

Charminster UK

School of English



**Charminster UK  
School of English  
123 Charminster Road  
Bournemouth  
Dorset BH8 8UH  
England**

**Tel +44 (0) 1202 520123  
Fax +44 (0) 5602 091488  
Email [info@cisukschool.co.uk](mailto:info@cisukschool.co.uk)  
[www.cisukschool.co.uk](http://www.cisukschool.co.uk)**

# Student Guide 2009 / 2010

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## Emergency Telephone Numbers

Charminster UK School (for problems in the evenings and at weekends)

01202 520123 (24 hours)

Bournemouth Police - if you want to report a crime or talk to the police on non-urgent matters

01202 222222

For Emergency Services, Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coastguard 999

CISUK is committed to a policy of equality of access to all assessment, for all students. This policy is on display in the office

## Bank & Public Holidays

There are a number of Bank and Public Holidays in 2009/10 as

follows:-	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Good Friday	10 April	2 April
Easter Monday	13 April	5 April
Early May Bank Holiday	4 May	3 May
Spring Bank Holiday	25 May	31 May
Summer Bank Holiday	31 August	30 August

There is no tuition on these days and there is no refund of tuition fees. However, the school invariably plans social and/or cultural events on these dates to ensure that students add to their experience of living in the UK and have the opportunity to use their English.

### Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint about anything in the school, please tell us about it. If you feel you can talk to your teacher, s/he will listen to the complaint. You can also talk to any other member of staff. If your complaint is more serious, please go to the Director of Studies who will try to resolve the matter as soon as possible. If your complaint is very serious, please ask for a “**Complaint Form**”, complete it and give it to the Director of Studies or the Principal. We will make sure you receive an answer in writing and we will keep your complaint in our records.

Please remember that we are here to help you – but we cannot help you if we do not know that there is a problem. **We want you to be happy!**

## Welcome!

We hope you enjoy your stay at our school and in our beautiful town. Bournemouth is a popular seaside resort with 11 kilometres of sandy beaches for swimming and all sorts of other water sports. It also has a good university and is the headquarters location for many leading companies. The town centre, just two kilometres from the school has a wide variety of shops, theatres, cinemas, night clubs, restaurants and bars.

It is also just two hours by train from the centre of London, as well as being surrounded by beautiful countryside, including the nearby “New Forest” which is a national park with wild ponies and deer and beautiful areas to walk or cycle in.

The school is located in the cosmopolitan suburb of Charminster. Many language school and university students live here so there is ample opportunity to make new friends. The school building is on the main road where there is a cultural diversity of food stores, bars, cafes and restaurants. It is a very lively student centre in the evenings and at weekends.

During your stay, we will organise a number of social events so that you can mix with the teachers and other students to practise your English. Also, we arrange a variety of excursions to places of interest such as London, Stonehenge, Bath etc. for which there is a charge to cover transport costs.

We aim to make your stay with us as pleasant and rewarding as possible. Please come to the office or speak to your teachers if you have any problems. Also contact us for any advice or information you may need.

**Enjoy your time here!**

Charminster UK School Management Team  
Principal

Mr Abdou Saddigh

TEACHING

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Director of Studies	Academic issues – decides on classes and teaching materials, arranges teachers, deals with all questions about your studies, exams and universities. Also checks attendance for visas and certificates.
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Ms Lindsay Ross

ADMINISTRATION

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Accommodation and Welfare Officer	Finds host families and allocates students. Can also help with finding a doctor or dentist. If you have any problems with your host family, please speak to her.
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Mrs Marzena Saddigh

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Social, Sports and Travel Organiser	Arranges social and sports activities for afternoons and evenings, organises excursions at the weekends, can help with airport transfers and general travel enquiries.
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Mrs Val Quin

## Your safety and the law

Please note:

- It is illegal to buy alcohol or cigarettes if you are under 18 years old. If you buy alcohol or cigarettes for people under 18, you may be fined £80. Do not be surprised if you are asked for proof of your age before buying alcohol or cigarettes in bars or shops.
- There are also strict laws relating to the sale and use of drugs.
- Stealing from shops is a crime. If you do this you may be sent back to your country.

