

Welcome to England and to your stay at an English boarding school.

Here are some guidelines to help you settle in and enjoy your time in this country.



Cotswold Guardians is run by Anne Sharp and Anne will be acting as your educational guardian whilst you are at school in the UK. Anne is available to answer any questions you may have and ensure you settle into your new school.

Contact Details

There may be times that you need to contact me. I am always here to assist you with any requests or concerns that you may have. Any concerns you have will be taken seriously.

You can contact in the following ways:

General enquiries	
Telephone	01285 711789
Email	anne@cotswold-guardians.co.uk
Emergencies 24/7	
Telephone	07733 333914
Safeguarding concerns	
Designated Safeguarding Lead Anne Sharp	07733 333914

Keeping in touch

We will keep in regular contact with you throughout your stay in the UK to check that you are happy at school and with any homestay arrangements we have made for you. Please do talk to us if you have any questions, concerns or if you simply want to chat. We are here to help.

Before you leave home, make sure you have put the mobile phone number into your phone (and remember to copy it over if you buy an English sim card). If you ever have any concerns that are not being listened to in school, contact Anne. She is here to help you.

Your responsibilities as a student

Cotswold Guardians has a Student Behaviour Code of Conduct which outlines the positive behaviour it expects from students. Please see the stand-alone code of conduct for further details. Some guidelines are also covered in the relevant sections of this handbook.

Arrival in the UK

Do not forget your PRB and European visa (if needed). Make sure you have this in case the Customs officers wish to see further evidence.

If you are being collected by a driver, we will have sent you a form with contact details. The driver will have your name on a board and will be waiting in arrivals. If you cannot find them, call their mobile number first. If there is no answer, call the mobile number of Cotswold Guardians immediately.

Living in the UK

Living in the UK may be quite different to what you are used to. Every country has its own customs and it may take you a while to get used to the new way of life. Please do not worry, this is most normal. Here are a few examples of British customs to help you understand what is expected:

Meeting people: Sometimes British people come across as being reserved but usually they are kind, helpful and welcoming of visitors. British people usually greet each other with a handshake and use their title and surname, until being invited to use their first names. For example, when meeting a new contact, they may greet saying "Good morning Mr Harris". Due to the coronavirus, greetings changed, and handshakes were not being used, although many people are starting to use this form of greeting again. If you feel uncomfortable doing this, a verbal greeting is perfectly acceptable, whilst maintaining social distancing.

Queues: The British people love queues! When waiting their turn, for example in a shop, bank or for public transport, people form a line one behind the other so that they are served in turn. It is considered rude to push in.

Please and thank you: British people greatly appreciate politeness. This means when you would like something you would start a sentence with the word "Please", for example, "Please may I have a sandwich?" When you have received something, you should always reply with "Thank you".

Sorry! The British people are often heard to say "Sorry!" This word is used if people accidentally bump into each other or make a mistake. Often people say it even if they were not to blame (for example, a person bumped into them whilst walking in the street).

Mealtimes: It is considered polite to wait for all people at the table to have their meals in front of them before you start to eat. Knives and forks are used to eat the vast majority of main courses, although some British families may use other cutlery to suit the cuisine. Knives and forks are placed together to indicate that the diner has finished. It is not considered polite to eat with your mouth open or speak whilst eating. Similar to the beginning of the meal, diners usually wait until everyone is finished before leaving the table, and often time is spent having a chat around the table.

Keeping Safe

We expect your stay in the UK to be a safe and happy one. The UK has a diverse population and is very welcoming. There is lots to do- from visits to art galleries and museums, to a wide range of outdoor activities. However, as is the case in all countries, you need to be aware of how to keep yourself safe just in case you find yourself in a difficult situation:

Personal safety and the care of valuable possessions and cash / credit cards

When you go out, you should be vigilant of what is happening around you. Keep your belongings close and ideally walk with no headphones so that you can hear traffic and others around you. Try not to use your phone when out and about unless it is necessary as this distracts you and could tempt opportunist thieves. It is best to go out with a friend or adult, rather than alone. Always let your homestay know if you are going out and what time you expect to return. If for any reason you are running late. Please let your homestay know. Make sure that your homestay has your mobile number, and that you have their number in your phone.

Please take care of your valuable possessions, including any money or credit cards. When out, ensure that money and cards are carefully stored, such as in a zipped pocket or bag. This is especially important in crowded areas, as pick pockets may be in operation.

If you lose your debit or credit cards, or think that they have been stolen, then contact your bank immediately who will be able to stop your card.

