

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



July Issue

SCHOOL OF THE MONTH



PEMBROKE HOUSE SCHOOL

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MY VISIT TO PEMBROKE HOUSE SCHOOL

I almost didn't go.

Not because I wasn't interested. In fact, I had done a bit of research on Pembroke House. The only challenge was that it is situated in Gilgil, and if you've driven there from Nairobi, you know that's not exactly a quick detour. It's the kind of visit you have to plan for.

But I went anyway.

And somewhere along that drive, as the city faded behind me and the scenery began to change, I started wondering what makes parents choose a school tucked away all the way out here. A few hours later, after walking through the campus and speaking to the staff, I had my answer.

Pembroke House School was founded in 1927, nearly a hundred years ago. It was formerly a boys-only school, but it became fully co-educational in 1988 and introduced its Pre-Prep section in 2008. Today, it sits on a 140-acre campus in the Rift Valley, on the Nyahururu Road in Gilgil, offering education from six months all the way through to age 13, following the British National Curriculum and the British ISEB Common Entrance framework, preparing children for entry into leading senior schools in Kenya, the UK, South Africa, and beyond.

Firstly, what I liked is that it's not a huge school. Two hundred and twenty students. In today's world, where some schools can feel like small towns, that's refreshingly small.

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The result is an environment that feels intimate. People know each other. Teachers know their students. Students know each other across year groups. Something else that is interesting is that Pembroke House has a no-device policy. In a world where screens compete constantly for children's attention, the school has deliberately created an environment where learners are encouraged to be fully present. No doomscrolling here! Pembroke pupils are known for getting muddy, going fishing, conquering hills, and building things.

A huge priority area for me was the boarding setup. There has been a lot of general talk on boarding schools in Kenya since the school fire at Utumishi High School, and many parents are interested in what different schools are doing to safeguard students' lives and well-being. At Pembroke House, there are resident housemistresses and housemasters, nurses, and security personnel within the campus. The school also does regular fire drills and intruder drills to ensure both staff and students know how to respond appropriately in different situations.

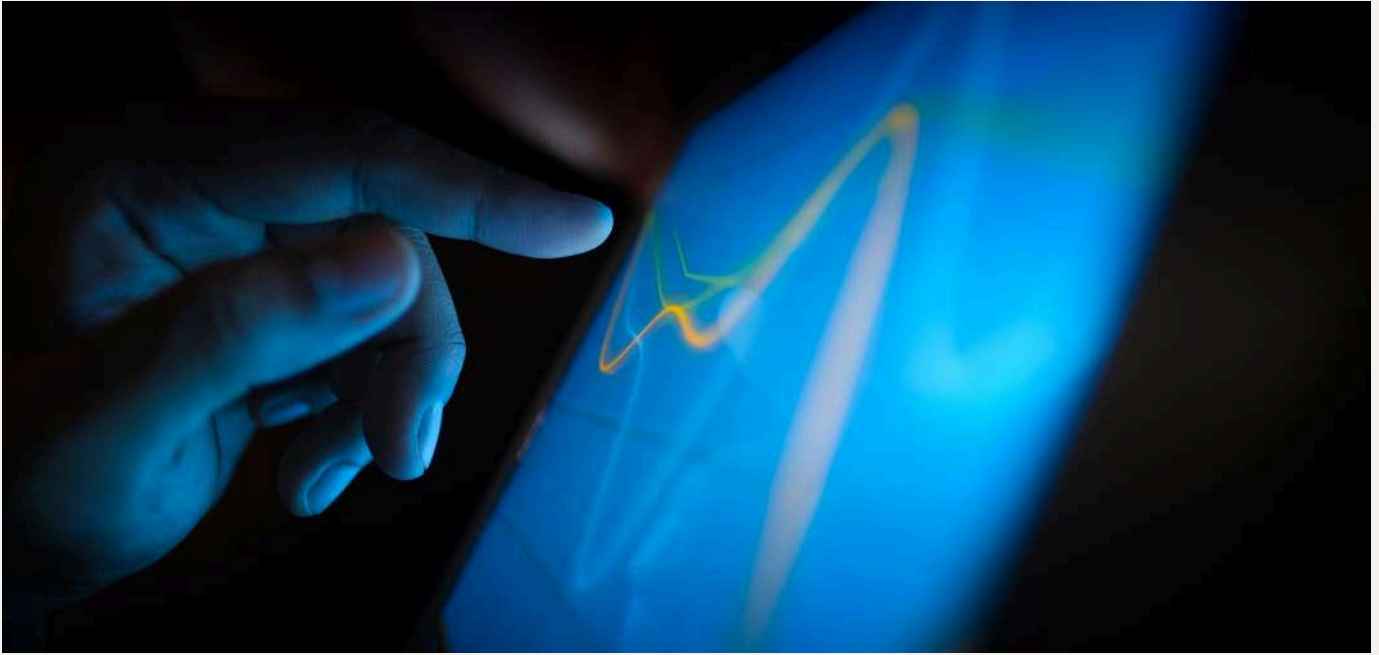
Who is Pembroke House right for?

