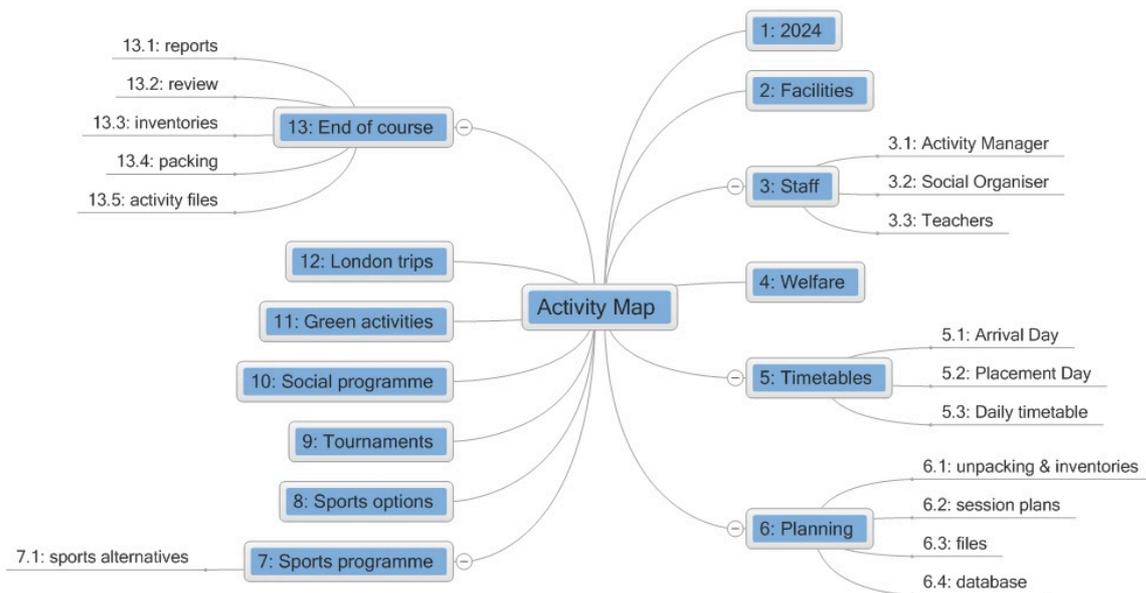


# ECS Activity Map 2024



The activity programme on our courses is central to our aim of providing fun, friendship and learning in a healthy natural environment for the young people in our care. We provide a choice of supervised sports and social activities each day appropriate to the age group of the children on each course. The emphasis is on fun, within a safe, supervised environment so that everyone will mix, make friends, get plenty of exercise, have fun and practise their English. This activity map aims to provide as complete a description as possible of the sports and social programme. Please read it carefully and let us know if you have any questions.

## 1: 2024

2024 looks like being a busier summer than 2023. For simplicity we will continue with the two age groups, children (8 – 12) and teenagers (13 – 17) but might run a 'zig-zag' timetable during the first three weeks if numbers make it necessary.

- This summer 8 - 12 year olds will be accommodated in The Mansion. 13 – 17 year old boys will be in Prichard boarding house and girls will be in Grosvenor.
- The five weeks will be divided into 3 + 2-week courses. Around twenty pupils will be leaving at the end of week two and there will be a changeover day at the end of week three. There will be four days when we will need some staff to help at the airport.
- There will be two weekend trips to London, one on the first weekend and one on the fourth weekend.

- Sports for both age groups will take place in the afternoons leaving the mornings for planning – unless we decide to run a zig-zag timetable.
- Golf lessons will hopefully take place at the school.

## 2: Facilities

ECS - English Country Schools - shares the use of sports facilities with Port Regis School who also sometimes run their own activities. The school has extensive grounds containing sports fields, a practice golf course and woodland with a small stream running through it. There is an all-weather pitch for football, hockey and tennis plus additional hard tennis courts. There is a large sports hall with two squash courts and a table tennis area. There is a 25m indoor swimming pool. There are two performance halls: one is a lecture theatre suitable for meetings, films and shows. The other is a more traditional hall suitable for discos, wet weather activities and stage performances.

