

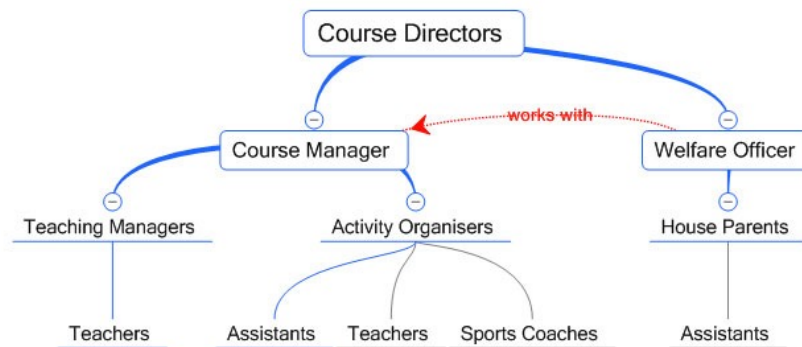


Notes for Staff 2024

This document is for the information of ECS - English Country Schools - staff only. It must not be copied, shared or published without permission.

Terms of employment

These Notes provide essential information for all staff and form part of the contract. Please read them carefully in addition to any information we send you about your specific role at the school. Ask if you have any questions. If, after interview, you sign and return our Letter of Appointment within 7 days of the date on the Letter this marks your acceptance of the contents of the Letter, the information we send you about your post, these Notes and our Child Safeguarding Policy. When we acknowledge receipt of your Letter of Appointment this constitutes a contract.



Breach of Contract

Please think carefully before you accept our offer of employment. It is a legally binding agreement. If, after signing, you later change your mind we will regard this as a breach of contract and will inform your referees. A last-minute breach of contract is particularly unwelcome as this leaves little time to re-advertise a post, select and interview a replacement, follow up references and perform the necessary background checks. There is no guarantee we will be able to replace you at short notice and this places an unfair burden on remaining staff.

Our aim

We aim to help educate young people for the excitements and challenges of the future. To succeed in a globally connected world they will need to be well-rounded individuals, self-confident and independent, able to mix and collaborate easily with people from different countries and cultures. We therefore aim to provide a wide educational experience that is highly engaging and memorable. We call it Real Learning and aim to make it a part of everything we do: in lessons and workshops, during the sports, activity and adventure programme and through the residential experience. Everything you do in employment with us should be directed toward this aim. You can read more about Real Learning at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/why-ecs/real-learning>

Sustainability

We are members of Green Standard Schools and have a strong commitment to sustainability. You can find out more at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/why-ecs/environmental-responsibility> We hope staff will join us in our efforts to operate sustainably, to deepen our pupils' connection with nature and help them understand the issues.

Our web site

Please view this to gain a general understanding of our courses. You can find it at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk>

The courses

Our residential courses take place at Port Regis School near Shaftesbury in Dorset. You can find travel directions at the end of these Notes. We run two separate courses for children 8 – 12 and teens 13 – 17. Each age group has its own accommodation, lessons, activity programme and excursions.

The students

Our pupils come from all over the world with the majority from Europe. Their parents have high expectations of our courses. Most pupils are bright, confident and well motivated. Some are inevitably spoilt, awkward or shy. The weeks they are with us are a significant time in their lives. Whatever your role, you will play an important part in helping them to make the most of their time so that they have an enjoyable and worthwhile stay with us.

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 face-to-face. Please see <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/courses/staff-induction> Face-to-face induction will start at 10am in Dorset on Friday 5 July. Pupils arrive around mid afternoon on 7 July. This allows sufficient time for general orientation and preparing for the arrival of pupils.

Child Safeguarding

Please complete the short online course in Child Safeguarding that you will find at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/courses/staff-induction>. During the course you should maintain friendly relations 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>

Qualifications, background checks and proof of identity

During the employment process we will ask you to email copies of relevant qualifications such as degree and teaching certificates; plus the main page of your passport or other valid proof of identity and any evidence of background checks such as local police reports or previous DBS reports. When you come to the school you must present the **originals** for checking. Failure to do so may jeopardise your employment with us and we may inform your referees that you lack the evidence for a claimed qualification.

