

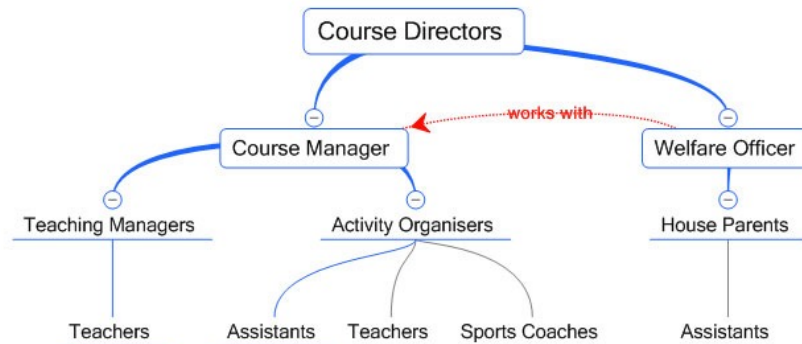


Notes for Staff 2025

This document is for ECS - English Country Schools - staff only. Do not copy, share, or publish without permission.

Terms of employment

These notes are part of your contract. Please read them carefully along with your role details. To accept the job, sign and return the Letter of Appointment within 7 days. This confirms your agreement to the terms, role details, these Notes, and the Child Safeguarding Policy. Your contract becomes official once we confirm receipt.



Breach of Contract

If you accept the job and then back out - especially at the last minute - this can cause serious problems and will be considered a breach of contract. We will notify your referees and may sue. Decide carefully before accepting.

Our aim

We aim to educate young people, improve their English, and give them a fun, healthy holiday in the countryside while making international friends. This is part of our "Real Learning" approach: see <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/why-ecs/real-learning>

Sustainability

As members of Green Standard Schools, we are committed to sustainability. Learn more at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/why-ecs/environmental-responsibility>. We encourage staff to join us in these efforts.

The courses

Courses are held at Port Regis School in Dorset, with separate programs for children (8–12) and teens (13–17). Please read our brochure at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/files/ECS-Brochure-2025.pdf> and see our webs site at www.countryschools.co.uk

The students

Our students come from all over the world, mainly Europe. They are bright, motivated and sometimes shy or spoiled. They are with us at a significant time in their lives. You will play an important part in helping them have an enjoyable and worthwhile stay.

Before the course

Please note the arrival and departure dates and times contained in your Letter of Appointment. Read everything we send you. Induction will be a mixture of online and in person. Please see <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/courses/staff-induction> In person induction will start at 10am in Dorset on Friday 4 July, with pupils arriving at the school from midday on 7 July.

Child Safeguarding

Before the course we will ask you to complete a short online course in Child Safeguarding. During the course you should be friendly with pupils while avoiding exclusivity or over-familiarity. If a member of staff or a student makes a serious allegation against you we will suspend you while we make enquiries. As a result we may reinstate you or we may dismiss you, advise referees and inform the police. Your acceptance of our Child Safeguarding Policy is a condition of employment: <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/files/Safeguarding-Policy-2023.pdf>

Sexual harassment at work

Employers must take steps to prevent sexual harassment. Please understand that harassment is a subjective experience. We will consider this further during staff induction.

Qualifications, background checks and ID

Before starting, you must email copies of your qualifications (e.g., degree, teaching certificates), passport or ID, and any background checks (e.g., police or DBS reports). Bring the originals when you arrive. Failure to provide them may affect your job and could be reported to your referees.

Social media

Join our private [ECS Staff Group](#) on Facebook to connect with colleagues and discuss work or travel plans, but do not connect with pupils on social media at any time, even if they request it.

Resources

Use our online database of resources to help prepare for the academic or activity programme before you arrive: <https://countryschools.infomanaged.co.uk> Contact us for your username and password. At the school we also have files relating to each part of the programme and a library of resource books.

The working day and time off

Find a daily timetable at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/courses/summer/daily-timetable>. We divide the day into morning, afternoon and evening and try to provide one of these periods for planning and relaxation. This is not possible for all posts, for example house parents need to take time off when pupils are in lessons or at sports. In addition for most people there will be one 24-hour period off per week starting at 6pm. This enables staff who have supervised excursions to take the evening off. During days off we recommend getting out of the school for a change of scene. It is not usually possible to provide exceptions - for example by extending days off or by giving complete weekends off - as this places an unfair burden on the remaining staff.

Who Does What?

