Notes for Vacational Studies Staff 2027 (revised/updated IGM/PSD 1 August 2026)

1 Read this first	***These Notes are important.*** Sections are included that are applicable to all posts as well as some that apply only to particular jobs. This is to provide everyone with as clear an idea of the Course as possible. **We shall assume you have read these Notes in conjunction with the job-description and the web site.** Aspects of this document may be tested on arrival. For some posts there are additional Notes. Further details on specific areas of the Course will be uploaded to a secure area of vacationalstudies.com before the start. Staff should read these 'Notes' before the acceptance of a post with us so that this organisation's standards and expectations are known. We cannot cover every aspect of the Course, but all the points included here appear because they have arisen in one way or another on previous Courses. These Notes are designed to be help newcomers, especially staff unused to VacStuds and to boarding schools, benefit from our experience. They are not meant to be patronising (we realise they can be so interpreted), but positive and unambiguous. Revisions from 2026 are in purple. As we believe in openness, the Directors and Course Manager will visit every aspect of the Course. This is to be informed, not to find fault. The office door is always open for staff.
2 Aims	***We aim to give...*** • young people aged 10-18+ the chance to meet people their age from many different countries using English as the only communicative medium • a positive and safe experience of our country • a taste of independence while being secure in our care • a learning experience that they could not get in their own country • the best time of their life. We do not take groups of students via agents, so we have a number of different nationalities with no preponderance of any nationality. Vacational Studies is a huge international family. We are now well into our second generation of students. In many families, coming on a VacStuds Course is a rite of passage. Parents know their children will meet interesting youngsters from similarly cosmopolitan backgrounds. We have been running Courses for 50+ years and are well-established in the field. Our students come to us on recommendation from past parents. The website contains a list of Parental References, so prospective clients can speak to parents who have already sent children to us. We also require a letter of recommendation covering behaviour and attitude to study before accepting a new application. In this way we tend to get pleasant children who are motivated to learn and have a good idea of what the Course is about. Parents and children receive special Notes before they come. You can see these so you know what they know. We appreciate that parents are entrusting us with their most precious possessions. In appointing staff, we are delegating this trust to you. Although you will see children 'en masse', bear in mind that each is an individual who comes as a result of much correspondence. All of them have high hopes and all of them leave behind parents who are naturally concerned for their welfare. What happens to them is up to us. The Course is divided into four 'Houses' (= teams) for sports and competition purposes. Staff are allocated to a particular 'House'.
3 Conduct for Professional Relationships between Staff and Students and all 18+s and under-18s	Policy documents on ***Safeguarding/Prevent:*** • describe child protection response procedures • give names of Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) • provide guidance for everyone on appropriate behaviour and interaction with under 18s **The law changes for those over 18. All over-18s are in a 'Position of Trust' vis-à-vis under 18s and under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 anyone aged 18 or above who may be considered as caring for under 18s and who has access to under 18s is legally not able to have any sort of intimate interaction with those they are with under the age of 18. All relationships must be entirely open and in no way exclusive. No advantage may be taken of an under-18 because of age or status.** **Staff are asked to tell the management in confidence if they suspect anyone of taking advantage of any imbalance of age or status.**
4 The day staff arrive	**The day staff arrive** is Saturday 11 July at 10.00. ***Arrival day*** for staff is the day before the students arrive. We ask that staff arrive at 10.00. We do not request and Cheam does not grant permission for staff to stay at the school the night before. The school releases its liability to me at 10.00 on the day before the students arrive, not before. Use the packing list when moving things in and out of the basement. This is to keep track of the equipment we have whilst ensuring that things are not lost outside (or during) summer. On arrival someone from the sports and social crew will spend an hour or two inspecting the school, noting down anything abnormal. The condition of the school will then be known to everyone, mitigating uncertainty later on in the

