

Vacational Studies

Pepys' Oak Tydehams Newbury
Berkshire RG14 6JT England

Telephone National

(01635) 523 333

FAX National

(01635) 523 999

Telephone International

+44 1635 523 333

FAX International

+44 1635 523 999

Web Site: <http://www.vacstuds.com>

E-mail: vacstuds@vacstuds.com

The Courses have been full for the last two months. For some nationalities, they have been full since November 2008. A wide range of countries are represented.. All students come having supplied a letter of recommendation from their own school. They should be motivated and keen. I hope that our 'task-based' teaching system will keep them that way in the classroom and that the splendid sports/social programme arranged by the SSOs at Mary Hare and Cheam (both former students) will stimulate them outside the classroom.

All pre Course information for staff is on our web site. Please look under 'Jobs' for 'Latest Staff Information' with clickable links. Under 'The Courses', look for 'Information Pack' for the 'Notes' we send to parents and students (so you know what they know); the 'Events/Dates' list; a list of your colleagues and the swimming pool rules. Messages for parents are under 'Latest News;' on our home page.

Hereunder are some points not covered in the 'Notes for Staff'.

When you arrive

Please arrive at 10.00 on 4 July for Mary Hare. There will be a First Aid at Work course which will start at 10.00 and run through until lunch. After this, there will be briefing from the Course Manager. This order of events is not ideal, but is dictated by the availability of St John Ambulance trainers. For Cheam, please arrive at 10.00 on 10 July. There will be a briefing from the Course Manager followed after lunch by the First Aid at Work Course.

Teacher Induction

The teachers' induction with the Academic Manager, Sarah Robinson, and each School's Senior Teacher will follow the Course Manager's briefing. Thereafter, teachers will have the opportunity to organise their classrooms and help the other staff prepare the school for the arrival of the students.

British Students and other Scholarships

In addition to the full range of nationalities, each school will have two British students who were interviewed and chosen by the Vacational Studies Foundation. We expect each 'token Brit' to be fully utilised linguistically as a teaching resource and to justify his existence socially. The DoS/Senior Teacher will oversee their use in classes. I think no other organisation offers native-speaking students in this way. We have a number of Scholarship recipients. Scholarship students are treated in the same way as the others. We do not reveal their status. They may choose to do so.

Pre-VacStuds

We shall have some young children at Mary Hare. Children from 9 to 11 will live at Howard House and follow a special programme under the aegis of Hannah Cooper and Tom Goodwin. Mary Hare staff who would like the chance to work with young children are welcome to mention this to Hannah.

The JWA

The Jörg Weise Association - one the charities I have founded and described on our web site - has asked me to increase its internationality by awarding the Jörg Weise Trophy more generously than in the past. Before 2008, the Trophy was awarded to a student 'making an outstanding contribution to the international aims of the Course'. In some years it was not awarded simply because there was no one outstanding person among several very good candidates. Last year, I awarded the Trophy to several students 'making an excellent contribution to the international aims of the Course'. The JWA has asked me to do this again. I am guided by staff advice.

Insurance

Staff possessions to the value of £750 are covered against theft (only), not loss. Please don't leave valuables lying around - and preferably don't bring them. If you do, they should be locked in the Office. As I mention in the 'Notes for Staff', staff are covered for personal accident only when there is

negligence involved. If you are injured playing sport and there is no negligence, it is considered a risk of the game and is an uninsurable event.

Sports Day

Sports Day will be held on Tuesday 28 July if Monday 27 July is wet or on Wednesday 29 July if both days are wet.. Please avoid requesting days off on these days.

Students and mobile phones

Student use of mobile phones can, we have discovered, add a new and unwelcome dimension to the Course. We allow mobiles only on trips.

Trips

Where possible, we shall try to take students where they want to go, rather than where we think they should go. On arrival, a coachload will split into small pre-arranged groups, each led by a teacher, and go in different directions. In addition to the trips we have on the programme, if students have particular interests, we can arrange transport and staff supervision.

Catering

As last year, the choice system is one at a time. Students can choose one hot choice or cold choice of main course and return for 'seconds' if they want another choice. Students can take one choice of dessert at a time and can return for 'seconds' if they want another choice. There will be a free choice from the salad bar. Each School will have a 'Food Committee'. Staff are welcome to give opinions.

DVD

I shall be filming activities in and out of the classroom for the 2009 video. It will be filmed digitally in HD.

Qualifications

If I have not already seen the originals of your qualifications, British Council regulations require me to see them as soon as you arrive.

NI Number

If you have not given me yours, please do so now.

Various

My sons, Piers, Ian and Lars, are now 8½, and will be around during the first two weeks before adventure camp starts. They will be looked after by Helen Skinner.

Please contact Sarah Robinson with any teaching queries/requests. She is at sarah.robinson@libero.it.

For anything else, just get in touch with me.

Although staff will generally refer to the Course Manager, I want everyone to be happy, so you are welcome to see me during the Course if my intervention would be helpful.

Ian G. Mucklejohn - 15 June 2009