Based on what I saw, Pembroke House is a strong fit for families who want a home away from home for their child while in school. It is for the parent who has made the deliberate decision to place their child in boarding and wants the absolute confidence that the people on the other end of that decision are worthy of their trust. You are also busy! Boarding is not always the easy choice, but it is the honest one.

And beyond all of that, you want your child to be a child. A real one. The muddy-knees, fishing-on-a-Saturday, climbing-hills-for-no-reason kind of child that this generation is at serious risk of never getting to be. Pembroke House, sitting on its 140 acres in Gilgil with the Rift Valley as its backyard, was built precisely for that.

On fees, Pembroke charges between KES 106,000 and KES 1,140,940 per term, depending on the year group, with a one-time joining fee of KES 300,000 that is partially refundable at the end of the child's final term. The school is a charitable trust, meaning every shilling goes back into the school and its pupils, and bursaries and scholarships are available for families who need them.

THE SCREEN TIME CONVERSATION EVERY PARENT IS HAVING RIGHT NOW



Is screen time a hot topic in your family? Do you end up shouting or saying things you later regret, just to try to get your children to listen AND get off their screens? If you've felt your blood pressure rise at the sight of your child hunched over a tablet for hours straight, then welcome to the club.

For many parents, managing screen time has become one of the hardest parts of parenting. And with school holidays, weekends and homework increasingly happening on devices, it's easy to feel like screens are taking over family life.

The good news? The goal isn't to eliminate screens. It's to help children develop healthy digital habits that they'll carry into adulthood.

Start with your family values, not your rules

Before deciding how many hours your child should spend on a screen, ask yourself: Is family dinner sacred in your house? Is sleep non-negotiable? Do you want your kids to genuinely respect what everyone else is doing, screens included? Your rules should come from these values, not the other way around. A rule without a "why" behind it just feels like control to a child. Once you're clear on your values, your screen rules become much easier to explain and much easier to enforce.

Connection comes before correction

Here's the part that's easy to skip. A child who feels heard, respected, and genuinely understood is far more open to a boundary than one who just feels managed. That means taking real interest in what they love about their screen time. You don't have to love what they're doing. But understanding why it matters to them makes it easier to guide them. Connection first. Limits second.

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Create rules together

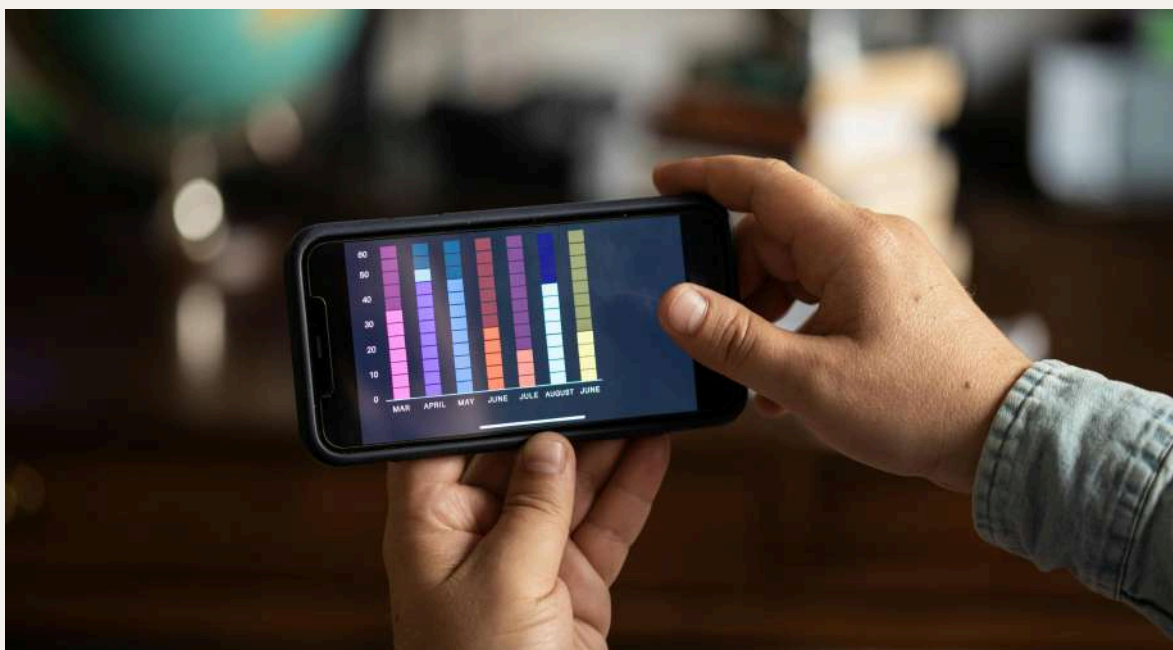
The most effective family screen rules are ones your child had a hand in shaping. Sit down when things are calm and talk through it together: what do they love about their screens? What do they notice about how they feel after a long stretch on them? What might they be missing out on while they're on there? Then bring your own concerns to the table honestly, listen without interrupting, and agree on limits, rewards, and consequences before they're needed.