Carry your student card with you at all times – this is your I.D. **Don't** carry your passport with you: leave it in a safe place with your host family or group leader.

### Police Registration

Students with certain visas need to register with the Police on arrival in the UK and this costs £35.00. We can help you with the procedures which are quite simple.

While you are in England, you may wish to visit other European countries. If you are a visa student, we can assist you to obtain a **Schengen visa** which will allow you access to up to 25 countries. Please ask for details at reception.

## Heating

Most homes have central heating. This is often turned off during the night. If you feel cold, please ask your host family for extra blankets or additional heating but never leave fires or heaters burning overnight. Electricity is expensive in Britain, so be considerate and switch off the lights when you leave the room.

## Meals and mealtimes

You will normally eat with your host family. If you cannot eat certain foods, tell your host family as soon as possible. You will be expected to be punctual at meal times. Please tell your hostess if you are likely to be late or if you will not be eating dinner at home. If you would like to use the kitchen to cook or you would like to keep food in your bedroom, please ask the host family.

## Food

Host family accommodation is half-board. This means your host family will give you breakfast and an evening meal every day. You must buy your own lunch. Please do not help yourself to your host family's food without permission.

## Smoking

If you are in a non-smoking host family, please respect this and never smoke in the house.

## Academic Information

When you arrive, we will test your knowledge of English so that we can find the most suitable class for you, at your level. There are 6 levels at Charminster UK School, as follows:

Level 1	Beginner
Level 2	Elementary
Level 3	Pre-Intermediate
Level 4	Intermediate
Level 5	Upper Intermediate
Level 6	Advanced

Each lesson lasts 45 minutes, but most of our lessons are 'double' lessons – 90 minutes. (Please note that some levels may not run at all times)

## Standard & Intensive Courses

Standard courses are 15 hours per week, and Intensive courses are 21 hours per week. You will generally have 2 teachers. *Teacher A* will usually focus on grammar, structures and accuracy. *S/he* will normally base the lessons on a current English course book. The course books are loan sets, so please do not write in your book. You may keep the book for the duration of your course, but please return it before you leave the school. *Teacher B* will focus on skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening – and fluency. *S/he* may use a course book at times, but will also use material from other sources such as videos, newspapers, or the Internet. You will learn new vocabulary in all our lessons – make sure you have a vocabulary notebook to write it all down! Students in your class will have the same general level of knowledge as you, but there will always be some differences. For example,

you may be better at speaking than writing, whereas another student may be better at writing than speaking!

### **School Opening Hours**

The school is open from 08.30 -17.30 from Monday to Friday (unless there are evening classes, when it will stay open for longer). This gives students the opportunity to use the computer room or do self-study work outside their normal class times.

### **Your classes**

If you have studied in England before, or in a language institute in your country, you will know what to expect in a typical class. However, if you have never studied in this kind of school, or if you have not studied English since you left high school, you may find the classes quite different. This is how we teach you:

- We use various different materials (books, CDs, DVDs, Internet).
- We expect you to speak a lot! You will do lots of work in pairs or groups in order to give you lots of speaking practice.
- We will give you homework every day. Please ask if you would like more work to do outside class.
- We will correct you – but not all the time! Some activities will focus on accuracy. During these, we correct you. Other activities focus on fluency, so you will probably only be corrected *after* the activity.

### **Laundry**

Some host families will be happy to wash your clothes for a small charge, others may let you use their washing machine but some may prefer that you wash your clothes at the launderette. If your hostess agrees to wash your clothes, you should pay her directly, usually around £5.00 per week.

### **The bathroom**

Most British homes only have one bathroom so it is polite to arrange with your host family the most convenient time to take a bath or shower. You can have a bath or shower each day. If you do not understand how the equipment works, please ask the hostess or her husband to explain. Remember to leave the bathroom clean and tidy for the next person to use. The host family will give you a towel if you do not have your own but you will be expected to use your own toiletries, i.e. shampoo, toothpaste, shower gel, etc.

### **Friends and visitors**

It is polite to ask permission from your host family before inviting friends or visitors to the home. Please do not let your friends (male or female) stay overnight in your bedroom – this is likely to cause offence.

