



Notes for Parents

Please read these Notes carefully with your child to help ensure a successful stay at ECS this summer. To translate this document visit <https://translate.google.com/> and type the address where you found it.

You need to know:

- Our head office address is different to the school address. See > Addresses
- You must send details of your child's travel arrangements at least 14 days before arrival. Free airport transfers apply only within specified times. See > Travel
- You can help to avoid homesickness. See > Homesickness
- The use of mobile phones on our course is restricted. See > Mobile devices, wifi and telephoning
- Clothes are washed once a week. All clothes must be labelled with the child's name. See > Notes for Students > Clothes & Laundry
- Children of different ages cannot sleep next to each other. See > Notes for Students > Community life > Bedrooms

Addresses

The summer school address at Port Regis is not the same as our office address near Cheltenham! During the course please address any post directly to your child at Port Regis School. If you send it to our Head Office this will cause delay and your child might not receive it before s/he leaves.

Port Regis

English Country Schools
c/o Port Regis School
Motcombe Park
Shaftesbury
Dorset SP7 9QA

Tel: +44 (0)1747 852551

Office

English Country Schools
18 Riverside
Winchcombe
Cheltenham GL54 5JP

Tel: +44 (0)1242 604067

etchells@countryschools.co.uk

Your online account

Please log in to your online account to book optional extras, view progress reports, make payments, upload your child's photo and add travel and medical details. The system will send reminders when a payment is due, if we need travel or medical details or when a report is waiting to be viewed.

Pre-course documents

You can find additional useful information by logging into the 'pre-course documents' section of your

online account. These include 'consent to travel' forms and road / train directions to the school. You can also find frequently asked questions at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/more-info/faqs/>

Pre-course check

Shortly before the course we will email a summary of the main details we hold for your child. Please check the details carefully and inform us if anything is missing or incorrect. We will also confirm the summer school office telephone number and emergency mobile phone number.

TRAVEL

Please inform us via your online account how your child will be travelling at least 14 days before the course begins. Please read our [greener travel advice](#) and consider contributing to our environmental causes. We will send automatic reminders until we consider the travel details to be complete, after which we will lock the details to prevent further changes. Please [inform us separately](#) if there are any last-minute changes.

We cannot provide accommodation for pupils who arrive in the UK before the scheduled arrival date or leave the UK after the scheduled departure date.

If you wish to bring your child directly to the school (please see Port Regis address above) or collect at the end please bring at around 14:00 hrs and collect at around 10:00 hrs. Contact us for details of local accommodation if required. Local accommodation is unlikely to be available at short notice.

There is a good train service from London Waterloo to Gillingham (Dorset) near the school. There are public transport connections from central London and from Gatwick Airport to Heathrow if you wish to connect with our Heathrow transfer service (see below). Please contact us for details. Parents who plan to meet our staff in the airport should contact us to arrange meeting place and time.

Heathrow transfer service

Arrivals

On **7 & 28 July 2024** we will meet pupils on arrival at London Heathrow airport and provide free transfers to Port Regis School for flights arriving **11:00 – 16:00 hrs**.

Our representative will be holding an ECS sign and wearing a white ECS polo shirt or navy sweat shirt. Transfer coaches leave Heathrow at about 13:00 hrs and 16:00 hrs and the journey to the school takes around two hours. For pupils whose flights arrive before 11:00 hrs we can arrange for them to be met by a reputable company who will take care of the child until our staff arrive, at a cost of £60 per child.

Please note we cannot confirm the arrival of each child. Please be patient if your child does not contact you immediately. If there is a problem you can be sure we will contact you.

Can I accompany my child on the free transfer to the school? Please see Travel and Location section at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/more-info/faqs>

Departures

On **28 July and 11 August 2024** we provide free transfers and assist pupils with check in for flights departing from London Heathrow Airport **12:00 – 16:00**

Transfer coaches arrive at Heathrow at about 10:00 and 12:00 hrs. For pupils whose flights depart after 16:00 hrs we can arrange care by a reputable company until the flights leaves, at extra cost.

Unaccompanied Minors

If your child is travelling in the care of airline staff (UM) please give 'Christopher Etchells' as the person meeting your child. Give the school's head office address and telephone number (see above). Please note that UM travel for both journeys must be arranged and paid by you in advance: we cannot do this for you. Children travelling UM who arrive or depart outside our free transfer times must either be looked after by Airport Angels or take an escorted taxi transfer.