	Course.
Absence/lateness	***Student absence/lateness*** If a student is absent from/late to class, the teacher must send a message to the Course Managers in the office to this effect. The absence/lateness will be investigated by them. Depending on the circumstances, the student may be placed on a 3-day Punctuality Report sheet. Lateness for organised activities is dealt with first by the Senior Sports/Social Organiser, then the Course Manager who will investigate whether this may relate to a lack of interest in the event and whether the event itself needs revision.
Abuse	See policy document on Safeguarding
Access restricted	***Access is to be restricted*** to all rooms containing potentially dangerous equipment (such as laboratories) which must be locked. The gymnasium and pool must be locked when not being used. Use of the gymnasium and pool is permitted only when a member of staff is present.
Age-appropriateness	All activities in and out of class are to be ***appropriate for children*** and are not to include any form of smut, suggestiveness, humiliation or inflammatory political or religious content.
Airport collection/return	***Airport collection/return*** A number of staff are taken to Heathrow Airport to meet students on arrival day. Staff are taken there by taxi and return with the school bus. Expenses are paid. Staff accompany students to Heathrow Airport on the departure day to check them in and send them through to departures. Staff go to Heathrow on the school bus and return by taxi unless departure from Heathrow has been agreed with us first.
Alcohol, noise, pubs and clubs	***Alcohol, noise, pubs and clubs*** Unwind in the local pub by all means, but we shall absolutely not tolerate any form of intoxication or alcohol consumption on School premises. This will be regarded as a breach of contract. All staff on the premises must be able to exercise responsible judgment at all times in case there is an emergency. This is why we insist there is no alcohol in the school or within its grounds. Noisy gatherings do nothing for students' respect for staff. Noisy gatherings in the school grounds disturb the neighbours and are not permitted after 22.00. No one affected by alcohol must enter school premises. 'Affected by alcohol' means, for example, anyone who could be reasonably supposed to be legally incapable of being in control of a car. The Course Manager/Assistant Course Manager are asked not to allow anyone apparently over the drink/drive limit to enter the school. That person must make other accommodation arrangements. The Course Manager can decide when to secure the school. This is no later than 23.30. Anyone out after this time must make alternative accommodation arrangements for the night. Night for the Sports and Social Staff. An evening in the middle of the course when the sports and social staff can relax, socialise and have fun off-site (e.g. dinner in Newbury or similar). The idea is that this will break up the course and hopefully ensure that everyone is able to perform to the best of their abilities for the full duration of the Course. Some important things to note about the event. It will have to be organised by the sports and social staff, meaning that they decide what to do and more importantly, what the students do when they're away (ideas: the teachers can step in and run the evening activities, the selected evening can fall after a packed day of activities, i.e. the students are not expecting an evening full of activities, etc.). Intoxicated staff are NOT allowed to return, students should not be disturbed by noise and everyone must be fresh and ready as usual for the following morning.
'Ambassador'	***The 'Ambassador'*** role is described here.
Board Meetings	***Board Meetings*** are part of a student-development 'process' that runs through the Course. We ask the class teacher, one or more of the Sports Crew and one or more Prefects to come to these. Board Meetings are designed to help students get the most out of the people and activities around them.
Boarding School Day	***A boarding school day*** is 24 hours long. Because the children are asleep, this does not mean that they have ceased to exist. We continue to be responsible for them and there must always be adequate staff presence in the house. Staff are asked to 'sign out' when they are off site. Staff who are not 'on' are free to be 'off'. We expect that they will wish to be around the School, but they should not feel obliged to do this.
British Council Inspection	***The British Council Inspection*** All English UK members are visited by British Council Inspectors every four years and by 'spot-check' thereafter. We were successfully inspected in 2024.
Britishness	***Britishness*** is what our students have come to learn about. By all means give them some examples of British humour. Its self-deprecating understated nature is world famous and, although it helps to make us what we are, hardly any other nation understands it. What for us is funny may not be so for other nationalities. It is the same with our values. We tell parents that their children are staying in a modern liberal Western democracy. That is as far as it goes. Our socio-political mores may not be those of the countries our young visitors come from. We must be careful not to assume that they share our values and must not to be perceived to preach to them that our ways are best. The perception can easily become the reality. There are here to experience what Britishness is, not to espouse it. They are free to take it or leave it, but see below.

British Values	***We must make clear to all our young visitors what fundamental British values are:*** • democracy • the rule of law • individual liberty • mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith
Bullying	See policy document including Bullying
Cars	***The use of cars*** Vacational Studies vehicles are not for staff use. Staff must not carry students in their own cars, nor use their cars on our business, unless they have specifically cleared this with IGM or PSD. We use hired buses with drivers.
Catering/Dietary requirements	***The catering staff can accommodate all dietary requirements*** such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, dairy-free, allergies, etc. All dishes (hot and cold) are clearly labelled. All meals are provided for all staff and students.
Charitable arms	***The Jörg Weise Association and The Vacational Studies Foundation*** You will hear mention of these. They are international organisations which have sprung from the work VacStuds does. Giotto comprises former students, staff and anyone else who wants to be part of it. It is a way for people to stay in contact long after personal contact days have gone. What used to be Giotto is now the VacStuds Facebook group. The Jörg Weise Association is named after one of our students who was tragically killed just when he was embarking on a promising career. The JWA helps young people cross frontiers and, as part of its work, awards Scholarships to VacStuds and other organisations. Representatives from the JWA may talk to the students. The Vacational Studies Foundation was registered as a Charity under English Law in January 2000 to assist talented children from less-privileged backgrounds and offer them opportunities to develop their potential in environments they might otherwise not experience.
Chewing gum	***is banned.***
Confidentiality	***Confidentiality - 1. Students' forms*** These are confidential, but available for inspection by staff. Information in them is not for copying or communicating. Photographs are not to be removed. ***Confidentiality - 2. Students' Addresses*** While there is no objection to these being requested for social contact purposes after the Course, we have to stipulate that they must not be given or sold to any commercial or news organisation. ***Confidentiality - 3. Confidentiality clause*** We require staff to declare if they are or intend to be freelance or paid journalists. We do not permit information gained or photographs taken while in our employ to be sold or given to the press or other media. Staff are asked not to promise confidentiality if there is a safeguarding issue involved or that may become involved.
Contract	***Your contract with us/Our contract with you*** If appointed, your acceptance of an offered post assumes the acceptance of the contents of these 'Notes' and the information on the information page of the website is part of the contract of employment. The actual Contract of Employment is here. If your circumstances change after acceptance, request to be released from your contract. No employer wishes to employ an employee who does not wish to employed.
Damages	Damages must be reported to the Course Manager as soon as they have been spotted. Damages to equipment and to the school caused by students will have the cost incurred deducted from their pocket money. Any costs incurred due to damages caused by a staff member will be deducted from their department's spending budget. Any unattributable damage will be paid for by students caught out of bed at night on the basis that, as staff were not around, it may have been caused by them.

