



THE LONDON  
SCHOOL OF  
ENGLISH  
SINCE 1912

## **PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION**

Summer 2009

## Welcome to the London School of English!

Thank you for booking a course at the London School of English. We look forward to welcoming you to the school and hope your stay with us will be successful and enjoyable.

The following information is intended to help you make all the necessary preparations before coming to London and for your arrival in this country. We have also included some information about living in London, to help you prepare for your visit.

We know that you may be very busy in the period just before you leave for England, and may not have time to read everything. If you do not have enough time to read all of the information, please read these very important sections:

- OUR TWO LOCATIONS to make sure you know where to go (page 5)
- PRACTICAL THINGS TO ARRANGE BEFORE YOU COME (page 7)
- ARRIVING IN THE UK (page 10)
- CHANGING YOUR COURSE
- Cancellation and postponement Changing your course after you have started and (page 14)
- HOMESTAY ACCOMMODATION (page 21)

You may like to print this information pack out for reference, but we also suggest that you read it first time on screen, as there are a number of web site links which will be much easier for you to look at if you are connected to the Internet.

If you have used an agent or representative in your country some of the contents of this information pack will not apply to you. For example, you may have paid your fees in your own country. Different agents arrange things differently, so it's hard to say exactly which parts may not apply to you – please use your common sense, or ask your agent or us if you are not sure.

Our web site ([www.londonschool.com](http://www.londonschool.com)) has a lot of detailed information to help you before and during your stay. Please have a good look at it before you come.

Finally, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us. You can ring us on +44 20 7605 4123, email us on [clients@londonschool.com](mailto:clients@londonschool.com), or fax us on +44 20 7605 4190. If you are having any problems, please do feel free to ask for me.

We look forward to seeing you in London.



Timothy Blake Managing Director

The London School of English  
15 Holland Park Gardens  
London W14 8DZ

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## OUR TWO LOCATIONS

Depending on your course, you will study at one of our two centres in London. In some cases, you may be doing part of your course in one centre and part in the other.

Both centres are in excellent locations, convenient to central London but slightly away from the noise and crowds.

Your course confirmation stated which centre you are in, and included a map, but if you are not sure which centre your course will be held at, please contact the school.

### Holland Park Gardens

Holland Park is an exclusive neighbourhood within Kensington, quiet and green, about 10-15 minutes by Underground from Oxford Street.

Our spacious building at **15 Holland Park Gardens** offers 26 training rooms, all with audio and video equipment and excellent facilities throughout including multimedia computer room, free wireless Internet and email. It is almost fully air-conditioned.

Your accommodation will be conveniently close to the school. When we send you details of where you are staying, we will include instructions for how to reach the school. Your homestay hosts or hotel can also help you if necessary.

See page 15 for more information about technical facilities.

When full we have about 130 people studying with us at Holland Park Gardens

- Courses at Holland Park Gardens
- International Business Communication
- Communicating Effectively in English
- Young Business English
- Cambridge BEC Vantage
- Cambridge BEC Higher
- Individual Tuition
- English for the Public Sector
- Legal English: Commercial Lawyers
- Legal English: Public Sector Lawyers
- Legal English: Criminal Lawyers
- Legal English: Young Lawyers
- TOLES (Test of Legal English Skills)
- Legal English: Legal Secretaries
- English for Human Resources Professionals
- Communication Skills for Bankers
- English for Secretaries and Personal/Executive Assistants
- English for Engineers
- Other specialised group programmes

### Getting to Holland Park Gardens

The local Underground station (Holland Park) is in Zone 2, on the Central Line. It is about 5 minutes' walk away. Central London (Oxford Circus) is 10-15 minutes by Underground.

Buses 94, 148 and 49 pass nearby.

See our web site for a local area map:

[www.londonschool.com/docs/LSE\\_Map\\_Holland\\_Park\\_Gardens.pdf](http://www.londonschool.com/docs/LSE_Map_Holland_Park_Gardens.pdf).

## **Westcroft Square**

Stamford Brook is about three kilometres west of Holland Park Gardens. It is a pleasant residential area with many local amenities including restaurants, cafés, shops, parks and sport centres.

Our building at **65 Westcroft Square** is modern and was completely rebuilt for our purposes in 1998. It is fully air-conditioned. It offers 14 training rooms all with audio and video equipment and self-access facilities including multimedia computer room and language laboratory. The whole building offers free wireless internet.

Your accommodation will be conveniently close to the school. When we send you details of where you are staying, we will include instructions for how to reach the school. Your homestay hosts or hotel can also help you if necessary.

See page 15 for more information about technical facilities.

When full we have about 130 people studying with us.

Courses at Westcroft Square

Intensive General English Course

Cambridge First Certificate Course

Cambridge Advanced English Course

IELTS Course

Individual Tuition

Flying Start

Getting to Westcroft Square

The local Underground station (Stamford Brook) is in Zone 2, on the District Line. It is about 3 minutes' walk away. Central London (Victoria) is 15-20 minutes away.

Buses 27, 190, 237, 267 and 391 pass nearby.

