

## Frequently Asked Questions

### WHY CONSIDER A BOARDING SCHOOL LIKE GRIER?

At Grier, the educational experience incorporates the academics, athletics and the arts in a way that permits you to explore your passions and discover new interests. You will be challenged in a variety of ways but will find that support is always there for you from peers and faculty. You will learn how to think, listen, communicate with others and make decisions. Best of all, this personal growth will take place in the company of other young people and faculty members whose influence on you will last a lifetime.

Grier has a rolling admissions policy with first acceptances being mailed out March 10 for September admission of every year. Applications received after March 10 will continue to be considered as long as space is available. Financial aid is available based on need and is awarded on a "first come, first served" basis.

It is highly recommended that applicants to Grier take the SSAT test. All students from China must take the SSAT test and the TOEFL test is also recommended for them.

Applications for financial aid are evaluated by the "School and Student Service" for Financial Aid, an independent organization operated by the National Association of Independent Schools. Recommendations for financial aid given by "SSS" are recommendations only. The actual financial aid award given by Grier School is based on available funding. It is rare for a first year student to be eligible for financial aid worth more than 50% of tuition, room and board fees. Candidates for financial aid are advised to have their applications for financial aid completed and filed by late February of the year in which they hope to enter Grier. Grier also offers some

Merit Scholarships to students who excel in school. To be considered for a Merit Scholarship, it is recommended that applicants take the SSAT test. ( [www.ssat.org](http://www.ssat.org) )

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### Questions with Answers

Does Grier have a prom?

Yes, most years Grier does have a prom. It is organized by seniors under the guidance of a faculty advisor.

Why should I consider going to boarding school?

My family was drawn to an American Boarding school for the many opportunities to succeed and proceed in life. Boarding schools build character and mind. They give you opportunities no other schools can offer. They pinpoint every student as one and help each individual succeed in that duration of that school. There is no past but only present and future. You are not judged for who you will be who you were but for who you are.

Boarding Schools are chosen by parents for their excellent education. American boarding schools offer many academic courses that challenge their students to prepare them for colleges of their choice. However, parents also choose boarding schools for the extra help each student gets for their academics from teaches who live on campus. Students also have accesses to the library after academic days. Lastly, students live among there fellow class mates and are able to compare notes and form study groups.

American boarding schools set a certain time in each student's schedule for them to review and complete their studies and practice their lessons. Boarding schools also help prepare youth for college with the opportunity to develop their portfolios to target the students choice in college that the student decides on.

The schools personalize your schedule no matter what grade classes you will be in all are mixed so all students are challenged in many different ways. Each student may choose at which level they want to be challenged.

American boarding schools also have breaks. On weekends, students can sign up for a selection of trips and activities such as the shopping trips, major cities, amusement parks, plays, dances, festivals, and much more . These activities bring student together for everlasting friendships.

American Boarding schools offer a variety of clubs and after school activities. They usually offer a wide variety of varsity and junior varsity sports such as soccer, tennis and basketball. Some boarding schools offer other sports such as a variety of dance classes and horse back riding, or skiing and golfing as well as different bands and musical organizations.  
(Written by Bridget, Grier 9th grader)

How much does it cost to go to Grier?

All the details are on their own page. Please [Click Here](#)

Is financial aid available?

Financial aid is available in limited quantities. Generally, first year students do not received financial aid grants in excess of 50% of tuition, room and board. For more information, contact [Andrew Wilson](#)

"What is the address for The Grier School?"

The complete address is:

The Grier School  
P.O. Box 308  
Tyrone, PA 16686  
Phone: 814-684-3000

When a courier service is being used and the P.O. Box is not acceptable, the following address may be used:

The Grier School  
2522 Grier School Rd.  
Birmingham, PA 16686  
Phone: 814-684-3000

Parents may mail letters and or packages to the school at any time. Mail is sorted Monday through Friday in the late morning. Packages are handed out Monday through Friday just after lunch. Packages and mail that arrive on Saturday or Sunday are delivered on Monday.

Can my parents visit me?

Parents are welcome to visit at any time. Each year there is one official "Parents' Weekend" in October when many parents come to the school for a visit.

Grier is located approximately 2½ miles SOUTH of Tyrone, PA on Rt. 453. Tyrone is mid-way between the cities of Altoona and State College. It takes a person 25 minutes by car to be in the shopping and hotel district of either city.