A few small tricks that make a real difference:

- Frame rules positively: "phones on the charging table at supper" lands very differently from "no phones at the table"
- Screens off an hour before bed; the research is consistent that this protects sleep quality
- Agree on consequences together, in advance, and write them down somewhere visible
- Notice and name the small wins - descriptive praise ("you got off the moment I asked, and I know that's hard") does more than any punishment ever will.
- Offer something better, not just "less screen time". Consider: visiting a library, playing a board game, going for a family walk, trying a new sport, etc.
- Don't forget to model the behavior. Children notice our habits more than our instructions

This isn't a one-time conversation

Managing screens isn't a single agreement you make once and file; it's something you'll keep adjusting as your child grows, as new apps and platforms appear, and as your family's rhythm changes. The goal isn't a perfect, screen-free household. It's a family that's talked honestly about what balance looks like for them, and keeps checking back in.





admission

10 QUESTIONS EVERY PARENT SHOULD ASK BEFORE CHOOSING AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

A school's website can tell you a lot. So can its social media pages. However the answers that really matter usually come from asking the right questions during your school visit.

Whether you're exploring schools for the first time or comparing your final shortlist, here are ten questions that can help you look beyond the marketing brochures.

1. Which curriculum does the school offer, and why?

Not all international schools are the same. Some offer British Curriculums, the IB, the American curriculum or a combination.

Ask the school specifically how the school's pathway prepares students for what's next, whether that's local university, international study, or a transfer to another curriculum entirely if your family relocates and life beyond school.

2. What does learning look like in the classroom?

Don't settle for "we offer quality education." Ask:

- How are lessons taught?
- How much emphasis is placed on practical learning?
- Do students work on projects?
- How is technology used?

If possible, ask to observe a lesson in progress.

3. How are students assessed?

Learning is about more than exam results. Find out:

- How often parents receive progress reports.
- Whether assessment includes projects and presentations.

4. What support is available for my child?

Every child learns differently. Ask whether the school offers: Learning support, Counselling services, English language support where needed, Gifted and talented programmes.

A good school should be able to explain how it supports children with different learning needs.

5. What are your average class sizes?

Smaller classes don't automatically mean better education, but they often allow teachers to give more individual attention. Also ask about the teacher-to-student ratio.

6. What happens outside the classroom?

Education isn't just academics. Ask about: Sports, Clubs, Community service. Leadership opportunities and Educational trips. These experiences help children build confidence, friendships and practical skills.

7. How does the school communicate with parents?

The best schools see parents as partners. Find out:

- How often teachers communicate with families.
- Whether parents can easily schedule meetings.
- Which apps or platforms the school uses for updates.

8. What are all the costs involved?

Tuition fees are only part of the picture. Some schools quote lower tuition and then recover it through "optional" extras that turn out not to be optional at all. Ask for a full breakdown of: admission fees, Uniforms, Lunch, Transport, Educational trips. Technology & resources fees. Examination fees.

9. What do graduates go on to do?

Ask where recent graduates have gone. For secondary schools, this might include universities in Kenya and abroad. For preparatory schools, ask where students typically transition after completing the programme.

10. What happens when something goes wrong?

This is the one most parents forget to ask, and it matters more than almost any other question on this list. Ask about the school's process for concerns, complaints, or a child who isn't settling in.