## 3: Staff

This year instead of appointing individuals to specific roles we have appointed several 'Activity Assistants' with the intention of being able to move people around to where they are most needed - and to some extent for people to find their preferred roles. The activity team consists of:

**Activity Manager** - has overall responsibility for the successful and safe delivery of sports, social events and excursions for pupils of all ages. Oversees report writing. Helps plan and lead a full, varied and safe programme of sport and social activities.

**Social Organiser** plans and – with the help of other staff - leads a programme of age-appropriate evening social activities so that pupils will mix, have fun and practise their English.

**Activity Assistants** - flexibly provide help with planning and delivery of the activity programme where needed across the age groups.

**Teachers** also assist with the afternoon and evening activity programme on a rota basis.

### 3.1: Activity Manager

Before the course:

1. Carefully read our Notes for Staff, our Child Safeguarding policy, this Activity Map and any other information we may send you about the activity programme. Raise any queries you have with the head office.
2. Carefully browse our web site at [www.countryschools.co.uk](http://www.countryschools.co.uk) to ensure you are aware and up to date with what we are offering this summer.
3. Try to bring any first aid qualification up to date before employment begins.
4. Begin thinking about and researching the content of the activity programme.
5. Attend online and face-to-face induction meetings. Find out as much as possible about the professional background and skills of the staff team. Explain the programme and systems to new staff.

During the course:

1. Liaise with everyone concerned (host school, Directors, off-site activity and transport providers, staff and students) to ensure that the recreation programme proceeds as smoothly, enjoyably and safely as possible throughout the course.
2. Lead daily activity planning meetings. Ensure everyone knows what they are doing. Carefully check plans for each activity. Encourage innovation and creativity and going the

- extra mile (adding the 'wow' factor). Ensure a planning form is created for each activity (including risk assessment) and submit these to the summer school office daily.
3. Delegate teaching staff to assist with activities. Monitor staff performance and deal sensitively with any problems that arise.
  4. Ensure that facilities are booked to ECS, that equipment is available for each activity and that backup plans are in place in case of bad weather.
  5. Ensure that an element of coaching is included in every sport session to help pupils develop skills.
  6. Encourage all staff to spot and record personal and skill development by pupils engaged in activities so as to provide meaningful student reports.
  7. Encourage the exploitation of opportunities provided by the programme for students to practise their English, for example by telling each other how to play a game. Involve teachers in this.
  8. Communicate with the students, elicit ideas and encourage participation.
  9. Ensure that sports activities are clearly publicised and that visual information is clear, attractive and up to date.
  10. Find out who wants to do what, taking into account that some students will be taking lessons in tennis and golf. Create lists of names and ensure every relevant member of staff has a copy.
  11. Avoid the formation of national groups and encourage the students to mix as much as possible.
  12. Know how to use two-way radios provided by the school, ensure that these are present at activities and are returned / recharged after activities.
  13. Prepare and attend daily pre-activity briefings to explain the activity to staff who will be assisting. Notify the summer school office if any staff are persistently late or absent.
  14. Play a leading part in sports activities, for example leading a game or providing coaching.
  15. Monitor activities. Discuss them with colleagues, raise any issues with management and record any improvements that can be made.
  16. Ensure that a log of all incidents, however minor, together with action points is recorded in the Incident Book.
  17. Help with unpacking at the start of the course and organise packing at the end of the course.
  18. Ensure that equipment is treated with respect, that playing areas are clean and tidy after sports and that equipment is put away.
  19. Request any new equipment / provisions in a timely manner, allowing time for it to arrive.
  20. Write and monitor the writing of student reports by sports staff.
  21. Conduct staff appraisals for sports staff and assist with end-of-course employment references for teachers.
  22. Supervise students during morning break times and make sure pupils hydrate between sports activities.
  23. Accompany and supervise students on some excursions.