To learn more about State College on-line, visit: [visitpennstate.org](http://visitpennstate.org) or [DowntownStateCollege](http://DowntownStateCollege).

[com](#)

How do I get to Grier School?

Grier is very accessible by car, plane and train. I-99 is the main road leading into Tyrone. This highway has links with Rt. 22, Rt. 322, I-80 and the Pennsylvania Thruway. For specific directions on how to reach Grier [click here](#). The nearby airports of University Park - State College (airport code SCE) and Altoona (airport code AOO) offer many flights in and out of the area daily. Altoona is served by USAirways and provides service to Washington Dulles, while State College is served by USAirways, United Airlines and Delta Airlines. Direct flights from State College go to Philadelphia, Washington Dulles, and Detroit.

Amtrak's main line through Pennsylvania stops in Tyrone and in Altoona (for students traveling as an unaccompanied minor). Service is daily with trains coming from both the east and west.

Megabus is an express bus service that operates out of State College. From there, buses go to New York, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Philadelphia with free WiFi on board.

Is there a required uniform?

Sort of!

Dear Grier Parents,

After many conversations with students, parents and visitors, we have decided that it is an appropriate ti

During the Academic Day, only the following will be allowed:

- Nice, clean shirts with no offensive signs or writing
- Tidy, hemmed jeans (no holes, rips, or fringed hems)
- Khakis and other “dress” pants
- Dress shorts (formerly called walking shorts)(fingertip length)
- Sweaters
- Grier sweatshirts (as sold through the bookstore) with or without hoods. However, hoods are not to be
- Jackets (blazer type and jean jackets)
- Dresses or skirts at fingertip length or longer

Not allowed during the Academic Day are tanktops, inappropriate tops, short shorts, mini skirts or sweatp

A wide variety of footwear including sneakers, loafers, and clogs is acceptable with the following note: Flip-flops are allowed only before the November Break and after the Spring Break in March.

Students may always exceed these guidelines by wearing dresses, skirts, suits etc.

During after-school hours or weekends, the Dress Code is much more relaxed. “Sweats” may be worn d

As you shop with your daughter for the approaching school year, please keep these guidelines in mind.

We hope you agree with us that dress does influence attitude. All of us at Grier feel that we are moving i

Best Regards,

Gina Borst

Head of School

How many girls share a room?

The majority of rooms at Grier are double rooms, with an adjoining bathroom with toilet, sink and shower. Rooms are furnished with two closets, a set of twin beds, window shades, two desks built to accommodate computers, and two chests of drawers. Additional furnishings such as rugs, curtains, desk lamps, fans, hangars, etc. must be supplied by the student.

Who picks my roommate?

When a new student enters Grier, she is placed with a roommate of her own age group. Gina Borst, Grier's Head of School, carefully reviews student files and tries to match students as best she can. If she knows another student she would like to have as a roommate, she may request that person. If a student decides she needs to change roommates, she must first speak with her housemother who then meets with Mrs. Borst to try and arrange a change. Changes are made in such a way as to avoid hurting anyone's feelings. In each case, the student initiating the change must be willing to move. When a student re-enrolls in Grier for the following school year, she may select a roommate and also a room in her future dorm. These room choices become final only after the student's room deposit has been paid.

What is a "Resident Advisor/Housemother?"

At Grier, the dormitory areas of the building are supervised by housemothers whose sole responsibility on campus is to oversee the life in the dorms. Housemothers are mature women who have raised families themselves. Their most important quality is that they like young people. Housemothers do daily room inspections to guarantee that girls keep orderly rooms with beds made and possessions organized. They also enforce the rules of the school concerning "lights out," "study hall," and travel to and from campus.

When is "lights out?"

For 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th graders, the schedule is as follows:

Sunday - Thursday: room bell at 10:00 & lights out at 10:15.

Friday, Saturday: room bell at 11:00 & lights out at 11:30. 10th and 11th graders:

Sunday - Thursday: room bell at 10:00 & lights out at 10:30.

Friday, Saturday: room bell at 11:00 & lights out at 12:00. 12th graders:

Sunday - Thursday: room bell at 10:00 & lights out at 11:00.

Friday, Saturday: room bell at 11:00 & lights out at 12:30.

Do Grier students have to take "Gym" class?

Grier does not have what most kids think of as "Gym" class. We do require that student participate a minimum of four days a week in sports for a minimum of one hour a day.