- **Course Directors:** ECS – English Country Schools - is a summer school organisation owned and run by Christopher and Sarah Etchells from their home near Cheltenham. During the summer they live at the summer school to provide direction. Sarah is the nominated safeguarding officer for ECS.
- **Course Manager** is responsible for the day-to-day running of the course: administration, oversight, liaising with host school and other providers, dealing with problems, etc.
- **Director of Studies / Teaching Manager:** responsible for the ongoing support and supervision of the teaching teams.

- **Teachers** teach and run educational workshops each day except Saturday and Sunday and help with the general programme including excursions and airport duties. Sometimes we appoint Trainee Teachers who receive extra support in return for a reduced salary.
- **Activity Staff** plan and lead a varied, safe and age-appropriate programme of sports and social activities so that everyone will get plenty of exercise, mix socially, have fun and practise their English. Teachers assist.
- **Safeguarding Officer** (Sarah Etchells) monitors and advises on all aspects of welfare.
- **House Parents** provide care and supervision of students in the boarding houses, assisted by other staff.
- **General Assistant(s)** provide flexible help where needed – for example sports, social activities, in the boarding houses, at the airport and on excursions.
- **Other staff** – cooks, cleaners, caretakers, etc, employed permanently at the host school.

Facilities for staff

The main building has a large staff room with sofas and WiFi for relaxation and planning—please keep it tidy. Teaching resources are in a separate room in the academic block, also used for academic staff meetings. Activity staff have their own storage and planning rooms. WiFi is available in most areas. Do not share the staff connection with pupils.

Staff bedrooms are situated to assist with general supervision of the children. They are not generally lockable. Children must not enter them. Staff bedrooms can be cleaned by the school's domestic staff: this must be requested as they cannot enter your room without your permission. Staff have separate toilets and washing facilities from children. There are washing machines or you can use the school's laundry service if you wish.

Staff can use the tennis and squash courts and fitness room during free time; and the swimming pool by arrangement. Please do not use changing rooms at the same time as children.

Staff meetings

There are daily academic and non-academic meetings, and briefings for those involved in afternoon and evening activities. Other meetings will be arranged as needed, for example before excursions. Please attend staff meetings punctually.

Communications

Please talk first to the person who is most likely to be able to answer your question - see the organisational diagram at the top of these notes. For example, teachers should consult the Director of Studies on academic issues, consult the Activity Organiser about the activity programme and House Parents / Welfare Officer about domestic or welfare issues. Day-to-day communication is through meetings, word of mouth and WhatsApp. Please do not approach host school staff (eg. catering staff, cleaners, etc.) with requests or complaints but go through the summer school office instead.

Two-way radios

These are provided for communication and emergencies. All staff may use them as needed. We will show you how during induction. They are expensive, so please don't leave them unattended or let children use them.

Grievance procedure

First, try to resolve issues by talking to the relevant person. If unresolved, speak to the Course Manager or Directors. If it still isn't resolved, submit a written grievance to the Directors and keep a copy. To resign from employment for any reason other than a certified emergency, you must give reasonable written notice to allow time to find a replacement.

Disciplinary procedure

If there's an issue with your conduct, we will talk to you and try to help resolve it. If your behaviour remains unacceptable or threatens the safety of students or staff, we may terminate your employment immediately. In this case, we will pay you up until the day of termination.

Airport transfers

These take place at the beginning, on Changeover Day during the course and at end of the course. All staff might assist. Staff are on public view so must be reasonably smart. We will provide an ECS polo shirt to help with identification. Arrivals involve meeting students and sometimes their parents and waiting with them until the coach journey to the school. Departures involve helping students to check in with their passports and baggage and seeing them off through the departure gates. Flights can be delayed; information can sometimes be wrong. Good communication is key and we use a WhatsApp group to help with this. We will provide details before airport days.

Class absence

Classes and educational workshops are compulsory for students. If a student is ill, house parents should inform the teacher. If a teacher receives no **adult** explanation for the absence of a student from a lesson or workshop the teacher must inform the Director of Studies within the first five minutes of absence.

IT facilities

Classrooms have internet and a smart board. There are three IT rooms that must only be used under adult supervision.

Photo / video policy

Photos and videos help provide feedback to parents and are important for promotion. You can take them, but must share them with the school office. Do not take inappropriate or disrespectful photos. We assume permission to use your media for promotion unless you state otherwise. **You must not** publish images of ECS pupils in any form, including on social media, without written permission from ECS.

Data protection

Data such as pupil welfare notes will be shared with staff on a need-to-know basis. Please inform yourself about the pupils in your care, but be careful what you do with this data. For example you should not leave welfare notes or pupil reports where they can be read by other pupils. We can provide USB sticks to store data. At the end of the course please delete any personally identifying data such as pupil reports.