In an emergency

In emergencies you can call the police, fire brigade or ambulance on 999. This number should only be called when there is an emergency. The telephone operator will ask you what service you require and will ask you for some details, such as what has happened, and where you are.

For less urgent issues there are two separate numbers you can call, one for the police, and one for medical advice:

Police (non-emergencies): 101

Medical information NHS: 111

You can dial any of the above numbers from a landline telephone or mobile phone.

Safeguarding

If you are ever concerned about your safety, we are here to help. If you have any worries, feel that you have been asked to do something that you feel uncomfortable doing or have been hurt in any way by another student or an adult, you should tell an adult you trust, even if the person has asked you not to tell anyone. Any concern you raise will be treated seriously.

Cotswold Guardians has a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who can be contacted with any concerns that you have. They are trained to help you. Their details are:

DSL: Anne Sharp 01285 711789

24 hour emergency number: 07733333914

Alternatively, you can speak to any member of the guardianship organisation staff, your homestay

or staff in school, and they will listen and help you.

Cotswold Guardians has a safeguarding policy that is available on our website. This explains our procedures in detail.

List of useful contacts

There may be times when you would like advice from organisations, rather than from us. Whilst we would encourage you where appropriate to share with us any concerns so that we can help you, you could also contact the following organisations:

ChildLine: Childline is a counselling service for children and young people up to their 19th birthday. You can contact them with any problem or concern. They can be contacted on 0800 1111

Local Safeguarding Partnership: The Local Safeguarding Partnership plays a critical role in protecting the welfare of children and young people in the locality. It is often the first point of contact for any non-emergency safeguarding concerns. The guardianship organisation's Local Safeguarding Partnership is Gloucestershire and they can be contacted on 01452 426263.

The Children's Commissioner: The Children's Commissioner's role is to stand up for the rights of children. You make contact via their website, www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us/contact or by telephone: 020 7783 8330.

Prevent / anti-radicalisation

The ChildLine Website explains radicalisation as follows:

"Radicalisation is when someone starts to believe or support extreme views. They could be pressured to do things illegal by someone else. Or they might change their behaviour and beliefs.

This could happen if they feel:

- isolated and lonely or wanting to belong
- unhappy about themselves and what others might think of them
- embarrassed or judged about their culture, gender, religion, or race
- stressed or depressed
- fed up with being bullied or treated badly by other people or by society
- angry at other people or the government
- confused about what they are doing
- pressured to stand up for other people who are being oppressed.

Someone who has been radicalised might believe that sexual, religious, or racial violence is OK. They may be influenced by what they see online. And they might have links to extreme groups that preach hate like Nazi groups or Islamic extremists like Daesh, also known as ISIS or IS.

Having extreme views can be dangerous. And this can often lead to harmful and illegal activities involving violence, attacks, discrimination or hate - which the person could be arrested or sent to prison for. This can affect them and their future."

Student handbook



If you are worried about the behaviour of someone you know, or if you think that someone is trying to radicalise you, seek help. Cotswold Guardians director Anne Sharp is trained to deal with any concerns you may have:

Prevent Lead: Anne Sharp

Alternatively speak to a trusted adult in your school, such as the DSL, a member of guardianship organisation staff, your parents or your homestay. You could also speak to ChildLine on 0800 1111.

If you think someone is in serious danger, you can call 999 for urgent help.

Further information on Prevent, Radicalisation can be found in the Cotswold Guardians Prevent Policy. You can request a copy from Anne Sharp.

The ChildLine website has further information that you may find useful: www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/

Safe use of the internet, access to Wi-Fi

The internet is a wonderful tool, providing us with a huge amount of information as well as access to our friends and family who can be many miles away. However, we need to take care to keep safe whilst using the internet as there are some people who are trying to trick us, such as into giving us their personal details. Please take great care whilst using the internet. Your school will teach you how to use the internet safely. It is important that you adopt good online safety practice and report misuse, abuse or access to inappropriate materials.

Good online safety practice includes:

- ✓ Not giving out personal details such as addresses and telephone numbers to strangers, even if they say they are your own age
- ✓ Not sending digital pictures to strangers
- ✓ Not responding to unkind messages- tell a trusted adult
- ✓ Never giving out internet passwords to anyone
- ✓ Following the online safety guidelines that your school teaches you both in and out of school.