The sports included in this are:

Soccer (Varsity and recreational), Tennis (Varsity and Recreational), Volleyball (Varsity), Yoga, Jump-roping, Dodgeball, Kickball, Zumba, Fitness training, Jogging, Walking, Horseback Riding (Varsity and Recreational), Dance (Ballet, Jazz, Tap, HipHop, Modern in different levels), Skiing, Basketball, Volleyball, Weight-training and occasional other offerings. These are not just your run-of-the-mill gym class offerings! We believe that fitness is an integral part of a student's lifelong educational process. As Grier's logo states, "Sana Mens In Corpore Sana." (A Sound Mind in a Sound Body)

Can I have a pet in my room?"

Grier is very strict about pets. The only ones permitted in the dorm are small fish in small aquariums. Students need to remember that these must be cared for during holidays! The dorm is closed for nearly 3 1/2 weeks at Christmas so fish should not be brought to the school unless a plan is in place for their care at holiday time. Numerous on campus faculty members have pets so students enjoy playing with these. When is "study hall?"

All student must attend a required study hall Sunday through Thursday nights from 7:45 PM - 9:30 PM. Since students need to study more than just these hours of the week, all are asked to be respectful and considerate in the dorm at all hours so as not to disrupt others. Girls may study in their rooms or in the library. Supervised study hall is available for students who required extra help with study skills or a tutor. Can I have a computer in my room?

**Yes**, all students are required to bring a laptop computer for use at school. Wireless internet is provided campus-wide between the hours of 8:00 AM and 9:30 PM, seven days a week. Both Apple and PC computers work well with Grier's system.

Do Grier graduates ever decide to "major" in Art?"

Yes, each year about five of Grier's seniors decide that they want to enter very competitive art programs at the post-secondary level. Our Portfolio class and other art classes help them to prepare for applications to the most selective programs in the USA. In the 2008-2009 school year, our students had wonderful success with this process. The places accepting Grier students were: Maryland Institute College of Art, Savannah College of Art & Design, Fashion Institute of Design – (New York City), Moore College of Art and Design – (Philadelphia), Otis College of Art and Design – (San Francisco), and School of the Museum of Fine Arts – (Boston)

Can you give us any references of parents or previous students?

References can be provided during the admissions process. To ensure the confidentiality of our current families, we provide them with applicant names and phone numbers so that contact may be initiated by them.

How do you handle medical appointments? Are doctors and dentists there nearby? Is there a hospital in the community? How is transportation handled?

Our nurses, with one on duty daily from 7 am to 11 pm, handle all appointment schedules with local doctors/dentists and coordinates travel with our school's female drivers. The Tyrone Hospital is approximately five minutes from our campus by car. Can I have a phone in my dorm room?

Yes and no.

Cell phones are permitted on campus. They may be used by the student owners during specific times of the day.

Grier's dorm rooms do not have telephones.

What happens on weekends?

Whereas weekdays are very structured at Grier, the weekend is the exact opposite. A student may, if she chooses, do absolutely nothing from dinner on Friday until study hall on Sunday. However, most students fill their time participating in trips organized by the school or using the school's facilities for some other activity.

Off campus trips include:

- Dinner and movie trips to Altoona or State College
- Trips to malls in Altoona, State College and King of Prussia, Pennsylvania
- Camping
- Overnight trips to New York, Washington, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Baltimore or Philadelphia
  
- Altoona Curve baseball games
- Ski trips
- Penn State University concerts, theatre, dance and athletic events
- Visits to see artists' studios
- Trip to Hershey Park

On campus activities include:

- Watching movies
- Enjoying the media room
- Working on projects in art, drama and dance
- Homework
- Laundry
- Using the school's sports facilities
- Hanging out with friends
- Spending time at Grier's snack bar, "The Mouth," on Sunday afternoon
- Playing instruments

What is the weather like in Pennsylvania?

Grier School enjoys a very balanced climate characterized by about three months each of spring, summer, autumn and winter.

Winters can have cold temperatures that drop down as low as 10 degrees fahrenheit on the coldest days and summer can reach a high temperature of about 95 degrees fahrenheit on the hottest days. For the most part, the temperature range is quite comfortable throughout the year. No matter what the weather is outdoors, Grier students benefit from the fact that most facilities are all housed within the interconnected main buildings of the school.

Are students ever asked to leave Grier?

