

CATS Boston – Pre-Arrival Guide



HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR ARRIVAL

Arriving at a new school in a new country can seem very daunting. To help students and parents prepare for this, we have put together a comprehensive pre-arrivals guide that can be found below.

KEY ARRIVAL DATES FOR 2025-2026

Fall 2025	Spring 2026
New Students Please Arrive Between: Saturday, August 30 to Sunday, August 31 Returning Students Please Arrive Between: Saturday, September 6 to Sunday, September 7	All Students Please Arrive Between: Saturday, January 3 to Sunday, January 4, 2026
Arrive Between: 9am – 6pm	Arrive Between: 9am – 6pm
Orientation Commences: Tuesday, September 2	Orientation Commences: Saturday, January 3, 2026
Classes Commence: Monday, September 8	Classes Commence: Monday, January 5, 2026

* Students arriving for the College Counseling Preparation Program and the High School Preparation Program will be expected to arrive on Sunday, August 17 2025. A separate communication will be received by these students providing full details.

MEDICAL FORMS

You will receive a packet of medical forms once you have enrolled in our school. You **MUST** complete these forms with your family doctor **PRIOR** to arrival in the U.S as this is a legal requirement in the State of Massachusetts. Completion of these forms is compulsory and students will not be allowed to begin their courses until the packet is completed in its entirety. You **MUST** bring up-to-date immunization records when you arrive.

All medical documents and prescriptions must be translated into English.

Health Insurance:

Health insurance is mandatory in the state of Massachusetts and is not provided free of charge. If you are an international student, you will be automatically enrolled in the CATS Boston's student health insurance and this is included in the fees.

Domestic students must submit their family insurance information to the health office.

Competitive Sports:

If you wish to take part in any competitive sports whilst studying at CATS Boston you must bring an up-to-date physical that has been signed by your doctor. This will need to be updated annually.

WHAT TO BRING

PASSPORT & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

- Passport (with Visa I-20)
- CATS Academy Boston details and phone numbers.
- Consent To Travel Letter written by your parents or guardian giving you consent to travel.

It is recommended that students carry important items (passport, visa, medications, chargers) in their carry-on luggage to avoid issues in case of baggage delays.

LAPTOP OR TABLET:

Students can choose their device but should be able to type up essays, carry out research and connect to a printer.

CELL PHONE:

All students are required to have a U.S based cell phone. You may bring a U.S compatible phone with you or purchase one on arrival.

CLOTHES:

At CATS Academy Boston, students are expected to always dress in a respectful manner that promotes a safe, healthy, and inclusive community.

As well as clothes suitable for the school day and weekends, please also bring:

- Winter jacket
- Gloves, scarf, winter hat
- Clothes hangers
- Rain/snow boots
- Umbrella
- Laundry bag
- Laundry detergent, stain remover, dryer sheets (if you are not using the laundry service)
- Clothes drying rack
- Under-the-bed bins or storage crates

TOILETRIES:

- Towels/washcloths
- Shower caddy
- Personal toiletries (shampoo, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, razors, etc.)

BEDDING:

Ensure you organize the correct size bedding to avoid any issues.

- XL Twin sheets
- Mattress topper
- Pillows
- Comforter / Duvet
- Blanket / Bedspread

DESK & SCHOOL SUPPLIES:

- School supplies (i.e., pens, binders, notebooks, highlighters, stapler, etc.)
- Assignment book/planner
- Backpack/tote bag
- 3-prong power strip and surge protector
- Command hooks or wall-safe strips for decorating dorm room

U.S POWER ADAPTORS:

Bring sufficient U.S power adaptors for your electronic items.

SPENDING MONEY:

Please ensure you have money available for arrival and the first two weeks. We suggest around \$250.

A LETTER FROM YOUR DOCTOR:

If you bring any medication into the USA, also carry a letter (translated into English) from your doctor explaining what the medicine is and what it is for.

ANY MEDICATION THAT YOU ARE TAKING:

Bring any medicines you need to take prescribed by a doctor and a copy of the prescriptions, preferably with generic names. All prescriptions must be translated in English and reported to the Health Office. Medicines that are not regulated in the U.S and are not translated to English will not be permitted and confiscated by our Medical Team.

INSURANCE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

CATS Boston cannot accept responsibility for the loss of, or damage to, your personal belongings.

All students are encouraged to follow the advice below:

- Don't bring highly valuable possessions or equipment to the school.
- If you do choose to bring valuable items, we encourage you to arrange your own insurance for personal possessions as we cannot arrange this for you.
- There are multiple providers available for Students' Possessions Insurance. Ask Student Services for details.

