



The Bournemouth School of English

Student Handbook

Information for students

01202 294938 | office@bsenglish.co.uk



www.learnenglish.today

Welcome!

We want you to improve your English, live in a beautiful area, have fun in your free time, travel to different places, and stay safe while you're doing it all!

Our school is situated in the centre of Bournemouth, on the south coast of England. It's a small and welcoming school, where we all know each other and work together like one big family.

Our small team of staff are always here to help; you can find pictures of everyone on our website, and you can talk to us at any time - our doors are always open!

Our students are truly international - we welcome people from all over the world. The minimum age for our classes is 16, and the average age of our students is normally 24. We also offer special classes for younger students at certain times.

The services we offer you fall into 5 basic areas, as you can see below, and we'll tell you more about each area in this handbook.

SCHOOL	Classes, tutorials, and exam preparation
ACCOMMODATION	Homestay accommodation, and alternatives
LEISURE	Excursions, and free time opportunities
TRAVEL	Private and public transport services
WELFARE	Safeguarding, help and advice

What we will expect of you

Our students and staff are all expected to follow a **Code of Conduct** - this is an important document that explains how we should behave and what is not acceptable in our school.

Everything we expect of you is quite normal in British society, and should not surprise you, so don't worry. Read the **Code of Conduct** carefully, and ask if you don't understand anything.

What to do if you have a problem...

Firstly, don't worry - we are here to help! There are not many problems we haven't seen before, and we will always do our best to give you advice and help.

Speak to anyone in the office, and we will always find time for you.

Help us to help you, and others...

Being a student at our school means being part of our international community, and part of our multicultural family. We care for each other, look after each other, and enjoy being together.

Coming to study with us might be your first time in a foreign country, or it might even be your first time away from your family - it can be scary, but it can also be brilliant! The difference between **horrible** and **wonderful** is often in the small details - people smiling at you, people talking to you, people eating together, and people having fun together.

We completely understand that you will feel nervous when you arrive - that's normal.

Trust us that we will always do our best to help you; we will give you honest advice and sensible opinions.

And then help us to make your school better by being a good friend to everyone else. Smile at people, talk to people, eat together, and have fun together. All in English...

We need your help to create this feeling of family and community - it all starts with you!

Remember to bring... an open mind!

You will find many things that are unfamiliar to you; different ways of studying, different meal times, and different beliefs.

Be prepared to try everything once, make your own decisions, and respect what other people think.

School

We want you to **improve your English**, live in a beautiful area, have fun in your free time, travel to different places, and stay safe while you're doing it all!

Most people say that studying with us is nothing like studying at school, and we are proud of that! Our lessons are designed to be different from what you might be used to - we want you to have fun, enjoy using our language, and start using your English in real situations.

Your level of English

Before you arrive, we'll send you details of our online English test, so that we can understand what classes will be best for you. If you have recently taken any exams, like FCE or IELTS, please do tell us as this can also help.

Every student is an individual, and people don't all learn at the same rate; you will progress at your own speed and, when you and your teachers agree, you can move to a higher level class.

Morning classes

09:30 - 11:00	11:00 - 11:15	11:15 - 12:45
Lesson 1	Break	Lesson 2

Our morning classes follow a course book, and a more traditional style of teaching. We focus on a different language skill each lesson.

Afternoon classes

13:30 - 14:30	14:30 - 14:45	14:45 - 15:45	15:45 - 16:00	16:00 - 17:00
Lesson 3	Break	Lesson 4	Break	Lesson 5

Our afternoon classes are designed to supplement your morning classes, by helping you to access real-world English, and by allowing you to use your language in real-world situations.

These classes follow a more modern approach to teaching; we do not use course books but use the real world for inspiration and materials.

Exams and qualifications

We offer you the opportunity to prepare for, and take, a range of internationally-recognised English language exams; this will allow you to finish your studies with a recognised qualification and a way to demonstrate your proficiency in English.

If you are interested in taking an exam, speak to us in the office and we will help you decide which exam would be best for you, and when to take it.

Attendance and changing classes

Firstly, don't worry - we are here to help! There are not many problems we haven't seen before, and we will always do our best to give you advice and help.

If you **can't come to school**, for any reason, you must contact us to let us know.

If you tell us more than 30 minutes before the start of the morning or afternoon, we will allow you to recuperate the missed hours at another time during your course.

If you **don't understand anything**, relax and give it some time. It can take a few days before you begin to feel comfortable using your English every day. It can also be a very intense experience, and we completely understand this. Talk to us, of course, but don't worry - it does get easier, and you'll love it when you start to feel comfortable in English!

