

ACS
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL
HILLINGDON

ACS HILLINGDON WELCOME GUIDE

1 | OUTLINE OF CONTENTS & IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

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Important Contact Details

EMERGENCY (POLICE, FIRE, AMBULANCE)	**999**
Urgent Medical Enquiry	111
To report crime or other police concerns that do not require an emergency response	101
ACS Hillingdon International School 108 Vine Lane, Hillingdon, Middlesex UB10 0BE, England	01895 259771

www.acs-schools.com/hillingdon





A Welcome from Martin Hall, Head of School

Dear Families,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to ACS Hillingdon, a school community where global perspectives, academic excellence, and personal wellbeing are at the heart of everything we do.

Joining a new school is a significant moment in any family's journey and we are honoured that you have chosen to become part of ours. Whether you are arriving from across town or across the world, you are now a member of a diverse and vibrant international community where every student is known, supported, and empowered to thrive.



At ACS Hillingdon, we are proud to offer an education that goes beyond the classroom. Our beautiful campus – steeped in history and surrounded by nature – provides a unique setting for young people to explore, grow, and discover their passions. From Early Childhood through to Upper School, we encourage curiosity, creativity, and compassion, fostering not only academic achievement but also character, resilience, and global citizenship.

You will find that relationships matter deeply here. Our expert teachers and dedicated staff are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment where each student can reach their full potential. As parents and guardians, you are essential partners in this process and we look forward to working closely with you to ensure your child's success and happiness.

This guide is designed to help you feel at home and navigate your first days, weeks and further with confidence. Please don't hesitate to reach out to any member of our team – we are here to help.

Once again, welcome to ACS Hillingdon. We are delighted that you are here, and we look forward to getting to know you and your family in the weeks, months and hopefully years ahead.

Warm regards,

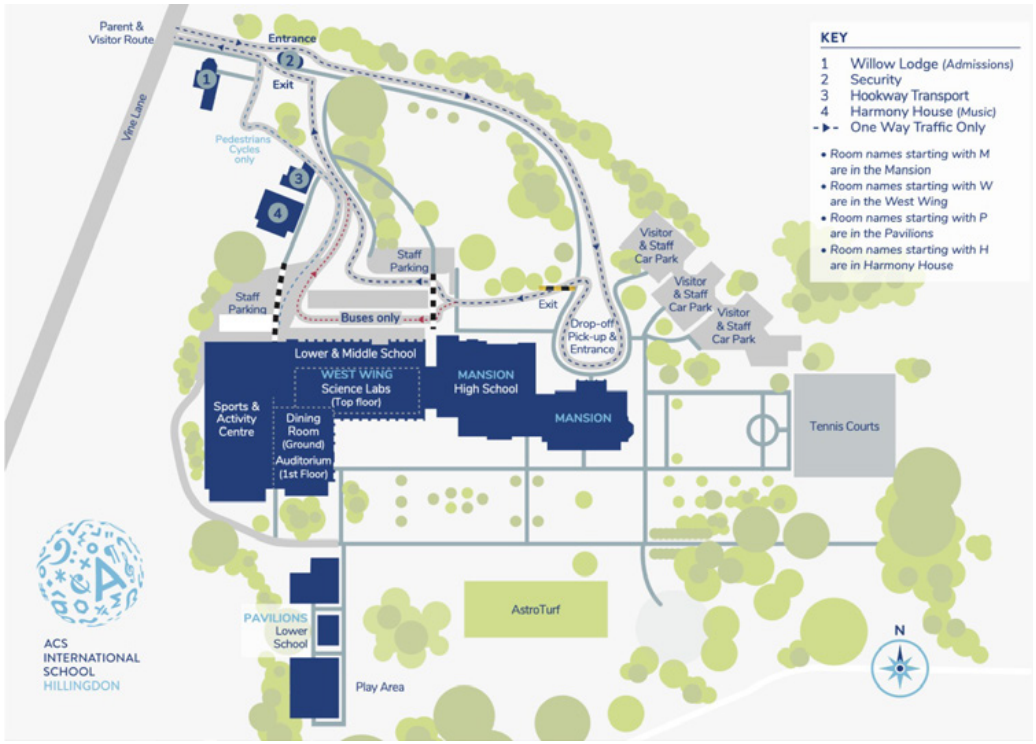
Martin Hall, Head of School
ACS International School Hillingdon

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2 | ABOUT THE GUIDE AND LINKS TO INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL



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Welcome to Your New Community

Welcome to ACS Hillingdon and congratulations, you're now a Hawk! The Hawk is our school mascot, symbolising the spirit, curiosity, and resilience we value across our community.