Further advice can be found at www.thinkuknow.co.uk or www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/



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How to report concerns:

- ❖ Tell a trusted adult, such as Cotswold Guardians DSL, your guardian, homestay, teacher, or parent.
- ❖ If you are worried about online abuse or the way someone has been communicating online you can report them to Child Exploitation & Online Protection command (CEOP) <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre>. CEOP is a law enforcement agency who helps keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online.
- ❖ You can also call ChildLine who will offer advice and listen to any concerns. Their number is 0800 1111

Please discuss Wi-Fi access with your homestay. Some families have packages where they have a limit on the data they may use in a month; therefore, streaming films for example would be inappropriate. Please note that homestays may have filters on their internet and may use parental controls to prevent access of inappropriate sites. Some homestays may turn off the Wi-Fi at bedtime. You should use your own devices rather than the family's home computer.

Bullying / cyberbullying

Bullying is unkind and will not be tolerated by your school or Cotswold Guardians. If you experience bullying during your stay in the UK, please tell a trusted adult as soon as possible who will be able to help you and make the bullying stop. This would usually be a teacher or your house parent if bullying occurred in school, or your guardian, homestay or a member of the guardianship organisation staff if bullying was experienced during your stay with a homestay family. Bullies often are unkind because they are unhappy themselves, so by telling an adult they will be helped too.

Bullying may include:

- Name calling or teasing
- Making unkind comments on social media or sending unkind messages
- Hurting someone physically
- Stealing items from an individual
- Threatening a person
- Spreading unkind rumours
- Unkindness may happen online- this is called cyberbullying

Your school will provide you with guidance on how to spot and handle bullying. ChildLine also offer some advice for children on bullying and cyberbullying. You can find this here

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/bullying-cyberbullying/>

Living with a homestay

Cotswold Guardians expects all their students to be polite and courteous when staying with a homestay. As mentioned previously, it is expected that you say “please” and “thank you” when asking for and receiving items. Your homestay is not a hotel and the expectation is that you will be included as part of the family. As such, you will be expected to engage with family members, joining them at mealtimes, and possibly helping with chores such as laying the table. Your homestay will explain their own house rules with you when you arrive. Please do ask them if you have any questions.

Mealtimes

You will be provided with three meals a day:

Breakfast- Typical food includes cereal, porridge, toast, croissants, fruit, or yoghurt. You may be offered a cooked breakfast such as poached, boiled, or scrambled eggs, or bacon and eggs.

Lunch- this is usually a light meal, such as a salad, sandwich, or soup.

Dinner- this is usually the main meal of the day and will usually be a two-course meal. The main course will usually be hot. Dinner is usually served around the table and all family members usually attend.

Snacks- your host family will provide you with snacks and drinks in-between meals if you so wish.

Typical snacks include a biscuit, slice of cake or fruit. Your homestay will explain how you can access these.

You should ensure that Cotswold Guardians is aware of any special dietary requirements or allergies. If you have any special requests, please do let your homestay know.

Most homestays will prepare meals for you (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). You may want to help the family in their meal preparations or cook something yourself. Please do talk to your homestay about this and they will advise you how to use the kitchen and the necessary safety rules. If you have your own food that you wish to eat during your stay, please let your homestay know so that this can be stored safely (for instance in a fridge if required).

Use of the bathroom

Students are asked to be respectful of the family routines. If you are sharing a bathroom, please be considerate with the time taken to shower and bathe as others may need to use the facility. Please leave bathrooms tidy. Some families may have limits on the amount of hot water available each day due to their boiler capacity. Please discuss the best times for showering or taking a bath. It is not usually necessary to shower or bathe more than once a day. Please ensure that you lock the door of the bathroom when in use and ensure that you are suitably clothed when travelling to and from the bathroom.

Laundry arrangements

If you are staying with a homestay for more than one night, they will provide you with laundry facilities. In most cases the homestay will undertake to do the laundry for you. Depending upon your age and maturity, the homestay may give permission for you to do your own laundry if requested and agreed.

Homesickness

When you arrive in the UK, you might miss your home, family, and friends. These feelings of missing familiar surroundings and family are perfectly normal and are called homesickness.

Signs that you may be feeling homesick include:

- A strong desire to go home
- Feeling lonely
- Feeling sad
- Feeling anxious
- Lack of motivation
- Loss of confidence
- Feeling depressed
- Experiencing mood swings
- Feeling insecure
- Finding simple tasks difficult
- Physical symptoms, such as headaches and nausea

If you feel homesick please do not worry, there are many people who can help you manage your feelings. Talk to your house parent, teacher, parent, guardian, or any member of guardian staff who will listen and will be able to support you and offer advice. School life will be very busy and there will be many activities arranged to enable you to have fun and make new friends.

Electrical appliances and safety

Please be aware that electrical appliances need to be handled safely as they can pose a risk of fire if not used appropriately. Specifically, overseas phone chargers and laptop power devices may pose a significant fire risk so if possible, purchase UK versions. Please do ask us for advice on the best appliances to purchase, we are happy to help!