Directions	***Directions to the School*** are as follows. The School is served by regular public transport past the front. By Road: From London, follow M3 to Exit 6 (Basingstoke). Follow the A339 to Headley. Or follow the M4 to Exit 13 (Newbury) and follow the A339 past Newbury to Headley. 'Cheam School' is signposted. Take the first left on entering the school and you will arrive at the front. By Train: From London, leave from Paddington Station. Arrive at Newbury Station. There are normally taxis at Newbury Station. If not, dial 01635 33333 (from an overseas phone +44 1635 33333.) From Heathrow Airport: Take the RailAir link (bus) from Heathrow to Reading Station. Take a train to Newbury from Reading Station. There are normally taxis at Newbury Station. If not, there are taxi numbers in the phone box near the Station.
Dormitories	***Dormitories*** are in various buildings on the campus and are divided into boys' dorms and girls' dorms. They range from single rooms with a shared en-suite to rooms with four beds. We do not allow boys in girls' dorms or girls in boys' dorms at any time - day or night. Parents expect their children to be safe. It is our duty to keep them safe. If we think there is movement at night, we shall take action immediately. The students will be told that there will be an all-night patrol of the corridors and the grounds involving our sports staff. Our sports staff will be invited to take part in patrols between 23.00 and 05.00 at an hourly rate of pay to be agreed by them which will reflect the anti-social hours they are keeping. The money involved will be taken from the pocket money of the students in those areas being patrolled and students will be told the amount that it costs for each night we decide to supervise their behaviour. We are all entitled to our sleep. As the patrolling staff may wish to sleep the following day, students will be told that the following day's event may be cancelled as a direct result of their behaviour. Students will be reminded that they have signed their agreement to abide by our rules and that, just as we keep our promise to give them a great experience, we expect them to keep their promise to us to keep our rules. Parents will be informed of any child involved in any night-time activity and the child will either be expelled or put on a three-day suspended expulsion at our discretion based on our opinion of that child's likeliness to co-operate. No one over 18 is permitted to share with someone under 18. Staff will have their own bedroom and generally share a bathroom.
Dress code	***Dress*** There should be a distinction between dress in the classroom and on the sportsfield. We ask students not to walk barefoot in the school or to and from the pool. This applies to staff, too. Stiletto heels and studded boots damage floors and should not be worn. There are occasional events where formal dress is appropriate. Only conventional swimwear may be worn in the pool. Hats/caps are not to be worn indoors by staff or students.
Duty	***Being 'On Duty'*** All paid staff are involved. It is absolutely crucial that it is done conscientiously. It cannot be done from the Staff Room and duty staff must be around the school and grounds the whole time. ***Notes on Duties*** For all staff (except Apprentices) there is a total of 1 duty day + 2 x ½ day duties (or the equivalent thereof) each week. This could, for example, be one 'full day' duty and two 'evening assistance' duties, or the equivalent thereof. Full day duty begins at 07.50 and ends at 07.50 the next day. If a male member of staff is on duty, evening assistance is provided by a female - and vice versa. Evening assistance duty begins at 18.30 and ends when all is quiet. As a member of staff has a legal liability for the safety and well-being of the children, a detailed list of particular aspects of a duty day is given below. THE DUTY MEMBER OF STAFF MUST BE CONSPICUOUS THROUGHOUT THE DAY AROUND THE BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS. This not only ensures that the duty staff are aware of what is happening around the school, but also that there is no period during which it can be assumed there is no member of staff about. Visits to all areas must be frequent and irregular. Any damage or safety hazards must be looked for and reported. It follows that the staff on a full day duty cannot remain in the Staff Room, nor be involved in sports or activities other than teaching. ***Duty - Before Classes*** Ensure that the rising bell is rung at 07.50 (08.50 on some Sundays.) Supervise entrance queue into breakfast. Check orderliness of breakfast arrangements. (At 09.00 Matron checks that dorms are tidy, beds made, etc. Occupants of untidy dorms can be recalled during the first break.) ***Duty - During Classes*** Arrange for the bell to be rung at the beginning and end of every lesson - 09.00; 09.45; 09.55; 10.40; 11.10; 11.55; 12.05; 12.50 ; 13.00 (for lunch); 13.45; 14.15; 14.45 (for the beginning of afternoon activities.) ***Duty - Lunch*** Entrance to lunch will be structured to avoid a long queue. A member of staff to supervise the entrance queue into lunch and name-check the children.

	Duty - Afternoon If students are going out, make sure they have given you their names. Keep children away from manoeuvring buses. Check they have a wrist-band which includes the School telephone number. ***Duty - Before Dinner*** Check on the general tidiness of the School and report on this to the Course Manager. ***Duty - Dinner*** Arrange for the bell to be rung at 18.00. A member of staff to supervise the entrance queue into dinner and name-check the children. ***Duty – Evening and 'Evening Assistance'*** Make sure the hot drink container, mugs and biscuits are in position. Have the bell rung at 21.00. Serve hot drinks and biscuits (with the help of the other duty staff, Staff Helper, or any other member of staff.) Make sure the mugs are cleared afterwards and the room is clean for the breakfast caterers. ***Duty - Bedtime*** Students should be upstairs by 22.30 and in bed by 22.45. Dormitories must be tidy and clothes folded before lights-out. Curtains should be closed and at least one window left partly open. Dormitories must be tidy and clothes folded before lights-out. Lights-out can either be then or after a short reading period (at the duty staff's discretion.) Only the Course Manager may authorise later bedtimes for any dormitory. Maintain a 'presence' until all is quiet. Before retiring, tour the School. Check that all lights are off (except certain corridor lights) and that fire doors are closed. The School must be locked up by 23.00. ***Duty - During the Night*** You are still on duty. Should there be an emergency before the next duty staff takes over at 07.50, take appropriate action or contact the Course Manager or Director. Staff opting out of the Working Hours Directive do so by signing this opt out form and bringing it on the first day of their employment.
End of Course	***End of the Course*** To prevent the high spirits from getting out of hand, we have a special duty rota for the last two nights and an optional all-night activity on the last night. Everyone helps by being on patrol for short periods during the night. There is an amount of clearing up to be done at the end. Staff are involved in this.
Equipment	***Equipment*** This may be used only with the express authority of the Course Manager. Equipment in the kitchen and dining room is the responsibility of our caterers. As light refreshments are provided for staff remaining with the students in the evenings, some crockery and cutlery is provided at the start of the Course. No more may be removed from the kitchen or dining room during the Course. Any furniture that is moved must be returned to its original place by the end of the Course. Drawing pins and sellotape must not be used, except on pinboards. (See 'Damages' above.) We can provide Blutac. The 'Club' stereo is not to be moved out of the 'Club'. The revolving whiteboards in Cheam classrooms must only be written on with special pens provided by Cheam, otherwise use the chalkboards. We use the interactive whiteboards in each classroom only after individual permission has been requested. Students must be told not to mark them.
Expenses	***Expenses*** These are to be cleared with the Course Manager first. We have accounts with suppliers of the sort of goods likely to be needed. Purchases are to be made through the Course Manager.
Extra-curricular activities	***Extra-curricular activities*** for teachers are entirely optional and are arranged by the sports staff. Children can be encouraged, but not forced to join in. A member of the teaching staff is specifically delegated as 'Sports/Social Liaison' and will assist teaching staff who request an involvement with the extra-curricular activities.
Facebook	***Facebook 'friendships'*** when students are no longer students are, of course, acceptable – not before.
Fire	***Fire alarms*** must be responded to. We have fire practices, but one never knows when it will be for real.
Fireworks	***Fireworks*** are banned.
First Aid Course	***First Aid Course*** A practical CPR course is available online and may be reinforced at the initial staff meeting.
Guests	***Guests*** Only if agreed with the Directors (not CM) first, please. We expect to be asked if you wish to invite a guest to a meal. In general, for reasons of child safeguarding, we do not permit overnight guests. All visitors must sign in and out.