As a school, we blend a global outlook with a supportive, close-knit environment where students are encouraged to be themselves, challenge ideas, and grow with confidence. Whether you're new to the UK or just new to our school, this guide is designed to help you settle in and feel informed from the very beginning.

Inside, you'll find practical information about school life, local services, and what to expect as part of the ACS Hillingdon community. You'll also get an overview of our values and approach, to help you better understand the culture and ethos that shape daily life here.

We hope this guide serves as a useful starting point. If you have any questions along the way, please don't hesitate to get in touch, we're excited to welcome you.

Full detailed onboarding information regarding your child and the school can be found on the Hawks Hub here.

Our parent handbook can be found here.

Please also refer to our Admissions Hub if you are just starting at ACS.

Important ACS Hillingdon Contacts
Main Switchboard (Monday-Friday) 01895 259771

enquirieshillingdon@acs-schools.com

Head of School
Martin Hall mhall@acs-schools.com

Key staff list: Key Staff and Their Contact Details

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3 | FOR NEW ARRIVALS INTO THE UK & FIRST DAYS AT SCHOOL

What to do first . . . for living in the UK

1. Register with the NHS & your local GP (General Practitioner). Find your nearest NHS physicians at Find a GP
2. Open a UK bank account for salaries, bills etc.
3. Get a UK mobile phone number
4. Register for a National Insurance (NI) number if you do not already have one. You will need this for the right to work in the UK.
5. Find your closest hospital with an A&E (Accident & Emergency/Emergency Room) by entering your postcode at: Find nearest emergency hospital
6. Schedule appointments for telephone, internet, gas, electricity and water services, as well as getting a TV license.
7. Purchase car insurance and get information about driving in the UK Driving in GB with non-GB licence. For insurance there are comparison websites, such as: Compare the Market / Confused / Go Compare / Money Saving Expert

What to do first . . . for school

1. **ACCESS THE ONLINE INFORMATION SYSTEM**
   Once you have enrolled and paid your fees, you will be provided with your login details for PowerSchool where you will have access to the forms that need to be completed prior to your child(ren)'s first day of school. A to-do list is provided on the Admissions Hub. On the Admissions Hub, you will also have access to PSO key contacts and related information.

2. **PURCHASE SCHOOL SUPPLIES**
   You will be given a list of school supplies for your child(ren).

3. **PURCHASE P.E. (PHYSICAL EDUCATION) UNIFORM AND KIT**
   For students in Grades 5-10, P.E. uniforms are mandatory for class and can be purchased here.

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4. ACTIVATE PARENTPAY ACCOUNT
After your child is enrolled, you should receive a ParentPay account activation email from finance@acs-schools.com. Follow the instructions on the email to set up the account and add credit to your child's catering account. This is so your child(ren) can purchase food from the cafeteria. If you have any queries or do not receive your account activation email, please contact finance@acs-schools.com

5. CHECK THE ACS HILLINGDON CAMPUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS
The ACS Hillingdon campus calendar can be found on our school website.

Transport

WHAT TYPES OF BUS TRANSPORT ARE THERE?
ACS Hillingdon operates both a door-to-door and shuttle bus service, which picks up your child(ren) from either outside your house or a dedicated shuttle stop in the morning and drops them off again after leaving the school at 3:25pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and 2:45pm on Wednesdays. The door-to-door service is available for all students from Pre-K upwards. There are also Shuttle Services, which pick up from various Pick-Up Points in the morning and drop off after school for students from Grade 1 and above.

DO YOU OFFER A LATE BUS?
We offer late buses to certain shuttle stops for students taking part in after-school activities to all students from Grade 1 upwards. This service can be booked via our new transport app Vectare. Our bus services are subject to availability and changes without prior notice.

HOW DOES PARENT DROP-OFF WORK?
The drop-off line is strictly designed to let children out of your car and move on. If you need time to organise yourself, you should park in the East Wing Visitors car park by the entrance to the school. Please park and drive responsibly onto our school campus.

WHERE ON CAMPUS CAN I PARK MY CAR?
Parents can park their cars in the East Wing visitors car park before 8.30am and in the turning circle outside the Mansion House/Reception between 8.30am and 2pm. All other times are prohibited due to busing hours.

