

Sheiling School Ringwood

Information for Co-workers

Introduction:

These notes have been compiled to help prospective co-workers understand how we live and work together. They will also give you more information which you will need for your own orientation as a volunteer in our school community. It is important that you read them very carefully.

If you require more information, please contact:

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Life in the Houses

There are approximately 45 pupils and students, between the ages of 7 – 19 years, distributed between 7 houses in the school. Each household has one or two “houseparents” who keep the house running smoothly. The children usually live in rooms with 2 beds or in a single room. New co-workers are given the task of ‘carer’ for one or more children, or as someone who replaces others on their free day. They are then responsible, under the guidance of the houseparent, for the daily routine of the pupils – for teaching them self-care, hygiene and domestic tasks (simple cleaning, cooking, gardening, etc), and helping them to play and to occupy their free time. Everyone must learn to keep a constant consciousness and responsibility for the pupils. The personal joy and satisfaction in such a task can be great, as the co-worker builds up a close relationship with the children. Co-workers are also expected to help in the school – in a class for the younger pupils and in various classes and workshops for the senior students.

Everyone in individual households is responsible as a group for the care of the home and its surroundings, and it is therefore essential that all co-workers carry their share of the practical work and help the children and adolescents make their own contribution to the care of the house. Such shared responsibilities are an essential part of community life.

Co-worker Accommodation

This is in single study-bedrooms, usually within the house in which you will work and be based, but it may be in other accommodation within the school estate.

Free Time

Each co-worker has one day off a week. There are holiday periods after Christmas and Easter and during the Summer and Autumn. Within these times there are specific periods in which co-workers are able to take their own holiday break. These vary according to the time of year and nature of events taking place in the community. Any advance travel arrangements need to be discussed with individual houseparents. Term dates are published on the school website.

Please note that because of the nature of life in the school community and in order to comply with legal obligations, arrangements to receive visitors at any time can only be made with prior discussion and agreement with your houseparent.

Personal Allowance

Formal salaries are not paid to anyone living in a Camphill community in the UK. The costs of food, lodging and all basic living expenses in the house-community are covered by the school. New co-workers receive a personal allowance of £35 per week plus an allowance for holidays and telephone.

What you should bring with you

Adequate clothing for work, formal and social occasions should be brought. Waterproof boots and swimwear are also essential. It is expected that co-workers joining us for a year will not need additional clothing. We very much encourage you to bring your own musical instruments.

Health Issues

If you are not in good health you must give detailed information and consider whether you should apply for this kind of demanding work. Should health difficulties come to light only after your arrival, then you may be asked to leave. Anyone who relies on the support of alcohol or illegal drugs will not be able to fit into the school community and should not apply.

Medical Treatment

Whilst at the Sheiling as a co-worker you can receive routine medical treatment free of charge through the National Health Service (NHS). All co-workers should, however, continue to be covered by insurance in their home country in case medical attention is needed while you are there during holiday periods.

Dental Treatment

The National Health Service does not include free dental treatment and this cannot be paid for by the school. It is therefore essential that you have a dental inspection and any necessary treatment completed before you arrive in England. Only emergencies can be treated by our local dentists.

Learning and Training

All new co-workers join the induction course of the Foundation Year, which includes the whole of our life and experience within the school community. The core of the Foundation Year is the daily work with children and students, under the supervision and guidance of houseparents, which includes group discussions and individual tutorials on how to develop the right attitudes and approaches to the care and education of those with special needs. A Foundation Year certificate is awarded to all successful participants after one full year of work.

Successful applicants wishing to study the three year Camphill Course in Curative Education may work towards achieving a Diploma (more details on request).

Other Training Possibilities

Although it is expected that all new co-workers will have a basic knowledge of First Aid, there will be First Aid, Health & Hygiene, Signalong (a means of supporting communication through hand signs), and other relevant training available to all co-workers. Training takes place when you arrive at the school and throughout your stay with us.

Language

All new co-workers are expected to have a good working knowledge of the English language before they arrive, thus enabling them to work with people with special needs and to take part appropriately in the Foundation Year training.

Religious Issues

When applying to a Camphill community you will probably already know that the cornerstone of all Camphill establishments is Christianity. There are Sunday Services for all and the celebration of many Christian festivals throughout the year as well as a weekly bible supper, and it is expected of all our co-workers, no matter what their own personal religious beliefs are, to uphold the right attitude of respect and reverence as an example to our pupils. Any personal questions are welcome to be discussed with either houseparents or other members of the community.

A Working Handbook

On arrival all co-workers will receive a Co-worker Information Pack which covers all aspects of life and work in the school, including health and safety requirements, fire regulations, first aid and guidelines for aims and objectives in basic care for children and adolescents with special needs.

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