

# Zoom Meeting for Parents

## 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020

### Transcript



**Introduction** – Joanna is excited that we about to start a new school year. New opportunities, experiences and new friendships lie ahead for all the students as they move up a year or start school in the UK for the first time. This is the same each year. Parent are busy getting organised to come to the UK and the ECG team are very busy with preparations to welcome students when they arrive.

Covid has brought changes for everyone so this year will be different.

ECG is recognised as one of top Guardianship Organisations in the UK. AEGIS and BSA have approached Joanna for comments and advice and Joanna has been working with both organisations to develop the Covid Safe Charter that is now adopted by all good schools.

Have also carefully considered ECG and our organisation and we have made some changes so that we can ensure that we uphold our number one priority of keeping students safe.

#### **Purpose for meeting –**

1. Understanding Bubbles,
2. Meeting the team – this enables you to put a face to a name as parents may not be able to come over.
3. Answering parents questions

#### **Bubbles**

- ECG Guardians are close to your school and can help students when in they are in the UK –
- As they are dealing with smaller number of students they can respond and communicate rapidly with both parents and students in an emergency situation

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- Guardians provide backup for each other so that students will never be left unsupported should Guardian not be available.

**Meet the team** – quick introduction from everyone in order

**Head Office** – Joanna – Principal – can be contacted by all parents if required

Helen Wu – Chinese Co-ordinator – translates main messages, newsletters and assist all Guardians and parents when translation is required

Roger – Deals with all financial issues including helping to manage your Expense Account, pays bills on your behalf, works with parents to resolve any financial questions they may have with school bills

**Cheltenham Area** – Cassie & Wendy

**Reading** - Helen M & Rachael with support from Caroline

**Surrey/Sussex/Kent**- Diane, Sophie, Sue, Maki, Joanna & Lesley who will be in charge of ECG quarantine.

- **Questions** – sent by parents

#### 1. **What is it like in the UK now? Is the UK safe? Do people wear masks? \_ (answered by Cassie)**

Lockdown restrictions are being eased and we are returning to a 'new normal' with shops, restaurants, cafes and playgrounds being opened and free travel permitted.

- Masks are now required by law indoors and on public transport
- Screens are in place in shops and cafes, etc.

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- Alcohol gel is freely available in all indoor public spaces
- 2m social distancing is advised and actively supported in indoor spaces

Recent news shows an increase in UK cases.

- These have mainly been in built up cities in the North of England mainly around Manchester. ECG schools are mainly in very rural locations a long distance away from the areas currently effected.

Local lockdown laws have been put into place to rapidly close areas with new infection.

Tracking and testing has been massively improved

Schools are essentially businesses. They have put everything possible in place to ensure they avoid any infections at all costs, with safety measures in schools and restrictions of movement which you will hear about in due course. Thus, even if there is a local outbreak in the area where your child attends school, they will still be in their bubble in school and school will ensure the safety of all the students, providing remote learning for day students and maintaining education and safety of boarding students.

## 2. How can I order uniform or buy things for my child? Can I send money over with my child?- (Roger)

*Can you help with Ordering Uniform*

- Yes, the first point of contact should be your Guardian who will know how the school uniform system operates and can advise the best way of getting uniform.
- If necessary we can order and pay for uniform on your behalf out of your expense account.

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#### *Can I order items for my child*

- Yes, you should contact your Guardian to understand the best way to have items delivered to school. It may be better for the Guardian to receive the items and take them to school.
- For items coming from outside of the UK, please remember to mark them as a gift so they don't get charged for import tax.

#### *Sending Money*

- If a student is travelling with a large amount of cash, this should be deposited with school for safe keeping.
- Alternatively we can arrange for cash to be deposited into your expense account if needed.
- Please let us know before travelling so we can be prepared.

#### **3. Will you be able to help my child go to school at the start of term? – (Diane)**

- Some schools have specified students should use the transport they are organising. We will liaise with school to arrange this.
- For all other students, we will organise all the transport. We have a team of excellent drivers whom we have worked with for many years. Our drivers are friendly, approachable and efficient. Their cars will be fully sanitised and they will wear face masks, and gloves.
- Most schools are not allowing visitors to go on site, but we will accompany students as far as possible.
- Once they are in school we will keep in contact with them and if there is anything that they need their Guardian will be able help them as they live nearby.
- Please complete and send the Cognito travel form. Once we receive this we will be able to make all the plans and send you an individual Travel Plan

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#### **4. Can we contact you by wechat in case of any urgency when our child is travelling and entering the UK? – (Helen Wu)**

- a. Yes! We are in process of setting up the ECG WeChat and WhatsApp Groups. Important that parents fill in the Cognito Travel Form and enter their contact details as this ensures that we have the most recent contact details for everyone. Parents will be put into a group by school. This will enable important messages to be sent out quickly by your Guardian.
- b. Before your child leaves home your Guardian will send you a Travel Form. The student must have a copy of this as it may be required at immigration. It contains all the important phone numbers.
- c. It will be very helpful if parents can go through the Travel Form with their child and explain all the numbers and put them in their phone.
- d. When students are travelling into the UK Helen will be in charge of the ECG phone so parents can contact her and speak in English or Chinese by WhatsApp or WeChat.

#### **5. What will happen in quarantine? What happens if I want my child to after the start of term and they need quarantine – can you still care for them? – (Lesley)**

- e. Schools are carefully planning quarantine arrangements and will send you details of their arrangements
- f. All schools are ensuring that the schools are cleaned thoroughly
- g. ECG are using a school for quarantine so it will be thoroughly cleaned and we will also take measures to ensure cleanliness.
- h. Students will be kept in a bubble according to their arrival date – so those arriving on 14th Aug will be in one group and separate from those arriving on 20th/21st.

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- i. Students will be able to go outside and enjoy some fresh air and the beautiful English countryside around Cobham Hall.

#### 6. What happens if a student is unwell? – (Sue)

- j. The same as any other year. If students are unwell in school they will go to the health centre and will be cared for by a nurse. If the school cannot care for them, they will call the Guardian and we will take over.
- k. We are still providing the same 24/7 Guardianship support which includes 24 hour emergency telephone contact in term time ▪ Accompany student to hospital, dentist or airport in emergency ▪ Provide accommodation if child is sick and not able to remain in school for medical or emotional reasons.
- l. The difference this year is as follows:-
  - i. If a student displays Covid-19 symptoms, they must remain where they are and book a test. This means that if a student is taken ill at school they will remain under the care of school. All schools have organised isolation rooms to accommodate students if needed.

#### 7. Will there be Saturday school and exeats next term? (Helen Murphy)

- m. Most schools are operating a normal timetable. You will be notified by your school if they are changing their timetable.
- n. Most schools are not having exeats for the first term. This ensures that students can be kept in a safe group with minimal contact from others.
- o. Guardians will keep in regular contact with all students by WhatsApp and hope they can also chat with them by Zoom.

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- p.* The schools are planning different activities and Guardians will join in and support their students in these activities. We are all looking forward to seeing the students in assemblies, concerts etc in the coming term!

#### **8. My child will not be able to come home for October half term and may not be able to fly home at Christmas – can you care for them? (Sophie)**

- q.* Yes absolutely! We have already organised half term. For the October half term we always like to run a group holiday. Those who have been on them, know how much fun they are! This year we have arranged to stay at Cobham Hall as we know it is a good environment for students to stay safely.
- r.* Currently we can also provide limited homestay for October and if needed Christmas.

Question posted in the meeting:-

#### **Can students wear masks in schools?**

As far as we are aware, all schools are allowing students to wear masks if they want to.