Taxi transfers

If your child must travel outside our free transfer times or via another airport or train station we can arrange escorted taxi transfers. Our driver will meet children on arrival and assist with checking in on departure. The cost for a one-way taxi transfer is around £275 for Heathrow and £300 for Gatwick. When pupils share a taxi the cost will be shared between the number of pupils plus £10 per child (to take into account a larger vehicle, waiting and checking in different flights, etc.) Children travelling as Unaccompanied Minors (in the care of airline staff) will incur an extra charge of £25 per person to reflect the extra time needed to look after them. There are also extra charges for antisocial hours if the taxi journey begins before 06:00 or after 20:00. We cannot be sure of the exact cost until we receive everyone's flight details. Also, there may be changes on the day: for example flights may be delayed or arrive early. We do not arrange taxi transfers without first receiving payment and need at least two weeks notice to be sure of using our usual taxi company. The best way to handle this is for us to charge the maximum cost to your child's account. We will however deduct only the actual cost according to the number of people who share. Any surplus will be returned to the child's pocket money. We do not make any profit on taxi journeys and the cost of the taxi is not negotiable. If students choose to pay the taxi driver directly (not recommended) they **must** obtain a receipt to avoid being charged twice.

Boarding passes

Many airlines offer electronic boarding passes, typically 24 hours in advance, to save time checking in at the airport. You may wish to help download the airline app to your child's mobile phone to assist with this. Please make a copy of your child's passport before they leave for ECS.

Homesickness

If you are worried about homesickness please read the document you will find in our online pre-course documentation. Tell us if your child has suffered any recent emotional or physical upset. Do not tell children that they can come home if they don't like the school as this encourages a negative attitude. We try to involve children as quickly as possible so that they forget they are away from home and develop independence. If a child is homesick please talk to us so that we can agree a joint approach to overcome the problem. Children sometimes exaggerate their problems: please trust us to tell you the truth.

Mobile devices, wifi and telephoning

ECS is an opportunity for children to spend less time on screens and instead engage with real life. We do not recommend bringing mobile devices except phones. We provide filtered wi-fi for pupils during free time. If your child has a 'smart phone' this may give unfiltered Internet access via phone networks. If you prefer to avoid this consider purchasing a simple 'voice and text' phone that will work in the UK. Remember also to purchase and pack a UK adaptor plug.

Whatever you decide, please do not phone children repeatedly as this can cause homesickness. 8-13 year olds must give their phones to the house parent: they can use them daily 17:00 to 18:15. If your child does not have a phone you can speak using the summer school office phone but this will be limited to one call per week at an agreed time. We cannot bring children to the phone without prior agreement. If you arrange to speak to your child please make sure you phone at the arranged time.

Motivation & behaviour

Before travelling please talk to your child about personal responsibilities and make sure both you and your child have read, understood and accepted the rules in Notes for Students. Emphasise the importance of speaking English, being positive and participating in the programme. If a child breaks rules

or behaves antisocially we will talk to the child and inform you. If the poor behaviour continues or if the offence is serious – eg. smoking, alcohol, illegal drugs or bullying - we will send your child home.

Tennis & golf lessons

If you have booked tennis or golf lessons please make sure your child knows and agrees to this. If your child fails to attend lessons there will be no refund. A list will be displayed at the school showing lesson times. These might change to provide for different ages and abilities or if the weather is bad. We will always inform pupils of any changes but it is their responsibility to be in the right place, at the right time, suitable clothed and ready for their lesson.

Personal possessions

There is a general clothes list at the end of these Notes. Please clearly name all clothes and possessions, including mobile phones and accessories. It is not sufficient for a child to be able to recognise his or her own things: we need to know who they belong to as well. Please try to minimise the weight of your child's baggage - both for their convenience and for environmental reasons.

Pocket money

We recommend about GBP 50 per week. This is best brought by your child as a prepaid debit card as many places in the UK no longer accept cash. Please talk to your child about sensible use of pocket money and the need to give any cash or card to house parents for safekeeping. If you have to send extra money during the course and cannot do this via your child's card, you can send it using [ecs.flywire.com](https://www.flywire.com)

Problems

Please encourage your child to tell us if he or she is unwell or has any other problem. We have many years of experience and can usually help. We will keep you fully informed.

Reports, course photo & certificate

You will receive an email when a report is waiting to be viewed in your child's online account. You will receive a 'settling in' report from your child after four or five days, a report from your child's class teacher at the end of each full teaching week and a more general report at the end of the course. Your child will bring home a course photo and an attendance certificate.

Stay in contact..