Social media

You can find links to our social media channels at our web site. Please join our ECS Staff private group on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecs.staff> You can use this to make contact with other staff, for example to talk about work or to arrange travel together. Staff must not socialise with pupils online before, during or after a course, even if a pupil requests this.

Resources

We maintain an online database of resources relating to the academic and activity programme that you can use to prepare before you arrive. Log in at <https://countryschools.infomanaged.co.uk> Contact us for your username and password. In addition at the school we have files relating to each part of the programme and a library of resource books.

The working day

You can find a basic daily timetable at <https://www.countryschools.co.uk/courses/daily-timetable>. For employment purposes we divide the day into three sessions – morning, afternoon and evening – and expect most people to be on duty for at least two sessions. Some posts - for example house parents – do not neatly divide in this way. Duty involves doing whatever is necessary for the smooth running of the courses and supervision of the students during the period of duty. We will send more detailed timetables for the age group you will be working with.

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 work in the summer school office at Port Regis providing overall supervision and communication. Sarah is the nominated safeguarding officer for ECS.

- **Course Manager(s)** are responsible for the day-to-day running of the course. They often have a specific academic or recreation programme remit. They monitor general progress, liaise with staff, solve problems, run meetings and assist with the administration of the courses.
- **DoS / Teaching Managers** are 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 and supervises house parents.
- **House Parents** provide care and supervision of students in their boarding houses. They have assistants who may be teachers or activity 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

There is a large staff room in the main building, with comfortable sofas and wifi, that is used for relaxation and planning. Please treat this room with respect and leave it tidy. Teaching resources are kept in a separate room in the academic block that is also used for academic staff meetings. Activity staff have their own rooms for storing equipment and for planning. Computers are available and there is a filtered wifi connection in most areas of the school. Please do not share staff wifi details with pupils who have their own connection.

Staff bedrooms are dotted around the accommodation to assist with general supervision of the children. They are not generally lockable. Children must not enter staff bedrooms. 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.

There is a swimming pool, tennis and squash courts that staff are welcome to use. 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 whose role is closest to the nature of your query (see the diagram at the top of these notes). For example, teachers should consult the DoS on academic issues; consult Activity Organisers about the activity programme; and House Parents / Welfare Officer about domestic and welfare issues. Day-to-day communication between the summer school office and staff is through meetings, by word of mouth and Whatsapp. Please do not approach host school staff (eg. catering staff, cleaners, grounds staff, etc.) with requests or complaints but go through the summer school office instead.

Grievance procedure

Try to resolve problems by talking to the appropriate person. If the grievance remains, talk to the Course Manager or the Directors. If the grievance still remains, put it in writing to the Directors and keep a copy for yourself. If a member

of staff wishes to resign from employment for any reason other than a certified emergency, reasonable notice must be given in writing to allow time to find a replacement.

Disciplinary procedure

If we have a problem with your conduct during employment we will talk to you and try to support you in resolving the problem. If your conduct (which may or may not be related to the initial problem) is persistently unacceptable, or if we consider your conduct to pose a threat to the security of students or staff, we reserve the right to terminate your employment with immediate effect. In such circumstances we will calculate your pay up to and including the day of termination of employment.

Two-way radios

These are provided for efficient communications and summoning help in an emergency. They might be used by all staff from time to time. We will show you how to use them at induction. They are expensive devices. Please don't leave them lying around or allow children to use them.

Airport transfers

These take place at the beginning, on Changeover Day during the course and at end of the course. All staff may be asked to 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 at induction and before airport days.

Teaching

This takes place in the morning or afternoon for the different age groups. It is compulsory for all children to attend classes and educational workshops. 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 the teacher must inform the DoS within the first five minutes of absence.

