

notes for students 2027

Days I'll remember all my life™

Vacational
Studies

Please read these 'Notes' and the 'Notes for Parents' carefully. You must KNOW them before you arrive. If you have difficulty understanding them, please ask your English teacher to help you.

S'il vous plaît, voulez-vous lire avec attention ces 'Notes' et les 'Notes for Parents'. Il vous faut les comprendre avant que vous arriviez. Si vous avez des difficultés de compréhension, demandez à votre professeur d'anglais de vous aider.

Bitte lese diese 'Notes' und die 'Notes for Parents' sorgfältig. Du müsst sie verstehen bevor du ankommst. Wenn du Schwierigkeiten hast, sie zu verstehen, frage bitte deinen Lehrer daß er dir hilft.

Per piacere leggete questi 'Notes' e anche 'Notes for Parents' con grande attenzione! Devono essere bene assimilate prima di arrivare qui. Se avete qualche problema nel capirle, per piacere chiedete al vostro insegnante di Inglese di aiutarvi.

Por favor lee estas 'Notes' y las 'Notes for Parents' cuidadosamente. Debes entenderlas antes de llegar. Si tienes dificultad para entenderlas, por favor pide a tu profesor de ingles que tu ayude.

Here are our assumptions about you:

- You want to come on the Course because you want to speak and learn English
- You want to meet people from other countries
- You enjoy participating in sports and other activities.

This is what you can assume about us:

- We arrange the Course to stimulate you to speak and learn English
- We arrange the classes so that you will use English as a working language
- We put you into one of four 'Houses' to split up nationalities and encourage competition. ('Houses' are what we call the teams we put you in for sports and competitions.)

We want you to have a good time and benefit from your stay with us. We also want to enjoy your company. In addition, we want you to think about why you have come to us and how this very structured experience can help you develop as a person. For this reason, we have various processes running throughout the Course.

We have created a multinational environment with many activities and plenty of interesting people to meet. The only language you all have in common is English.

We expect you to make contact with the many other nationalities. Do not waste this opportunity by using your own language with friends from your own country. For you to make international friends, you must use English.

The 'Houses' are named after schools we have used. Each 'House' has a mixture of ages, nationalities, boys and girls. You will have been allocated to a 'House' when we accepted your application. You will have a loyalty to your House. The Houses (and their colours) are:- Cheam (red) Douai-Elstree (yellow) Hawtreys (green) Mary Hare (blue)

Each House will have its own Sports Organiser to arrange the competitions and 'House Captains' chosen from the students.. 'House Points' are awarded for competitions. Occasional 'treats' are given to the House with the most points at any time. Students sit in 'Houses' for some meals.

The Course has its own currency - the 'Vaccle'. These are virtual and are given for using English and for good work. They can be exchanged for treats. Treats include jumping to the head of the queue for meals, 30 minutes on the internet, etc. You can also be fined Vaccles for not using English and for poor work.

We expect you to work at your English in the classroom. We award a prize for academic excellence.

We also expect you to join in with the activities. This will help you get to know everybody and use English with the other students. If you have a talent or interest, you may wish to perform in the 'Folies Bergère'. If you need equipment or costume (guitar, ballet costume, etc.), bring it. We can store your possessions safely in the Office. Try not to bring valuable items and don't keep them, or pocket money over £5, in the dormitory. All possessions must be named. We cannot be responsible for any items not handed in to us to keep in our safe. We disclaim liability for all un-named items.

You will have to be tolerant and co-operative. Living in a community necessitates certain compromises. One cannot always do as one wants - for many good reasons. Our rules are designed to ensure that everybody is happy, that people's feelings are respected and that the buildings and equipment are looked after. We also consider your welfare. You can imagine what most of our rules are. Some are listed below. Please make sure you understand them. We shall assume you do.

Before you come

- 1 Meet other students through www.vacationalstudies.com and our Facebook pages.
- 2 Ask me any questions at vacstuds@vacstuds.com.