Please feel free to contact us at any time during the day but do not telephone at night except in emergency. After the course, please complete our parental survey so that we know what you liked or didn't like. You may wish to join our list of Parental Contacts, connecting you with the parents of other ECS pupils around the world. At any stage please contact us if you have questions or suggestions. In the unlikely event that you have a complaint that we cannot resolve please contact our professional association, English UK: see <https://www.englishuk.com/en/students/complaints-procedure>

We look forward to welcoming your child to ECS.

Christopher and Sarah Etchells
etchells@countryschools.co.uk
Updated Nov 2023



Notes for Students

We want this summer to be an excellent experience for you. These Notes will help you with this. They are written for all ages 8 -17. Not everything will be relevant to you, but please read everything so that there are no misunderstandings and you know what to expect.

What we try to achieve

In addition to improving your English we want you to have fun, make new international friendships, broaden your horizons and increase your knowledge and self-confidence. We hope you will enjoy and appreciate the green campus at Port Regis and return home healthy and refreshed, with great memories and a positive mindset to help you face the future.

The environment

Education is about trying to create a better future, individually and collectively. For this reason we try to be as environmentally-friendly as possible. Please see our web page at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/why-ecs/environmental-responsibility> and our environmental tips for students at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/files/ECS-environmental-tips.pdf>.

Our expectations of staff

We expect our staff to treat all pupils with respect regardless of age, gender, colour, race or religion. They must not act aggressively towards a child verbally or physically and must avoid favouritism. Our staff try to avoid being alone with pupils and are not allowed to correspond with pupils privately using email, telephone or social media.

Our expectations of pupils

We expect you to:

- Treat each other and staff with respect regardless of age, gender, colour, race or religion
- Participate in the academic and recreation programme to the best of your ability
- Mix and speak English among the different nationalities on the course
- Follow school rules and obey all reasonable instructions and requests from staff
- Talk to us if there is a problem so that we can try to help

Travel

Please read our green travel advice at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/files/ECS-environmental-tips.pdf> We will send travel stickers before your journey. Put a sticker on your baggage and on your clothes to help us recognise you at the airport. If you are travelling in the care of airline staff, they will show you what to do. If not, follow the other passengers through passport control to the baggage area. Look for the baggage carousel with your flight number. Wait for your baggage. This may take quite a long time: don't worry: we will wait for you. Then go into the arrivals hall and look for the person wearing a white ECS polo shirt or navy ECS sweat shirt and holding a large ECS sign with our logo. Airport staff are always available if you need help or you can telephone +44 7917 501161 or ask your parents to call us. After meeting you we will take you to an area in the airport where you can wait with our staff and the other students. You might want to buy a snack and a drink during this time. We will then take you to the transfer coach for the journey to the school. This leaves at about 13:00hrs and 16:30hrs. The journey takes about two hours. At any time in the airport if you have a question please talk to our teachers. Many of them speak several languages and we can find someone to translate if

necessary.

On arrival at the school we will show you to your room. Unpack your things into the drawers and cupboards provided and put your empty suitcase on top of the wardrobe. Your house parent will be there to help and will ask you to hand in money, travel documents and any medicines or valuables for safekeeping. These will be given back when needed. **We cannot be held responsible for loss of anything you do not give us for safekeeping.** Your house parent will also ask for your mobile phone number. This will be kept securely in case we need to contact you in emergency. We will delete your phone number from our records when you get home.

Fire practice

On the evening of arrival there will be information meetings and a fire practice. The fire practice is for your own safety: please take it seriously, do not run or shout and stay quiet so that we can explain procedures and check that everyone is present.

Mobile phones & wi-fi

There is a (filtered) wifi service for all pupils which turns off at night. If you are in our boarding house for 8 - 13 year olds your phone will be kept by your house parent. You can use it 17:00 - 18:15 daily or at other times by arrangement if necessary. Pupils in our boarding house for 13 - 17 year olds can keep their phones at their own risk (or can hand them in for safekeeping) but must not use them in classes or workshops unless allowed by the teacher. Pupils must not take mobile phones to sport activities.

Lessons and workshops

On the first teaching day we will assess your written and spoken English. This is nothing to worry about. We will place you in a group with others of similar age and ability. Your class will be multinational and you will be expected to work in English with pupils from different countries. You can find more information and view samples of teaching materials at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/courses/summer/lessons> Lessons will include environmental issues and a variety of activity types such as out-of-class lessons, music-based lessons, debates and discussions, literature and film-based lessons.