Expectations of staff

Please see the Employment Reference Form at the end of these Notes to understand our expectations of staff. We have employed you on the basis that your previous employer has rated you positively in all key areas. We will use the same form to provide references that may be required by future employers for your work at English Country Schools.

First Aid

We recommend emergency first response training for all staff working with children. Only apply first aid if you are properly trained. We will display notices with the names of staff who have current training and show you where first aid boxes are located. Each box has a list of contents—please report if anything is missing.

Incident Book

An Incident Book is kept in the summer school office for staff to write down accidents, incidents (such as illness, disputes between students, lost property) and near misses (to avoid future problems). House parents keep separate notes and transfer any incidents to the Incident Book at the morning meeting.

Appraisal

We encourage staff to develop professionally, and staff appraisal is an important part of this. In the first 7 days of the course, everyone fills out an Appraisal Questionnaire to identify issues and set personal development goals (e.g., teachers improving use of songs, activity staff improving instructions for foreign

children). At the end of the course, you'll have a second appraisal meeting with your line manager. Course Managers will also complete a confidential Employment Reference Form for each staff member.

Student reports

Parents want updates on their child's progress, so we provide online reports. **Settling-in report:** Completed by the child with their teacher a few days after arrival. **Weekly reports:** At the end of each teaching week, teachers and workshop leaders summarise the week's work and comment on each child's performance.

Final reports: Activity staff and house parents add their feedback towards the end of the course. We will show you how to use the system during induction.

Duties and free time

We try to provide as much free time as possible so that you will give your best when you are with the children. This has to be balanced against our duty to provide adequate supervision as follows:

- There must be at least one member of staff per 15 students at any organised activity, on or off the school premises. Off-site groups which include children 8 - 12 years must have at least two supervisors, preferably one male, one female.
- The exact number of staff needed for each on site activity will be decided by the organisers.
- Students must feel that there is someone in authority about at all times, including during free time. House parents normally provide this, assisted by duty staff.
- Staff on evening duty are expected to assist house parents and remain in the boarding house until students are quiet and the house parent is happy for them to leave.
- Students must not use the swimming pool without a qualified lifeguard and a member of ECS staff.

Signing Out Book

For safety, we need to know how many staff and children are on site. While it's not necessary for staff to sign in and out, please inform another staff member and ideally the school office when you leave the premises. Teens may walk to the village shop but must sign out and back in when they return.

Student rules and behaviour

Before attending, students receive a document called *Notes for Students*, outlining our expectations. We will review this with you during induction. Please be ready to enforce the rules both in and outside of school and don't ignore any rules - they exist for a reason. While we want the course to be relaxed, some students may test the boundaries. We use a 'signals' procedure, managed by house parents, to address unacceptable behaviour.

Staff should not impose punishments. If you have a problem with a student, inform the appropriate manager (academic, sport, or social), who will decide if the house parent should be notified. This helps us build a more general picture of a child's behaviour. If a student's behaviour is consistently bad, they will be sent to the office and their parents might be contacted. In extreme cases, they could be sent home.

Smoking, drinking and illegal drugs

Smoking, vaping and illegal drugs are prohibited. The school is rather remote (the local town is around 30 minutes walk) so we tolerate moderate alcohol consumption in the staff room providing you:

- Leave no evidence and aim to finish gatherings by midnight
- Completely avoid alcohol when you are working with the students
- Do not go near pupils if you have had any alcohol when you are off duty
- Avoid making a noise in the school or on return to the school that might disturb others
- Avoid behaviour that might affect your ability to work professionally the following day

Staff relations

Communal living in a pleasant working environment is one of the benefits of working at ECS. We encourage staff to share ideas professionally and enjoy each other's company. Handle personal issues discreetly and avoid behaviour that could damage our reputation with the host school, students, or local residents. Living closely with others can sometimes create tension, so try to stay positive, pace yourself, exercise, and take breaks away from the school. Address problems early before they get out of hand.

Visitors

No guests allowed without permission. Please report any suspicious visitors.

Excursions and shopping trips

Excursions give students a chance to explore and learn about British culture. Each trip is led by a Trip Leader, who will brief students about the logistics. You must attend this briefing to be fully prepared.

During excursions, your role is to supervise students and help them make the most of the experience, such as guiding them on a town trail or visiting a museum. We will give as much notice as possible about destinations, but plans may change (e.g., due to weather), so we appreciate your flexibility.

Do not expect time off during excursions. Some younger children must be accompanied all day, while older children may not need constant supervision, but you must remain on duty and ready to assist. Please read the "Excursion Guide and Risks" document before each trip.

London Weekend trip

We run two weekend trips into London: around 12 teenagers with two members of staff. Let us know if you are interested in assisting.