See our web site for a local area map: [www.londonschool.com/docs/LSE\\_Map\\_Westcroft\\_Square.pdf](http://www.londonschool.com/docs/LSE_Map_Westcroft_Square.pdf).

## **PRACTICAL THINGS TO ARRANGE BEFORE YOU COME**

### **Money**

#### Fees

Please remember that unless you are arranging your course through one of our accredited agents the balance of the fees must be paid in full 30 days before your course starts, or at the time of booking if you are booking less than 30 days in advance.

#### Accommodation money

If you are staying for a month or less, you must pay for all your accommodation by the time your course starts. If you are staying longer, you can either pay all your accommodation in advance, or month by month, as you prefer.

#### Private spending money

Although these days most people get cash from an ATM at a bank, you can also send money to our bank and withdraw it in the school whenever you need it.

### **Paying us**

Payments can be made by:

Bank transfer (details shown below)

Credit card (Visa, Mastercard, American Express or Diners Club)

Cheque (drawn on a UK bank only)

Travellers' cheques or cash (when you are in London only)

#### Bank transfer

Bank to bank transfers usually take at least a week and from some countries it may be much longer, even if banks sometimes tell you something else. So if you need to send money, please do so in good time. The transfer documents should give your name and say what the money is for (for example course fees, personal money). Please make sure that you pay all bank charges in your country.

School Bank Account No 10468606 Barclays Bank (20-06-05) Pall Mall London Swift: BARC GB22  
IBAN: GB15BARC20060510468606

### **Personal and Health Insurance**

We strongly advise you to arrange insurance before you leave home, to cover any loss of personal property, money etc. The school's own insurance covers small losses of property on our premises, but does not cover money, valuable items or losses elsewhere in London. If you are staying in school accommodation or with friends, your host's insurance may not cover any losses to your property in their house. Remember that even with insurance you will probably have to pay something towards your loss (typically the first £50 is not covered).

Students from EU countries can get a special form (E111) before coming to the UK. With this, if you need to go to the doctor you will not have to pay for any consultation, although you will still have to pay a standard charge for any medicines you need. You will have to pay if you need to visit a dentist.

If you are not from the EU or a country with a reciprocal health agreement, you should take out some medical insurance before coming to England. You may have to pay if you go to the doctor but you will be able to get the money back from the insurance company. Emergency treatment in hospital is free in the UK.

As a result of changes in UK law, we cannot arrange insurance on your behalf, but you can do this on line at:

[https://secure.tamar.co.uk/Endsleigh/cgi-shl/agent\\_refer.cgi?agent=00323&policy=languageSchool](https://secure.tamar.co.uk/Endsleigh/cgi-shl/agent_refer.cgi?agent=00323&policy=languageSchool)

## **Visas**

If you have an EU, West European or Scandinavian passport, you will have no problems entering the UK. If you come from other countries, you will need a visa. In many cases you can get this when you arrive, but not always. It is very important that you understand the visa procedures: please read our visa note at [www.londonschool.com/Travel\\_Visas.cfm](http://www.londonschool.com/Travel_Visas.cfm).

Even if you have a visa, remember to bring your visa letter and course confirmation with you when you come to London. You may be asked for them when you go through passport control.

## **Things to remember before coming to London**

•

Return the pre-course questionnaire we have sent you. If you have not received one, please ask us for one.

•

Tell us your arrival details if you have requested an airport transfer. We need to know the airport and terminal you will arrive at, your arrival date and time, your flight number and the city you are coming from (if you are not flying direct, we need to know these details for the last flight you are taking).

•

Pay the balance of your fees if you have not already done so.

•

Notify the school if you intend to arrive late.

•

Make bank transfers at least 7 days before leaving to ensure you have enough money when you arrive in London. Bank transfer documents must show your name and say what the money is for (for example, course fees, accommodation, personal money).

•

Contact your homestay about your arrival date/time, unless we are arranging your transfer from the airport.

•

You might consider organising your Oyster card for London Transport from your own country. This way it will be available for you as soon as you arrive. You can get these from a Visit Britain office - see [www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/faresandtickets/visitortickets/5181.aspx](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/faresandtickets/visitortickets/5181.aspx). There is a special visitor's Oyster card available ([www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/faresandtickets/visitortickets/5185.aspx](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/faresandtickets/visitortickets/5185.aspx)) but you cannot put a weekly travel pass on it, so you may prefer to get a normal Oyster card.

•

If you are taking an examination course:

Return your pre-test within one week. We can only confirm your place on the course when we have received it.

Check the exam date before booking your return flight (if this cannot be changed later). The exams are usually – but not always – held in the week after the end of the course. You can check this – or anything else about your exam – by sending an email to [exams@londonschool.com](mailto:exams@londonschool.com).

## **Things to bring with you to London**

Course confirmation and visa letter if appropriate.

Details of the family where you are staying.

Credit cards/travellers cheques.

Mobile phone and charger. You can easily buy a pay-as-you-go SIM card for it when you are here, to give you a UK phone number.

An internationally recognised student card if you have one.

Relevant documents if you have arranged your own insurance.

