vulnerable** for reasons of complex home circumstances, whose characteristics can be described as being on the 'edge of' care (e.g. identified by their Local Authority as being 'in need' – with a 'CIN' Plan or Child Protection Plan, Young Carers, those who have faced significant trauma)
- ii. Children and young people who face complex **disadvantages** in their immediate environment, who live in **social mobility** 'cold spots' (defined by a cocktail of deprivation statistics relating to high rates of child poverty, risk of knife/drug crime, lack of available 'good' or 'outstanding' educational opportunities etc.) AND whose families have very low household incomes, lack of available role models (often single parent families) and precarious housing situations (e.g. temporary, overcrowded or social housing)
- iii. Children and young people who are **in care**; whether a looked-after child, cared for by others not their birth parents (e.g. those with special guardianship orders) or with unaccompanied asylum seeking status.

How we identify which children and young people to support

	Who the children are	How we hear about them	How we assess suitability
	Children/young people facing significant vulnerabilities. The majority have been in contact with Children's Social Services and face circumstances that can be characterised as being 'on the edge of care.'	Often families and extended families approach us directly. Applications have to be endorsed by at least two professional referees (e.g. Children's Social Services).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of lack of appropriate available parental care Review of financial circumstances Discussions with professional referees Home visit Academic report and interview
	Children/young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, for whom the case for a boarding school bursary centres around their circumstances of disadvantage.	Recommended to us by one of our partners, which are either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community organisations/ mentoring charities Maintained schools/ Academies/ Free schools (usually 11-16yrs schools) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners work with families to complete our application pack, which provides us with information to assess socio-economic, financial and other circumstances of disadvantage Academic assessment and interview
	Children who are looked after in the care system.	Referred to us by Local Authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison with Children's Social Services Academic assessment and interview

For candidates referred through each of the three programmes, a multi-disciplinary team will assess whether there is evidence of both a 'need' and 'fit' for a boarding bursary placement.

In terms of 'need', the following selection criteria are used:

i. 'Vulnerable' children programme

The main criterion is a lack of available appropriate parental care. This situation can arise through:

- Evidence of (or evidence of risk of) abandonment, neglect or abuse of child
- Chronic and enduring mental or physical ill health of parent
- Disability of a sibling of sufficient severity affecting the care and normal development of other children within the family

To consider an application, there must be evidence that:

- The case for boarding is justified by the fact that the home circumstances are seriously prejudicial to the normal development of the child
- Boarding is in the best interest of the child. We determine this by reviewing references from professionals – more often than not social care professionals and/or medical professional references.
- The parent/guardian has insufficient income and/or assets to pay themselves and there is a 100% bursary requirement
- The child must be a British Citizen, have indefinite leave to remain in the UK, or 'settled' or 'pre-settled' status under the EU Settlement Scheme. The child must also currently be a resident in the UK

ii. 'Social mobility' programme

RNCSF selects partner organisations who have a strong community presence in areas of multiple deprivations. Partners in this programme are from areas in the bottom 3 quintiles of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Education & Skills Decile and Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). These partner organisations refer pupils for the bursary opportunities based on evidence of:

- low household income (usually meaning they are eligible for Free School Meals) such that the pupil will merit 110% support (i.e. all significant 'extras' are also paid for). A means testing assessment is undertaken collecting evidence of income and assets and judged against the Joseph Rowntree Trust Minimum Income Calculator
- British Citizenship, indefinite leave to remain in the UK, or 'settled' or 'pre-settled' status under the EU Settlement Scheme. The child must currently be a resident in the UK
- a difficult home life with weighting to applications given on the basis of:
 - overcrowded or precarious/temporary housing situations
 - absence of positive adult role models e.g. single parent family,
 - if English is an additional language in the home and education/occupations of parent(s) prohibitive to supportive parental oversight of homework etc.
 - difficulties in the relationship between parent(s) and pupil and/or difficulties in family affecting the care and normal development of the child (e.g. bereavement or traumatic events, abuse/neglect, alcoholism or other addiction issues, prison or significant police involvement)

iii. Children in care programme

Pupils eligible to be considered for this programme have been identified by their Local Authority Virtual School Head and/or current school given significant social care involvement because there is (or there is a risk of becoming) unsustainable care arrangements. Typically, pupils considered in this programme are:

- subject to a formal care order or a special guardianship order and/or the child is being looked after by someone other than their birth parent

- links with their family network but the links may be fragile or chaotic, and full-time, long-term care by the wider family is not possible, as assessed by the Child in Need or Child Protection Plan
- they are an unaccompanied asylum seeking child/young person
- they are 'previously' looked after (PLAC) and there is evidence of the significant risk of adoption breakdown

In terms of 'fit' for boarding, we know that boarding is not the right environment of in the best interests of every child. Through collecting references, home visits (in the case of the Vulnerable children programme) and interviews, the multi-disciplinary Programmes Team will test whether, with the correct support, the child/young person can flourish in an independent or boarding setting. Suitability for a boarding bursary placement, including consideration of:

- Degree of independence and resilience to the challenges of a busy pace of life and increased workload i.e. able to keep going if the 'going gets tough'
- Curious, motivated and open-minded to explore new experiences and make the most of opportunities
- Demonstrate self-awareness and the empathy to be aware of others' need
- Non-intractable behavioural issues that might be prejudicial to the ability to socialise and adhere to the routines and expectations of a mainstream school setting
- Generally an average to good educational potential or an identified talent or potential talent
- The desire to attend boarding school and at least one member of the family/adult responsible for the pupil should be supportive of boarding.
- Be capable of becoming role models for younger peers. RNCSF is committed to creating a 'ripple effect' of aspiration by empowering bursary pupils to become SpringBoard ambassadors.