Harassment	***Harassment/Unwanted Attention*** is something we can all do without. If it happens or if you even only sense it or if you think it may happen to you or a colleague or a student, come and tell us at once. We try to prevent it happening in the first place. Please see this policy document and this easy-to-read document from a legal firm on sexual harassment. This is to protect you as employees and us as employers,
Humour	***Humour*** Best to avoid jokes at the expense of a nation's characteristic behaviour, accent, history, etc. or to discuss stereotypes or anything that might be construed as racism. See also 'Britishness'.
Insurance	***Insurance*** Our students are comprehensively insured. We hold Public Liability insurance. In addition, personal effects of employees and dependents whilst engaged in duties of Vacational Studies at the School are insured against theft to a maximum value for any one person of £1000. The office can be used as a safe place for valuables. We request that these are not kept in staff rooms and insist that proper precautions against theft are taken. Vacational Studies holds employer liability insurance. This is a standard policy which covers employees against injury through the negligence of the employer. If there is no negligence, there is no claim. Insurers see sports injuries (whether playing or supervising) as part of the risk of the game and an uninsurable event unless there is provable negligence. Staff should hold their own personal accident insurance. Injuries to teeth are generally not covered by personal accident insurance and need to be separately insured.
Laundry	***Laundry*** Students' clothes are washed in the school laundry. The laundry staff will arrange for a limited amount of staff laundry to be done, too, if they are asked. Clothes must not be sensitive to bulk washing/drying and are laundered at your own risk. If you do not name them with a name tape or laundry marker, you may lose them.
Leaving – and leaving a contact address	***When you leave*** Departure is mid-afternoon of the last day of the Course. Special arrangements may apply to Matron. The Course Manager remains until the last student is in the air. Staff are expected to help with clearing up and are free to leave after 15.00. If staff wish to leave at any earlier or later time, this must be by prior arrangement with IGM/PSD. Cleaners, caterers, etc. are contracted until the end of the Course only. Please leave a contact address, e-mail and phone number for the month after the Course in case a parent has a query which only you can answer.
Lifeguards	***Lifeguards*** will always supervise the pool when in use and the opening and closing of the pool. Protocol (NOP) for swimming pool use is here.
Lite	***VacStuds Lite*** We are offering a 'VacStuds Lite' programme this summer. 'VacStuds Lite' is any two or three weeks. It is 'Lite' because whatever is on during the period chosen is included. What happens outside this period is missed. For instance, our free collection/return is included if the arrival/departure dates are as for the full Course, otherwise it is not included but can be arranged at cost. Excursions are included if the dates of the programmed excursions coincide with the dates chosen.
Loudspeakers	***Loudspeakers*** outside are banned after 22.00.
Loyalty	***Loyalty*** The Course Manager and Directors will support staff in front of students - even when the member of staff is wrong. We expect your loyalty; so do your colleagues. Give and take are important in such a small community and any over-critical analysis - of another person or the Course in general - is likely to be damaging. One can always find fault if one looks closely enough, but the positive aspects become obscured like this. Please do not air criticisms in front of the children. They like to take the Course as it comes. We are, of course, willing to listen and learn.
Masterclass	***Masterclass*** takes place during the 'Homework' period now renamed 'Digest'. It is for staff to ride their particular hobby horse and offer to take a Masterclass, if they wish. It is aimed at developing English skills to a high level. Seventeenth century metaphysical poetry, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Wordsworth, rap and UK politics have all been included in the past. Masterclass is a no-charge option for those interested.
Mobile phones	***Mobile phones*** are kept centrally as the children are with us for real and new experiences rather than having familiar ones at one remove. They can have their phones for trips out of school, 'Telephone Sundays' and by special arrangement. If they use theirs for the film project, their teacher is entrusted with issuing it and getting it back afterwards. Staff must not permit students to use their personal mobile phones, tablets, laptops, smartwatches, or any other personal electronic devices under any circumstances. This includes allowing students to make calls, send messages, access the internet, take photographs, record audio or video, or use personal accounts or applications. Maintaining clear professional boundaries and protecting the privacy and security of both staff and students is essential. Where students require access to technology for educational activities, communication, or emergencies, they must use their own authorised devices or equipment provided by the school.
Notes for Parents and Students	***'Notes for Parents/Students'*** Please read these. They are on the web site here and here. You need to know what 'rules' parents and students are expected to observe. The rule banning chewing gum may seem rather drastic and need explanation. The Cheam School does not allow their pupils to have gum for the same reasons we ban it. It causes damage to floors, walls and furnishings. We assure the school that no damage will be caused by gum and we enforce the ban. The fine is high as a deterrent. Staff must report students who have gum.