Your driving licence in case you want to hire a car (You have to be aged over 23, and have held a (clean) licence for a minimum of 2 years). If your own licence is not in a West European language or if an authorized translation into English is not provided, you may need to get an International Driving Licence.

A good bi-lingual dictionary. Mono-lingual dictionaries can be bought more cheaply at the school or in London if you do not already have one.

A memory stick to save any work you do in the computer lab.

Any materials you might wish to use for self-study, (for instance, a technical text or book on a specific subject that interests you) or for a presentation on a business English course, (for instance, statistics, graphs or a map).

Consider bringing a laptop computer – especially if your course will cover making presentations, etc. We have wired and wireless networks at both our centres in London. If you do not bring your own computer you can always use the student computers during school opening hours.

If you think you might want to connect to your office network from London, please make sure you bring all the necessary technical details to set up VPN access.

Suitable clothing and equipment if you wish to do some sport (and perhaps an umbrella!).

An adaptor for non-British plugs if you wish to use a hair-dryer or other electrical appliances. In the UK we use 3-pin plugs and the power is 240 volts. You can buy such adaptors in London if you have difficulty finding them in your country. We also have them for hire in the school.

Some passport-sized photographs, for student cards, travel passes etc.

## ARRIVING IN THE UK

If you have requested an airport transfer, you do not need to read this section. Please make sure that you send us your arrival details in good time, and remember to bring your pickup instructions with you.

If you have not requested a transfer but would like one, please let us know as soon as possible. It costs £85 from all London airports.

### By air

London's main airports are **Heathrow** and **Gatwick**. Other airports you may use are **Stansted**, **Luton**, and **London City**. We are closest to Heathrow but travel from all these airports is straightforward.

The method you choose may depend on how much luggage you have with you.

If you have asked us to arrange accommodation for you, we will send a map and arrival instructions from Heathrow Airport when we confirm details of your accommodation.

### Heathrow

Underground. Frequent Piccadilly line trains into central London. Approximately 25 minutes to Hammersmith station. This costs between £2.10 and £3.80 depending on your destination.

Heathrow Express. This train is fast but goes to Paddington which is not the most convenient station for you unless you are staying at a hotel in the Bayswater area. It is also quite expensive.

Taxi. Costs about £30 - £35 to Central/West London. It is cheaper to take the Underground to Acton Town, Hammersmith or Notting Hill Gate and then continue your journey by taxi (there is a taxi office in the station).

### Gatwick

Train. There is an excellent service into Victoria Station. Trains run every 15 minutes and the journey time is 30 minutes. From Victoria Station continue your journey by Underground and/or taxi.

Taxi. Gatwick is a long way from central London so taxis are expensive and we do not recommend them. Airport transfers can be arranged.

### London City

London underground. Airport transfers can also be arranged. A taxi is possible, although quite expensive to the area where most of our accommodation is located.

### Luton

Airport bus or train into Central London and then continue by Underground and/or taxi. Airport transfers can also be arranged. Luton is a long way from central London so taxis are expensive and we do not recommend them.

### Stansted

Train to Liverpool Street Station and then continue your journey by Underground and/or taxi. Airport transfers can also be arranged. Stansted is a long way from central London so taxis are expensive and we do not recommend them.

### **By train/train and ferry**

London has quite a lot of railway stations and if you are travelling by train you must remember to check which one you will use.

The Eurostar train from Paris or Brussels arrives at **St Pancras Station**.

If you come by ferry and train through Dover, you will normally arrive at **Victoria Station**. If your port of entry is Harwich you will arrive at **Liverpool Street Station**.

If you are coming to London from another part of the UK, there are several other stations that you might arrive at.

In all cases you can reach your accommodation by Underground or by taxi. If your luggage is not too heavy, you can save some money by taking the Underground part of the way (for example to Notting Hill Gate, Holland Park, Hammersmith or Acton Town). You can then take a taxi.

### **By car**

We do not recommend that you come to London by car. Parking in central London, including the area around the school, is restricted. It is also quite likely to be difficult to park at your accommodation. If you are living in a parking controlled area, it is not possible to get a parking permit unless you are renting your own flat and are staying for a longer period. If you do bring your car, we will try to find you accommodation where you can park with no difficulty but it will be further from the school.

## YOUR COURSE

### What your course fees cover

- your registration fee
- the course itself
- your course book (if one is used), student folder and any other teaching materials you are given
- your student card (provided on request)
- unlimited access to the school's computers for Internet access
- unlimited access to the school's wired and wireless LAN if you bring your own laptop
- the use of our study centre for private study after school
- reasonable use of school staff to help you arrange entertainment while you are in London
- your leaving certificate
- a detailed report (supplied automatically for certain courses and on request for others)

### Daily Schedules Westcroft Square

General, Cambridge Examination and IELTS Courses

09.30 - 10.30: Main class

10.30 - 10.50: Coffee

10.50 - 11.50: Main class

11.50 - 12.00: Short break

12.00 - 12.45: Main class

12.45 - 13.45: Lunch

13.45 - 14.45: Option class

14.45 - 15.00: Tea

15.00 - 16.00: Option class

Lessons finish at 12.45 on Wednesdays on the Intensive General English course. We always arrange an accompanied activity to help you to enjoy yourself in London. You may stay and work in the school or make your own arrangements, if you prefer.