### **3.2: Social Organiser**

Before the course:

1. Carefully read our Notes for Staff, our Child Safeguarding policy, this Activity Map and any other information we may send you about the social programme. Raise any queries you have with the head office.
2. Carefully browse our web site at [www.countryschools.co.uk](http://www.countryschools.co.uk) to ensure you are up to date with what we are offering this summer.
3. Begin thinking about and researching the content of the social programme.

4. Attend online staff induction meetings.

During the course:

1. Plan the evening social activities for your age group
2. Do a risk assessment for each activity and ensure that activities proceed with due regard to the safety, age and enjoyment of everyone involved.
3. Complete a session plan for each activity, provide this to the Recreation Programme Organiser. Make a copy for each teacher who will be involved and ensure they receive this by the evening meal at the latest.
4. Lead pre-activity 'briefings' to explain the social activity to teachers who will be assisting.
5. Think about how to include the 'wow' factor in your activities. Ensure that activities are realistic and achievable, that props are available, that equipment has been checked and that 'what if?' backup plans (for example wet weather) are in place for each activity.
6. Identify and encourage the exploitation of opportunities provided by the social programme for students to learn and practise their English. Ensure nationality groups mix as much as possible.
7. Ensure that evening social activities are clearly publicised and that visual information is clear, attractive and up to date.
8. Communicate with the students, elicit ideas and encourage participation, ensuring that attention is given to clear explanations of activities and the logistics of organising groups before and during events.
9. Know how to use two-way radios provided by the school: ensure that these are taken to activities and are returned and recharged after use.
10. Play a leading part in social activities, for example acting as compere.
11. Monitor activities. Discuss them with staff who have taken part and suggest any improvements that can be made.
12. Ensure that all incidents and near misses, with action points, are recorded in the Incident Book.
13. Ensure that equipment is treated with respect; that rooms are clean and tidy after an activity; that lights are off and equipment is put away.
14. Request replacement equipment and other provisions allowing time for them to arrive.
15. Assist with the writing of student reports.
16. Supervise students during morning free time and assist with other supervisory duties (including excursions) on a rota basis.
17. Organise the packing of resources at the end of the course and make a list of replacement resources needed.

### **3.3: Teachers**

We appoint teachers who we hope will be willing and able to assist on the activity programme. Don't expect all of them to be good at sports but do expect them to set a good example for the pupils and have a go at whatever they are asked to do. Try to engage teachers in activities that play to their strengths: the simplest way to do this is to ask them what they'd like to do. If you notice that one or more people are not making an effort, please let us know sooner rather than later so that we have an opportunity to remedy the situation. With regard to activities teachers you need to know that teachers are advised:

- During induction and at any time during the course make sure that activity staff know your preferences and particular skills – for example you may prefer to help with non-sport activities such as arts and crafts, countryside walks, drama, dance, music. However, don't

expect to always do what you want and do be willing to assist with activities outside your comfort zone if you are asked to.

- Each day make it your job to find out whether you are helping with the afternoon or evening programme for that day. Read the relevant session plan for the activity.
- Attend the activity briefing session (afternoon or evening, depending on when you are helping) and make sure you fully understand your part in the activity.
- Be punctual for meetings and for the start of activities.
- Wear appropriate clothing to activities so that you can join in.
- Please note your role should not involve any planning of activities: everything you need should have been prepared in advance (with your help if you are offering a particular skill).
- Your job is to assist or, in some cases, to help to run the prepared activity.
- Assist activity staff in helping to group students. Take charge of a group if asked to.
- Activity staff are not usually experienced in giving clear instructions to foreign children / teenagers. Please help with the giving of instructions: talk slowly and clearly, use simple language, explain in stages, check understanding and wherever possible demonstrate the activity. This can sometimes be done by 'relaying' the instructions for a game from the activity organiser to smaller groups via teachers.
- Be positive and upbeat. Avoid standing (or especially sitting) on the sidelines talking with other members of staff. Provide a positive role model by being interested and involved. No one expects you to be an expert in every activity but we do expect you to be willing to have a go. Children and – especially – teenagers will be looking to you for a lead.
- Safety issues will be covered in the session plan and in the briefing: please make safety your priority while activities are in progress and report any concerns immediately to the organiser.
- When the activity is over, assist with tidying the activity area and putting away equipment. Help house parents by escorting students to their houses. Duty does not end at the end of the activity. See the duty timetable as to where you will be needed next.
- Above all, enjoy the opportunity to mix with pupils outside the classroom. Have fun (always observing professional standards of behaviour) and help them to get the most from their holiday at an important time in their lives. It's true that, as the old saying goes, the more you put in, the more you get out. And good teachers are never forgotten!

