

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PORTSMOUTH

Please read through this document before you arrive at school.  
All the information in this handbook is designed to get you informed so you can concentrate on the reason why you are here – to learn English!



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# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**Phone numbers:****Meridian School**

(9am – 5:30pm)

0845 673 3007

**Meridian Emergency Number**

(24 hours)

07932 301292

If you call the emergency telephone and there is no response, please leave a voice message and your call will be returned. You will be given a card with this number on. Please remember to keep it with you at all times.

Emergency Services (Police, Ambulance, Fire)

999 or 112

Police (non-emergency)

101

**School address:**

Meridian School of English / Tellus Education Group

3rd Floor Portsmouth Guildhall

Guildhall Square

Portsmouth

Hampshire PO1 2AB

United Kingdom

**Health and Safety**

Please ensure that you keep yourself and others around you safe at your work placement and on trips/excursions. If you see anything which compromises anyone's health or safety at any time, please contact the school or the Health and Safety Officer at your place of work as soon as possible.

**Health and Wellbeing**

NHS treatment is free if you are from the EU. Other students may need their own medical insurance and may initially need to pay for treatment. If you need to see a doctor (GP) or a dentist, please call Student Services on 0845 673 3007 who will help you. Remember that you will still need to pay for your medicine.

**Where is the hospital?**

Queen Alexandra Hospital

Southwick Hill Road

Cosham

Portsmouth

Hampshire

PO6 3LY

**Call:** 02392 286000

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## Before you leave home

### Passport / visa:

Please check that all of your documents are 'in date' and correct. Do you need an entry visa? Not sure?

You can check here: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/do-you-need-a-visa/>.

Please consider whether you need medical insurance.

## Travel information

### Coach:

National Express: [www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com)

Megabus: [www.megabus.com](http://www.megabus.com)

### Train:

[www.thetrainline.com](http://www.thetrainline.com)

[www.nationalrail.com](http://www.nationalrail.com)

### Sea:

[www.brittany-ferries.com](http://www.brittany-ferries.com)

### Road:

[www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info)

### Bus travel:

Bus passes are either arranged in advance in your booking or you can purchase one from Student Services when you arrive.

### Car Hire:

There are many local car hire companies to rent cars from. Their websites are available online, just search for 'Portsmouth Car Hire'. Remember you will need to have a valid driver's licence that you can use in the UK. If in doubt, please check the DVLA website for further details.

[Driving in Great Britain on a Foreign Licence](#)

[The Highway Code](#)

### Taxis:

**Aqua Cars:** 02392 818 123

# YOUR FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL

Please arrive at the school by **8.30am**

You will do a **test** so that your English level can be assessed and then you will be given a **Welcome Presentation** and taken on a Walking Tour of the city.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

As a student you are expected to follow the rules of the school. These are here to help everyone and make sure that all lessons start on-time.



Please arrive at your lessons **on-time**. This includes after the breaks.



If you are **more than 5 minutes late** the teacher will not allow you into class and you will be marked as absent for that lesson.



If you know you are going to be late before the lesson starts (before 9am) please **contact the school** so we can tell your teacher.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR VISA STUDENTS:  
PLEASE SEE THE APPENDIX AT THE END OF THE HANDBOOK**

## GRAMMAR AND SKILLS



Our courses have a good balance of grammar, vocabulary and skills (speaking / listening / reading / writing), so you will have enough practice in all of these areas. This will ensure that you remember what you've learned and are able to use it in real life situations.

## COURSE BOOKS



We have a range of course books for the students to borrow. Students are tested on a regular basis to check progress. The school uses a communicative approach where students actively use language in real-life situations.

## EXAMS



The school can help you arrange the IELTS and the Cambridge Certificate exams. IELTS is the most widely recognised qualification for international students who wish to enter a UK university. This qualification is also recognised in Canada, Australia and the USA. Although the school is not an exam centre, we will arrange the exam at the appropriate place.

# STUDY SKILLS

Here are some things you could try whilst you are here and in the classroom, to speed up your learning.