	'Childline' will be delighted at your doing this. Those fined for chewing gum will have the task of removing all gum from floors, etc. on the last day. We hope that staff will not chew gum in front of students... The other rule constantly broken by students is the one about only having a small amount of money on them. They tend to hide money so they will not have to queue for pocket money. If they do this, not only is money likely to be stolen, but the theft may not be reported as the student knows he or she should not have had so much money. To avoid the bad feeling that results from thieving, staff should instruct students to return all unspent money after trips.
Photocopying and recording	***Photocopying & Video Recording*** The number of copies taken must be noted. Copyright material cannot be copied. The whiteboard can often be used instead of copied paper. We are no longer covered by an Educational Recording Agency (ERA) licence, so you cannot record radio or TV programmes as a teaching aid or copy recordings. Newspapers cannot be copied.
Photographs and videos	***Photos and videos*** Although parents will have given permission for us to photograph and video their children, these are for our use only. They are confident that we will use our judgement not to circulate photos or videos that will embarrass them later on. A photo or video of some youthful indiscretion may be amusing now but, given the ubiquity and permanence of the internet, may haunt them in later years. If a child does not wish to take part in an activity, it may be for this reason. The child should not be persuaded. We take photos on arrival to put into 'The Name Game'/'Putting a Face to the Name'. Care must be taken to name the correct child. Photos of children must not be taken on staff's personal mobile phones.
Pocket money	***Pocket money*** To guard against arithmetical errors, there is a space on the Pocket Money sheet for students and Course Managers to check and sign after every seventh transaction. Return travel arrangements and other information are included on these sheets.
Politics	***Politics*** has no place on the Course. Staff will not pressurise students with any political or religious belief they may have. A student doing this will be seen as a bully and expelled.
Prefects/House Captains/Mentors	***Prefects, House Captains and Mentors*** These roles and the progression from House Captain to Prefect to Sports Staff are described here. Prefectship and House Captaincy can be rescinded by the Directors if the status proves undeserved. There will be a meeting four days into the Course when all positions of responsibility are reviewed and numbers trimmed.
Prevent	***Our Prevent policy is here.*** Ian Mucklejohn, Paddy Douglass and Tom Goodwin are the designated, trained, certified Safeguarding Leads (DSLs). All staff will take an online Course provided by Vacational Studies in 'Safeguarding Basic Awareness Training with Prevent'. The local West Berkshire Safeguarding and Prevent policy and phone number, if you wish to contact them, are here.
Pride	***Encouraging a pride in Classwork*** The Academic Manager and Senior Teacher will award a prize for academic excellence to the student with the best folder.
Professional relationships (Code of Conduct for)	***Code of Conduct for Professional Relationships*** In a boarding situation, staff should have good, friendly relationships with the students while avoiding any suggestion of exclusivity or over-familiarity. The relationship staff have with students is a privileged one, based on trust and subject to professional, ethical and contractual restraints. For reasons of age and authority, staff and students do not meet on equal terms. *No advantage must be taken of this situation for personal gratification and any clandestine or improper development of this professional relationship will be regarded as a breach of contract.* To prevent allegations of any form of abuse, staff must not be alone with any student in a private room. Except in the case of fire rescue or when lives are in danger, *male staff must never be in girls' dormitories or vice-versa.* Staff are in contact with potentially vulnerable young people and are potentially vulnerable themselves to situations in which misunderstanding or malice may put them at risk of accusation. These situations will be explained at the start of the Course by the Safeguarding Officer or his deputy. The 'Safeguarding Policy' describes how Vacational Studies safeguards young people and action to be taken if abuse is suspected.
Questionnaires	A questionnaire for staff is distributed at the mid-point of the Course to gather feedback. Feedback is welcome at any point during the Course whether verbal or written. There is a beginning and an end-of-Course questionnaire.
Relations	***Staff-student Relations*** Traditionally these are excellent with the staff on first-name terms with the students - and vice-versa. The staff may be the only native English-speakers the children have access to. They cannot get this at home, so it will enhance the Course if staff are around as much as possible rather than spending hours in the Staff Room. This is more of a between-lessons-refuge than a staff waiting room. Talking to colleagues outside or in communal areas in the School will help staff-student relations. This is the key to our most successful Courses. Dress is informal with a distinction between what is worn in the classroom and what is worn on the sportsfield. We expect our students to be well-behaved. Please insist on good behaviour in the classroom and outside it. Our students also deserve courteous treatment. **We must, of course, comply with British Council**