At the Airport

- 1 Wear your identity badge. After Customs, look for our representative carrying a 'Vacational Studies' sign. Do not go with anyone not carrying our sign. If you cannot see our representative, read (3) below.
- 2 Make sure you keep your luggage with you.
- 3 If you get lost, go to 'Information' and say 'Page the Vacational Studies representative' or phone Paddy Douglass' number (+44 7505 911 896) or my mobile phone (+44 7717 007 007).

When you arrive at the School

- 1 The staff will tell you what to do. Bring to the Office your pocket money, any non-British money, the 'Valuable Possessions' form and the wallet containing your passport, ticket and spare suitcase key. We keep these for you. Hand in anything you wish us to keep (camera, stereo, etc.) We assume non-British money is for you to use when you return. We cannot give it to you to change it during the Course. If you want it in £, change it before you arrive or at the Airport.
- 2 You must give ALL medicines to Matron for safe keeping.
- 3 If you wish, ask us for a student who has been with us before to show you around the School. Your 'student guide' can answer your questions.
- 4 On the day after you arrive, there will be a meeting at 09.00 at which you will be placed in an 'assessment group' so the teachers can see what your English is like. There will also be a short test. A combination of the results of this and the teachers' observations will decide whether or not you are moved to another group. These groups become classes after a few days.

Around the school

- 1 Speak English with the other nationalities. This is why you are here.
- 2 We expect you to arrive at your lesson on time. If you are late a second time, you will be on a '3-Day Report'. For three days you will obtain the class or duty teacher's initials at specified times. Your parents will be informed if you do not obtain these and we may ask for you to be removed. Lateness will be recorded and mentioned in your final report.

- 3 You are responsible for keeping the School tidy. Don't drop litter. If you damage something accidentally, tell the Course Manager.
- 4 Food, drink and equipment may not be taken out of the dining room.
- 5 We expect students to make their own beds.
- 6 The front stairs, fire escapes and balconies are not for normal use by students.
- 7 You may receive calls on the 'Telephone Days' listed. With the Course Manager's permission, students can make calls on their mobile after the first week between 21.00 and 22.00 English time. Mobile phones are to be kept in a special room and charged only there. Mobile phone chargers must be named. You will find it useful to have a separate camera and to wear a wristwatch.
- 8 We do not permit any device that contains a SIM card (even if the SIM card is removed), or connects to the internet, or uses wi-fi, so if you want to listen to music or take photos, you will need an alternative music-playing device, wristwatch or alarm clock and camera. You may have too much to do to need devices.
- 9 Mobile phones can be used on trips.

A typical day

08.00 Breakfast
 09.00 First class
 09.45 Break
 09.55 Second class
 10.40 Break
 11.10 Third class
 11.55 Break
 12.05 Fourth class
 12.50 Break
 13.00 Lunch
 13.45 Digest and Masterclass
 14.30 Break
 15.00 Organised sports and games
 18.00 Evening meal
 19.00 Games, events, etc.
 21.00 Hot chocolate and biscuits
 21.30 'Club'
 22.45 Bedtime (or 22.30 or earlier for 10-13s)

- 1 All excursions are optional extras which have been pre-booked by parents. The stated charge will be deducted from pocket money. A packed lunch is provided on some excursions.
- 2 There is one optional shopping afternoons in Newbury during the month. If you wish to go, we shall arrange the coach. The fare will be deducted from pocket money.
- 3 For the sports programme (and for everything else), look at the notice board, or ask the staff.

Behaviour

- 1 We have chosen to accept you. Show by your good behaviour that you justify your place.