## IN THE CLASSROOM

### KEEPING NOTES

TAKE NOTES  
ORGANISE YOUR NOTES  
LEXICAL NOTEBOOKS  
> VOCABULARY  
> WORD  
> TRANSLATION  
> IN CONTEXT  
> FORM

### TOOLS TO HELP YOU

MIND MAPS  
USE A HIGHLIGHTER  
MAKE USE OF COLOURS

### THINGS TO DO

ASK QUESTIONS  
BE ON TIME  
REPEAT / USE THE LANGUAGE  
CORRECT YOURSELF WHEN SPEAKING / WRITING  
NOTICE HOW IS THE WORD  
WHAT LANGUAGE IS USED  
LOOK FOR DIFFERENCES TO YOUR LANGUAGE

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

TIME MANAGEMENT  
SET GOALS  
QUIET STUDY AREA  
PLAN YOUR LEARNING

## AT HOME

### THINGS TO DO

DO YOUR HOMEWORK  
PRACTICE SPELLINGS  
SOCIALISE  
LISTEN TO MUSIC  
PRACTICE VOCABULARY  
WRITE TO A PEN PAL  
WATCH TV OR FILMS  
READ MAGAZINES  
TALK TO YOUR HOST FAMILY  
LISTEN TO THE RADIO

### MAKE USE OF

MNEMONICS  
RECORDINGS  
KEYWORDS  
BULLET POINTS  
REPETITION  
COLOUR CODING

### TOOLS TO HELP YOU

DIARY  
ENGLISH DICTIONARY  
REVIEW NOTES  
MIND MAPS  
GRADED READERS  
INTERNET  
SELF-STUDY BOOKS

### TECHNIQUES TO HELP YOU

TIME MANAGEMENT  
SET GOALS  
QUIET STUDY AREA  
PLAN YOUR LEARNING



# STUDY SKILLS

## IMPROVE YOUR ENGLISH

### INTERNET

The following websites have free resources to help you with English:

[www.bbc.worldservice/learningenglish](http://www.bbc.worldservice/learningenglish)

[www.learningenglish.org.uk](http://www.learningenglish.org.uk)

Many course book publishers have extra practice content on their websites which you can use to supplement your lessons. For example, see 'New English File online' and 'Headway' online.

### READING

Reading short-stories, novels, blogs, newspapers, magazines and comics can be helpful. [Just choose a topic you're interested in.](#)

### FILMS AND TV

Watching movies and TV in English will improve your listening ability. If it is difficult, some DVDs and TV channels allow you to watch with subtitles.

### KEEPING A JOURNAL

Make notes of new [vocabulary, grammar, phrases, and idioms](#) you learn at work or with your host family. This will help you to remember.

### EXAMINATION COURSE

Do an English language exam. This will motivate you to learn even more, and you can [add something to your CV!](#)

### TALK TO OTHER PEOPLE IN ENGLISH

Do your best to [talk to other people in English](#) wherever and whenever you can. This is valuable practice and will really help improve your English.

### PROGRESS

You will be given a [placement test on your first day](#) so we can assess your English language ability and inform your work placement.

# REGISTRATION WITH THE POLICE

## (NON-EU STUDENTS)

Some foreign visitors who are staying longer than a few weeks have to register with the Police and get an identity card with a photograph. The entry stamp on your passport will tell you if you need to do this. Student Services will arrange this for you.

## REPORTING A CRIME

You should ring: **101**

You will be given a crime reference number, and should note it down. If you cannot understand their English, they will ask for your phone number and language, and call you back with an interpreter.

Or this can be done online:

Website: <http://www.hampshire.police.uk/internet>

Email: <http://www.hampshire.police.uk/internet/contact-us/>

## POLICE STATION

Portsmouth Police station  
Hampshire Constabulary  
Winston Churchill Avenue  
Portsmouth  
Hampshire  
PO1 2DG  
0845 045 4545  
(3 minute walk from the Guildhall)

# ACCOMMODATION

## Residential Accommodation

University residence accommodation. This option is self-catering only. Please see Student Services for more information.

## Homestay

You are treated as one of the family and have access to all the communal living areas (e.g. living room, dining room, kitchen and garden). You may have full-board (breakfast, lunch and dinner) or half-board (breakfast and dinner daily, and also lunch on Saturday and Sunday). Please make an effort to talk to the hosts at every opportunity. Please do not bring anyone your host does not know back to the accommodation unless you have permission from the hosts themselves. Some hosts do not have internet access. However, if they do, please do not abuse it (e.g. don't download harmful or inappropriate material).

## Housekeeping

You must keep your own room clean. It is your responsibility to make your bed and keep your room in a presentable condition. Your host cleans your room once a week and provides you with a clean set of bed linen and a bath towel. Please talk to your host about laundry arrangements.

Please remember smoking is forbidden in the house.

Please don't use the host's phone. You may receive calls on it, but you should not make calls on it.

