



Controlled Free Time – Additional Freedom

Written by: April Castle, Welfare & Accommodation Officer
Approved by: Maribel Cabrera, School Director
Jose B, Managing Director

Applies to: Students
Group Leaders
Homestays
Welfare & Accommodation
Safeguarding Team
School Director

Context: Applicable to students whose parents/guardians have signed the Additional Freedom consent form

Last updated: February 2024
To be reviewed: February 2025

Introduction

Country Cousins has established this Policy to ensure the “Additional Freedom” concept is understood by parents/guardians, students, homestay providers and staff. Additional Freedom is the extra controlled free time the student has when part of a Country Cousins programme. We define free time as; when the school has not organised an activity or lesson.

Under 18s will be studying on either a structured summer programme or a closed group programme. All parts of the programme are compulsory and students **MUST** attend ALL lessons and activities. If students are unable to attend for any reason, they **MUST** inform their group leader or homestay immediately who will then contact the school.

During induction, the students must save their host and school emergency phone number into their mobile phone. These details are also included on their school ID card given during the induction which should be kept in their mobile phone case or wallet. Students are also given a non-removable bracelet to wear which contains the emergency phone number.

Students are either driven to school by the host, take our private school bus or they can walk. Students will be shown how to do this on the first morning and then unaccompanied after this. It is important students walk straight to school or to the bus stop. Registers will be taken at the start of each lesson.

Break and Lunchtimes

Class Timetable

Morning

Lesson 1	09:00 – 10:00
Break	10:00 – 10:15
Lesson 2	10:15 – 11:15
Break	11:15 – 11:30
Lesson 3	11:30 – 12:30

Afternoon

Lesson 1	13:30 – 14:30
Break	14:30 – 14:45
Lesson 2	14:45 – 15:45
Break	15:45 – 16:00
Lesson 3	16:00 – 17:00

Break time in between lessons is 15 minutes. During this time students must **NOT** leave the school premises. Toilets, water fountains, the vending machine, outdoor seating areas and the indoor student lounge are all for student use during breaktime.

LUNCH BREAK – 12:30 – 13:30

Lunch time is 1 hour. During this time students are permitted to remain in the school grounds or explore the nearby Bicclescombe Park, purchase drinks, ice creams and hot food from The Mill Café, play tennis free of charge on the tennis courts and use the playground equipment. It is important to respect other park users and to dispose of rubbish in the bins provided around the park. Do not feed the seagulls. Students must **NOT** leave the premise of the park. Tennis racquets are available from the school reception. All students must have returned to the classroom by 13:30 prompt for registration.

All afternoon lessons and excursions finish at 5pm. All students must go directly to their homestay. Free time is not permitted at this time. School buses leave from the bottom of the school driveway at 5.10pm. For students that walk, it should take no longer than 20 minutes to walk home. If a student is late for any reason, they **MUST** phone their homestay to inform them why, where they are and what time they can be expected to be home. If a student is more than 30 minutes late home, hosts initiate the Missing Student Procedure.

Evenings and weekends

Students will only be allowed free time outside of the school if their parents/guardians have signed the Additional Freedom consent form to say so. Dinner in a homestay is usually between 6 and 7pm. All students must eat with their hosts at this time unless prior arrangements have been made. Mealtimes should not be rushed to allow for more free time.

For students that are allowed to have free time outside the school, we suggest they stay in small groups with friends.

The following activities and locations are recommended:

Ilfracombe

- Capstone Hill for relaxing and sunbathing and photography
- The High Street shops
- Lidl and Tesco supermarkets for snacks and drinks
- Bicclescombe Park for tennis
- Country Cousins School outdoor area
- Tunnels (paid entry), Rapparee and Hele beaches for sea swimming (check tide times)
- Mini golf at the seafront (opposite Wetherspoons)
- Embassy Cinema – High Street

Combe Martin & Berrynarbor

- The beach for relaxing and sunbathing and sea swimming (check tide times)
- The High Street shops
- Hollands Park for football
- Berrynarbor recreation ground

Barnstaple (age 13 & over) – public transport, pre-booking and payment may be required

- High Street Shops/Green Lanes Shopping Centre
- Rock Park
- Scotts Cinema
- Bowling
- Roller skating
- Air extreme trampoline park

Things students must NOT do:

- Buy alcohol, drink alcohol or ask other people to buy cigarettes or alcohol – this is against the law and students will be sent home if they are found doing this.
- Try to enter pubs without adult supervision – including Wetherspoons
- Shout, scream or swear in any language
- Be rude or aggressive to other people
- Take over the pavement/not let people pass
- Jump from the rocks on the coastline
- Play at the cliff tops
- Go into the arcade
- Swim out of depth in the sea/ignore safe swim signs