Yes, Grier does ask students to leave if there is sufficient cause to do so. Immediate expulsion from the school results from the following situations:

1. Proven use of illegal drugs
2. Shoplifting
3. AWOL (leaving campus without permission)
4. Bodily harm to another student

In general, the school's discipline system can be summed up by the following words of our

former Head of School, Andrea Hollnagel.

1. Be where you're supposed to be.
2. Do what you are to do.
3. Be respectful of yourself and others.

When a student is asked to leave the school, the tuition, room and board fees are not refunded to the family unless they have purchased the "Tuition Reimbursement Plan" prior to the student's matriculation at Grier. When this insurance has been purchased, a refund is paid amounting to 50% of the pro-rated remaining balance only after the student has been in attendance for 14 full days of school.

If I decide I don't like Grier for some reason and go home, will my money be refunded? No. Grier expects that a family and a child will make a full one year commitment to having a successful year. If Tuition Reimbursement Plan is purchased before the school year begins, there can be a partial refund based on the terms of the program. A student must be at Grier for fourteen full days of attendance before the Tuition Reimbursement Plan goes into effect. If a student leaves prior to that time, there is never any refund.

Does Grier have a summer program?

Yes, we do have a summer program for girls ages 7 - 15. It is called [Grier Summer](#) . The focus of the program is in horseback riding, dance and art. Some remedial work is also available in academic subjects. Grier Summer offers sessions of 3, 4 and 6 weeks duration. For more information about Grier Summer, please go to:

[www.bestcamp.org](http://www.bestcamp.org)

Another summer program offered on campus during the summer is for international students, ages 10-17. This TOEFL/ESL camp lasts for 7 weeks and includes several weekend excursions to destinations such as Niagara Falls, New York City, Washington, and Cleveland. If you desire more information about our summer TOEFL/ESL camp, please send email to [Frank Lambert](#) .

What is the name of the entity through which your school has its accreditation, and how can I reach them?

The "Middle States Association" does a review every ten years so that member school may continue to be accredited. Our last review which we passed without difficulty will be valid through 2010 at which time we will need to go through another rigorous review.

Contact information:

Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools

3624 Market St.

Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680

Tel: 215 662 5603

Fax: 215 662 0957

WebSite: <http://www.css-msa.org/> What other affiliations do you have?

**NAIS** - National Association of Independent Schools

**NAPSG** - National Association of Principals of Schools for Girls

**NCGS** - National Coalition of Girls Schools

**TABS** - The Association of Boarding Schools

**SBSA** - The Small Boarding Schools Association

If I go to Grier, can I store stuff at the school over vacations and summer or do I have to empty my room each time I leave?

During the school year, your dorm room is really yours so you may keep the room set up. The housemothers do have a checklist of things you must do before leaving the room at Christmas and Spring Break that include unplugging computers, refrigerators and other such items. You must also clean your room very thoroughly and close all windows before your departure.

When school lets out at the end of the year, you need to entirely clean your room and clear out your possessions. Summer storage is provided through a local company at a minimal fee for those students returning in the fall. Each student may store up to six boxes and one refrigerator. There is no storage available on campus. Graduates and students not returning to school must remove all of their possessions when they leave school. We will not ship items that have been left on campus.

Why would an American family living overseas pick Grier? Once there, is an American girl living far from her parents treated well?

A family interested in Grier recently asked the mother of a current student these questions and the mother, writing from her job in Turkey, wrote the following:

Several things come to mind immediately. Grier has an international component that is critical for expatriate children. Some schools might have very few students that have traveled outside the USA. Foreign Service dependents have likely lived some if not all of their lives overseas and they want to speak about and relate to other people with similar experiences. Grier offers that. My daughter can speak Russian to the girl from Moscow and talk of the Bolshoi Ballet. This helps to validate these foreign experiences instead of squelching them as might happen in purely American oriented student populations.

Grier has a personal touch that is unbelievable. When I write an email to anyone at Grier I get a quick thoughtful response. This shows that the staff and administration genuinely care about the girls. This is what you need when you are thousands of miles away. The response that includes a reference to seeing my daughter smile that day is priceless. The staff at Grier know which one is my daughter. I cannot say that would be true at another school.

The campus at Grier is sooooo beautiful and sooooo safe. Being in the country is a security plus that is hard to duplicate. In the crazy world we live in it is nice to know that my daughter is about as safe and sound as anyone could be. During the recent sniper issue in America and the Moscow Theatre seige all I kept thinking was thank heaven that my daughter is safe at Grier.