In addition to English lessons you will choose a different educational workshop to attend each week: see <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/courses/summer/workshops> Workshops are intended to continue practising and developing your English while providing an element of choice and the possibility to develop real-world skills such as photography and cookery. If you do not receive your first or second choice of workshop in week one you should have your first or second choice of workshop in week two.

Punctuality

One of the benefits of residential living is that you begin to develop independence through daily routines. You will find a daily timetable on your house notice board. Please make an effort to be on time for meals, lessons and workshops, for all organised sport and social activities and during excursions.

Rules

These are essential for the safety and well-being of everyone on the course. You must observe them both on and off campus. If there are any rules to which you cannot agree, do not come.

• NO SMOKING, ALCOHOL OR ILLEGAL DRUGS

We will automatically inform your parents if we suspect you have broken this rule. Drug abuse or repeated smoking or drinking offences will result in expulsion.

• NO BULLYING

People who make others feel bad through verbal or physical abuse will be cautioned and if this has no effect will be sent home.

• Do not enter another student's room without their permission. Boys must not enter girls' bedrooms.

Girls must not enter boys' bedrooms.

- **NO AEROSOL SPRAYS**

These cause problems with the fire alarm system. Please bring roll-ons, sticks, etc. instead.

- **DO NOT LEAVE THE SCHOOL GROUNDS WITHOUT PERMISSION**

Pupils in our boarding house for 8 - 13 year olds must not leave the school grounds except on organised excursions. Pupils in our boarding house for teenagers 13 - 17 can walk to the village shop in small groups during free time with permission but must sign out first. School rules apply equally when you are out. Please remember that in Britain the traffic drives on the left.

- Please use mobile phones and any other mobile devices only during free time. Devices will be confiscated for 24 hours if used during meals, during lessons and workshops (unless your teacher permits this) or during organised sport or social activities.

- **RESPECT THE BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS** Please take care with the furniture and fittings. No chewing gum. No graffiti. Please put rubbish in the bins provided. Food and drink are not allowed in the bedrooms as this is a hygiene risk.

- **DO NOT GO INTO THE GROUNDS AFTER DARK** It is dangerous to wander around dark grounds at night. Stay in the school buildings or in the lighted areas near the main buildings.

- **RESPECT THE RULES OF THE SWIMMING POOL.** Do not run round the pool or push or throw others in as this might cause an accident. Dive in only under supervision at the deep end. Do not push other students under the water, even in fun.

If you break rules

We operate a 'signals' policy to alert you when you do something we find unacceptable. If your poor behaviour continues we will give you an official warning and inform your parents. If you continue to break rules or if your behaviour is totally unacceptable (including smoking, illegal drugs, bullying) we will send you home early at your parents' expense.

Accidental damage

If you cause any accidental damage please be honest and tell us about it immediately. We will not be angry but we will expect you or your parents to pay for the repair. If we are unable to find the person responsible we will charge everyone for the damage. This will cause ill feeling and is best avoided.

Clothes and laundry

You can find a general clothes list at the end of these notes. Make sure **all** items are named: even if you can recognise your own things we also need to know who they belong to so that we know who to return them to. Do not try to 'live out of your suitcase' during the course as this can result in lost and mixed up clothing. There is a weekly basic laundry service for underwear, sportswear, tee shirts, etc. Bring a net laundry bag for your underwear if possible. We do not generally wash jeans, jackets or other heavy clothes. Your house parent will tell you when to put out your clothes for washing. Laundry is returned folded but not ironed.

Covid

At the time of updating these Notes, Covid is less of a problem than it was. However there is still a possibility of Covid on the course. We will be taking sensible measures to reduce risk - for example encouraging extra hand washing and if necessary social distancing in communal areas like the dining room. If you feel unwell and have Covid-like symptoms you can request a test for Covid. If your test is positive we will put you in an isolation area in the school until you are well again.

Community life

At ECS you will be in an international community with people from many different countries and

cultures. To get the most from your stay we suggest:

BE SOCIABLE. Many people feel shy at first but remember that you are at ECS to make new friends and speak English. Don't use electronic devices to avoid this. Do make an effort to talk in English to people from other countries. Try to keep a positive attitude and be sensitive to others' cultural and personal differences. People will like you if you show an interest in them. Avoid offensive language. If another student has a problem, help instead of criticising.

RESPECT PRIVACY. Don't gossip about people behind their backs. Respect people's wishes not to have their photo taken. Don't publish any photo online without their permission.