ACS HILLINGDON BUSING ROUTE
The blue shading, on the following page's map, shows the area the bus service covers; however it is subject to availability and changes.

Health and Safety/Security on Campus

WHAT ARE THE AFTER-SCHOOL RULES ON CAMPUS?
Students in Lower School and Grades 5-8 must be supervised after school. There are opportunities for students in these grades to stay after school for a supervised activity. For more information, please contact the divisional secretary.

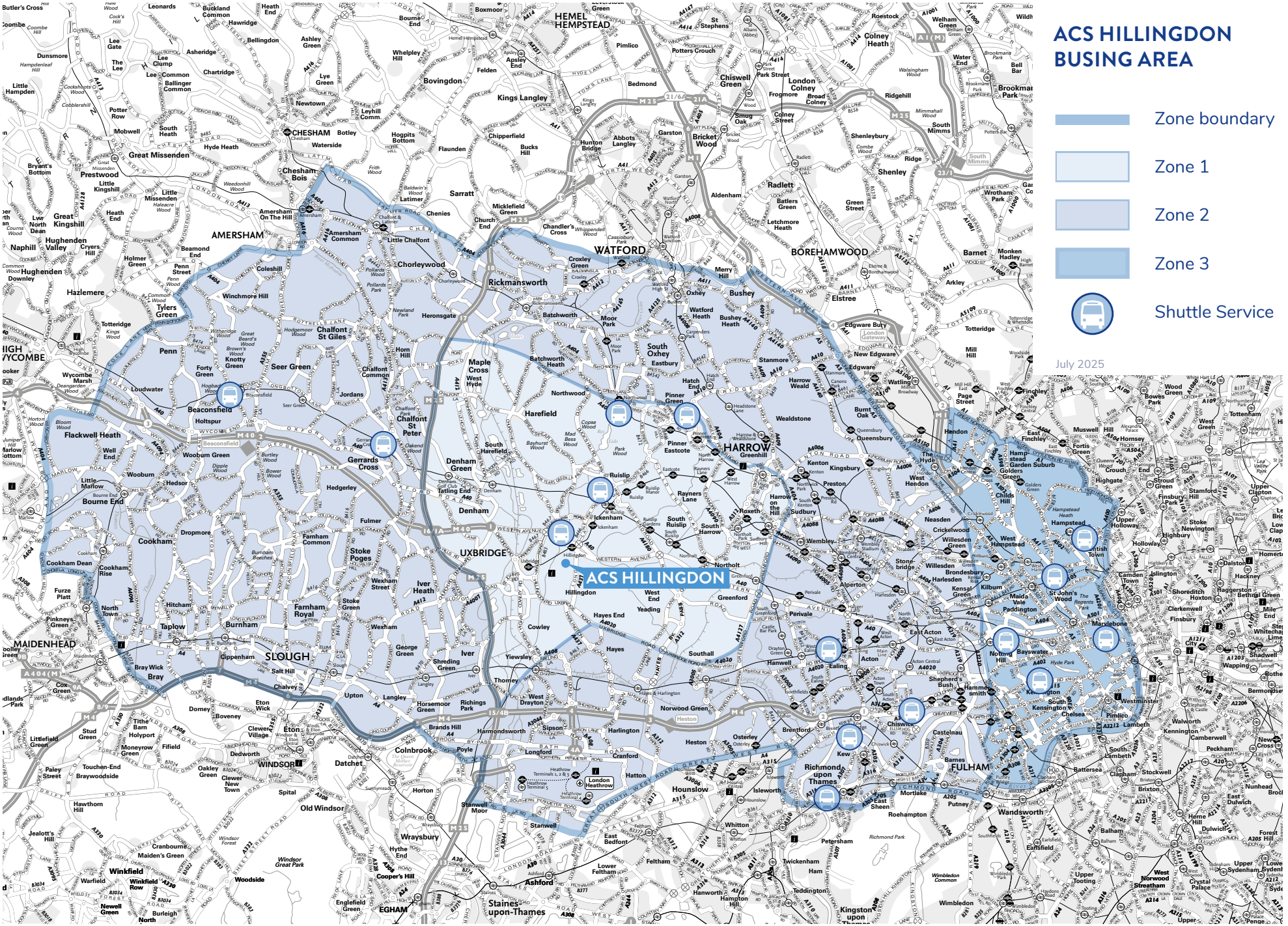
CAN MY CHILD WATCH THEIR FRIENDS PLAY SPORTS?
Lower and Middle School students must be supervised if they are staying after school. Parents are welcome to attend the games and supervise their child(ren).