IT facilities

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

Photo / video policy

Photos and videos provide feedback to parents and are an essential part of our promotional efforts. You can take photos and videos but you must share these with the school office. You obviously must not take indiscreet or demeaning photos. We assume your agreement for us to use any of your photos or videos for promotional purposes unless you inform us otherwise. No image of ECS pupils may be published by you in any form electronic or otherwise including 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 found and read by other pupils. We can provide USB sticks to store data. At the end of the course please delete any data you no longer need, especially personally identifying data such as pupil reports.

Our 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 advise everyone working with children to have emergency first response training. You must not apply first aid unless you have appropriate training. We will put up notices in the school showing which members of staff have current training. We will also show you where first aid boxes are located. Each box contains a list of contents. Please tell us if you notice that 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) as they arise. House parents keep separate notes and transfer any incidents to the Incident Book at the morning meeting.

Appraisal

We hope all staff will develop professionally during the course and staff appraisal is an essential part of this. In the first 7 days of each course everyone completes an Appraisal Questionnaire. This aims to uncover any problems as well as encouraging staff to set individual development targets. For example, teachers might decide to learn how to use songs better with their students; activity staff might aim to improve giving instructions to foreign children. Towards the end of the course you will have a second appraisal meeting with your line manager. Course Managers liaise with other staff to complete a confidential Employment Reference Form for each person at the end of the course.

Student reports

Parents like to know how their child is getting on away from home so we provide online reports. The first of these is a 'settling in' report that each child completes with their teacher a couple of days after arrival. At the end of each full teaching week teachers and workshop leaders provide a summary of the week's work and comment briefly on each child's performance. Activity staff and house parents add reports towards the end of the child's stay, building a comprehensive description of the child's participation on the course. We will demonstrate the system at 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 under 11 must have at least two supervisors, preferably one male, one female.
- The exact number of staff needed for each activity will vary according to the activity. Staffing requirements for each activity will be the decision of the activity organisers.
- Students must feel that there is someone in authority about at all times, even when there are no organised activities in progress. Hence we employ house parents, assisted by duty staff daily. Please see the course timetables for the detail of what is involved.
- Staff on evening duty are expected to assist house parents and remain in the boarding accommodation until the students are quiet and the house parent is happy for assisting staff to leave.
- Students must not use the swimming pool without the presence on the poolside of a qualified lifeguard and at least one member of ECS staff.

Time Off

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 throughout the course 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 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.

Signing Out Book

In case of emergency we need to know how many staff and children are on the premises. It is impractical to ask staff to sign in and out but please let another member of staff and preferably the school office know when you go off site. Teens are sometimes allowed to walk to the village shop but must sign out and sign in again when they return.

Student rules and behaviour

Before pupils attend we send them a document called Notes for Students setting out our expectations of them. We will go through this with you during induction. Please be prepared to enforce the rules in and out of school. It is a mistake to 'turn a blind eye' to any school rules: they exist for a good reason. We like the course to be relaxed and friendly, but some students can be expected to test the boundaries of what is permitted. We have a 'signals' procedure, administered by house parents, to alert pupils when their behaviour is unacceptable. **Staff must not**

impose their own punishments or sanctions. Instead, if you have a problem with a pupil you must inform the appropriate manager (academic, sport or social) who will inform the house parent if they see fit. In this way we can build a more general picture of a child's behaviour. If a child behaves persistently badly they will be brought to the office and parents may be informed. In extreme cases they will be sent home. If you find fault in the behaviour of another member of staff please do not criticise them in public; but do please tell us.