PERSONAL HYGIENE. Please shower daily. Change your underwear regularly and put your dirty washing in the laundry bag. Remember to brush your teeth. Flush toilets and leave them clean. Toilet paper goes in the toilet. Female hygiene products go in the plastic bin. If you find a toilet in a mess, tell your house parent.

BEDROOMS. We put students of the same age and different nationalities together so that you will speak English and make new friends. In an emergency we need to know where you are so **you must not move to a different room without permission.** You may talk or read quietly after bedtime but please respect other students' need for rest and don't make too much noise. Do not leave your bedroom at night except to use the toilet or if you hear the fire alarm. Please keep your bedroom tidy. Put rubbish in the rubbish bin. Make your bed each morning before or after breakfast and put away your clothes.

MEALTIMES are an opportunity for you to be sociable and speak English. Sit with others of different nationalities and do not use your phone during meals. We use less salt in our cooking than you may be accustomed to. After a few days you will not notice the difference and will have a healthier diet.

If you feel unwell or have a problem

Please talk to your house parent, your teacher or any member of staff. We have many years of experience with young people and can usually help. If you disclose a serious problem such as a medical issue or verbal or physical abuse our staff have a duty to share this information with managers in order to provide the best possible response.

Excursions

We reserve the right to decide on the level of supervision that pupils need on excursions. Younger pupils will be accompanied by a teacher at all times. Older pupils can normally visit in small groups without a teacher directly accompanying them. Please listen carefully to your group leader's instructions so that you know where and when to re-group. If you have a problem, go to the meeting point or call the number on your wristband. On the coaches please remain seated during the journey. Do not eat, drop litter or drink on the coaches except water.

London

If you have pre-booked the trip to London you will be one of around 12 pupils accompanied by at least two members of staff. You will be accompanied at all times by staff, except in places like Oxford Street or Covent Garden when you can shop in small groups without leaving the area. Once in the hotel, you must not leave it without a member of staff. We will allocate you to a double room with another pupil of the same gender. You must not change room without permission. The hotel is comfortable and there is a swimming pool which you can use with at least one other person of the same gender. We cannot make arrangements for you to visit friends or relatives in London or leave the hotel with them. Please try to keep up with the group and make life easy for everyone by being pleasant and cooperative. Always carry the school's emergency number in case you get separated from the group.

Sports options

If you have pre-booked sports lessons in golf or tennis we will show you where and when to meet.

Tennis lessons take place on campus; golf lessons involve a 25-minute journey by minibus. Lessons might not take place in the week in which you booked them. We will remind everyone about lesson times but please note it is your responsibility to meet at the correct place and time. If you are absent the lesson will start and you will still be charged for it. Sports lessons are pre-arranged so we cannot usually change them. We do not provide refunds if you decide not to continue with your lessons.

Your data

When your parents make a booking for you to attend ECS they will provide information that we need in order to care for you during your stay. During your stay we will collect information about your performance in class and on the course generally in order to write reports for your parents. We will also collect information about you if you have an accident or if you significantly misbehave. We will need to retain some of this information in case it is required in the future. You have a right to see the data that we hold about you but will make our own judgement about sharing sensitive information.

End of course

The end of the course can be an emotional time as you pack and prepare to part from the new friends you have made. Allow plenty of time to pack. Refer to the clothes list. If something is missing, look carefully for it. If you still cannot find it, tell us. Un-named lost property will be given to charity. Please remove all rubbish from your room. Please do not ask to 'stay up all night' or similar: we understand how you feel but it is important for you to get a good night's sleep so that you can be alert for your journey home and return refreshed to your family.

In summary, to make the most of your stay:

- **Participate!** It's natural to feel unsure at first but please join in: you will make new friends, have lots of fun and grow as a person.
- **Communicate!** This is a great opportunity to broaden your horizons and learn about other countries and cultures. Please avoid spending too much time with your compatriots - or your mobile device! Talk to someone if you have a problem.
- **Smile!** If you are helpful and friendly towards other people they are most likely to be helpful and friendly towards you.

We very much look forward to having you with us this summer. Please ask if you have any questions or if we can be of any other assistance whatsoever.

Christopher & Sarah Etchells
Updated February 2023

Want to know more?

- Public Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/EnglishCountrySchools/>
- Pupil Facebook group: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/ECSfriends/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/englishcountryschools/>
- Photo galleries: <http://countryschools.smugmug.com/> (password = Real-Learning)
- Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/user/EnglishCountrySchool>
- Web site: www.countryschools.co.uk