WHY IS THE PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE ALWAYS OPEN?
The pedestrian entrance is located in front of the security gate and is monitored. Security is aware of all visitors and will ask pedestrians the purpose for their visit. Pedestrians who are not expected will not be permitted access to campus.

CAN STUDENTS LEAVE CAMPUS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY?
Students are not permitted to leave campus during the school day unless they are unwell, or their parent has informed the school that they have an appointment. Students leaving campus will be given two exit slips from their divisional office or the nurse. One of the exit slips must be retained by the student/parent and the other must be given to Security at the gate in order for the student to leave campus.

CAN I TAKE MY CHILDREN TO THE LOWER SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAYGROUNDS AFTER SCHOOL?
No this is not permitted.

WHERE IS THE NURSE?
The nurses' office is located opposite the Lower School Office in the West Wing.



ACS HILLINGDON BUSING AREA

- Zone boundary
- Zone 1
- Zone 2
- Zone 3
- Shuttle Service

July 2025

ACS Hillingdon Dictionary

Word	Explanation
Advisory	A regular meeting time where students receive academic guidance, social-emotional support, and build relationships with a designated teacher and peers.
Alumni	Students who have previously attended ACS Hillingdon.
Advanced Placement (AP)	US university-level courses taught in High School.
Assembly	Meetings for sharing information or presentations or awards, some of which parents may be invited to attend.
Bank Holiday	No school; banks, post offices and some local shops will be closed.
Buddy	Current ACS student who is paired with a new student to help them settle in at school.
Bulletin	At ACS Hillingdon, parents will receive every Friday a “Hawk News” bulletin from each division. It will keep you informed of ongoing and upcoming events related to Lower and Upper school.
BYOD	Bring your own device.
Cafeteria	Dining hall for students and staff.
Campus	All of the school’s grounds.
Campus Calendar	The main calendar with all activities, events and meetings for the school year.
CAT4	Test used to measure students’ reasoning skills to show learning potential.
CCA/ECA	Co-curricular/extracurricular activities.
Clubs	Students or Teachers led activities that would usually take place during lunch time or after school hours.
Creativity Activity Service (CAS)	As part of the IB Diploma, students must complete a programme of approximately 150 hours total over Grades 11 and 12 in sports, charity work, etc.
Chaperone	An adult (staff, parent) supervising field trips, parties, dances, etc.
Coffee morning	A casual get-together over coffee, tea, and light refreshments, for socialising with other parents.
College Workshop	High School informational meetings for parents and students regarding preparation for university.
Core Subjects/Classes	The academic subjects in each division, usually Maths, Language Arts, Social Studies, Language; different from ‘Specials’ or ‘Extras’.
Counsellor	Trained members of staff primarily there to provide social and emotional support for students.
Credit	In High School, a unit that represents the successful completion of a course, used to measure progress toward graduation requirements.
Curriculum Coordinator	Directs the planning, delivery and ongoing improvement of curriculum, assessment and instructional practices within the school.
Division/Divisional	There are two divisions in the school: Lower School and Upper School. Each division has its own office.

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Dress Code	ACS provides a standard dress code for students, however school divisions may have other requirements.
DofE	Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
DTL	Digital Teaching and Learning.
Early Childhood	A sub-division of Lower School for Grades Pre-K and K.
English as an Additional Language (EAL)	Extra English language support for students with limited English ability.
EE	Extended Essay (part of the IB Diploma Programme).
EPP	Elite Performance Pathway, a programme created for selected students to improve in their respective sports through tailored workouts and expert coaching.
Field Trip	Students travel to museums, theatre, etc. in the London area during the school day, usually by bus.
Freshman	A Grade 9 student.
GCD	Global Citizen Diploma.
Grade Representative	A parent who communicates information from PSO to other grade level parents. Also helps organise any grade level parties or other events.
Hawk	School mascot; the 'hawk' name and logo is used especially by sports teams.
Hawks Hub	A one stop shop platform once your children are enrolled at school, for any day to day questions you may have.