Cambridge and IELTS courses work on Wednesday afternoons.

The **Option Classes** on the Intensive General English course give you an opportunity to choose the area of study that is most important for you. There are four main areas:

Intensive General English

English for Contemporary Life

English for Work

English for Study

You can see more about the options choices at: [http://www.londonschool.com/general/igec\\_cc.htm](http://www.londonschool.com/general/igec_cc.htm).

We will ask you to give us an idea of which option you want to choose when you fill in your pre-course questionnaire, but you may change this when you arrive.

## Daily Schedules Holland Park Gardens

International Business Communication; Communicating Effectively in English; English for the Public Sector; Legal English: Commercial Lawyers; Legal English: Public Sector Lawyers; Legal English: Criminal Lawyers; Legal English: Legal Secretaries; English for Human Resources Professionals; Communication Skills for Bankers; English for Secretaries and Personal/Executive Assistants

09.00 - 10.30: Main class

10.30 - 10.50: Coffee

10.50 - 12.35: Main class (there may be a brief break during this lesson)

12.35 - 13.45: Lunch

13.45 - 14.45: Main class

14.45 - 15.00: Tea

15.00 - 17.00 Main class

Communicating Effectively in English finishes at 16:00. It is possible to do morning-only classes on this course.

Secretaries' and Legal Secretaries' courses finish at 15:00 on Friday.

Young Business English; Legal English: Young Lawyers; TOLES (Test of Legal English Skills); Cambridge BEC Vantage; Cambridge BEC Higher

09.30 - 10.30: Main class

10.30 - 10.50: Coffee

10.50 - 12.45: Main class (there may be a brief break during this lesson)

12.45 - 13.45: Lunch

13.45 - 14.45: Main class

14.45 - 15.00: Tea

15.00 - 16.00: Main class

For combination courses (half day group work and half day individual tuition) the morning teacher and the afternoon teacher are different. Lawyers' groups, and other specialised courses, usually work with the same teacher both morning and afternoon. Guest speakers and external visits are an integral part of the programme.

Individual Tuition schedules vary.

## **How you will learn with us**

We run a wide range of different courses, and the objectives will vary from course to course. But on all our courses we aim to give you useful, practical skills.

The way you learn with us may be a little different from the way you have learned in your own country. We want you to be as active as possible. To give you as much chance to practise as possible, you may sometimes work in pairs or small groups. Sometimes the teacher may join in the discussion. At other times, s/he will listen and give feedback or correction afterwards.

Just occasionally, students are surprised that their teacher does not do all the talking. This is deliberate – we want you and your fellow-students to have as much practice as possible. It's also very useful for you to listen to your fellow-students: English is important because it is a world language and it is essential that you can understand how it is spoken by other nationalities.

### **First Day of your course**

Please arrive about 15 minutes before the normal start time for your course. Make sure you go to the correct centre! (see page 5).

When you arrive we will give you a folder with information about the school and about London. During the morning we will check your level and interview you; we may also give you a test. We will ask you to check the information we hold about you and, if appropriate, to make any outstanding payment. We will also give you a tour of the building and show you the facilities we have to offer.

In Westcroft Square you will probably start with some tests and an interview. We want to make sure that you are in the best possible class.

In Holland Park Gardens, where courses are more specialised, the placement procedures are faster.

## **CHANGING YOUR COURSE**

### **Cancellation and postponement**

If you have to cancel or postpone your course for any reason, you should tell us in writing as soon as possible. The rules about cancelling and postponing are quite complicated. We are sorry about that, but they have to cover a wide range of situations. Please see paragraphs 5-8 in the Terms and Conditions at the back of these joining instructions, and contact us if you need any further help.

### **Changing your course after you have started**

You may be able to change your course after you have started it, but there may be penalties. The rules are given in paragraphs 9-22 in the Terms and Conditions at the back of these joining instructions. Before you ask to change your course please talk to a Courses Manager.

### **Taking a holiday**

If you are taking a course which lasts 12 weeks or more, then you can take a holiday, but only on certain conditions. You will find the rules in paragraph 24 in the Terms and Conditions at the back of these joining instructions. Before you plan a holiday, please talk to a Courses Manager.

### **Extending your stay**

This is not usually a problem, except in the summer months when we are very busy, but we advise you to let us know as soon as possible if you wish to extend your stay. Your place will only be guaranteed after you have paid a deposit.

If you are staying in homestay accommodation arranged by the school, extending your stay may be more complicated (please see notes on Accommodation, below).

## **SCHOOL FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **Technical facilities**

Both centres have excellent facilities and equipment to help you develop your English and make the most of your stay in London, including:

- DVD players
- DVD camcorders
- multimedia projectors and OHPs
- computers, all with free high-speed Internet access
- access to a wide range of computer-based language learning exercises
- LAN access, both wired and wireless, if you bring your own laptop
- script support in all major non-European languages
- language laboratories

You will use some or all of these as part of your course. Most are also available for you to use for self-study purposes after school. If you need to do private study for your work or for a course back home it is a good idea to bring the materials with you.