### **General**

Each host family has a different way of living, so please make sure you talk to your family about their rules – for example, mealtimes, the best time to have a shower – and always ask if you are not sure

## Accommodation and Welfare

We hope that you will enjoy the experience of living in a British home. The following notes are intended to give you general advice. Please read them carefully and talk to us immediately if you have a problem. An accommodation officer inspects all Charminster UK host families regularly; however, your comments and feedback are always welcome. Please help us by giving your honest opinion of the host family before you leave Charminster UK School.

### Your room

You will be given a key to the house but you will not usually be given a key to your room, as it is not normal to lock bedroom doors in a private home. The hostess is responsible for keeping your room clean but you are responsible for making your bed and keeping your room tidy.

If you wish to move furniture in your room or put pictures on the wall, please ask the host family first. Please do not use drawing pins, glue or sticky tape on walls or furniture and be careful with lit cigarettes, shoe polish and nail varnish. If you break or damage anything, tell your host family immediately and be prepared to pay for the cost of replacements or repairs. Please ask your host family before using any of your own electrical equipment. Note that the voltage in the UK is 240v.

## Making Progress

After your first week at the school, we will speak to you to make sure that you are happy with your class level and with your accommodation. You will stay in your class until you are ready to move to the next level. You will have a progress test every Friday so that we can check you have learnt and understood your lessons each week. The average length of time to stay at one level is 8 weeks, but everyone progresses at different rates and you may be ready to move up after 6 weeks, or perhaps not until after 10 weeks. If you feel your class is too easy or too difficult, please talk to your teacher or to the Director of Studies. If we think you should change class, this will usually happen at the end of the week.

Please remember that we are here to teach you and to help you learn, but we cannot learn for you! You must also help yourself to learn – so do your homework, use the self-access materials, read as much as you can, use every chance to speak to people in English – and then you will make progress!

**Progress reports:** Monthly progress reports produced on request.

### Taking exams

If you are interested in taking an internationally recognised English exam, such as Cambridge First Certificate (FCE), Trinity GESE or IELTS, please look at the Exams notice board on the ground floor, or ask the Director of Studies for more information.

## School rules

### In class

Please speak ONLY ENGLISH in class. Remember that you are here to learn and practise your English. If you speak your own language in class, you cannot learn – and you are stopping your classmates from learning. Making friends with other nationalities will help you.

Please make sure you come to class with a pen and a notebook or notepaper.

### Mobile phones

Please switch your mobile phone OFF or to SILENT before you come into class. You must not make or receive calls in class, and you must not send text messages. If you are expecting an important phone call, please talk to your teacher.

### Attendance Rules

You must attend at least 80% of your course. If your attendance is less than 80% when you leave, you will not receive a certificate.

**If a student has a visa to study in the UK and does not attend lessons regularly, he or she will receive a spoken and first written warning. If attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, we will issue a second and final warning letter. If there is no improvement after this, the student will be asked to leave the school immediately and we will be obliged, by law, to notify the UK Border Agency (Home Office) who may arrange for deportation from this country.**

## Holidays

Only students who have booked 24 or 36 weeks are entitled to holiday (2 weeks for a 24-week booking, 3 weeks for a 36-week booking). This must be taken in whole weeks. If you would like to take a holiday, please speak to the Director of Studies, who will ask you to complete a form and then take this to the office. Your holiday week(s) will then be added on to the end of your course. Students on other courses who wish to take holidays will be marked absent.

**If you leave the school for more than 3 weeks, you will be re-tested when you return, and you might have to change class or level. This is because when you go on holiday you are missing lessons and you are not practising your English, so you might find your old class too difficult.**

### Eating and drinking

In Charminster Road you can buy food and drink from a wide variety of sandwich and snack bars. There is also a machine in the kitchen where you can buy a cup of coffee, chocolate or tea at a reduced price of 50 pence.

### Smoking

No smoking is allowed in any of the school buildings.

- If you are absent for any reason, you must inform the school. If you are sick, please telephone the school, or ask your host family to let us know.
- If you need to go to the bank, or arrange an appointment outside the school, please do this in your free time. We will not excuse you for missing lessons in these cases.