Please use your mobile instead. The school reception can give you a UK SIM if you would like one.

Please be aware that you will be sharing a bathroom, so please ask the host when the best time is for you to use it.

## Food and Drink

Please let your host know if you are unable to eat any particular food and if you dislike any food.

Please understand that your host wants you to enjoy your meals. The host will provide you with English food, but please keep in mind that it's not the same food as you would get in your country.

Please ask your host when meal times are.

## Curfew Times

<b>PLEASE AGREE WITH YOUR HOSTS</b>	<b>OVER 18</b>
<b>YOU MUST BE HOME BY 23:00</b>	<b>17 YEARS OLD</b>
<b>YOU MUST BE HOME BY 22:00</b>	<b>16 YEARS OLD</b>
<b>YOU MUST BE HOME BY 21:00</b>	<b>15 YEARS OLD</b>
<b>YOU MUST BE HOME BY 20:00</b>	<b>12 - 14 YEARS OLD</b>
<b>YOU MUST BE HOME BY 18:00</b>	<b>11 YEARS OLD</b>

If you are going to be late, please call your host and inform them. If you are under 18 and don't call them, then we will have to call the police to find you if you are late. This is a standard procedure to ensure safety. Please respect the rules that are in place to keep you safe and enjoy your stay with us. If you have any questions about your accommodation, please speak to Student Services who will be happy to assist you.

# GUIDANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

## ON THE BUS

To catch a bus, please signal to the driver that you want him/her to stop at your stop.

Please try and give bus drivers the correct change if you can.

Bus drivers do not usually have change for **£20** notes, so please make sure you have the correct change.



## DRIVING

Under UK law, you are allowed to consume a very small amount of alcohol before driving (**up to 35 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath**). However, it is strongly advised that you do not drive a car if you have drunk any amount of alcohol.

The penalty for driving while drunk is very severe and you will lose your licence and receive a large fine to pay. It will also affect your future insurance premium.

## RECREATIONAL HABITS

You must be **18 to buy and smoke cigarettes** or tobacco.

You must be **18 to buy alcohol**. You must take your personal identification card (ID) with you to buy alcohol as the UK operates a '**challenge 25**' policy whereby if you look under 25 years old you will be asked for your ID.

You will not be served tobacco or alcohol unless you have this.



## KEEPING YOURSELF AND YOUR THINGS SAFE

**PASSPORT**  
**AIRLINE TICKETS**  
**MONEY**



Please keep these in a safe place at your host's home.

**REMEMBER!**

DON'T WALK  
 AROUND LATE  
 AT NIGHT

**MOST DRUGS ARE ILLEGAL**

PLEASE LOOK **RIGHT** WHEN  
 YOU CROSS THE ROAD

**BE AWARE**

OF THIEVES

WHEN YOU GO OUT

**DO NOT TAKE**

A LOT OF

**MONEY**

## GENERAL BEHAVIOUR

- It is illegal to smoke in buildings (including e-cigarettes) or in any public place.
- Please show respect to the rules and regulations of the place where you are working.
- Please be considerate to others.

# OUR POLICY ON BAD BEHAVIOUR

Any kind of bad behaviour, including bullying, is not allowed. All incidents will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

## BAD BEHAVIOUR INCLUDES:



### BULLYING

Bullying (trying to frighten others by physical, emotional, or spoken means either in person or via social media channels e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc. - known as 'cyber bullying').

## OTHER BAD BEHAVIOUR INCLUDES:



### SWEARING



### BEING UNKIND TO OTHERS



### LACK OF RESPECT



### BEING DISRUPTIVE AT YOUR WORK PLACEMENT

If you know or see any bad behaviour (especially bullying) you should report it to a member of staff immediately.

Bad behaviour in class is not acceptable. If you are disruptive in class, either by ignoring the instructions of your teacher or affecting the learning of other students, you may be asked to leave the class. You will be reported to the DOS.

# RULES FOR UNDER 18s

## IN SCHOOL:

Start your class on-time.

At break times, always stay on school grounds

Resume class on-time after breaks

Always eat your lunch in the school

Don't leave the school with anybody you do not know

Always be polite

Don't run around school or make unnecessary noise

Always speak to somebody from Student Services if you have a problem or something is wrong



## AT YOUR HOST:

Set your alarm to allow you enough time to get up and have breakfast and get ready to leave for your work placement.

Be polite and courteous to your hosts and follow the housekeeping rules of the host.

Please observe the curfew times (see page 9).