Guidelines and Curfews

The following guidelines apply during controlled free time:

- Young Learners (6 to 10 years old) are required to have full supervision at all times either with the host, our staff or their group leaders if they are in a group.
- Students 11 – 12 years old must not be absent from the homestay accommodation without supervision for long periods of time and must check in with the host at regular intervals. They must NOT get any public transport
- Students 13 - 15 years of age, have the freedom to spend their time as they wish but must check in with the host at regular intervals.
- Students 16 - 17 years of age, have the freedom to spend their time as they wish

If a student has made plans to go with friends, they must tell their homestay host the following information:

- 1) where they are going
- 2) how they are getting there / getting home
- 3) whom are they going with?
- 4) what times they are going / coming back
- 5) do they have their mobile phone?
- 6) do they have their student card / wristband?

Public Transport:

If a student will be going un-supervised on public transport, they must be aged 13 and over. Students need to make sure their homestay host knows the following information:

- 1) which bus stop / bus company they are using
- 2) what bus times they will be following

It is the hosts responsibility to make sure they have the students working mobile phone number, know where they are, and when to expect them to return.

Whilst in public places, students must consider the following:

Walk along the main roads where there are street lights (especially in winter)

Walk in groups of friends – arrange meeting points. It is safer to walk in small groups for both boys and girls.

Do not carry large amounts of cash and keep mobile phones safe.

If students get lost or do not feel safe for any reason, call a group leader, homestay or the Country Cousins emergency phone immediately.

Curfews

All children aged 10 and under must be under close supervision at all times by a responsible member of Country Cousins staff, a nominated Group Leader or an approved & designated adult homestay household member. All such children must be provided with full information, issued verbally and instruction sheets equipped with telephone numbers and emergency procedures, given at induction. All such children must be made aware of all these rules, using the facility of translation where necessary. Children of these ages should always be with their homestay host or in supervised accommodation by 9pm.

Students aged 11 and 12 years must be in by 21:00 at the latest.

Students aged 13 and 14 years must be in by 21:30 at the latest.

Students aged 15 and 16 years must be in by 22:00 at the latest.

Students aged 17 years must be in by 22:30 at the latest.

Appendix 1

FREE TIME – RISK ASSESSMENT

Date: 14/08/2023 **Assessment carried out by:** April Castle

Students will only be allowed free time outside of the school if their parents/guardians have signed the **Additional Freedom** consent form to say so. This risk assessment is for students who DO have consent for additional freedom. This will be clearly displayed on the Booking Confirmation Form (BCF) sent to all homestays, agents and parents.

The following guidelines apply during free time:

- Young Learners (6 to 10 years old) are required to have full supervision at all times either with the host, our staff or their group leaders if they are in a group.
- Students 11 – 12 years old must not be absent from the homestay accommodation without supervision for long periods of time and must check in with the host at regular intervals. They must NOT get any public transport
- Students 13 - 15 years of age, have the freedom to spend their time as they wish but must check in with the host at regular intervals and not go further than Barnstaple.
- Students 16 - 17 years of age, have the freedom to spend their time as they wish but must not go further than Exeter.

If a student has made plans to go with friends, they must tell their homestay host the following information:

- 1) Where they are going?
- 2) How they are getting there / getting home?
- 3) Whom are they going with?
- 4) What times they are going / coming back
- 5) Do they have their mobile phone?
- 6) Do they have their student card / wristband?

CURFEW TIMES

Students aged 11 and 12 years must be in by 21:00 at the latest.
Students aged 13 and 14 years must be in by 21:30 at the latest.
Students aged 15 and 16 years must be in by 22:00 at the latest.
Students aged 17 years must be in by 22:30 at the latest.