Head Hawks	A group of 4 Upper School students (2 Head and 2 deputy) who represent the student body, fostering school spirit and sense of community. They also act as a voice for their student body with school staff and senior faculty.
Head of School	The ACS Hillingdon staff member responsible for all school divisions.
High School	The division consisting of Grades 9-12.
Home Language Enrichment (HLE)	Lessons for students with a native language other than English.
Homeroom	Lower school students of the same grade meet daily under the supervision of their homeroom teacher, who takes attendance and administers other school business.
International Baccalaureate (IB)	A globally recognized educational programme that develops students' academic, personal, and international-mindedness skills through challenging, inquiry-based learning.
IBCP	A two-year programme for students aged 16–19 that combines career-focused learning with IB academic courses and core elements that develop personal and professional skills (Theatre and Digital Arts at ACS Hillingdon).
IBDP	A rigorous two-year pre-university course for students aged 16–19, focusing on academic excellence, critical thinking, and global understanding across six subject areas and core components (TOK, EE, CAS).
In-Service Day	No school for students; training sessions for staff.
IO	Individual Oral, a form of assessment used in Language courses in the IB Diploma programme.

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ISAA	International School Athletics Association, made up of selected international schools for competitive sports tournaments.
ISI	Independent Schools Inspectorate which assesses the school every three years, most recently in 2025.
Junior	A Grade 11 student.
Junior Varsity (JV)	Upper School student sports teams, which comes under the Varsity Team.
K	Kindergarten, 5-6 year old students.
Learning Support	Individual/small group learning support provided for students needing extra help with literacy, maths or English language.
Liaison	PSO parent representative of a school division or parent group, such as Lower School Liaison or Australian Liaison. Acts as a 'link' between PSO board, parents and school.
Locker	Lower School students each have their own unlocked cupboard for personal belongings. Upper School students each have a locker for their bags and school materials.
Lower School	The division consisting of PreK-Grade 4.
LSSA	London School Sports Association, consisting of other London international schools for competitive sports competitions.
Mansion House	The main, original Grade II listed building housing the Head of School office, main reception, and iconic Red and Green Rooms.
MAP Testing	Measures of Academic Progress, an online assessment taken by all students twice a year in specified grades.

Medical Office (Nurse)	Medical office for all students on campus staffed by a nurse near the Lower School office.
National Honor Society (NHS)	An organisation that recognises high school students for their excellence in scholarship, leadership, service, and character.
Nurse	See 'Medical Office'.
OFSTED	The inspectorate for children and learners (Office for Standard in Education) in England; contributes to the provision of better education through inspections and regulations.
Open House	Informational evenings for parents held by each division (Lower School, Upper School) at the start of each school year.
Open Mornings	Mornings set aside for interested families and students to come learn more about ACS Hillingdon and tour the facilities.
Orientation Day	Important informational day held before school starts in August; class lists are posted, new students and families meet to tour school and gather other information.
Pre-K	Pre-Kindergarten, 4-5 year old students.
(4G) Pitch	The large grass playing field in the back of the school.
Prom	Formal High School dance, held in spring, usually for students in Grades 9-12.
Parent School Organisation (PSO)	Consists of all parents and staff at ACS Hillingdon. An annually elected board leads the PSO.
Parent Information Meeting	Regular gatherings to update parents and share information.

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PSO Board	The elected leadership of the PSO who organise activities and events to support students, parents and staff as well as communicate with the school regarding parent ideas and concerns.
Recess	Free play time for students before/after lunch. May also mean school holiday break.
Report Card	School reports showing each student's progress.
Residential Trip	Residential trips are school trips that take place over a few days and pupils are required to stay away from home. Residential trips are usually activity-based trips.
SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test)	US test taken for university/college admissions by Grade 11 and 12 students; may be taken more than once.
Service Learning	Enables students at ACS Hillingdon to be caring contributors around the world, with the local community, and in school. Opportunities are presented as clubs, humanitarian expeditions, or other avenues.
School Colours	Blue and white.
Security Lodge	The small lodge at main school entrance with security staff.
Senior	A Grade 12 student.
Sophomore	A Grade 10 student.
SPC	Student Progress Conference.
Specials/Special area classes	Other than core subject classes; specialist teacher classes in art, music, computers, etc.