Clothing

Should be informal while avoiding scruffiness. We provide bed linen plus one small and one large towel. Bring sports clothes which, however, should not be worn in lessons.

Expenses

Reasonable expenses will be met for items relating to the programme providing they are agreed in advance with the Course Directors and a receipt is obtained. The cost of travel to/from the school is your responsibility. A packed lunch is provided for airport duties and on Excursion Days plus up to £10 for airport refreshments.

Salary and tax

Salary is paid at the end of the first teaching week and at course completion. Provide bank details in advance. Foreign account charges are your responsibility. National Insurance will be deducted at the prevailing rate and tax if your UK earnings are above the tax threshold rate. If you have a P45 tax form please bring it with you. Alternatively we will provide you with a P46 on which you must declare any UK earnings.

Realistic expectations

Staff who have not worked in a residential situation before sometimes arrive with unrealistic expectations. Please be aware:

- Accommodation: Rooms will be clean on arrival, and cleaning can be arranged. Don't expect en-suite facilities or lockable rooms.
- Things may take longer than expected due to the busy nature of summer school. We'll listen to your concerns, but immediate solutions may not always be possible.
- Food is varied and healthy but institutional. Vegetarians are well catered for. Vegans may need to supplement their diet. If you have specific intolerances or allergies, let us know before you start.
- Residential living is intense. Things can get magnified. Try to keep a sense of proportion and a sense of humour.
- Expect to work hard. You can read comments from previous staff at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/more-info/employment>
- Expect the unexpected! Not everything will go as planned. Your flexibility and cooperation will be appreciated.

End of Courses

The end of each course is a busy time with course reviews, departure preparations and report writing. Staff who are not helping at the airport assist in the school. There is an end-of-course meal after the students

have left. We understand your need to relax please be careful and remember that your employment contract continues until you leave after breakfast the following morning.

Finally

We aim to support you throughout your stay and hope you enjoy working with us. We are happy to provide employment references reflecting your contribution. After the course, please complete a staff questionnaire to help us improve. If we are satisfied with your work we may invite you to return next summer. Keep us updated with any changes to your contact details, and feel free to ask questions at any time.

Christopher and Sarah Etchells

etchells@countryschools.co.uk

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Employment Reference Form



Applicant name:

Referee name:date.....

Relationship to the applicant:

Please rate this applicant as follows (d/k = Don't Know)

This person:	Positive		Negative			
Relates well to colleagues	5	4	3	2	1	
Relates well to managers	5	4	3	2	1	
Relates well to students aged:	5	4	3	2	1	
	7-11	5	4	3	2	1
	11-14	5	4	3	2	1
	14-17	5	4	3	2	1
Participated well in the sports programme	5	4	3	2	1	
Participated well in the social programme	5	4	3	2	1	
Is adaptable (If asked to fill in at the last minute for an absent colleague, would this person respond well?)	5	4	3	2	1	
Is dependable (Is this person punctual for classes and meetings? Does this person do what they say they are going to do?)	5	4	3	2	1	
Is mature and responsible (Would you entrust your own child to the care of this person?)	5	4	3	2	1	
Displays energy and initiative (Is this person proactive or does he /she wait to be asked to do things?)	5	4	3	2	1	
Is professionally competent	5	4	3	2	1	
Is healthy and presentable	5	4	3	2	1	
Is generally in good humour (ie. has a pleasant, positive disposition)	5	4	3	2	1	
Do you know of any reason why this person is not suitable to work with children?	YES / NO					
Has this person had any disciplinary sanctions or allegations made against them?	YES / NO					
Would you re-employ this person?	YES / NO					

Is there anything else you wish to say?

Travel directions to Port Regis School

Address: Port Regis School, Motcombe Park, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 9QA.

Telephone: (0)7502 405807 / (0)7917 501161

Train: The nearest main-line station is Gillingham, Dorset (not Kent) which has regular direct services to London Waterloo and the South West and is ten minutes by taxi from the school.

Car: Port Regis is located on the B3081 about a mile to the west of Shaftesbury.

From the M25 via the A303: Leave the M25 at Junction 12 and join the M3. Exit the M3 at Junction 8 to join the A303. Leave the A303 at its junction with the A350 towards Shaftesbury. On reaching Shaftesbury travel to the Ivy Cross roundabout - A350/A30 junction - take the third exit onto the B3081. Remain on the B3081 and pass under the A30 flyover. Do not take the turn for Motcombe village, travel for approximately 1 mile, and the main entrance is on your right signed "Port Regis, Motcombe Park".

Travelling from other directions? See <http://goo.gl/maps/aWjvm>