#### **4: Welfare**

As you will be working closely with young people you will need to be particularly aware of health, safety and general welfare issues. You must read and agree to abide by our Child Safeguarding Policy. Be aware which members of staff are First Aid trained and if possible bring any first aid training you may have up to date. Always plan activities with safety in mind. Do not allow activities to take place with less than two members of staff. Make sure there is a working two-way radio at each activity. Be patient with the children: they may not want to join in; they may not understand what they have to do; they may be homesick, they may be culturally less organised and punctual. Never shout at a student. Think about how you will explain things clearly, including by delegating explanations to teachers who are more experienced with foreign students. Keep in mind that we always aim to provide fun, friendship and learning for the young people in our care.

#### **5: Timetables**

##### **5.1: Arrival Day**

There are separate timetables for Arrival Day, for Placement Day (the first teaching day when we allocate pupils to classes); for standard weekdays and for weekends. The following table is a guide only, with timings subject to change.

08:00	Breakfast
08:30	Staff on airport duty leave. Some activity staff may need to help at the airport.
Morning	Plan activities, create lists of students doing sports options, put up notices, displays, flags, bunting, etc. and occupy any early arrivers.
13:15	Lunch
14:00	Meet, greet and occupy early arrivers. The main body of students will arrive by coach from the airport around 4.30pm and 7pm. Some pupils will arrive in dribs and drabs with parents from about midday, possibly one or two earlier. Think about how you will occupy early arrivers. Non-demanding, fun activities that students can drop in to are best. eg. parachute games, football, tree house, etc. Make sure that you have put up attractive notices alerting students and parents to what is on offer
16:00	Refreshments. This is a good opportunity to gather everyone together and check everyone is OK. Try to encourage them to join the afternoon activity afterwards.
16:30 (approx)	First coach arrives form airport. Provide low-key ongoing activities for them to join after they checked in with house parents and have moved into their rooms.
18:30	Evening meal
19:00 (approx)	Arrival of second coach from airport. Be prepared for delays. Help to meet and greet and direct students to their boarding houses.
19:30 – 20:30	Evening activity
20:30	All pupils return to boarding houses for meetings and fire practice.
	Bed times as appropriate, probably a bit earlier than usual

## 5.2: Placement Day

Placement Day is the name given to the first teaching day after pupils arrive. The timetable is different to the normal daily timetable. You may be asked to assist teachers in class during placement and help to occupy pupils while tests are marked. Students will be going back into class so it's best not to organise anything too physically demanding. Make sure pupils remain hydrated.

## 5.3: Daily Timetable

Please see the Student Weekday Timetable at the end of these notes.

## 5.4: Duty timetable

We divide the day into three parts, morning, afternoon and evening. Teachers are usually 'on duty' (ie. available to help with the activity programme) for one of these sessions each day. There is a staff duty timetable that shows this and also shows days off.

## 6: planning

Please see [www.countryschools.co.uk/courses/staff-induction](http://www.countryschools.co.uk/courses/staff-induction) for details of pre-course induction events. Our online resources database (see below) will be helpful.