If you are going to be late please let your host know.

Always go home for your evening meal.

Always speak to your host if you have a problem or something is wrong.



# RULES FOR UNDER 18s

## ACTIVITIES AND EXCURSIONS:



### LEISURE PROGRAMME

We have a fun, interesting and varied leisure programme of evening and weekend activities available to students. For more details speak to Student Services or read the information displayed around the school.

You need to be ready to leave on-time.

Make sure you follow the way led by the activity leader.

Always listen to and take notice of your activity leader - they will be giving you instructions and guidance on the activity/excursion including safety information.

Always make sure you have your host family's address and telephone number with you.

Make sure you wear appropriate clothing for the activity: footwear/jacket/hat, etc. Please also take an umbrella/bottle of water/sunscreen, etc - check the weather!

Always speak to your Activity Leader/guide if you have a problem or if something is wrong.



# FREE TIME

## WHAT IS ON IN THE CITY?

If you want to go on a trip by yourself or go to an event in the city you are in, visit the local Tourist Information Office or go to their websites:

[www.visitportsmouth.co.uk](http://www.visitportsmouth.co.uk)

You can also find information on our website:

[www.meridianenglish.com/events](http://www.meridianenglish.com/events)

## SHOPPING

During the week (Monday to Friday), most shops open at 9:00am and close at approx. 5:00pm. Supermarkets stay open later (Tesco, Sainsburys, Asda, Co-op etc).

### Saturday

Most shops open the same hours as during the week.

### Sunday

Many shops are open during the day but usually close earlier than on Saturday or during the week. Most shops have video cameras (CCTV) or store guards to prevent people from stealing goods from the shop (shoplifting). Make sure you keep the receipt for anything you buy from the shop so you can show that you have paid for it.

English law is usually tough on shoplifters (people who steal things from shops).

## LIBRARY

Portsmouth Central Library is in Guildhall Square. They too have free internet facilities.

<http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/learning/1028.html>

## PLACES OF WORSHIP

If you are looking for a place to practise your religion or to worship in the Portsmouth area you will need to use a search engine or the online 'yellow pages'.

## CONTACTING YOUR EMBASSY OR CONSUL

If you need to contact your embassy or consul, you can find the contact details here:

[www.embassyworld.com](http://www.embassyworld.com)

## SAFEGUARDING

If you are worried about your own safety or someone else's at your work placement, please talk to the Designated Safeguarding Person (SDSP) at the school. Please find information on safeguarding around the school.

## COMPLAINTS

If you are unhappy about something, please speak to Student Services. They will put you in contact with the right person or department.

If you still feel that this has not solved the problem, you can contact our Complaints and Compliance Manager by email:

[info@meridianenglish.co.uk](mailto:info@meridianenglish.co.uk)

If you make a complaint, we will:

Treat you in a courteous and professional way.

Treat your complaint seriously.

Deal with your complaint promptly.

For a full description of the complaints policy and procedure go to: <http://www.meridianenglish.com/policies>

# APPENDIX

## ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR VISA STUDENTS

Students must have an 80% attendance rate. If a student fails to achieve this in any given week, and does not have an acceptable excuse (e.g. phoning in sick before a class starts or a documented visit to an embassy), he/she will be given a verbal warning from their teacher.

Student's monthly attendance will be monitored by the Director of Studies / Assistant Director of Studies.

If student's attendance does not improve during the next calendar month, he/she will be given a second Verbal Warning from the Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies and warned that they may not receive a certificate at the end of their course.

If the student improves his/her attendance in the next calendar month and continues to have good attendance (above 80%), no further action will be taken and the procedure, if it happens again, will start from the beginning.

If a student's attendance continues to fall below 80% again in the second month, they will receive a Final Written Warning from the Director of Studies/Assistant Director of Studies in which the student will be informed that if their attendance does not improve in the next calendar month they will be asked to leave the school and no refund will be given. This letter will also be forwarded to the embassy if the student is sponsored.

If the student improves his/her attendance in the next calendar month and continues to have good attendance (above 80%), no further action will be taken and the procedure, if it happens again, will start from the beginning.

If no improvement in attendance happens for a 3rd consecutive calendar month the student will receive a Termination of Studies letter from the Chairman of Tellus Group informing them that they must leave the school and their accommodation/residence. A copy of this letter will be sent to their sponsor and/or family.

The UK Visas and Immigration department will be informed if the student has a study visa.



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Meridian School of English is a trading name of Tellus Education Group Ltd.

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