### **Punctuality**

Please be on time for your lessons. If you are late, you may not be allowed to enter the class and you will be marked absent.

### **Personal Behaviour**

The school operates a “zero tolerance” policy towards spoken or physical aggression of any type. In such cases, the student concerned will be asked to leave the school immediately and will not be entitled to any refund whatsoever.

We have students from a wide variety of nationalities and cultures and all we ask is that you respect this diversity and treat your teachers and fellow students with equal respect, regardless of sex, colour or nationality.

### **Food and drink**

You may have a bottle of water to drink from in class, but please do not bring any other drinks or food into your classroom. Chewing gum is not allowed in class.

### **Personal Property**

The school is not liable for any loss or damage to your personal property (cash, mobile phones, laptop computers etc.) We strongly advise you to take out travel insurance to cover these items before your arrival.

## **Health**

If you need to see a doctor or dentist, please speak to your host family, who will tell you the name of their family doctor ('GP') or dental surgery so you can make an appointment. If you are a non-EU citizen, you will have to pay to see a doctor – an appointment usually costs £35 - £40. A visit to the dentist may cost considerably more, depending on the treatment needed. We therefore advise you to buy medical insurance: please go to the office if you would like to ask about this or, even better, arrange insurance before you leave your own country.

For any other health questions during school hours, please speak to Marzena in the accommodation department. Please also advise us, when you enrol, of any health problems you may have (e.g. diabetes) so that we can be prepared for any possible problems.

### **Local Facilities**

There is a pharmacy across the road from the school and a Post Office just 100 metres away. In addition, because the suburb of Charminster is popular with students from all over the world, there is a wide variety of bars, restaurants, cafes and snack bars catering to every possible taste. This is also the case with food shopping. Charminster alone has three stores specialising in Halal meat and other food products!

In the town centre, less than two miles from the school, are major department stores, boutiques and a number of busy night clubs, pubs and bars.

## Damage to School Property or Homestay Accommodation

If you cause damage to school property or equipment, you may be asked to compensate us financially. The same applies for any damage you might cause at your homestay accommodation.

## General Information

### Banking

It is extremely difficult to open a bank account in Britain unless you are in the UK us for six months or more. However, we have a Charminster UK School Bank facility that you can use to keep your money safe. Please contact reception for details.

**Do not carry large sums of money with you or leave it unattended in your room. Also, if you use a credit card, make sure you have sight of it at all times when making a transaction and don't enter your PIN number unless you are sure that no other person can see you from behind.**

### Spending Money

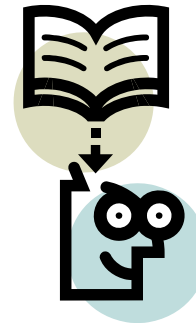
A packet of 20 cigarettes costs about £5.00 and a large beer or glass of wine about £3.00. A cup of coffee will cost about £1.50 to £2.00 and a return bus ticket to the town centre £1.60 (although if you are travelling a lot on the bus you can buy a Yellow Buses "buzz card" or Red Buses "Saver Ticket" allowing you unlimited travel at a much lower cost). You should budget sufficient money to buy lunch if you need it (your homestay will provide breakfast and an evening meal) and any incidental costs such as eating out or entertainment (a cinema ticket in the town centre will cost between £6.00 and £8.00). We can arrange a student pass for you so you can get a discount in many shops, restaurants and cafes in the town.

## Reading books

There is a small library with a selection of books of general interest, novels and simplified readers in the teachers' room. You are free to borrow any of these for home reading, but please remember to bring them back afterwards. Graded readers (books simplified for language learners) with cassettes / CDs are also available: please ask your teacher or the Director of Studies.

## Using computer programmes and listening practice

The computer room is on the first floor. Here you can send and receive emails, surf the Internet, and use language learning software to practise your English. Your teacher will also take your class into this room for some lessons. There are also tape cassette machines in this room for self-study exercise. Your teacher or the Director of Studies will advise you on suitable material. Please do not interfere with any of the settings on our computers



## Books for Sale

We can order a selection of English language books, at extra cost for you (for practice in grammar, vocabulary, exam skills, business English etc). Your teacher or the Director of Studies can advise you. Please ask at the office if you would like to order one. You can also buy your course book / workbook if you would like to write in it and keep it.