- When planning, make sure you include a variety of activities each week in both the sport and the social programme. Don't repeat activities just because the students appear to enjoy them. For example, don't have the same students playing football every day: save it for when you are stuck for other ideas (and remember they'll probably play in their own time anyway)
- In general, begin the course with familiar games and activities that pupils will feel comfortable with. Once you have as many people as possible participating, move on to less familiar, perhaps sillier activities. There is an excellent article called 'How teens play' in the resources database.
- Be aware of what is happening in each other's programme: for example, if Dodgeball has been organised in the afternoon, don't repeat it the same week in the evening.
- Always, always consider safety for each activity you plan. Think about how you will manage any risks and make sure staff are aware and know what to do.
- Think about backup plans in case something goes wrong, for example because of faulty equipment or wet weather.
- Beware of activities (e.g. World Cup Football) that encourage the formation of national groups and rivalry. Instead, organise the students into multinational teams in the fairest way you can.
- The formation of 'houses' (e.g. greens, reds, blues, etc.) can encourage competition and participation. Beware of running the same house groups throughout a course however: one house tends to prove superior and this can be demotivating for the others. If you want to organise houses make sure you change members and staff team leaders on a regular basis.
- Boy v. Girl activities can be motivating every now and then, as can occasional separate activities organized for each gender.
- The pupils enjoy staff v. student football, tug of war, volleyball, etc. Remind staff that their job is not necessarily to win but to provide sufficient challenge while avoiding getting too competitive and risking injuries. Look out for and stop any over-zealous behaviour from staff during the game.
- Remember that for teachers, time spent helping you means less time planning lessons and workshops. Use as many staff as you need, but don't ask staff to help pointlessly. Try to be fair in your allocation of duties, making sure everyone helps equally over the course of each week.
- Perhaps the most difficult part of organising activities is explaining to students how the activity works. Please allow time and thought for this. Break down complicated activities into manageable chunks. Provide clear session plans for assisting staff and if possible ask teachers to help in explaining the activity to the students.
- There is usually a disco on Saturday nights. Don't assume that any one activity is an easy option. The more thought and planning you put into each event the better it will work. See, for example, the suggested planning notes for discos and film nights.
- For each activity, what ingredients can you add to make students say 'Wow'? It will make all the difference between a mediocre and an excellent programme.

### **6.1: unpacking and inventories**

On arrival at the school help unpack and organise resources for the activity programme. As you unpack make an inventory of equipment. When the inventory is complete store it carefully as you will need this at the end of the course when you repack. If at this stage you notice anything obviously missing or in short supply please inform the course office. Please note that new orders can take several days to arrive.

## 6.2: session plans

For each session you organise or help to organise you must complete a session plan. Session plans from previous years are available in the resources database and in files at the school. The aim of session plans is:

- To draw on experience from one summer to the next
- To help you to think systematically about each activity and plan it in detail including 'What if?' scenarios and safety issues
- To communicate to other staff how the activity works and what part they will be playing
- To record anything that went wrong / improvements that can be made for future reference

## 6.3: Files

There are various files of materials relating to the sports and social programme for different age groups. Please take time to look through these when you get to the school. Activity files vary in content but between them expect to find the following:

- Lists of students: names, ages, genders, health notes, sports options
- Posters from previous programmes that you might find useful
- Weekly programmes and session plans from previous summers
- Rules for various sports with warm-up and skill development exercises
- Sports hall / swimming pool timetable
- Advice and general info manuals
- Ideas for skits and games for camp fires / course shows
- Ideas for indoor games

## 6.4: Database

Many of the above are also contained in a database containing various documents for the academic and activity programme: useful for pre-course planning and for finding things quickly. You can find the database at <https://countryschools.infomanaged.co.uk> Please contact us for log in details.

## 7: sports programme

Expect to be able to organise any or all of the following:

- Squash
- Croquet
- Dodgeball
- Swimming
- Water Polo
- Multi sports
- Volleyball
- Badminton
- Basketball
- Handball
- Football (indoor and outdoor)
- Hockey (indoor Unihoc and outdoor hockey)
- Tag rugby
- Rounders / baseball
- Tennis
- Table tennis
- Athletic / 'Olympic' events
- Frisbee

## Sport alternatives

Try to include afternoon activities from time to time that will appeal to less sporting students or just provide a change. E.g. countryside walks, arts and crafts, yoga, cookery – anything else?