What to do in a medical emergency

You will be required to register with a doctor whilst staying in the UK. This is usually arranged by the school. If you have private medical insurance, please provide us with the details. Depending on your period of stay, it may also be advisable to register with a dentist.

Please do let your homestay or the guardianship organisation know if you feel unwell. They will look after you. This may include making a doctor's appointment for you, or in an extreme emergency taking you to hospital. If you feel unwell at school, please let your house parent, matron, nurse or teacher know and they will look after you.

The National Health Service has a helpline that can be used. This number is 111.
In an emergency, an ambulance can be called on 999.

Permission for visiting the local area / travelling further afield

Cotswold Guardians permit student to go out but with the permission of your parents. You will need to always be in direct contact with your mobile phone THIS MUST NOT BE ON SILENT! You need to notify the host family of your plans for the day trip and a time of return. Your host family will contact you by text during the day to check you are ok. You must always be back by a reasonable hour and earlier in the winter. This is normally around 6.00pm in the winter and 8.00pm in the summer.

Please be aware of your personal safety! Keep your phone inside a secure pocket and do not carry it around in your hand when in cities like London. Criminal activity is very in these places.

If you wish to explore the local area then just discuss this with your host family and again be in direct contact with your phone.

English laws

Laws regarding the consumption of alcohol

Cotswold Guardians does not permit their students to consume alcohol whilst under their care, including when they are staying at a homestay. In the UK it is illegal for people under 18 to buy alcohol in a pub, off-licence, shop or elsewhere. In most cases, it is against the law for anyone to buy alcohol for someone under 18 to drink in a pub or a public place.

Laws regarding the use of drugs and illegal substances

Cotswold Guardians prohibits students from using recreational drugs and illegal substances whilst in their care. In the UK you can get a fine or prison sentence if you:

- take drugs
- carry drugs
- make drugs
- sell, deal or share drugs (also called 'supplying' them)

If you are under 18, the police are allowed to tell your parent, guardian or carer that you've been caught with drugs.

Laws regarding smoking

Cotswold Guardians prohibits students from smoking whilst in their care. In the UK, it is illegal to buy cigarettes if you are under the age of 18.

Laws regarding sexual activity

Cotswold Guardians prohibits students from engaging in sexual activity whilst in their care, even if they are over the age of consent. In the UK the age of consent is 16. That means that it is illegal to have sex with someone under the age of 16.

Laws regarding tattoos and body piercings

Cotswold Guardians prohibits students from having a tattoo or body piercing whilst in their care. In the UK, it is illegal to tattoo a young person under the age of 18, even if they have parental consent.

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There is no legal age of consent for body piercing, and so it is legal for someone under the age of 18 to have a piercing as long as they have consented to it. Children under the age of 16 cannot legally consent to a genital (or in the case of girls, nipple) piercing, as it is considered to be indecent assault.

Mobile phones

The UK has several network providers. We will be able to help you register with a phone provider and help you purchase SIM cards- please contact us for further details.

Mobile phones are extremely useful devices, especially when you are a long way from home and want to stay in contact with your family and friends. However, it is important that you use them safely.

Childline offers useful advice on their website:

- “Use a passcode on your phone: This can help to protect your data if someone tries to steal or access it. Nobody should be able to guess your passcode, so do not set it to something other people will know, like your birthday.
- Keep your phone with you: Store your phone in a safe pocket so that it is hidden from sight. Be careful when you take it out in public places and do not let other people use it unless you know and trust them.
- Do not use public WiFi: Public WiFi may not always be secure, especially in places like cafés. Connecting to it means that someone might be able monitor the sites or apps you are using.
- Check what data your apps can use: Lots of apps will ask for permission to use your data when you install them. They might want to view things like your location, contacts, photos and even messages. Be careful about what you agree to and check what permissions your apps have in the ‘settings’ menu of your phone.
- Add an ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact number to your phone: If you lose your phone or something happens, it can be hard for someone to contact you. Add the phone number of someone you trust, like your parent or carer to your lock screen or on the back of your phone with a sticker.
- Be careful who you add or talk to: When you talk to someone online, you do not always know who they are or whether they’re being truthful. If you are talking to someone online, be careful about what you share.
- Think before you share or save something: Once you share a message, photo or video you lose control of it. Someone else can save or screenshot it, and they can share it with other people. Sharing or saving nudes can be illegal.”

Please also be courteous when using your mobile phone whilst at your homestay. This includes not using it at the mealtime, or when the family are engaging in discussion with you. You should not ask to use the homestay telephone unless there is an emergency, or you have agreed this in advance with the homestay.