### **Financial services**

We offer a number of financial services. You can:

- Open a personal account at the school and draw money when you wish.
- Cash travellers' cheques and personal cheques (drawn on a UK bank) so it is not necessary to go to a bank in order to get cash.
- Exchange foreign currencies.
- Draw money on your credit card (there is a small charge for this service).
- Buy dictionaries and practice books.
- Buy CDs for pronunciation and CD-ROMs for language practice.

We are open for these things from 10.30 - 10.50 and 13.15 - 13.45. Please come at these times if you can – It's hard for our staff to do their jobs if they are interrupted frequently.

### **Social programme**

We organise several activities each week. They are usually free, although you will have to pay for tickets for the theatre and for food and drink.

In addition, we can help you to arrange your personal entertainment – for example by giving you advice about theatres, shops, sports etc, and ordering tickets for you.

### **Welfare**

If you have problems, we are here to help – for example if you need a doctor or a dentist in London.

### **Student card**

You can get a London School of English student card from reception when you are in London. You will need a photograph. You should find it useful in many places but it is not an 'official' student card – it will not give you cheap travel, for example. If you have an international student card (ISIC) you should bring it with you.

## **Restaurant services**

### *Holland Park Gardens*

Our centre in Holland Park Gardens has an excellent self-service restaurant providing refreshments throughout the day from 8.30 - 15.00 and a range of hot dishes, salads and dessert at lunchtime.

You can pay cash each time you use the restaurant or you can buy a restaurant pass for £50 per week. This gives you all reasonable use of the restaurant. If you prefer to pay as you go, prices are:

Lunch: main course	£3.50
Lunch: salads	£3.50
Lunch: dessert	£2.00
Cheese	£1.50
Fruit	50p
Coffee and tea	free
Soft drinks	60p
Fruit juice	£1.20
Pastries	£1.20
Yoghurts	50p

You can buy a restaurant pass in our accounts office or from the restaurant manager, or it can be ordered in advance and included on your invoice.

Most people eat in school because it is convenient, reasonably priced and the food is good. For those who prefer to go out there are a number of restaurants and pubs nearby.

### *Westcroft Square*

Our centre in Westcroft Square has a student lounge that provides refreshments and light snacks throughout the day. Hot food is available at lunchtime. There are also many local restaurants, pubs and cafes nearby.

## **Examinations**

We offer scheduled group preparation for:

- Cambridge First Certificate (FCE)
- Cambridge Advanced (CAE)
- Business English Certificate (BEC) Vantage
- Business English Certificate (BEC) Higher
- IELTS
- TOLES

If you want to study for another examination, we can help you on a self-study or Individual Tuition basis. Exams for which we regularly help people prepare include TOEIC, TOEFL and GMAT.

If you know that you wish to take an examination, please let us know as soon as possible.

Our Examinations Officer is available to help you to decide which examination may be most appropriate for you, and to make the practical arrangements. You can contact her by sending an email to [exams@londonschool.com](mailto:exams@londonschool.com).

## **General help**

We are here to give you general help in many different ways, for example giving you advice about anything to do with being in London, sending a fax for you or posting your letters. But please do not expect a full personal secretarial service!

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Keeping in contact with your home or office

If you give the school telephone number to your friends, colleagues or family so they can contact you at school, please check your class times and ask them to ring when you are not in class. We can only interrupt your class to get you in the case of a real emergency. Remember to tell them about the time difference between the UK and your country.

You will probably bring your mobile phone with you. We use the GSM system in England, which is compatible with most countries – but not all. If you need to hire a mobile phone, we can help you. When you are in class we ask you to turn off your mobile phone. We have payphones that you can use to phone home or the office. You will also be able to send and receive faxes.

The school telephone numbers are:

Holland Park Gardens Telephone +44 20 7605 4123 (from within the UK ring 020 7605 4123)

Fax +44 20 7605 4190 (from within the UK ring 020 7605 4190)

Westcroft Square Telephone +44 20 8563 2345 (from within the UK ring 020 8563 2345)

Fax +44 20 8563 2123 (from within the UK ring 020 8563 2123)

If you need to contact us in an emergency out of hours, ring + 44 20 7605 4140 (from within the UK ring 020 7605 4140)

### The weather and clothing

London does not usually have very hot or very cold weather but it can change quickly and unpredictably. The maximum temperature in summer is usually about 25° to 28°C and in winter the lowest is probably 0° to 3°C. London does not usually have much snow. We often have mild winters and cool summers so you should be prepared for anything. It doesn't rain as much as people think, but an umbrella is always useful!

You will probably find that the weather is much better than its reputation. But English people do not heat their homes as much as many other nationalities so make sure you bring some warm clothes. There are many very nice places to walk in London so bring some good shoes.

There are many opportunities to do sport in London, including tennis, squash, fitness training and swimming, so if you want to keep fit remember to bring the appropriate clothes and other equipment.