### **Places of Worship**

There is a Roman Catholic church and an Anglican church within easy walking distance of the school. The town centre also has a synagogue (Wooton Gardens) and a mosque (St Stephen's Road) and the school reception can identify locations for you when you arrive.

### **Central Library**

There is a very well equipped library in the town centre with free internet access. Please ask at the school reception for details of location and opening hours.

### **Moving into private accommodation**

We strongly advise you to stay with a host family, as this will ensure you speak only English at home and will help you to experience British culture. However, if you do decide to move into a flat by yourself or with friends, you must give us your new address and telephone number.

### **Study Facilities**

When you are not in lessons, there are several ways you can study on your own in the school.

### **Watching videos**

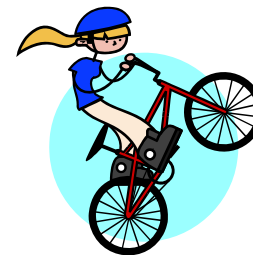
We have a small collection of videos and DVDs on a wide variety of subjects. Simply choose a film, put it in the video or DVD player and use the headphones to watch and listen. You may also take videos home on loan, but please remember to return these the following day. Your teacher or the Director of Studies will arrange this for you.

### **Personal Safety**

Remember that in Great Britain we drive on the LEFT, so look right and left before you cross the road. It is also important to observe traffic lights at all times and to cycle only on the road and not on pavements. If you are travelling alone or on a bus, train or tube, always sit near other passengers. Walk with friends and never walk alone at night – use a taxi. Only share a taxi with people you know. **Never** carry all of your money or your passport with you and keep your valuables (camera, mobile phone, etc) out of sight. Never leave your bag unattended in public places as it may get stolen or treated as suspicious.

### **Cycling/Driving**

If you decide to rent or buy a bicycle while you are in Bournemouth, please check the laws about cycling, and be aware that it can be dangerous. You should wear a helmet and you **must** have front and back lights. If you drive a car in England, you **must** learn British road laws, and you **must** have tax and insurance.



## Tips for learning English outside the classroom

We're sure you want to learn as much English as possible whilst you're here so try and do at least one of the following "activities" every day!

- ✓ WATCH TELEVISION – we especially recommend watching soap operas and the news! If you like soap operas, ask your host family to recommend a good one and to tell you the story!
- ✓ LISTEN TO THE RADIO – The local radio (Wave 105) has lots of pop music, BBC Radio 4 has lots of discussions and Classic FM has classical music and talking.
- ✓ KEEP A DIARY IN ENGLISH – try to write a few lines every day.
- ✓ READ A BOOK – the Course Director can recommend a book at your level.
- ✓ Write your POSTCARDS in English!
- ✓ Send EMAILS to your friends and family in English! Look at English Websites.
- ✓ TALK TO YOUR HOST FAMILY and offer to help them at home – you'll learn lots of new words and your host family will appreciate your help.
- ✓ TALK TO OTHER STUDENTS IN ENGLISH.
- ✓ Go SHOPPING - ask where things are, ask if they have things in your size, etc.
- ✓ READ MAGAZINES & NEWSPAPERS –choose a magazine you're interested in!
- ✓ Use your imagination and try to think in English.

- ✓ Use an ENGLISH-ENGLISH dictionary
- ✓ REVISE **AND USE** THE WORDS you learnt in class when you go home.
- ✓ TRY AND LEARN 10 NEW WORDS or PHRASES EVERYDAY.  
Try and use these words as often as possible!
- ✓ Watch VIDEOS and DVDs at school or at home
- ✓ Come to school for ACTIVITIES – you'll have fun and make new friends!

VERY IMPORTANT - Don't worry if you don't understand everything. It takes a long time to learn a language. You won't understand every word you hear but try and get the idea of what's being said. The most important thing to remember is: RELAX and TRY TO SPEAK AND LISTEN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE! Don't be shy, everyone makes mistakes – it's part of learning a language!

Good luck and HAVE FUN!

