

ACS Cobham - Welcome Guide for New Families, 2024-25

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WELCOME

A very warm welcome to ACS Cobham from ACS's PSO (Parent School Organization)! We have created the below to help as you and your family get acclimated into our school community.

ABOUT THE PSO or Parent School Organisation

All parents and staff at ACS Cobham are members of the PSO (PTA equivalent). The PSO Board and its Committees - including the Grade and Country Representatives, Event teams & Special Project teams - form a supportive link between the school and parents, with the aim to enhance the education of our children and support the wellbeing of our community. These teams are made up entirely of parent volunteers, a majority of whom are voted in at the AGM in May, and several others join through the academic year. Here is the current [2024-25 team](#).

BUDDY FAMILIES

Please contact buddyfamily@psocobham.org should you wish to participate in our buddy family program that will match you with a family to help personally welcome you to the ACS community.

STUDENT AMBASSADORS / Buddies

Please rest assured that your child/children in the lower and middle schools will be matched with a student buddy during their first week to help them with things like finding their locker & classes, having someone to sit with at lunch, etc. High School students will be offered support within their 'Advisory groups'. In the Boarding houses, most boarders have a roommate who is automatically their buddy from when they join boarding. Others (in a single room) or who come for Grade 12 only, are also given a buddy initially until they settle in.

PARENT COFFEE MORNINGS

The PSO offers welcome coffee mornings at various points in the year where you can meet other new families and representatives of the PSO welcome committee. Check out a list of

upcoming coffee mornings in the 'Events' menu tab of the website (for desktop users) or Spaces by Wix app (on your phone). This is currently being updated for the new school year.

DIGITAL PARENT PLATFORMS

We suggest familiarizing yourself with the various online platforms that facilitate lunch orders, the student learning management system, the gradebook etc. You can access all the platforms via the gateway on ACS Cobham website:

<https://www.acs-schools.com/cobham/parent-platform-links>

The main school portal for all school information is Schoology, which generates weekly newsletters to keep you up to date with all the goings on, important upcoming school events etc. Spaces is the PSO / Community portal where you find parent-to-parent information and clubs, family community events, forums and chat groups, etc. Please see the section below on Technology for more tips on access / support.

COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS (CRG) & Language Support

Our PSO CRG group helps ACS families connect with others from back home. We have a number of country groups represented by parent volunteers who will be very happy to help you get acquainted with all native things in your local environment. This is also a great group to find support in if English is not your first language and you are looking for someone to help you get familiar with all the communication from school. A contact list of CRG groups and parent representatives is available in the PSO 2023-24 team sheet above. The PSO CRG Committee Lead can be reached on crg1@psocobham.org

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering in the community is a fantastic way to make friends. The PSO committees are always looking for new and enthusiastic parents to join the various working groups throughout the year, as well as take up the bigger year-long roles, so if you are able to consider any of these, do kindly get in touch! During the course of large community events and other initiatives, there are also opportunities for parents (and students) to volunteer their help for an hour or two to set up / pack up / decorate / run some activities / etc. You will see sign-ups for these events being circulated from time to time. None of our community initiatives are possible without the support and hard work of our parent volunteers who devote their time and effort to make things happen!

ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

- Quick Ref: [Academic Calendar 24-25](#)
- Quick Ref: [ACS Policies](#)
- Quick Ref: [ACS Acronyms](#) (or [here](#) if you're not set up on Schoology yet)
- PE Kit List

The kit required by grade is included in this document - [PE Kit / Swim kit by grade](#). Most parents find that rain jackets and reversible tops are not really necessary. The recommended way is to start with basics - shorts / track pants, PE shirts, and mid layer/jumper. The kit can be bought online at a supplier called [KUKRI](#). You can view the Kukri brochure [here](#) - look out for the very useful sizing guide in this brochure.

- School Supplies List

This can be found in each division's group pages in Schoology. Any clarifications can be obtained from the divisional offices.

- Bussing

Approx 35% of the day school students utilize the bussing service at ACS Cobham which covers a radius of around 25 miles. Late Bus facilities are available for MS and HS students taking part in extra curricular activities.

[Bussing info](#)

Detailed bus routes information is available from the Transportation team.

Contact - Louise Culley; cobhamtransport@acs-schools.com; +44 (0) 1932 588 328; +44 (0) 7860 405 797.