The staff attrition rate at Grier is very low. This says much about the happiness of staff which translates into a pleasant well run classroom. Making a statement such as - Staff turnover at Grier is less than 5% annually and many of our staff have been with us 10 years or more - says much about the atmosphere surrounding the girls at Grier.

Class size is small and personal and yet academic choices are not limited. Grier offers a breadth of art classes, music, sciences, and liberal arts. This helps to insure that siblings with different areas of interest could attend Grier together.

### **Once the girls are here, are we sensitive to the issues caused by their living far from parents living overseas?**

Grier staff is sensitive overall. This translates into whether you are overseas or not. The main issue with any school is two way effective communication. Grier uses prompt email replies to avoid time zone issues.

Flexibility is a key plus for Grier. When you are living overseas you often encounter plenty of rigid bureaucratic nightmares and when you meet the people at Grier you realize quickly that you won't be dealing with another set of administrators who are looking for ways to say no instead of ways to make things work.

Is Grier School affiliated with some church?

When Grier School was founded in 1853, the first head of school was the minister of the local Presbyterian Church. Ties to this church remained for years before the school became affiliated with the Episcopal Church. For the last 50 years of the school's existence, Grier has been non-denominational. For this reason, students are not required to attend any specific church services or to worship in any manner. Nonetheless, students are encouraged to be active in observing their religious beliefs. Transportation is provided weekly to local churches in Tyrone. A Mormon church is located in Altoona as are two different Jewish synagogues. Muslim students may participate in Ramadan activities organized by local college and university groups. At Grier, all members of the community are encouraged to celebrate and support the religious beliefs found within the school.

What does a student bring to Grier?

**WHAT TO BRING** It is extremely important to bring a limited amount of clothing and other personal items due to closet and storage space. 95% of the rooms have one small closet per student, so each girl has limited storage space.

Since most bring more than they need, we are asking you as parents to help your daughter **limit** herself in the selection of clothing and other items that she brings to school. A chest of drawers is provided for each student.

Do NOT bring expensive jewelry or telephone credit cards. The school cannot be responsible for loss of students' belongings or the misuse of credit cards.

1. **CLOTHING** – School dress is worn during the academic day, on school trips, and to most meals. School dress consists of: dress pants, skirts, blouses, sweaters, jeans, tee-shirts, and sweat suits. Torn or patched jeans are not considered school dress and may not be worn during the academic day. It is advisable to have a heavy winter jacket, boots, headwear, and gloves by November.

2. **BEDDING LINENS** – The students are responsible for supplying their own bedding which should include:

1. Comforter or bedspread
2. Blanket
3. Pillows
4. Bath towels
5. Hangers

6. 2 Bottom sheets (twin size)
7. 2 Top sheets (twin size)
8. 2-4 Pillow cases
9. Laundry bags or a basket

(Students may choose to purchase these items during school trips to Target or Walmart on the second or third day of school)

### 10. APPLIANCES – MICROWAVE OVENS AND HOT POTS ARE NOT PERMITTED!

Students may bring (or purchase at Target or Walmart) the following appliances to use in their rooms:

1. CD players/Ipods
2. Personal computers
3. Curling irons
4. Refrigerators
5. Hair dryers
6. Desk Lamp
7. Power strip w/surge protector (required)
8. Small fan

### IV. MISCELLANEOUS –

1. Curtains
2. Throw Rugs
3. Posters

What about laundry?

Grier students do their own laundry in the facilities available on campus. Developing a habit of taking care of this is just one of the many ways that a young person develops her independence at Grier.

Can students smoke cigarettes at Grier?

No! We have a **NO** smoking policy.

Attention Parents! If a parent is a smoker, we ask that he or she refrain from smoking while on the campus of Grier School!

What happens if I get homesick?

At some point or another, every student in boarding school feels homesick. At Grier, we have a very wide ranging program of support to help kids through homesickness that involves Grier's guidance counselors, housemothers, student leaders, and Mrs. Borst. The best solution varies from student to student. Girls are quite supportive of each other so often the homesickness fades as friendships strengthen.

How do I get spending money?

An option available to students is a check cashing service. Checks mailed directly to the student can be cashed on Friday afternoons at the school business office with a weekly limit of up to \$200.