- 2 If you show signs of anti-social attitudes, we may ask you to do things for the community to help you understand how it functions.
- 3 Legally, we have a 'duty of care' to look after you as a 'prudent parent' would in accordance with English Law. If we do not exercise our 'duty of care', we are negligent and liable to legal penalties. We will do our best to fulfil our 'duty of care' under English law based on good will and the trust established by your and your parents' agreement to the 'rules' as evidenced by the signed 'Agreement and Travel Details' form. If your attitude or behaviour is such that we find that we cannot exercise the control required to fulfil our 'duty of care', we shall pass responsibility for control to your parents either by requesting their presence or by telephone contact with you. If this fails and we decide you are beyond control, we shall expel you.
- 4 As 'prudent parents', we forbid sexual activity or the possession of any item facilitating this.
- 5 We forbid bullying/harassment and racism. Tell us if these happen. Bullying/harassment is when a student or adult uses words or takes actions intended to hurt or gives unwanted attention.
 - Bullies exclude people and encourage others to do the same
 - they leave people out of games
 - they refuse to share a book or a seat
 - they deliberately ignore someone and encourage others to behave like them
 - they often encourage others to do their bullying for them (they have the idea but don't want to get into trouble.)
 - Bullies act in groups as well as on their own. Actions that count as physical or mental bullying are:
 - arm-twisting; hitting; pushing; tripping; frightening; name-calling; threatening; shouting; teasing; telling false tales; making disparaging references to family, shape, looks, nationality, religion, politics or orientation; taunting; stone-throwing; damaging or taking your property.
 - Bullying is also standing by and watching someone in trouble. If someone bullies you, we shall deal with it - at our discretion by expulsion.
- 5 If your behaviour causes problems for us, we shall take action to help you to improve it. We shall, of course, talk to you about your behavioural problem. We may also remove some privileges from you, partly to reinforce our message and partly so you will appreciate the privileges more when they are restored to you. Unacceptable behaviour includes lateness, rudeness, verbal bullying and any form of hitting. If you bully, we shall expel you.
- 6 We will expel you if you possess or use a knife or any other form of weapon or a water-filled balloon or if you are with anyone possessing or using these objects. We will expel you if you or anyone you are with buys, tries to buy, possesses or uses any smoking materials, matches, a lighter, snuff, 'snus', or any kind of drug or alcohol. We do not allow chewing gum as it gets on floors and furnishings and causes damage. Anyone possessing or using chewing gum will be fined £10 which will be sent to the charity 'Childline'. They will be sent to remove gum from floors, etc.
- 7 Buying, selling or exchanging of any goods over £5 in value must be done through a member of staff.
- 8 We do not allow you to be out of bed after lights-out (except for a visit to the toilet). We do not allow boys in the girls' dormitory area at any time, nor girls in the boys' dormitory area. If we think

this rule is being broken, we shall arrange an all-night patrol either by the staff or by a security firm for your and our security. There may be no warning about this and the cost will be paid by a general levy from pocket money - as will the cost of any extra cleaning required to be done by Mary Hare domestic staff in the dormitory because of student action or inaction.

- 9 In general, our students are well-behaved, but we must have sanctions for everyone's benefit. In the case of rule-breaking or bad behaviour, generally we place students on a 3-day suspended expulsion. It is designed to be unpleasant. The student may be removed from all Course activities, put on a report and behaviour is closely watched for the next three days. We try to contact parents at the start to inform them what has happened and to ask them to contact us in three days' time. If there has been an improvement, the suspended expulsion is lifted. If not, we ask parents to remove the student. Any subsequent rule-breaking will result in immediate expulsion. We require a signed understanding of this. Our rules apply at all times during the Course, including visits outside the School.
- 10 All staff are instructed to ensure your safety at all times. We expect you to think of the consequences of dangerous and foolish behaviour. You are expressly forbidden from endangering your own well-being or the well-being of others or being in any locked area of the School or on any roof, balcony or fire escape, or in the woods after dark or before light.
- 11 The UK has core British values which this organisation upholds. If you hear someone expressing extreme or violent opinions, you must tell one of the staff and we will deal with that person at once without mentioning your name. It is part of a policy called 'Prevent' to stop extremism.

Classes

Subject to my discretion, we expel immediately in certain cases. Examples of causes for immediate expulsion with no 'second chance' are listed here:-

- Theft (e.g. shoplifting) or any other crime
- Smoking in or in the immediate vicinity of the School or on a trip, or buying or attempting to buy or possessing cigarettes or smoking material or 'vaping' equipment or any drug
- Unauthorised use of the roof or fire-escapes
- Buying or attempting to buy or drinking or possessing alcohol or being in a pub
- Bullying
- Hitting
- Behaviour that we consider is a danger to others, or to ourselves, or to property for which we are responsible.

At my discretion, the writer of the original 'letter of recommendation' is informed of expulsion. We assume that anyone with a person breaking a rule is also breaking that rule.