	requirement M14 'Staff are helpful and courteous to students and their representatives, and provide good levels of customer service.'
Reports	***Reports*** Progress reports are scanned and e-mailed to parents after about five teaching days. Teachers complete a multiple-choice form and indicate levels of achievement. They can, if they wish, add a brief comment to provide parents with an idea of how the child is performing. The contents of reports must be disclosed to students. They cannot rectify deficiencies in work or attitude if they are unaware of them. Final reports are a similar format to the progress reports. Teachers can give their opinions on the students' performance on the Course - in and out of the classroom. A CEFR assessment is provided by the Academic Manager.
Risk Assessments	***Risk Assessments*** are here.
Rules	***The Rules*** are outlined in these documents 'Notes for Parents' 'Notes for Students' All parents and students will have read these and agreed to be bound by them. It is essential that you know them and enforce them - in and out of the School. It is easy to say 'yes', to appear to be 'liberal' about the rules and seek to gain popularity with the students by appearing to empathise with them. It does not work. The students will see through this attitude. The rules have been developed over the years to help everyone. Children prefer an organised environment and function better in one. We are, in effect, creating an 'instant' boarding school and we need to have a structure of discipline right from the start. Tabulating the rules helps achieve this and such a structure helps everyone. All staff rely on the rules if they encounter a discipline problem and cannot expect the support these give if they have previously selectively condoned their being broken.
Safeguarding (and Prevent)	See policy document on Safeguarding. Ian Mucklejohn, Paddy Douglass and Tom Goodwin are the designated and certified leads. All staff will take an online Course provided by Vacational Studies in' Safeguarding Basic Awareness Training with Prevent'.
Safety	***Safety, Welfare & being 'In Loco Parentis'*** For every member of staff the most important task is to make sure that each student's safety, welfare and happiness are maintained. Legally, we are 'in loco parentis' at all times - even when not specifically 'on duty' - and we must always keep in mind what a 'prudent parent' would do in similar circumstances. Clearly, no 'prudent parent' would permit a child to endanger him/herself, nor take risks with or by negligence jeopardise a child's safety. Prudent parents are protective and restrictive. We must be, too. It is our legal and moral responsibility. The Directors prohibit contact with anyone or anything they, in their absolute discretion, consider 'undesirable'. This includes topics for classroom discussion. The atmosphere on the Course is friendly and informal and the children are on holiday, but we must guard against complacency lest minor oversights develop into major problems. We use the local community hospital. We insure all our students against illness. In the event of a visit to hospital or the calling of an ambulance, staff refer to the Course Manager first, unless there is a real threat to life.
School/Security (Looking after the)	***Looking after the school and residents*** The Cheam School building has a value of several million pounds. For reasons of security, someone on our staff must be at the School at all times - even when everyone else is away on a trip. The school must never be left without a member of staff there. All staff have our permission to challenge (politely!) anyone they find on the premises, if they feel that person's right to be there needs to be established. Note the numbers of and report to the Course Manager vehicles that appear suspicious. Locking up is a duty and must be done conscientiously. Failure to lock up will result in termination of contract. Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the school is secure rests with the Course Manager, the Assistant Course Manager and the resident Director.
Sanctions	***Sanctions*** are usually administered by the Course Manager. The Directors are the 'ultimate deterrent' and will expel, if necessary.
Scholarships	***Scholarships*** A number of Scholarships each year are awarded by the JWA and the Vacational Studies Foundation. These students are treated in exactly the same way as the others and their special status is known only to the staff - and to their friends, if the Scholarship recipients decide to tell them.
School Council	***The School Council*** is overseen by staff, but run and minuted by student Councillors.
School fabric	***All Rooms*** The School is a rather fine country house that we have been guests in since 1975. Some of the fittings are more suited to domestic than institutional use. Nevertheless, they are our responsibility and any damage should be reported to the Course Manager.

Sexual Harassment	***Sexual Harassment/Unwanted Attention*** is something we can all do without. If it happens or if you even only sense it or if you think it may happen to you or a colleague or a student, come and tell us at once. We try to prevent it happening in the first place. Please see this policy document and this easy-to-read document from a legal firm on sexual harassment. This is to protect you as employees and us as employers,
Smoking and other matters	***Doing what we ask the students not to do*** As students are quick to spot what they perceive as unfairness, we ask staff to be so kind as not to do in front of the students what we forbid students from doing. For example, please do not smoke in front of them. The entire school and grounds is a no-smoking area. Smoking is permitted only in the shelter at the rear of the Manor adjacent to the croquet lawn and at the west side of Arlington Arts. We expel students who smoke. They know there is no second chance. If you see a student smoking, it absolutely must be reported. As we fine the students for chewing gum, we ask staff not to chew gum. We also tell students that, although they can have a haircut, they may not change their hair colour or style or their appearance while they are with us on the basis that the student's appearance on arrival is acceptable to their parents. Young people may like the idea of having their hair dyed, head shaved or ears pierced while they are out of parental control. We also ask that staff appear on the Course looking as they did at interview and that they do not change their appearance while with us.
Speaking English	***Speaking English*** is what the students are here to do. The line we take (and the policy of Vacational Studies) is that having a conversation in a language other than English excludes other nationalities, is selfish and contrary to the ethos of the Course.
Sports and social events/activities	***Sports/social events*** are run by the Sports Crew and will keep the students engaged during their free time. If teachers want to join in, that's fine. If not, it would be good if they were simply around to support some activities, but staff not involved in teaching or trips or on a 'Duty Day' can be away from the School without feeling they are not pulling their weight.
Sports Day	***Inter-House Sports Day*** Sports staff are asked not to be away on whichever day is Sports Day. This is, on the other hand, a good day for teachers to have as a day off. The moveable nature of this feast may mean having to re-jig a day off at very short notice.
Staff	Staff Job-descriptions:- • As Directors Ian Mucklejohn and Paddy Douglass are ultimately responsible for everything. We set up the Course during the year. When the Course is in action, we try to get to know the children better and gain an impression of how it is working. We do this by visiting every aspect of the Course. As the permanent factors in Vacational Studies, we need to be well-informed so we can liaise with parents during and after the Course. In many cases we have information about students and their backgrounds which may be useful if problems arise. We invite students to raise issues directly with us, if they wish. • The Course Manager is in charge of the pastoral care of the children and the day-to-day running of the Course with the exception of duties, excursion arrangements and the administration of pocket money. In an emergency, staff refer to the CM before taking other than life-saving action. • The Assistant Course Manager (ACM) takes over the Course Manager's rôle in the CM's absence and has responsibility for excursion arrangements and the administration of pocket money. The CM and the ACM cannot be away from the School at the same time. The ACM cannot be away when covering for the CM. • There is an overall Academic Manager who has a DELTA and substantial experience in teaching English as Foreign Language and in planning a Programme of Work. The primary functions of the Academic Manager are to deliver a task-based learning system and to support the teaching staff. The Academic Manager, in conjunction with the Senior Teacher, helps give a brief induction to the teaching staff on the first day; visits classes; observes and advises on teaching methods and oversees student placements and transfers and arranges the writing of progress and final reports. • The Senior Teacher is responsible, in liaison with the Academic Manager, for teacher-induction, overseeing student placement, teaching and the writing of reports on students' progress. The Senior Teacher also is in charge of arranging the staff duty rota. • A Teacher teaches, does boarding duties and helps with excursions. We particularly look for staff who have experience in teaching children, of working in a boarding environment, or have the necessary sensitivity to children's needs • The Sports/Social Organisers arrange the sports/social programme around students and staff. Ideally, the SSO will have had previous experience of the Course, possibly as an Assistant member of staff. The SSO is available for boarding duties. There is one SSO for each House. A Senior SSO (SSSO) is in overall charge of the work of all the SSOs. All purchases must be approved by the SSSO before any money can be spent. The SSSO needs to give an account of expenditure each week. • Assistant Staff help the Sports/Social Organisers, assist the Matron with her/his work and assist the Academic Manager with student pronunciation practice when requested. Assistant Staff are available to do boarding duties. There is an Assistant for each House.