## 8: Sports options

Each weekday afternoon some students will be taking paid lessons in tennis or golf. These sports lessons have been booked and paid for in advance. The Recreation Programme Organiser is responsible for liaising with sports coaches, making sure students know about their lessons and - with the help of other staff - that they get to them on time. Please note that a teacher must accompany all students for at least the first day of each new session. Keep an eye on sports options in progress and provide feedback to the office.

## 9: Tournaments

Free time is provided daily for each age group. We want students to enjoy some free time, but too much free time can lead to boredom, sometimes resulting in irresponsible behaviour and homesickness. Students may just want to relax around their houses under the supervision of house parents. But in addition you and house parents should also think about and arrange an informal programme of tournaments running throughout the course in any or all of the following so that students who need something to do will be occupied:

- chess
- Connect 4
- tennis
- table tennis
- squash
- pool

Tournament activities should not normally be arranged as 'official' afternoon or evening activities: keep them for free time instead. The exception might be during wet weather.

Students need lots of organisation, encouragement and monitoring to participate in and complete tournaments. Set time aside at the start of each course to explain to students and to house parents what is on offer, the rules, how it works, how to sign up, who will umpire, etc. See the Activities File section, 'Organisation of Tournaments and Leagues'. Organise a worthwhile prize for the winners and try to make the final an 'event' that people will watch and enjoy. Do however stress that tournaments are for fun and try to discourage over-competitive behaviour.

## 10: social programme

Expect to be able to organise all or any of the following:

- Hunts of various kinds: scavenger hunt, sardines,
- Swimming pool games
- Water games
- Wide games
- Tag games
- Quizzes
- Film shows
- Discos
- Karaoke
- Tag rugby
- Board games (chess, draughts, Connect 4)
- Blind Date
- Man o Man/Girl o Girl
- Crazy sports
- Capture the Flag
- Countryside walks
- Song nights
- Talent show
- International evenings
- Ultimate Frisbee

+ lots of other game-like activities: see the Activities File for further ideas.

## **IMPORTANT!**

In order to ensure variety, each week try to include at least one of the following activity types:

- A whole-school outdoor activity (eg. a wide game, a swimming gala, crazy sports, water games)
- A disco
- A stage activity (eg. talent show, fashion show, Mr & Mrs)
- An indoor 'floor' activity (eg. Casino, quiz, Bingo / Beetle Drive)
- A film
- A 'social sport' activity in which everyone takes part- eg. corner bench football, dodgeball, corner bench hockey, crazy relays, boys v girls v staff
- From time to time you might want to include a 'free choice' from a number of smaller activities: eg. choose between cooking, croquet or a country walk. This works well, but remember you need to plan and assess the risk of each activity.

### **11: Green Activities**

Our course at Port Regis takes place in a beautiful rural location. As members of Green Standard Schools we try to operate as sustainably as possible and try to encourage our pupils to connect with nature. You can read more at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/why-ecs/environmental-responsibility> and watch a video about this at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLLEM\\_3urPc&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLLEM_3urPc&t=3s)

### **12: London Weekend Trip**

This year we will be organising two London weekend trips – each with around 15 people going. You will need to take these into account when organising weekend activities.

### **13: End of course**

#### **13.1: Reports**

We operate an electronic report system with reports made available to parents online. Towards the end of each child's stay activity staff should help complete a report for each child. This will consist of a standard paragraph describing the activity programme, followed by some individual comments about the child's participation. Make sure the standard paragraph is approved by the office before you copy it into every child's report. Log in to create reports at: <http://www.countryschools.co.uk/CRM/login.php>

Then click 'Student Reports', select a course and a student. Write the report and enter your name, then click 'submit'. This will send the report to the office for checking. When reports are checked we may correct your spelling or sometimes ask you to re-word a report if necessary. Don't take this personally: it is simply that we are generally in a better position to know what kind of language will be understood or might be misconstrued by parents whose first language is not English.