### Cost of living in London

The following list gives a rough idea of 2009 prices. They are only approximate and you will probably find quite a lot of variation – it very much depends on you, especially for food and drink.

#### *Food & Drink*

Full meal in a restaurant from £20.00

Meal in a pizzeria from £15.00

Meal in a pub from £10.00

Pint of beer from £3.00

Glass of wine from £4.00

The cost of meals in restaurants clearly depends on how many courses you have and what you drink. There are also many 'takeaway' restaurants where you can expect to pay from about £5.00.

### *Entertainments*

Cinema £6.00 - £10.00

Theatre £20.00 - £50.00

Musical £20.00 - £65.00

Concert (classical music) £8.00 - £40.00. Opera will cost more – sometimes a lot more.

Concert (rock music) £15.00 - £45.00. Big names may cost a lot more.

Football match (premier league) £20.00 - £50.00 (exceptionally to £70)

Nightclub/disco £5.00 - £25.00 (depending on the night, time of arrival and type of club)

### **Paying for things in London**

For ordinary shopping in London, in addition to cash you will find credit cards are widely accepted. If you need to exchange foreign currency we recommend that you do this at school or in a proper bank. 'Exchange' shops that stay open all day and at the weekends are much more expensive.

### **Opening a bank account in London**

It is probably only worth opening a proper bank account if you are going to be in the UK for some time. You can wait until you get here, and then we will try to help you, or you may like to organise this in advance: you may find these links helpful:

[www.barclays.com/studentandfamily/](http://www.barclays.com/studentandfamily/)

[http://www.barclays.com/international/ibs\\_ibank\\_student.html](http://www.barclays.com/international/ibs_ibank_student.html)

### **Smoking**

Smoking is not as common in the UK as it is in some countries. It is banned in all public buildings, including both our schools. We have outside smoking areas in both schools.

If you are staying in school accommodation, please see the note about smoking on page 22.

Cigarettes are expensive in England (about £6 for 20) and if you are a smoker you may want to bring supplies with you.

## **ENTERTAINMENT IN LONDON**

There is an enormous amount to do in London of every sort. Whatever your interests, you will be able to enjoy yourself here. A famous English writer was speaking the truth when he wrote 'A man who is tired of London is tired of life'.

While you are here, we will help you as much as we can to enjoy your time, and in these notes it is not possible to cover the whole range of things to do, but to give you some ideas you could visit some of these websites:

For entertainment in general: <http://www.visitlondon.com>.

For sport: <http://www.sportinglife.com>.

For restaurants and cafes: <http://www.viewlondon.co.uk>.

If you want to go to the theatre it may be worth booking your ticket in advance. Some popular shows – particularly musicals – are very busy and it is often not possible to get tickets at short notice. A good website to book tickets is [www.ticketmaster.co.uk/](http://www.ticketmaster.co.uk/). You can arrange to collect the tickets when you go to the theatre, but in this case you must take the credit card used with you – so make sure that you use a card that you can bring to London.

# TRAVEL IN LONDON

## Underground (Tube) and bus

Travel in London is convenient and easy although the system is large and complex.

London is divided into 6 zones. The central area is Zone 1, a circle around this is Zone 2 and so on outwards. The fare depends on which zone(s) you are travelling in. For example, if your journey is wholly within Zone 2, you need a ticket for Zone 2. If your journey starts in Zone 2 but finishes in Zone 1, you need a ticket for Zone 1 & 2. If you start and finish in Zone 2, but pass through Zone 1 to get to your destination, you need a ticket for Zones 1 & 2.

Both our centres and most of our homestay families are in Zone 2, but some homes are in Zone 1 and some in Zone 3.

### *Underground or bus?*

The Underground is usually quicker and easier to navigate, but costs more. You can see London Underground maps, with zones, at [Maps | Transport for London](#)

Buses may seem bit more difficult to navigate, but they're easy once you try. A bus is cheaper, and you see more, but it is usually slower. For maps go to [Bus maps | Transport for London](#).

### *Pay per journey or a Travelcard?*

If you use public transport at all it is worth getting an 'Oyster' travel card. Buying tickets with cash is much more expensive (usually double the cost). You can either pay as you go, or buy a weekly or monthly ticket (see below). You can get an oyster card in an Underground station or in many newsagents.

See [www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/default.aspx](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/default.aspx) for information about fares.

### *Travelcards*

If you travel on public transport regularly, it's best to get a weekly ticket or a monthly ticket. If you go into the central zone (Zone 1) two or more times a week it is probably worth including this zone on your travel card. You can also get a one-day Travelcard for use at the weekends.

You can get Oyster cards from Underground stations and from many newsagents.

For tickets that last longer than a week you will need a passport-sized photograph.

If you are staying for 14 weeks or more, you can get a discount on the fares: you need to get a form from us for this, and again you will need a passport-sized photograph.

If you have quite a short journey that crosses a zone boundary, you can get a special weekly or monthly ticket which will be cheaper than a two-zone Travelcard. You need to get this from the local Underground station.