Travelling around

You may need to travel during your time in the UK. This will include travelling to and from your homestay, to and from school, to the airport or any places that you wish to visit. If you require transport please let us know. Transport is usually arranged by your school or guardianship organisation. They use trusted drivers who have had the necessary safety checks. Occasionally guardianship staff or homestays may be permitted to provide transport for you. You will be provided with details of who is going to collect you in advance. You will be given the name of the driver and the registration number of the car, along with the time that they will arrive. Please ensure that you are ready at the stated time. Never go with anyone other than the named person/registration number provided, even if they say that this has been arranged with school/guardian. If you are in any doubt ask a trusted adult, such as a member of school staff, or your guardian.

When you are travelling in a car please sit in the back where possible and use the seat belts provided. If you are under 12 and below 135cm in height you will be required to use a booster seat. This is a legal requirement.

If you wish to use public transport, please ask us for permission. We will help you with booking tickets if permission is granted.

The British Council has some useful advice for keeping safe on public transport. It can be found here: <https://esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/learners/uk-life/be-safe-uk/staying-safe-public-transport>

When you are walking or cycling, you need to take care to keep safe.

When walking:

- Use pavements to walk on.
- Use Zebra or pelican crossings where possible to cross the road, but do not assume cars will stop if they see you waiting. Make sure that it is safe before you cross.
- Stay alert and listen for bikes and runners- this means not wearing headphones when out walking
- Look both ways to check that it is safe to cross
- If there isn't a safe crossing, find a good place to cross away from parked cars where you can see what is coming on both sides of the road.

The Think! Website provides the following advice for cyclists:

- Ride decisively and keep clear of the kerb.
- Look and signal to show drivers what you plan to do, make eye contact where possible.
- Avoid riding up the inside of vehicles, as you might not be seen. If a vehicle is indicating to the left hang back at the junction to reduce the risk of a collision.
- Always use lights after dark or when visibility is poor. Wear high-visibility and reflective clothing and accessories at all times
- Wear a correctly fitted cycle helmet that is securely fastened and conforms to current regulations.

- Your local council can help you plan your journey by providing maps showing dedicated paths and routes.
- Where possible, try to maintain social distancing when you cycle, for example when waiting at crossings and traffic lights.
- Where using bikes (private, docked or dockless) wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands before and after cycling.

Managing your money

We will help you set up a bank account if required. Your money will be managed by your parents. If you need any advice regarding money please contact us.

Keeping your passport, BRP safe and police registration

Your passport, along with BRP and police registration (where required) are important documents. You should ensure that these are always kept safe. Usually schools will keep these for you but there will be times when you need to travel with them, for instance, when travelling to and from the UK. Please take care not to lose them as this could result in travel delays.

Religion in the UK and access to places of worship

The population of the UK is diverse, and many religions are practised. You may wish to access places of worship during your stay. If so, please do let us know, and we will make the necessary arrangements.

When you first get to school

If this is your first time away from home, you may feel slightly sad for a few days because you are in a different country. Make sure you join in all the activities for new pupils and talk to your buddy if you are feeling upset. Do not ring your parents every night, but go and talk to others at the school.

The school will be doing lots to make you feel welcome – take part in everything, and you will find this is a good way to make new friends quickly.

Schools can be cold – make sure you wear enough clothes to keep warm, especially if you have come from a tropical country!

School will run regular fire alarms and practice. It is compulsory to take part.

School will have different rules to home. Please be aware of them – they are there for your safety. If you are unsure, please ask your house parent or matron.

Your room

You may have to share your room with others – please make sure you keep your possessions tidy. If you have posters, only use approved fixings (white tack, etc) so that the walls are not marked. A useful tip is to have a combination padlock so that you can keep valuable possessions safe. All money and passports must be handed to the house staff when you unpack.

It is useful to buy a UK adaptor for your phone/laptop as otherwise they can pose a fire risk.

Make sure you go to the Common Room or House Room and talk to other students, remember to ask questions about them, not just talk about yourself.

Your house will have set bedtimes for different years. This must be obeyed.

Classes

It is important to try your best at school and to hand in all work on time. Teachers will be happy to help you if you do not understand the question or are confused. High grades are hard to achieve because you have come from a different education system and are working in a foreign language. Grades of a C or above are acceptable. It is important to improve, as this shows you are learning and listening well.

Sports and Clubs

There will be lots of different types of sports and clubs to try, from Archery to Zumba. Some will be compulsory, others optional – try lots of different activities and clubs and make sure you enrich your stay at an English boarding school.



Remember to go out and find new friends, you will settle in quickly and have lots of fun IF you make the effort to try.