If you feel like **you've seen it before**, that is a normal and positive feeling. The English language is not massive - the grammar is actually quite small - so it's normal that we will practise things that you have studied before. Be prepared to talk about the Present Simple, and Past Continuous... but please understand that we will keep talking about these things until you get them right!

Finally, if **you think you're in the wrong class**, you can always speak to your teachers, and your teachers will be honest with you.

If we agree that you're in the wrong class, we can make changes - so don't worry!

Accommodation

We want you to improve your English, live in a beautiful area, have fun in your free time, travel to different places, and stay safe while you're doing it all!

We can organise homestay accommodation for you, which means living with a local host. You are also welcome to organise your own accommodation privately but we will need to know your local address.

Homestay Accommodation

Every host is different so it's really important that you tell us what type of people you want to live with.

Some hosts work every day while others are retired; some have children while others don't; and some have pets while others don't... The one thing that everyone shares is an interest in welcoming students into their homes. You should therefore expect to feel *part of the family*.

There are many different aspects to being *part of the family* however. On the one hand, you should expect to be included in normal life; eating together and being welcome to sit together in the evenings.

On the other hand, it means that you are not living in a hotel, so be prepared to make your own breakfast if that's what normally happens in the house. You might also want to volunteer to cook one evening, or offer to wash up after dinner. You certainly don't have to do all the work, but you will find that offering your help will make you feel *part of the family* a lot more quickly.

The most important thing is communication: ask your host if there is something you need, and tell them if you're going to be late home, for example. Communicate openly, and treat your host as you would want your family to be treated.

Travelling between school and home

Very few of our homestay hosts live in the town centre; it is normal that you will need to travel on public transport or, if you prefer, cycle or walk.

We can help with the cost of public transport because we have a good relationship with the local bus companies. We sell bus cards in the school office, and these offer reductions on the normal prices.

Alternative Accommodation

If you don't feel that homestay accommodation is for you, there are other options available locally, although not organised by the school. We have connections with local self-catering residential accommodation and hotels of various standards.

As always, please ask if you need some ideas but you must understand that the school cannot recommend or guarantee any alternative accommodation as we do not inspect it.

You must also be aware of the legal implications of living in privately-organised accommodation. If you are expected to sign a contract, be sure that you have read it carefully and understand what you are agreeing to. Be aware that you may be liable for local taxes; language school students generally do not qualify for council tax reductions.

Apart from the legal and financial consequences of renting privately, you should also understand that it can be very lonely and you may not have regular contact with English speakers. You will probably be responsible for your own shopping, cooking, washing, and cleaning. These are all things which can detract from the main focus of your time in England – to enjoy yourself and improve your English!

Please think carefully before entering into a private accommodation agreement. If it goes wrong, you can always ask us for help but you will still need to be responsible for any agreements you have made.

Leisure

We want you to improve your English, live in a beautiful area, have fun in your free time, travel to different places, and stay safe while you're doing it all!

You're always welcome to use our coffee room, even if you don't have lessons that day; we have modern computers and wifi, of course, and our students often eat and relax together - talking in English all the time!

The coffee room is also a great place to sit and study quietly on your own; feel free to ask if you need help with anything, or would like to borrow a book or something else to help you with your work.

Bournemouth

Bournemouth is a small town with a big heart! The town is based around 2 main streets which meet at Bournemouth Square. It only takes 2 minutes to walk from the school to the centre of town. If you want a map of the town and the local area, just ask us in the office.

Bournemouth has a lot to offer and the more you look, the more you will find. A short walk around the town will reveal a busy shopping centre as well as a number of pubs, clubs, and restaurants. Remember, you have to be 18 years old to drink alcohol in England and it's also illegal to smoke in public places.

Sightseeing tours

When you're in Bournemouth, you should take the opportunity to explore more of the region. The South of England has so much to offer, including some world-famous destinations.

We work closely with local tour companies - they offer excellent local and national tours to places of interest and famous destinations.

Depending on what you have chosen, you might have these tours included in your programme with us. You can always book extras at any time - there are posters and leaflets around the school, so just come into the office and we can book something for you.

Banking

It is extremely difficult, and sometimes impossible, for students to open a UK bank account. Most banks will not consider your application unless you have a job in the UK, or can prove that you will be studying for more than one year.

If you think that you qualify for an account, you will need to take a letter from the school.

Sports facilities

You can find a list of local leisure centres and sports facilities [here](#).

Libraries

Our local libraries give you access to information, books, Wi-Fi, computers, CDs and DVDs.

There are twelve libraries in Bournemouth, and the main library is only a short walk from the school.

Places of worship

You can find a list of local places of worship [here](#).