General Risks

Hazard	How can the risk be controlled?	What further action is needed to control the risk?
Crossing roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In induction meetings we tell students to watch the road and be alert. Use Zebra Crossings. Turn off music players. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posters around the school reminding students to look left before crossing & road safety advice
Public Abuse / Mugging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students to be in pairs or larger groups Students not allowed to harass people Stay in public areas during hours of daylight or well lit. Do not carry large amounts of cash Keep mobile phones safe and out of sight (not hanging out of back pockets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When in the town, staff to patrol (making their presence known to students and civilians) to ensure that students are safe during their free time.
Children becoming Lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students carry a Country Cousins ID with contact numbers Students wear a Country Cousins non-removable wristband with the emergency number on it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify safe place establishments
Child Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff to have undertaken appropriate training and Country Cousins checks to ensure that children are not at risk. Students know who the school DSL is and how to report anything that has made them feel uncomfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding policy to be updated annually
Accepting Lifts from strangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We tell students not to accept lifts from strangers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Inclement Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students advised in their handbook prior to arrival that weather conditions in the UK are unpredictable and they should bring appropriate clothing for all weathers Students advised of recommended indoor activity locations to avoid inclement weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homestays check students have suncream and water bottle
Entering pub/nightclub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In induction meeting we tell students that legally they can only go in pubs in the UK if accompanied by an adult. Students wear a Country Cousins non-removable wristband so pub/nightclub staff would be aware they are under 18. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour policy – official warning given to student if staff are notified that a student has attempted to enter a pub without an adult
Buying/being offered cigarettes, drugs, alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In induction meeting we tell students that it is illegal to buy cigarettes and alcohol in the UK aged under 18. In induction meeting we tell students that if they are offered drugs/cigarettes/alcohol by anyone, they must refuse and report this to their homestay as soon as they return who will then inform the Accommodation & Welfare manager at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour policy - disciplinary given to student if staff are notified that a student has attempted to buy drugs, alcohol or cigarettes Homestay guidebook and contract to include obligation to report disclosures
Not home 30 minutes after curfew time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homestay phones and messages the student on their mobile number to establish their whereabouts If unable to make contact, the homestay notifies the school by phoning the emergency number Emergency phone holder requests other students help of whereabouts of missing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour policy – official warning given to student if they were late for their curfew without a valid reason

Hazard	How can the risk be controlled?	What further action is needed to control the risk?
	<p>student(s) in the CC Announcements Whatsapp group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency phone holder requests the help of all homestay hosts by asking if anyone knows of the whereabouts of missing student(s) in the CC Hosts Whatsapp group • If the student still cannot be located, the safeguarding team report the matter to the Police • Any updates should be communicated immediately between homestay and staff involved 	
Uncontactable - Battery dead/no mobile data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students to be in pairs or larger groups so should use the mobile phone of another student • Students should ensure their phone has suitable battery health before leaving the homestay • Students advised to carry power bank battery packs • Students advised of 'Safe Place' premises and must go in to ask if they can use a telephone to contact homestay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all students have access to a map (both paper copy & digital) with 'Safe Place' locations clearly marked • Contact 'Safe Place' locations to ensure they are suitable and know how to help students

Specific Risks – age 11 – 17 years

Hazard	Location	How can the risk be controlled?	• What further action is needed to control the risk?
Capstone Hill	Ilfracombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No jumping from rocks on the coastline Sea/tidal safety briefing as part of classroom Monday induction meeting No playing on cliff top 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal safety posters displayed around the school
High Street	Ilfracombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students to walk on the pavements Do not talk to strangers Use road crossings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify safe place establishments
Lidl/Tesco supermarkets	Ilfracombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In induction meeting we tell students that there is nothing we can do to get them out of trouble if they are caught stealing. It is a serious offence and they have 24 hours to leave the UK before getting a criminal record. No matter how insignificant the item stolen is! Students to check they have enough money to pay for items they wish to purchase Students must pay attention to warning signs inside the supermarket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour policy - disciplinary action for student if they are caught stealing
Bicclescombe Park	Ilfracombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We tell students to not go near the lakes or stream in the Park or chase ducks into the water. We tell students to be careful on the apparatus We tell students to respect other members of the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good relationship with Park management committee Contact phone number for Local Council Park warden
Country Cousins outdoor area	Ilfracombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No running signs Ensure benches are well maintained Signs to warn keep away from BBQ area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCTV always in operation
Tunnels beach – Swimming out of depth Cuts and grazes from rocks Becoming cut off by incoming tide	Ilfracombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a private beach which is controlled by premises staff Staff to be aware our students are present (they give them discounted entry so it becomes know at this time) Sea/tidal safety briefing as part of classroom Monday induction meeting Students advised to pay attention to warning signs at the beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal safety posters displayed around the school
Embassy Cinema	Ilfracombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cinema will have First Aid facilities and qualified first aider on site during opening hours. Cinema staff to be aware our students are present (they give them discounted entry so it becomes know at the time of purchasing a ticket) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cinema staff will not allow children to watch a movie that is not age appropriate The cinema is a designated 'Safe Place'
Beach	Combe Martin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sea/tidal safety briefing as part of classroom Monday induction meeting Students advised to pay attention to warning signs at the beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal safety posters displayed around the school
High Street	Combe Martin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students to walk on the pavements Do not talk to strangers Use road crossings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify safe place establishments

Hollands Park	Combe Martin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We tell students to respect other members of the public using the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a defibrillator on site
Recreation Ground	Berrynarbour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We tell students to respect other members of the public using the area We tell students to be careful on the apparatus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearest defibrillator – Community Shop & Post Office
Recreation Ground	West Down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We tell students to respect other members of the public using the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearest defibrillator – Community Shop & Post Office