Late buses - this is a complimentary service available for students in Grades 5 and above. Not door-to-door, but rather a shuttle service that aims to get the children as close to their homes as possible. To use the last bus, the student must sign up in their homeroom on the day. If they forget, they can also go to the divisional office later where staff will help them sign up! Late buses leave at 5:45 pm from the Admissions Car park (outside the school reception) and is a great way for students to get back home after extra curricular activities / sports. If their extra curricular activities finish earlier than 5:45, senior school students are able to wait in the library. Most kids will catch-up on homework or even play chess. MS Library is open until 5:30 pm every day. US & HS Library is open until.... Tbc

[Late Bus Schedule 2024-25](#)

- [Morning Drop off/PickUp Protocol](#)

If you are not set up with Schoology yet, find this information [here](#)

- Lunch

Payments and top ups for all lunches are done via Parentpay (see technology section below).

- MS & HS kids will order and pick up their food in the lunch hall, checking these out with their fingerprint or biometric (face ID) recognition - this would have been set up already during your orientation session.
- For EC & LS students, parents are requested to 'order' lunches via the Fusion App. Again, details would have been set up for you already. Please look at the technology tips section below for details on Fusion Online app.
- You can, of course, pack them a home lunch too. Please bear in mind that the school is strictly a nut free environment.

Please know that the staff will not let the kids go hungry if, for some reason, any of the systems have not yet been set up or don't work.

- Snack

For MS & HS kids, snacks are nice to have and some kids will take the time to dig into them during the school day, especially if they have after school activities. In EC & LS, kids are given dedicated recess time to have snacks, and it is advisable to pack healthy snacks for them to have during the school day.

- Car Stickers

You may have already requested your car stickers when you completed PowerSchool Forms (the place where you filled in your family information and all consents for your kids, medical forms, etc). But if you're not sure, you can always request one (or any additional ones you need) from Ruth Riddle (rriddle@acs-schools.com). New Families will be able to pick these up along with their parent lanyards (see below) during their orientation days.

- Parent Lanyards

For safeguarding reasons, it is essential that parents wear lanyards at all times when they visit the school. These are yellow lanyards with a paper ID that would have been sent to you in the post. If you haven't received one or would like to request additional ones for other family members or helping nannies, please write to Ruth Riddle (rriddle@acs-schools.com)

- Extra Curricular Activities (ECA)

ECA sign ups are sent by each division before the start of a term. Terms include:

Fall Season - Sep to early Dec

Winter Season - January to end March

Spring Season - end April to early June

- Sports

- [Sports Programme 2024-25 with FAQ's about how / what / when](#)

- TECHNOLOGY TIPS

The Parent Platform Gateway is available on the ACS Website and all ACS platforms can be accessed via this page:

<https://www.acs-schools.com/cobham/parent-platform-links>

All platforms require a login that you have either already created or will be able to do very soon.

- All families have a login for [Schoolology](#), [PowerSchool](#), [ParentPay](#), and if your kids are in Early Childhood & Lower School then also for [Seesaw](#) & [Fusion Online](#).

● TIPS ON ACCESSING SCHOOL INFORMATION

- Try to sign up to Schoolology as soon as possible. This is usually your first port of call for all information. Schoolology is the school intranet and here you will find that you will have access to all the divisional groups that your family belongs to as well as anything else relevant e.g. General Information group, Sports Group, Catering, Performing & Visual Arts etc. Each group has a treasure trove of information in its 'Resources' section - which we recommend should be the first place you head to when you are looking for something. The school calendar sits on Schoolology too, as do any divisional updates sent by the school.
- NEWSLETTERS - Each week, on a Friday, you will receive the school newsletters by email (i.e. Schoolology notifications on email) which has a round up of the activities of the week as well as a great summary of upcoming events and dates for your diary.
- Support contacts - in case you have login or set up issues with these platforms, please contact the following:
 - Schoolology Support: cobhamschoologyhelp@acs-schools.com)
 - PowerSchool Support: Ruth Riddle, rriddle@acs-schools.com)
 - ParentPay Support: finance@acs-schools.com)
 - Seesaw Support: Hayden Anderson, handerson@acs-schools.com)
 - Fusion Online Support: Catering Manager, Laura Pinn, lpinn@acs-schools.com)
 - For any other support or clarifications or if you are feeling overwhelmed and just want to talk to someone about how this all works - please feel free to reach out to our IT & Communications Coordinator, Pooja Mittal on it@psocobham.org)
- Schoolology training webinars occur throughout the year, to access pre-recorded sessions visit [this link](#).