Registering with the police

Students from some countries need to register with the local police when they first arrive in the UK. If you do need to register, there is a small cost and you will need to take some documents, including a letter from the school.

For more information, and to see which countries must register, click [here](#).

Travel

We want you to improve your English, live in a beautiful area, have fun in your free time, travel to different places, and stay safe while you're doing it all!

Bournemouth is a great location for getting around - the town has a great public transport system and is also within easy reach of many famous destinations, including London.

We can help with travel services in many ways, from organising a taxi to meet you at the airport when you arrive to helping you with a local bus for your day-to-day needs.

Airport transfer

Wherever you arrive in the UK, you will need to travel to Bournemouth, and this can give you extra stress. If you are a confident traveller, and over 18, it's very easy and we recommend National Express coaches as a great place to start.

If you are under 18, or a nervous or inexperienced traveller, we can organise a taxi to pick you up from the airport. This is a lot more comfortable and takes the stress out of travelling alone.

Public transport

Bournemouth is served by two very good bus services, and we can even help you reduce the cost of your tickets with travel cards.

The main service in and around Bournemouth is provided by **Yellow Buses**. These buses are frequent and reliable, and service the most popular student accommodation areas.

Wilts and Dorset's **more bus** service serves Bournemouth and Poole, as well as Christchurch and other more rural areas to the west of Bournemouth.

Both bus services do run a night bus service; this can be useful for getting home after the pubs and clubs. Make sure you understand the services that are available; check the times and destinations carefully so that you know when you need to leave for home.

Local taxis

We recommend PRC Streamline taxis - we have been working with this local company for nearly 20 years, and have a great relationship with them.

We know that their drivers are professional and safe, and we can also save you some money on a taxi journey by using the BSE10 account.

Making things cheaper..

The good news is that we have partnered with local companies to make sure that you get cheaper prices and student discounts.

Public transport

You can buy **travel cards** for the local buses here at school, and these cards give you **great discounts** on the normal cost of travelling.

Local taxis

If you need a taxi, we recommend PRC Streamline - and we have set up a special student account with them - you automatically get a **10% discount** on the price of your journey.

All you need to do is telephone **01202 373737** and ask for a taxi on account **BSE10**.

Sightseeing tours

We've also partnered with UK Study Tours, and can offer our students a special price on certain tours.

Ask in the office for special deals, but generally we can save you **£5.00** on any Saturday trip.

Welfare

We want you to improve your English, live in a beautiful area, have fun in your free time, travel to different places, and **stay safe while you're doing it all!**

If you need something, or if you want someone to talk to, remember that you can always find help here at school.

Our telephone number is **0044 (0) 1202 294938**; this is a 24-hour number, so you can call us at any time, day or night, if you have a problem.

Insurance

We strongly advise you to take out suitable medical, personal, and travel insurance in case you have any problems while you are in the UK. In our experience, it is essential that international students have the protection of relevant insurance during their stay in the UK. You should consider protection against loss of property, theft, and any medical or dental condition.

We cannot tell you what insurance companies and/or policies are best for you; this is something which you should think about and organise before you travel to the UK.

Feedback

We will regularly ask you for feedback, and we want you to be honest. Tell us what you think about our school, your teachers, your homestay host, and every aspect of your stay with us.

But you shouldn't wait until we ask you for feedback; if you want to talk to us, tell us and we will organise time for you.

Tutorials

A tutorial is a special time for you to talk to a teacher, a member of staff, or even one of the school's directors. We can talk about your classes, your progress, or anything else that is important to you.

In case of emergency

If you need emergency help, from the police, an ambulance, or the fire brigade, you can call **999** from any telephone.

This is a freephone number, and will also work on your mobile even if you have no signal.

You will need to say what service you need (*Police / Ambulance / Fire*) and explain where you are and what the problem is.

Pharmacy > Doctor > Hospital

There are many options for health care in the UK, but it's important to understand that a hospital is only somewhere to go if you have an appointment or in an emergency.

The first place to go is often a pharmacy (also called a chemist); they offer free advice and you don't need an appointment. They can give you some medicines, and will tell you if they think you should see a doctor.

If you need to see a doctor, you should visit the surgery nearest to where you are living. You can register as a temporary resident if you come from an EEA country and are staying in the UK for 6 months or more.

If your stay here is shorter than 6 months, or if you come from any country outside the EEA, you cannot register with a surgery. You are still entitled to emergency treatment, but you may have to pay for it.

EHIC card

If you have medical form E128 (such as the EHIC card in the EU), you are entitled to register with any surgery in the UK and receive treatment free of charge.

Dentists

You will normally need to pay if you need to see a dentist; it is important to ask for a receipt, so that you can claim back your money at home through your medical insurance.