Specific Risks – age 13 – 17 years

Public Transport:

If a student will be going un-supervised on public transport, they must be aged 13 and over. Students need to make sure their homestay host knows the following information:

- 1) which bus stop / bus company they are using
- 2) what bus times they will be following
- 3) what they intend to do when they get there

Hazard	Location	How can the risk be controlled?	What further action is needed to control the risk?
Bus Journey - Lost/Insufficient Tickets	Ilfracombe to Barnstaple route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy ticket online prior to travel (digital ticket) Ensure students have enough money to purchase another ticket if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homestays have access to vehicle to collect student if they become stranded out of town
Bus Journey – Cancelled bus, emergency incidents	Ilfracombe to Barnstaple route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students to follow guidance by bus driver, bus company, emergency services In case of cancelled bus, wait for next available service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homestays have access to vehicle to collect student if they become stranded out of town
High Street Shops	Barnstaple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students to walk on the pavements Do not talk to strangers Use road crossings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify safe place establishments
Bowling	Barnstaple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abide by the rules of the bowling alley – correct shoes to be worn, only one person on the alley to bowl at all times. The bowling premises will have First Aid facilities and qualified first aider on site during opening hours. Bowling staff to be aware our students are present (they give them discounted entry so it becomes know at the time of purchasing a ticket) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-booking required
Roller skating	Barnstaple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abide by the rules of the roller-skating centre Skate shoes to be provided and check by roller skate centre only The roller-skating premises will have First Aid facilities and qualified first aider on site during opening hours. Roller skating centre staff to be aware our students are present (they give them discounted entry so it becomes know at the time of purchasing a ticket) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-booking required
Trampoline Park	Barnstaple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abide by the rules of the trampoline park – correct jump socks to be worn Trampoline safety video to be watched prior to jumping The trampoline park premises will have First Aid facilities and qualified first aider on site during opening hours. Trampoline park staff to be aware our students are present (they give them discounted entry so it becomes know at the time of purchasing a ticket) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online waiver to be completed by an Over 18 (homestay host) at time of prebooking
Rock Park	Barnstaple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We tell students to not go near the river. We tell students to be careful on the apparatus We tell students to respect other members of the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact phone number for Local Council Park warden
Scotts Cinema	Barnstaple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cinema will have First Aid facilities and qualified first aider on site during opening hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cinema staff will not allow children to watch a movie that is not age appropriate

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cinema staff to be aware our students are present (they give them discounted entry so it becomes know at the time of purchasing a ticket)	
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Specific Risks – age 16 – 17 years

Hazard	Location	How can the risk be controlled?	What further action is needed to control the risk?
Train Journey - Lost/Insufficient Tickets	Barnstaple to Exeter route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure students have enough money to purchase another ticket if necessary Buy ticket online prior to travel (digital ticket) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homestays have access to vehicle to collect student if they become stranded out of town
Train Journey – Cancelled train, emergency incidents	Barnstaple to Exeter route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of cancelled bus, wait for next available service Students to follow guidance by bus driver, bus company, emergency services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homestays have access to vehicle to collect student if they become stranded out of town
On platform - Getting hit by train as it arrives Falling from platform onto track Being left behind on platform due to pressure of numbers on train	Barnstaple Train Station Exeter Central Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students to observe safety warning signs at the station Students to talk to station staff if they need help (use google translate if necessary) Wait for next available train The station(s) will have First Aid facilities and qualified first aider on site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

RISK ASSESSMENT - CHECK LIST

It is the hosts responsibility to make sure they have the students working mobile phone number, know where they are, and when to expect them to return.

Whilst in public places, students must consider the following:

Walk along the main roads where there are street lights (especially in winter)

Walk in groups of friends – arrange meeting points. It is safer to walk in small groups for both boys and girls.

Do not carry large amounts of cash and keep mobile phones safe.

If students get lost or do not feel safe for any reason, call a group leader, homestay or the Country Cousins emergency phone immediately.

The most likely risks are from:

- Traffic, particularly at crossings and alongside busy roads.
- Slips and trips on uneven and slippery paths and steps.
- Upsetting pedestrians.
- Children becoming lost or mugged.

If someone becomes injured or ill the nearest 24-hour A&E unit to all of the locations listed in this risk assessment is: North Devon District Hospital, Raleigh Road, Barnstaple, EX314JB.

Minor injuries Tyrell Hospital, St Brannocks Park Road, Ilfracombe, EX34 8JF – **only open Friday, Saturday Sunday & Monday 10am – 6pm.**

In Exeter: RDE Hospital, Barrack Road, Exeter, EX2 5DW

Review:

Please indicate if there have been any incidents during free time.

Have you found any other locations or risks we should be aware for future reference?

Signed

Print Name

Date