## **Paying per journey**

If you only use public transport occasionally, it's best to pay as you go – but always use your Oyster card, not cash.

If your journey means that you have to change and take two buses, you must pay for two journeys, even if they follow immediately after each other.

## **Taxis**

### *Black cabs*

London's 'black cab' taxis are very comfortable and reliable, usually quite easy to find, and the drivers have a very good knowledge of London.

Except at railway stations and airports, taxis do not usually wait at taxi ranks. They drive round the streets looking for passengers. If you see one in the street and the word 'taxi' is lit up stop it simply by waving at the driver. At railway stations and the airport you will have to join the queue at the taxi rank.

If you stop a black cab, they are obliged to take you where you want to go, as long as it is within 10 km. All black cabs have a meter so you know how much you are paying.

### *Minicabs*

A less expensive alternative is to take a 'minicab'. These do not drive around looking for passengers – you have to go to a minicab office or telephone for one. The fare is fixed by the minicab company, but it's a good idea to agree the fare with the office before you start your journey.

There is a minicab office at Acton Town Underground station which is convenient for people arriving from Heathrow on the Piccadilly Line. Your host family will be able to give you the telephone number of a local minicab company.

Unlike black cabs, minicabs do not have a meter and look just like normal cars. Do not be tempted to take a minicab outside the airport or a railway station as this may mean your journey will cost more than a black cab. Never take a minicab on the street.

### **Tipping**

Tipping is not as common in England as it is in some countries. If you want to give someone a tip, this is normally 10%. You may want to leave a tip for:

- A waitress or waiter in a restaurant – but check that service is not already included in the bill; it's not necessary to tip if it is. You do not need to leave a tip in an English pub.
- A taxi driver if she or he has been very helpful.

### **Pub culture**

You will probably want to visit an English pub while you are in London. After all, a lot of English people go to the pub and it can be a good way of meeting people and practising your English.

A couple of points to bear in mind are:

- There is no waiter service in a pub – you must go to the bar to order your drink.
- Most English people buy drinks in 'rounds'. This means that they buy a drink for their friends as well as themselves. You might like to follow this custom yourself and buy your classmates a drink.

### **Safety and security**

London is a very safe city, but occasionally things happen. You can help prevent this by following some basic safety rules:

- Do not carry a lot of money around with you.
- Don't take all your credit cards out with you at the same time, and don't keep your passport, credit cards, money etc together.
- Keep your handbag closed and close to you when you are out. Do not put your handbag on the back of your chair in a pub or restaurant – it may not be there when you look for it later!
- Do not leave your mobile phone lying around in a public place.
- Do not wear very expensive jewellery in an obvious way when you are out.
- Tell your host family or a classmate if you are going to be out very late at night.

Arrange for a reliable taxi or minicab to collect you and take you back to your accommodation if you know you are going to be out late.

## **HOMESTAY ACCOMMODATION**

We take great care in selecting accommodation. In accordance with British Council regulations it has been inspected and is of good quality. We also regularly check student feedback to make sure that students who stay there are happy.

You may find the home and lifestyle different but we are sure you will settle down quickly and enjoy the experience of living in an English-speaking environment. We know this is an important part of your stay in Britain and hope it will be successful. But please remember that you are staying in a private home and that the facilities and service will not be the same as in a hotel.

### **Notification**

We will send you full details of your accommodation well before your course starts. This will include information about your host(s), residence or hotel, and a map and instructions detailing the best way to reach your accommodation and the easiest route from your accommodation to the school.

### **Your hosts**

Your homestay host(s) may be a couple, a couple with children or a single person. They will be accustomed to having visitors stay in their home and will want to make sure you are happy and comfortable. They know that living abroad may be a completely new experience for you and that it may take a few days for you to settle. We strongly suggest that you call or email them before you come to make contact, discuss any special requirements, and say exactly when you are arriving. If we are arranging an airport transfer for you, we will tell them your arrival time.

### **Location and your journey to school**

London is a very large city but we will arrange your accommodation as close as possible to the school where you are working. Many homes are within walking distance but if you have to travel by bus or Underground your journey will be easy and should take no more than 30 minutes.

### **Holland Park Gardens or Westcroft Square?**

If your course programme involves working first in one centre then in the other, we will do our best to arrange accommodation that will be convenient for both schools. Clearly it may be closer to one than the other. We will usually arrange for you to stay with the same host throughout, but if you wish to move when you change centres please let us know as soon as possible.

### **Paying for your accommodation**

You can pay for the whole of your stay at the beginning if this is more convenient, but it is not necessary. You can pay month by month if you prefer. Never pay your host – all payments are done through the school except for small items like occasional meals or extra laundry.

### **Extending your stay**

If you want to stay in your accommodation longer than you originally booked, it may be possible for you to do so. But this cannot be guaranteed, as it is possible that your room will be unavailable. If you do want to extend your stay, please come and tell us as early as possible. If you ask less than three weeks before you are due to leave the accommodation and we have to find you an alternative homestay, you will have to pay a supplementary placement fee of £35.