One Final Tip

Choose the school that best fits your child's personality, learning style, interests and long-term goals.

The "best" school isn't the one with the highest fees or the biggest campus. It's the one where your child will feel challenged, supported and happy.

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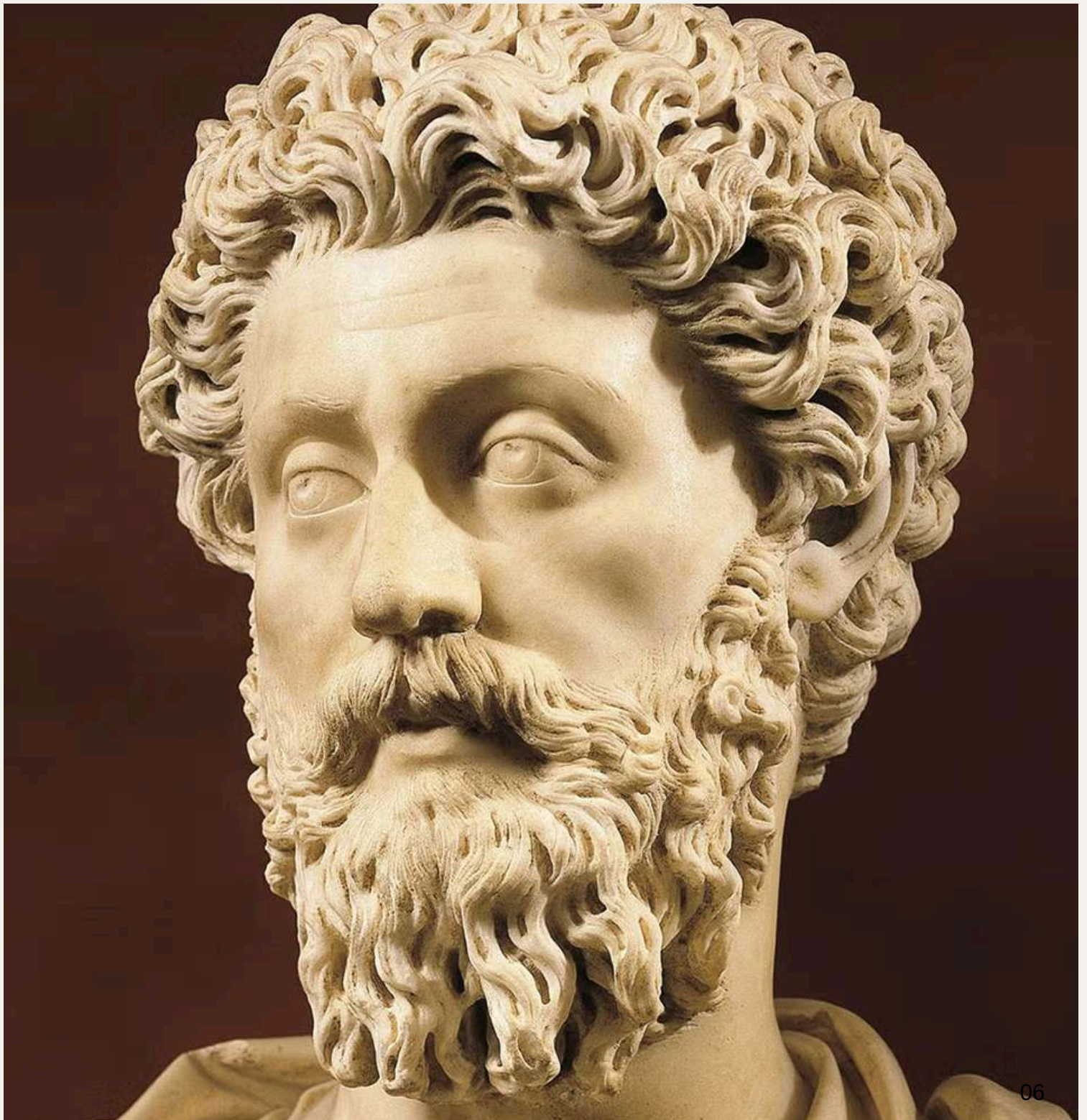
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*“The happiness of your life
depends on the quality of your
thoughts”*

Marcus Aurelius



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JULY ISSUE

GOSHULE **MONTHLY** **NEWSLETTER**

From school highlights to latest education insights, each issue is a curated guide to support your child's educational journey.

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