	• Matron/Medic is in charge of health, welfare and domestic arrangements. The Assistant Matron, or CM or ACM provide cover for Matron on her/his days off. • Prefects can act as ersatz staff to help the Sports crew and see how the Course works in preparation for their applications to be helpers in the future. They can assist with duties but, as they are unpaid and supernumerary, cannot supervise any hazardous activity (such as swimming) or be put in charge on trips. • We aim to develop talent among the students as well as the staff. The hierarchy is at:- 'Student Progression' The role of House Mentor gives young ones a taste of responsibility, if they wish. • Staff will receive support when managing student discipline and behavioural issues, particularly in situations in front of other students. Ultimately, all student management will follow Vacational Studies' established processes and procedures with final decisions made at the discretion of the Academic Manager, Course Manager and Directors.
Staff Common Room	***The Staff Common Room*** This is a communal, no smoking area. Staff are responsible for keeping this room tidy. Ultimate responsibility for this rests with the Academic Manager.
Staff ID	***Proof of staff identity and qualifications*** We need proof of identity for staff who have not worked with us before. We are required to see originals and keep copies of all staff tertiary qualifications. Those coming for interview should bring originals for us to copy. If originals are unavailable for the present, copies will suffice as long as originals are brought at the start of the Course.
Staff Matches	***Student-Staff matches*** Because of differences in age, size, weight and experience, staff and students will not compete on equal terms. Any student v staff event that includes any form of or even just the possibility of physical contact is not allowed. Any student v staff event must be cleared with the Directors.
Staff Pay	***Staff Pay*** Payment is by bank transfer at the end of the Course. If they wish, staff can be paid an advance at the end of the first week, to be deducted from the final balance. As employment is temporary, we are not required to deduct PAYE from British staff at source unless they are normally resident in the UK and so liable to tax. NI is deducted at the prevailing rate. Because we value their experience of our work, teachers (including support teachers and Senior Teachers), sports organisers, assistants and matrons are paid a bonus of 10% of the regular pay if they return after one summer with us and 15% if they return after two or more.
Staff:student ratio	The British Council insists that in a residential situation 'the ***ratio*** of supervising adults to students must be at least 1:20 for students aged 12–17, and 1:15 for students under 12 at all times.' While this must, of course, be maintained, our ratio is far better than this.
Staff relationships	***Staff relationships*** Social mores in northern Europe are not always acceptable elsewhere. We do not, for example, expect hand-holding or other open displays of affection among the staff. In view of the residential nature of the Course, we shall determine the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
Student Leadership	***Student Leadership*** It is important that we recognise and develop leadership potential. Those students who have it will relish the chance to take responsibility. Needless to say, this cannot include supervision of any activity that might be considered 'dangerous' or require life-saving skills. Students can take certain sports and lead the Folies Bergères as preparation for House Captaincy and Prefectship.
Students	***The Students*** are 10-18+ years old. They tend to be bright, interesting to talk to and can have a disarming self-confidence. You may think that their English is better than it actually is. It is easy to speak a little English and a few set phrases can disguise paucity of vocabulary. All of them have a lot to learn. They will learn most from the community experience of which you are a part. The line we take with them is that they are privileged to be on the Course. The students know what to expect and we have no sympathy with those who waste their place and parents' money by not integrating and participating. The Course Manager and Directors need to be told if any student is underperforming.
Swimming Pool	A lifeguard needs to be present whenever the pool is in use. Swimming naked alone or with others or being naked around the pool is inappropriate in an environment with children and will result in immediate termination of contract.

Teaching

Teaching During the four 45-minute lessons in the morning, there should be a balance between oral and written work. The 'Digest' period after lunch is for Masterclasses and whatever teachers find useful. Capitalise on the fact that you are a native English-speaker and that the children are (i) in Britain and (ii) on an international Course. If you are doing something that could equally be done in (say) Oslo with a Norwegian teacher in front of a class full of Norwegians, you are not using the Course situation to its best advantage. A Course of almost four weeks is brief and compromises have to be made. A teacher, like every other member of staff, is really much more effective joining in the sports and social programme or just being around the School chatting to children than hidden away preparing lessons or marking books. The decision whether be high-profile is entirely up to the teacher. A highly-structured lesson normally does not go according to plan. Marking can be more effective done in front of a student. There is no point in making copious notes and corrections if a student does not read them. We have a great variety of supplementary material together with work on audio and video cassettes. We ask staff to make use of all the materials. We provide pens and books to write in for students. Our own Programme of Work (with specific reference to the Task-Based Teaching programme) is published separately. The pre-Course induction and on-going availability of experienced staff is to assist teachers.