There are separate sport and social reports. Try to be informative and honest in your reporting: parents are keen to learn what activities their child has been doing and also how they related to other people during these activities. Try to describe any character development (eg. becoming more outgoing, friendly, cooperative, etc.) If you have criticisms, express these gently and suggest

how the child can do better in future. Please keep language simple and try to avoid qualifiers like 'quite' and 'rather' that add little to the meaning.

### **13.2: Review**

We have traditionally run a Course Review before students leave. This is a show involving students and staff. Content is usually some or all of the following:

- Photos
- Video films produced by classes
- Songs by classes or by the whole school
- A sketch or other performance by classes
- Individual talents – e.g. music, dance, juggling, etc.
- A staff performance

Done properly, the end-of-course review is often the highlight of the course and forms a natural conclusion to all the fun and activity before pupils return home. It can sometimes be quite an emotional event too as the end of the summer camp draws near.

- An alternative to a Course Review is an individual talent show. This gives pupils an opportunity to show off their talent without needing to involve whole classes and their teachers. Staff might like to take part too.
- Planning for a show should start several days before it takes place. Liaise with teachers about photos / video films etc. Teachers will probably want to prepare any class contribution during morning lessons.
- Be careful about the number of acts and how long they will be. Don't feel you have to say yes to every student who wants to perform. Parents sometimes attend and the emphasis should be on quality over quantity. If acts are performed by whole classes you will need to be very clear with teachers how long the acts should last.
- As soon as possible, produce a running order so that everyone understands the length and shape of the review.
- Think about what equipment you will need – lights, microphones, speakers, projector, screen, etc.
- Make sure someone is in charge of technology and test in advance that it is all working. A show can sometimes be let down by poor technical preparation.
- Students love seeing staff making an effort and getting into the spirit of things. If you can give staff a few ideas as to how they might contribute, this will make their participation more likely. A dance perhaps? Something musical or a comedy sketch? Bear in mind that some people might have time off on the evening of the review, so you'll need to check that they are willing to participate.
- As with all events, try to build up excitement with posters, announcements, etc. As the review approaches you might need to timetable extra practice sessions. If these take place during official activity times please ensure that they are properly supervised. There can be a bit of 'hanging around' during practice sessions so provide something for students who are not involved or who finish early.
- A crucial role is that of the show host. This will normally be an adult but it also works well if you can find a confident older boy and girl willing to help host the show. You might think about a 'warm up' session (e.g. with 'clap' and 'whistle' signs?) to get everyone in the mood before the first act.
- Talk to students about the need to be patient, respect acts performed by other pupils of all ages and not to talk during performances. Good sound audio helps!
- If possible produce a programme for the evening for students to take away after the course. You could leave a blank page for students to write messages to each other.

### **13.3: inventories**

At the end of each course it's a good idea to take stock of what equipment you have or may need for the next course. At the very end of the summer tour the school and grounds for equipment that belongs to ECS. Check to see what has been lost or broken. Update the inventory you made at the start of the course. Clearly indicate any new equipment that needs to be purchased for the next summer. Sign and date the inventory and leave it at the front of the activity file.

### **13.4: packing**

Pack equipment away in boxes in as organised a way as possible. Seal the boxes, add an ECS sticker and a label describing the contents of each box.

### **13.5: Activity files**

Organise the activity files so that they are ready for next year. Include in it your updated inventories, your programme for the summer, details of any particularly successful activities, etc. Also include copies of which children have done which options (golf, tennis, horse riding.) The activity files must be returned to the office at the end of the course.

### **Finally**

We hope these Notes will provide you with the information you need to run (or help to run) sports and/or social activities during the course. It's an important job and the success and smooth running of the activity programme plays a significant part in the success of the ECS experience for our pupils. At any stage if you have questions, please ask and we will be happy to help.