ORIENTATION WEEK

Your first week at CATS Boston

At CATS Boston, we are committed to supporting you. When you arrive, you are provided with a detailed schedule for the first week of Orientation where you will have the opportunity to explore the school campus, meet your teachers, visit Boston and make friends.

Your full induction program will include:

- Meeting your teachers and residential staff
- Taking a tour around CATS Boston's campus and facilities
- Planning your schedule with CATS Boston teachers
- An introduction to residential life
- A welcome lunch or social mixer
- Meeting your fellow students
- Checking your completed medical forms

- Taking ESL placement test
- Learning your way around Boston and opening a bank account
- Getting a US cell phone or US SIM card
- Gaining exposure to study skills
- Enjoying local trips and exciting extracurricular activities

In the first week of school, the faculty of CATS Academy Boston will provide extra time to allow you to adjust to your new environment. We accomplish this by holding information sessions to help you settle into life at CATS Academy Boston. In the first week of school, you can expect to attend fun and exciting activities to help you to get to know your classmates and teachers.

STUDENT WELL-BEING

When you arrive in Boston, life will be very exciting and upbeat. At times, however, you may miss your friends and family back home. It is perfectly normal to experience homesickness or culture shock when arriving in a new country and it is a good sign that you are engaging in the local culture and a healthy part of adjusting.

To cope with homesickness, we recommend:

- Taking part in activities organized by CATS Academy Boston to make friends with other students.
- Staying in touch with home via email or telephone.
- Bringing photographs or ornaments from home to decorate your room.
- Most importantly of all, it's really important to talk about how you're feeling. Your Personal Advisor, Dorm Parent or the Welfare Team will always be happy to listen and offer advice.
- Remember, almost everyone feels homesick at some stage, but help will always be close at hand.

COUNSELING & PERSONAL SUPPORT

If you have a personal problem, worries or concerns of any kind (such as relationships, health, depression, anxiety) please speak with any of the school staff. We have a school counselor on site and access to a school psychologist who can support you with managing any concerns you may have.

ACADEMY RULES & COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

LIVING IN A COMMUNITY

At CATS Academy Boston, we believe that living and learning in a diverse, residential environment offers a unique opportunity for personal growth. As members of this

community, students are expected to uphold shared values of respect, responsibility, and readiness. These principles guide how we treat one another, how we engage in our learning, and how we contribute to a safe, inclusive, and purposeful school culture.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is compulsory. Missed assignments will affect your overall grade. A high attendance rate is also an immigration requirement to keep your I-20 and International Student status valid. Late arrivals at the start of the semester are subject to approval by the Head of School, which may only be granted in the case of Visa delays. Please note that late arrivals may have limited elective options. You must be here for the start of each term and not leave before the end. Make sure your travel arrangements comply with this. End of year examinations may not be taken early, and any missed exams will receive no credit, so we recommend that you plan your travel for after the last day of class.

CELL PHONE USE

We recognize that cell phones can be a useful tool for you to make notes, record an assignment, translate a word, or send an email. If you wish to use your cell phone during a specific class, you are expected to gain permission from the faculty member prior to using the device. Failure to do so could be determined as a misuse of a cell phone. Cell phone use in public restrooms or during a school meeting, such as an assembly, is strictly prohibited. Cell phones are permitted in all common spaces during student free time.

SMOKING

Smoking and vaping are prohibited on all CATS Academy Boston property and on all related events and excursions. In the USA, purchasing tobacco products is illegal for anyone under the age of 21. If you have been smoking in your home country, you may find it difficult to adapt to the rules. Please understand that smoking will not be tolerated at CATS Academy Boston and you will be subject to disciplinary sanctions. If you have difficulties adapting, it is always better to communicate this with us so we can provide support to help you adjust.

ALCOHOL

It is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to drink or possess alcohol. Though not illegal for anyone over the age of 21, alcohol is and will be treated as an illegal drug by the Head of School and will be subject to the same policies.

DRUGS & SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Illegal drugs are not allowed under any circumstances. Legal drugs that are sold or misused will be dealt with as illegal drugs. The Head of School may, at their discretion, expel anyone caught in possession of, or having taken illegal drugs, may suspend the students, or may take other appropriate measures in keeping with school policies.

SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to uphold the principles, standards, values, and mission of our school. The discipline system at CATS Academy Boston is designed to hold students accountable for their actions and decisions, while providing feedback and helping them

understand the impact of their choices and behavior. Discipline responses are not meant to punish for the sake of punishment; rather, warnings and sanctions are designed to focus students on that which is most important – their studies and their development as maturing young people.

Please refer to our Student Handbook for further information on school rules and expectations.