Smoking, drinking and illegal drugs

It is a contractual obligation for staff not to smoke, vape or consume any illicit substances in the school or grounds. As the school is rather remote (the local town is around 30 minutes walk) we are willing to tolerate moderate consumption of alcohol 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

One of the attractions for staff is the fun of living together as a community in a pleasant working environment. We hope that staff will take the opportunity to exchange ideas professionally and enjoy each other's company. We expect staff to exercise discretion over their personal lives and avoid behaviour that might bring our organisation into disrepute with the host school, with students or local residents. The close proximity with other people in the residential situation can sometimes cause tensions. Please try to retain a positive attitude: pace yourself, exercise, get away from the school for a change of scene every now and then. Please talk to us as soon as possible if there is a problem so that we can try to remedy things early.

Visitors

Due to the demands of security and insurance we regret we cannot accommodate guests at the school. If a guest wants to visit, for example on your day off, please ask first and let us know when they arrive and leave. If you see someone you think should not be in the school, please notify the summer school office immediately.

Excursions and shopping trips

Excursions are a way for pupils to get a change of scene and learn about the culture of Britain. Excursions should be prepared and followed up in class. Each excursion is led by a Trip Leader who will brief pupils about the logistics of the excursion before the trip. You must attend this so that you are fully briefed too. During excursions it is your job not only to supervise students but also to help them to get the most from the places they visit, for example by leading a group of pupils around a town trail or visiting a museum or historical building. We will try to give as much notice as possible of each destination. Sometimes plans have to be changed, for example due to weather. It is not possible to plan for every eventuality and your flexibility and understanding is appreciated. Please do not expect to have time off during excursions. Some young children must be accompanied all day. Older children will not always need to be accompanied, however you must remain 'on duty' and ready to help at all times. We have a document called 'Excursion Guide and Risks' which you should read before each trip.

London Weekend trip

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

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 even then only when a receipt is obtained for all goods purchased. No receipt, no refund. The cost of travel to/from the school is your responsibility. A packed lunch is provided for airport duties and on Excursion Days. In addition up to £10 is allowable for refreshments at the airport.

Salary and tax

Salary will be paid directly into your UK bank account at the end of the first full teaching week and the rest on completion of your contract. We will ask for your bank details before the course begins. If you do not provide these details or if they are inaccurate your payment will be delayed. If you provide foreign account details you will be expected to bear any bank charges. We cannot pay salary in cash. 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. If you do not have a P45 we will provide you with a P46 on which you must declare any UK earnings.

Realistic expectations

Occasionally, staff who have not worked in a residential situation before arrive with unrealistic expectations. Please be aware:

- Accommodation is not luxurious. Expect your room to be clean on arrival and cleaned if you wish during your stay. Don't expect en-suite facilities. Not all rooms are lockable.
- Things take longer than expected. There are many competing claims for attention on a busy summer school. We will listen to any problem or complaint you may have, and will do what we can, but please don't expect immediate results.
- Food is institutional. It is quite good but don't expect haute cuisine. Vegetarians are well catered for. Vegans may need to supplement their diet. If you have specific intolerances or allergies please inform ECS before the start of the course.
- 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! We cannot cover every eventuality in these Notes. Things do not always go according to plan. Your willingness to co-operate in such circumstances will be appreciated.

End of Courses

The end of each course is usually very busy with departure logistics, packing and report writing. Staff who are not helping with airport departures will assist at the school. There is an end-of-course meal after all the students have left. While it is understandable that you might want to let your hair down please be careful and remember that your employment contract continues until you leave after breakfast the following morning.

Finally

Throughout your stay we will do our best to support you. We hope that you will enjoy employment with us and wish to return. On request we will provide references for potential employers that honestly reflect the contribution you have made in employment with us. After the course we will ask you to complete a staff questionnaire: please complete this to help us keep improving the course. If we are pleased with your employment we will invite you to return the following summer. Let us know if you change your postal or email address so that we can stay in contact. And at any time if you have questions, please ask.

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: +44 (0)1747 852551 / (0)1242 604067 / (0)7530997060 / (0)7917501161

Train: The nearest main-line station is Gillingham, Dorset (not to be confused with Gillingham, Kent) which has regular direct services to London Waterloo and the South West and is 5-10 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>