### **Not happy? Changing accommodation/leaving earlier than planned**

We understand how important it is for you to feel happy and comfortable in your accommodation and we take great care to meet your requirements. If you are unhappy for any reason, please tell us immediately – we can often sort out any problems, and it is easier to do so if we know about them at once. If you feel the need to change your accommodation we will do everything we can to move you without delay and without any charge.

You can leave your accommodation at any time but we ask you to give us one week's notice, or, if you want to move at once, to pay for a week. If you are leaving the accommodation because you are very unhappy, there then it may not be necessary to give a week's notice – please see us without delay in this case.

### **How long should you book for?**

People sometimes book for just one month because they do not want to pay for the whole period in advance, or because they want to be able to leave if they are not happy. Since you can pay month by month, and can leave at any time with a week's notice, these are not reasons to book for a shorter period. We strongly advise you to book your accommodation for the whole of your course, unless you are certain that you only need it for part of your time with us.

### **Other guests in the same accommodation**

You may not be the only guest staying in this accommodation. If there is another visitor he/she will speak a different language so you will have plenty of opportunity to practise speaking English.

### **Having friends and family to stay**

Your host may be willing to let you invite friends and family to stay with you but this is a matter for them to decide – it is not something that you should take for granted. So if you would like to invite someone, please consult with your host before you finalise any arrangements, such as buying a flight ticket if your partner is hoping to visit for the weekend. If you do have someone to stay, it is normal for you to pay extra.

### **Internet in homestay**

Wireless internet access to allow you to connect your own laptop is available in your homestay free as long as you tell us at the time of booking.

### **Smoking**

If you are a smoker and have not already informed the school, please tell us as soon as possible. The number of hosts who accept smokers is very limited. You will probably be staying in a non-smoking household and will have to smoke only when you are outside.

## **What you can expect from your hosts**

- Your own, private room, unless you have specifically asked to share with a friend or partner.
- A friendly welcome, with explanations of how to use things in the house and the best way to get to school.
- Information about local shops, restaurants, pubs and other facilities.
- Advice or help if you have a problem.
- Washing once a week, and facilities to do your ironing (or your hosts may do it for you).
- A chair and desk or table with a light for studying.
- A wardrobe or cupboard for your clothes.
- Breakfast every day (most families in the UK do not have a cooked breakfast in the week).
- Evening meals, if your homestay booking already includes these.
- An occasional evening meal 'by arrangement', if you have booked this option. In this case you must agree days and times with your hosts.
- Sheets and towels (laundered once a week).
- A front door key, so you can come in and go out when you like.
- Facilities for a bath or shower every day.
- The opportunity to receive telephone calls (within reasonable hours and for short calls - remember that your host's phone is important to them).
- The opportunity to make short telephone calls (you may have to pay for these).
- The opportunity to watch TV with your hosts, or in your room if it has a TV.
- Use of the kitchen to make drinks, and possibly snacks. Your hosts may also allow you to use the refrigerator.
- At your host's discretion, to have a guest to stay for short periods (provided that you give your hosts reasonable notice). There will be an extra charge for this which you must agree with your hosts.

## **What your hosts will expect from you**

- Not to smoke in the house if you are staying in non-smoking accommodation. If you do, your host may ask you to leave.
- Not to make a noise if you come home after 10.30pm, when other people in the house may already be asleep.
- To close the front door properly when you return, and lock any doors or windows they have asked you to.
- To turn off lights and heating where possible. British families do not normally leave the central heating on all night.
- To be considerate if you are sharing the bathroom with your hosts or other guests, so they are not held up.
- To keep the bathroom as tidy as possible, and clean up after you use it.
- To keep your own room reasonably tidy, so that it can be cleaned.
- To pay for any evening meals you have with your hosts 'by arrangement'.
- To make sure your family and friends do not telephone early in the morning or late at night and keep your calls as short as possible. Remember the time difference!
- To let your hosts know if your plans change during the day – for example, you decide that you do not want an evening meal with your hosts.
- To let your hosts know if you intend to stay out all night. If you do not they may worry about you, or need to lock doors and windows.

To allow your hosts some privacy so that they can lead their own lives. Do not expect them to be there all the time just for you.

### **Things to remember**

Unless we are arranging an airport transfer for you, please contact your host at least one week before arrival to confirm travel arrangements and planned arrival time. If you have any problems doing so please let us know and we will contact your host on your behalf.

Your host(s) will also want some privacy and to lead their own lives. Do not expect them to be there all the time just for you.

You are staying in somebody else's home, not in a hotel!

Many English homes have either a cat or a dog (sometimes both). If it is important for you to stay somewhere without pets and you have not already told us, please contact the school.

Please do not pay your family any rent. This will be paid by the school. You should only pay your host(s) for any occasional meals or for agreed extras such as use of telephone, laundry etc.

### **Help from Client Services**

Our Client Services staff will do everything they can to ensure that your stay is a happy one, but if for any reason you have a problem or wish to change the arrangements when you are here you should speak with them as soon as possible. If necessary, we will move you to new accommodation but please remember that when the school is very busy it may be difficult to move you closer to the school or to keep the same meal arrangements.