Classes

There are four classes in the morning, except when there is an all-day trip and on a Sunday (when breakfast is an hour later.) To allow a possible visit to a theme park with minimal queuing, one Sunday may become a teaching day and one weekday may become a Sunday. There is a session with teachers after lunch called 'Digest'. See 'A Typical Day' for times. The academic staff decide on your class based on the assessment test and other factors. They may get it wrong. If you feel the class is not right for you, tell the Academic Manager, Joe Wallis, Paddy Douglass, Tom Goodwin or me, Ian Mucklejohn, or any member of staff and we will look at moving you. What is important is that you feel you are learning. If you feel you are not learning, tell someone on the staff.

Personal matters – and if you feel ill

- 1 If you feel ill, or hurt yourself, see Matron. Matron also oversees domestic arrangements.
- 2 If you need medical help, Matron will arrange it for you first via the National Health Service (our local community hospital), then if necessary via the medical insurance you have through us. There is no charge to you, except the cost of transport to the local hospital.
- 3 Toilets must be used with care and thought for the person who will use it after you. Lavatory paper (and only lavatory paper) must be flushed down the toilet. Sanitary towel disposal bags are provided for girls. Ask Matron.
- 4 You will do plenty of exercise and need to wash often.
- 5 Living in a community means that you have less privacy than at home. This is part of the fun.
- 6 We launder your clothes, if they are named, at your risk. Matron will tell you where to put your laundry, when the laundry days are and how much is taken. If your clothes are not named, you must wash your clothes yourself. Matron will tell you where. You must wash non-machine washable/dryable/delicate items yourself. You may wash any items yourself at your risk.
- 7 We launder bed linen each week.
- 8 We have asked your parents to provide you with a check list so you know what you have. This will help you not to leave things behind when you go.
- 9 You may not change your hairstyle or colour while you are with us. Whatever hairstyle and colour you come with will be the style and colour you leave with - on the basis that this is acceptable to your parents. You may not change your appearance - for example, by having your ears pierced.
- 10 If you find the behaviour of the other students in the dorm unacceptable, you can request a change of dorm without giving a reason. This will tell us a 'problem' (such as bullying) exists without putting you in a compromising position.

Unhappiness/Complaints

If you are at all unhappy, please see a member of staff. You can see me if you have a problem, even if the problem is with my organisation. I can normally find a solution. Sometimes students tell their parents the problem first, then they tell me and I deal with it. This takes time which can be saved if you come to me direct in the first place. I will not criticise you or patronise you by taking the line that we cannot be wrong. If you or your parents have a complaint about us that we cannot resolve, it should be referred to The British Council on +44 (0)161 957 7755 or commentsandcomplaints@britishcouncil.org. There is a counselling service in the UK for young people up to 19. It is called Childline and is free to call on 0800 1111.

Outside the School

- 1 You are not allowed out of the School grounds or out-of-sight of the main building without the permission of the Course Manager.
- 2 Unaccompanied shopping (if you have parental permission and if we agree to this) is allowed in groups of no fewer than three on specified shopping days. Inform the duty teacher whenever you go out of the School. Outside School, you must take with you the key fob with our details and/or your House wristband. If you are lost, show either to a police officer or someone in uniform.
- 3 The UK is a liberal western democracy. We expect you to obey its laws, customs and values. Ask for advice if you are unsure about anything.

- 4 Do not attract the attention of thieves. Keep money where it cannot be taken and avoid using a mobile phone in public.
- 5 Supermarkets in the UK stock what in some countries can only be bought in special shops. We look into shopping bags and open all bottles on your return to stop illicit goods being brought in.
- 6 All students are to be in the School after dark.
- 7 All the rules apply when you are outside School.

Sports/social programme

- 1 We arrange the organised sports/social programme on the assumption that you will participate.
- 2 We need to know where people are so we name-check at activities. Tell Matron if you are not participating. Matron will then know where you are.
- 3 You are allowed in or near the swimming pool only when a lifeguard is present.
- 4 Diving and physical contact in and on the side of the pool are not permitted. We do not allow people to be thrown in, or to be wearing other than conventional swimming costumes. When a whistle blows, you must remain still and silent.
- 5 You are allowed in the gym or sports hall only when a teacher is present.
- 6 The 4 'Houses' will compete at Sports Day during the last week. The day depends on the weather.