Students can find the classes too easy. They need to be pushed - hard. They will expect it from you. The units in the notes contain more than enough material for four weeks - if properly exploited.

The Academic Manager and Senior Teachers place the students initially into 'assessment groups' based on our knowledge of the students, their age and nationality, the time they have been learning English and parental assessment. There will also be a brief, easily-administered placement test. For the first few days there is movement between the assessment groups before they become classes. The possibility for promotion/demotion thereafter remains. The AM and Senior Teachers compare standards in each class and effect transfers. Teachers can recommend transfers and the students should be told that the appropriateness of the level of the class they are in is continuously assessed. The AM and Senior Teachers also allocate staff - first to assessment groups and then to classes. Staff preferences are taken into account, but the AM and Senior Teachers exercise absolute control over teacher-placement.

The Directors and Course Manager will visit classes to gain an overview of this aspect of the Course.

Terms of Employment/ Contract/Grievance

Terms of Employment/Contract/Grievance These are outlined here and in the message sent to you in response to your enquiry. If an offered post is accepted, this constitutes a contract. If a contract is broken, our practice is to inform referees and claim refund of interview expenses. If we consider a teacher's or other member of staff's performance unsatisfactory after three working days, we shall put the reasons in writing and invite the employee to a meeting to discuss the issue(s). After the meeting the employee is informed of the decision and offered the right to appeal. If the employee wishes to appeal, the employee is invited to a second meeting to discuss the appeal. A final decision is given after this meeting. If you are not happy about something, tell us. We shall do the same for you. 'Force Majeure' applies to contracts if conditions beyond our reasonable control occur. These include Government restrictions, wars and terrorist attacks.

Timetable

A Typical Day

08.15	Breakfast (all students to be out by 08.55)
09.00	First class
09.45	Break
09.55	Second class
10.40	Break
11.10	Third class
11.55	Break
12.05	Fourth class
12.50	Break
13.00	Lunch
13.45	'Digest'/Masterclass
14.30	Break
15.00	Organised sports and games begin
18.00	Evening meal
19.00	Games, films, etc.
21.00	Hot chocolate and biscuits
21.30	'Club'
22.30	Bedtime (or 22.45)

Trips	***Trips*** All trips must have a written risk-assessment before they take place. There must be a staff:student ratio of 1:10 or better. Supervision of groups by staff is arranged on a rota basis. Any student going out of the School must carry a Vacational Studies key fob or wear a wristband. They will have been given one. Replacements are available. This contains the address and telephone numbers so they know what to do if they become lost. Accompanying staff must ensure that students have money on them and that they know how to use a public telephone or take their mobile phone. Unless specifically instructed to the contrary, all students must be supervised at all times. No child may be unsupervised and alone. It is not sufficient for staff to ask students to meet them at a certain place by a certain time. Safety is the prime consideration. All students must wear seat belts. Frequent checks must be made to ensure that all students are present. This is especially important before the departure of a bus. We expect staff to appear to be interested in the trip, even if they are not, as children tend to take their cue from those in authority. Students must be accompanied by more than one member of staff - at least one male and one female. Any additional trips or changes to scheduled arrangements must be cleared with me first as contractual or insurance obligations may be compromised. Theatre trips are just that. No stop-offs are permitted.
UK/EU Rep	***UK/EU Rep(s)*** A UK/EU Rep is a native-speaker who is chosen after interview by the Directors. They tend to be 17, about to enter or are in the Sixth Form and should be an excellent all-rounder. They are with us to encourage English-speaking. We expect them to join in with everything and get to know everyone. Teachers can use them as a resource. Their role is described in the 'Notes for UK Reps'. We expect them to feed information back on how the Course is going. They are with us initially on a week's probation. They are an expensive asset and we need to know immediately if a UK Rep is anything other than first-class.
Unhappiness	If you feel unhappy, even if it's nothing to do with the Course, please tell us. We want everyone to be happy and we need to know if you are feeling otherwise.
Vaccles	***Vaccles*** are the currency of the Course. They are awarded by staff for good work, using English, helpfulness, etc. With vaccles, treats can be bought from the Office. These include prizes in a lucky dip. Internet access, jumping the queue for a meal and other benefits can also be bought. Students can be fined vaccles for the opposite of the above. A 'vaccles standard' needs to be adopted.
What to bring	***What to bring*** You will need towels, but not bed linen. Sports/casual clothes are generally worn, but you should include formal clothes for the 'Casino', last-night dinner, etc. Don't bring expensive jewelry. If you wish to play tennis or squash, bring a racquet. If you think you may wish to come to the Fancy Dress disco, you may wish to bring your own fancy dress.
Whistleblowing	***Whistleblowing*** is necessary if something is going wrong. We try to give staff every opportunity to talk to us first even if you think we are the problem.
Working Hours Directive	***The Working Hours Directive*** This limits the hours per week staff can work. As these limited hours can compromise a boarding situation, staff can opt out of this Directive by signing this opt out form or that part of the Contract and bringing the signed copy with them at the start of the employment.
Finally	***And finally....*** Thank you in advance for your co-operation. We are sure you will enjoy your experience this summer. Many of the children have spent the whole of the previous year looking forward to coming. We value good staff and are happy to write references and testimonials after the Course, based on our experience of your work. If you wish to have your teaching observed, just let us know. We cannot write a reference on an aspect of work if we have not actually seen it performed. The Academic Manager can write one for teachers. Paddy Douglass will write one for sports/social staff.

Revised IGM/PSD - 1 August 2026