- **MOBILE APPS:** You can download mobile apps for Schoology, PowerSchool, Seesaw & Fusion Online platforms on both, Android and Apple. The school recommends you use the mobile version of PS on your phone rather than the PS app as it can have sync issues at times. But if you choose to use the PS app anyway, please follow [these](#) instructions to download. ParentPay does not have an app, but you can bookmark the ParentPay page and add it to your mobile device's homepage (Open the ParentPay webpage in Safari browser, click on the save icon and save as homepage). The same can be done for PS if you use the mobile site on your phone.

- **CONNECTING WITH THE PARENT COMMUNITY & the PSO**

The PSO runs several community events throughout the year during which time you are able to meet and connect with other ACS families. A complete list of these events is on the Schoology Calendar as well as the [PSO Website](#).

There are also several informal WhatsApp groups run by parents for their smaller groups eg class 2A or grade 5 parents. You will see the invite links to most of these groups that we are aware of are listed on Schoology (PSO Group - Resources), and will be circulated by parents in the first few weeks of school.

HELPFUL CONTACTS / LINKS

- **School Contact numbers**
 - **Switchboard:** 01932 867251
 - **Lower School:** 01932 869 706
 - **Middle School:** 01932 869 703
 - **High School:**
 - **Security Hut:** 01932 869 707

- Busing Contact

Louise Culley & Ann Fellows; cobhamtransport@acs-schools.com

- Reporting Absences

- Early Childhood & Lower School: Sarah Clarke & Debra Scott, cobLSoffice@acs-schools.com
- Middle School: Dawn Druitt & Virginia Immergluck, cobMSoffice@acs-schools.com
- Upper School: Clare Emes, cobUSoffice@acs-schools.com
- High School: Clare Emes, cobHSoffice@acs-schools.com

- Early Pick Ups/Late Drop Offs Contacts & Vacation Reporting

- Same as above for Reporting Absences. For vacation reporting (to take kids away during a working school day or a set of them, please contact the divisional office and get an Absence Application form).

- Playdates in EC/LS

If arranging to send your child for an organized play date with another parent after school, kindly email your child's class teacher copying in the LS office (cobLSoffice@acs-schools.com) as well as the other child's parent who will be picking them up, with a note on the agreed arrangement and the permission for the other parent to pick up your child.

- Medical Centre

01932 869753; cobhamnurses@acs-schools.com

- [Key Contacts in School](#)

- Boarding Information

Asst Head of Wellbeing - Sara Thomas, stthomas2@acs-schools.com
(previously Head of Boarding)

Lead House Parent, Fields: Dave Schuchter (dschuchter@acs-schools.com)

Lead House Parent, Woodlands: James Gray (jgray@acs-schools.com)

Administrator, Woodlands: Kate Morris (kmorris@acs-schools.com)

Administrator, Fields: Lillian Gilchrist
(lgilchrist@acs-schools.com)

- Sports

- [Sports Programme 2024-25 \(with FAQ's about how/what/when\)](#)
- [ACS Sports Department/Sports Centre Community Membership](#)
All ACS families can purchase a membership to gain access to the center and its facilities including the pool, fitness center and tennis courts.
Membership: Please email cobham-sports@acs-schools.com
- OTHER CONTACTS::
Sports Centre Reception: 01932 588345
Sports Centre Operations Manager: Simon Tomlins, stomlins@acs-schools.com;
01932 867251 (ext. 2298)
Secretary to Sports Department: Sharon Treves, streves@acs-schools.com; 01932 869722
Head of Sports: Steve Adams, sadams@acs-schools.com
Assistant Head of Sports: Sebastian Pedley, spedley@acs-schools.com
Head of Tennis: Ben Cullen, bcullen@acs-schools.com
Head of Basketball: craftopoulos@acs-schools.com
Head of Football: Sebastian Pedley, spedley@acs-schools.com
Head of Swimming: Glen Melson, gmelson@acs-schools.com
Head of Volleyball: Chris Hykiel, chykiel@acs-schools.com
Head of Rugby: Neil McCulloch, nmcculloch@acs-schools.com
Head of Track & Field Athletics: Sabrina Mace, smace@acs-schools.com
Head of Baseball & Softball: Dave Schuchter, dschuchter@acs-schools.com
Head of Golf: Steve Adams, sadams@acs-schools.com