Pocket money & possessions

- 1 We deduct from pocket money the cost of theatre visits and excursions. We deduct taxi charges if you take a taxi at the beginning or end of the Course. We also deduct £8 as a 'Club' subscription for decorations, special equipment, etc.
- 2 Pocket money is given out daily, normally from 13.20 to 13.45 and from 14.15 to 14.45. Hand in to the Office any money you do not spend on trips, valuables and anything you wish us to keep for you (such as your camera.) You may find it easier to use a debit card on trips.
- 3 Collect pocket money (and camera, etc.) when you need it. Except on trips, do not have more than £5 on you. Do not keep money or valuables (or camera, etc.) unlocked in your dormitory. We cannot be responsible for them.
- 4 The money in your pocket money account is not all spending money. Some may be needed if you are taking a taxi to the Airport at the end of the Course, for example. It may be needed in an emergency, if you have to take a taxi to the doctor, or for damages.
- 5 At least £20 must remain in your account until the last day. It will then be returned to you less deductions for unattributable damages (if any.) Wherever possible, we attribute damage to whoever did it.
- 6 Remaining pocket money is returned to you on the last day just before you leave for the Airport. Passports, tickets and any non-British money we are holding for you will be returned at the Airport, normally after check-in. We take no responsibility for anything you leave behind.

Positions of Responsibility

All positions of responsibility are subject to reconsideration at a Meeting after four days.

18+ year-olds

UK law changes for anyone aged 18+, caring for under 18s and having access to under 18s. From a safeguarding perspective, 18+s are in a 'position of trust' and are legally not able to have any sort of intimate interaction with those under the age of 18. All relationships must be entirely open and in no way exclusive. No advantage may be taken of an under-18 because of age or status. If you are 18+, your signature on the 'Agreement and Travel Details' form indicates that you forgo your legal rights.

School colours

We provide 'House' T-shirts. Colours are:

Cheam	Red
Douai-Elstree	Yellow
Hawtreys	Green
Mary Hare	Blue

You may like to pack some clothes (even just another T-shirt) in the appropriate colour.

Telephone days (10.00-13.00 English time)

Sunday 18 July and Sunday 1 August

on your mobile

School address

VacStuds at Cheam School Newbury Berkshire RG19 3LD

Dorms

The occupants of a dorm decide if anyone else may enter. If anyone is in anyone else's dormitory without permission, they will have to pay for any damage caused there at any time.

Being Out at Night and Unattributable Damage

Staff are 'on duty' and are observant during waking hours. After bedtime, they cannot be expected to be observant. If students choose to break the rules after bedtime by being outside, for example, there will be sanctions. One of these will be that they will be held responsible for any otherwise unattributable damage on the basis that such damage will have happened when it was not possible for our staff to observe or prevent it.

Emergency/Disaster

In the unlikely event that there is some sort of catastrophe, we have plans for dealing with risks and situations. The word 'emergency' will be used and clear instructions will be given which must be followed.

If there is anything you are unsure about, or if there is anything about the Course that you are not happy with, tell me. I shall not be offended. I want this to be a really positive experience for you and can only know that something is wrong if you tell me. Whatever you say to me will be as confidential as you wish it to be. If there is something you wish to see on the programme, please feel that you can suggest it to me. If there is somewhere special you would like to go, tell the Course Manager who may be able to arrange for staff to accompany a group.

Now please read again and know by heart these 'Notes' and then sign the 'Agreement and Travel Details' form. ('Who to see for what' - a quick guide - follows.)

Who to See For What

Point of Contact	Type of Issue
Course Manager / Assistant Course Manager	• Accommodation • Homesickness • Bullying • Maintenance • Contacting home • School trips
Matron	• Injuries • Illness • Dietary issues/requirements • Daily / regular medication
Academic Manager	• Class work • Trinity exam • Teaching programme
Sports & Social Crew	• Sports programme • Social programme • Equipment