Boarding schools request interviews as a chance to get to know you as a person. You may be evaluated by the interviewer on things such as your communications skills, ability to articulate your motivation, goals and accomplishments, and interest in the school. The interviewer will assess whether you are a good fit for the school. You should similarly treat your visit to the school as a chance for you to see whether the school is a good fit from your perspective.

General Common Sense:

✓ Before the interview, make sure you have “done your homework” about the school: go on the school’s website, read any materials they have sent you, talk with any alumni you know who have gone there, or any current students you know.
✓ Arrive at your interview at least 15 minutes early so that you are not late, and also so you can take a deep breath and relax. Remember to eat something before you arrive.
✓ Dress appropriately (jacket, tie, nice shirt and pants for boys; suit or dress for girls).
✓ Don’t chew gum; turn off your cell phone.
✓ Try to obtain the interviewer’s name prior to meeting him/her (call ahead or ask the admission receptionist).
✓ Upon meeting your interviewer: shake hands, make good eye contact, and greet them by name (“It’s nice to meet you, Mr. Jones”).
✓ During the interview: sit up straight, don’t fidget, maintain eye contact, speak with good articulation, focus, enthusiasm and conviction, and avoid casual phrases such as “you know,” “um”, and “like.” When the interviewer asks a question, it is always nice to begin with a confident start such as “sure,” “definitely” or “yes.” (Example: If Mr. Jones asks you “Can you tell me about your academic experience at Aspen Country Day School?” a good response would start with “Sure. I started Aspen Country Day in third grade, and am finishing my 8th grade year. I really enjoyed . . .” A not-so-good response would sounds like, “Um, I’m in 8th grade and, you know, I liked Outdoor Ed. We, like, went on hut trips . . .”). During the interview: be yourself, and be honest when you respond.
✓ Tell the interviewer about your interests and things that make you unique. Activities, experiences and interests that you may think are ordinary may be unusual within the pool of applicants, particularly in a geographically distant place. (i.e.: dirt biking, skiing, spending summers in Alaska, family in the UK, adjusting to the move from NYC to a small mountain town).
✓ Be prepared to answer some questions that require you to be introspective on the spot (What difficult situation has your family faced? What would you do if you had a week to do anything you wanted?, If you could choose to be a famous person, who would it be?, etc.) Don’t be afraid to take a minute to formulate an answer to an unexpected question.
✓ Prepare some questions you would like to ask (but not things easily addressed on the website). Feel free to write them on an index card or bring a pad of paper with you. (Examples of some questions you ask: Is there anything new on campus this year that you can tell me about?” “What do your students do to balance their school work and sports team commitments?”)
✓ At the end of the interview: shake hands with the interviewer, make good eye contact, and thank them for the interview. You should also ask for a copy of their business card, and following the interview, send the interviewer a brief thank you note (Example: Dear Mr. Jones, Thank you so much for interviewing me today. I enjoyed my visit to Holderness and our conversation confirmed my interest in attending Holderness. (add any other personal thoughts or things that may have come up during the interviewer to help them remember you). If there is any additional information you need to consider my application, please let me know. Sincerely, ____).
Questions You Might be Asked:

You can think ahead of time about how you might answer questions such as these. You can role-play the questions with someone, or think them to yourself, but don’t overly memorize them and sounds robotic when you answer.

✓ Why are you applying to boarding school?
✓ Why are you applying to (Holderness), in particular?
✓ What do you like about (Holderness)?/What is it specifically about (Holderness) that makes you think it would be the best fit for you?
✓ Tell me about your educational experience at Aspen Country Day.
✓ What are your academic/educational goals for the next 4 years?
✓ What are your goals, and how are they different from your parents’ goals for you?
✓ Do you like to learn? Is it cool to be smart at your school?
✓ What is more important to you: learning, or getting good grades?
✓ What do you do in your free time?
✓ What are you passionate about?
✓ If you had a day to do anything at all, what would you do?
✓ Can you tell me about a personal achievement?
✓ Can you tell me about a challenge you overcame? What did you learn?
✓ What do you feel are your strengths (what are you proud of?) and weaknesses (what do you want to improve/work on?)?
✓ If I spoke with your teachers, what would they tell me are your strengths and weaknesses?
✓ Can you explain your (low grades; absences; many schools you have attended)?
✓ What is the most important thing I should know about you?
✓ What makes you unique?
✓ How do you plan to contribute to the (Holderness) program?
✓ What did you do last summer?
✓ What do you do best?
✓ Tell me about your family.
✓ How does your family feel about you attending a boarding school?
✓ Have you ever been away to camp, or away from your family for a long stretch of time?
✓ Is there anything else you would like to tell me about yourself that we haven’t talked about already?
✓ Do you have any questions?
✓ Good Luck!