Staff Appreciation	A time set aside by the PSO to show appreciation for school staff. Can be one event or a week-long series of events.
Student Ambassadors	Current students who are selected to represent the school during Open Mornings or New Student Orientation. Ambassadors can also be asked to help new students during the school year in different ways.
Student Council	Students elected by their peers in Lower and Upper School to form a council that organises parties, dances and charity events. A teacher advises each council.
Student Services	Our department for Learning support and EAL.
TextMagic	In the event that weather (or anything else) may result in closure of the school at short notice, we will inform parents using our emergency messaging system – TextMagic.
Transitions	PSO parent volunteer team who helps ease the transitions of families who come and leave ACS Hillingdon.
Try-outs	Sports/Drama Scheduled right after school on designated days before seasonal sports teams begin or dramatic performance rehearsals. Students demonstrate their skills to earn a place on team/performance.
Varsity (V)	Our highest-level competing sports team.
West Wing	The addition to the original mansion house which consists of a vast majority of the classrooms.

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Yearbook	End-of-year books produced by Lower School and Upper School with photos of all students and their activities during the school year. Each student has the option to purchase a book and are encouraged to have other students sign or write encouraging messages in their own.

4 | LIFE IN THE UK



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Below is some information, in alphabetical order, with links that may be useful.

Adult education

Check with your council for local options or you can try:

Hillingdon Borough Council
Adult Education Classes.

Other London boroughs information can be found here.

The National Careers Service
Government site set up for advice on careers and courses.

The Open University
Flexible learning options for a huge range of further learning courses remotely and part-time.

Uxbridge College
Just one of many colleges where adults can study towards qualifications.

American to British Translation

US to UK

Area councils

The local District Council Office is equivalent in the US to a 'Town Hall,' and takes care of community services such as rubbish and recycling, building permission, parking permits and schools. Find my local council

Banking

- The process of opening a bank account in the UK is very thorough, and can take time. Items requested may include: photo ID, proof of residence (at least one utility bill or other document with your UK address), six months' worth of prior bank statements.
- If your bank card is lost or stolen, block it, report it stolen and request a new card. Your new card will be posted to you, and can take 3-5 working days.

Popular British banks include:

AmEx
Barclays
Citibank
First Direct
Halifax
HSBC
Lloyds
Metro Bank
Monzo
Nationwide
NatWest
Revolut
Santander
Starling

**For general financial queries, Martin Lewis' MoneySavingExpert is an excellent guide, clearly explaining account types and benefits so you can choose what works best for you and your family.*

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice Bureau helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free information and advice. Visit their website for answers to your questions or to find your local office: Citizens advice

OMBUDSMAN

There are various Ombudsman services in the country which are in place to help resolve complaints when you feel you've been treated unfairly by an organisation, such as a hospital, council, or bank. They investigate problems fairly and can recommend how to put things right. There are different ombudsmen for different services, including health and finance. Their service is free, and they can often help without the need to go to court.

Conversion Tables

WOMEN'S CLOTHING

UK	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
USA	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22
EUR	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52

MEN'S SHIRTS

UK/ USA	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	16.5	17	17.5	18
EUR	36	37	38	39	41	42	43	44	46

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WOMEN'S SHOES

UK	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
USA	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5
EUR	35	35.5	36	37	37.5	38
UK	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	
USA	8.5	9	9.5	10	10.5	
EUR	39	40	41	42	43	

CHILDREN'S SHOES

UK	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	1	2	3
US	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	1	2	3	4
EUR	23	24	25	27	28	29	31	32	33	34	35

Please note that these charts are only guidelines and can vary depending on brand and source.

WEIGHT AND MEASUREMENT

Length

UK/ USA	1 inch	1 foot	1 yard	1 mile	.333 in.	39.37 in.	3.28 ft.	.62 mile
Metric	2.5 cm	30 cm	0.9 cm	1.6 km	1 cm	1 m	1 m	1 km

To convert:	Multiply by
Inches to millimetres	25.4
Feet to metres	0.3048
Yards to metres	0.9144
Miles to kilometres	1.6093

Weight	American	British
One cup	8 oz.	10 oz.
One pint	16 oz.	20 oz.
One tablespoon	½ oz.	1 oz.

Weight	US (Standard UK)	Imperial	Metric
Flour	¼ cup	1 oz.	25g
	½ cup	2 oz.	50g
	¾ cup	3 oz.	75g
	1 cup	4 oz.	100g
Icing sugar/cocoa/cornflour	1 cup	4½ oz.	120g
Butter/Sugar (castor, granulated or brown, firmly packed)	2 Tbsp.	1 oz.	25g
	¼ cup	2 oz.	50g
	½ cup	4 oz.	100g
	¾ cup	6 oz.	175g
	1 cup		225g
Liquids/Cream/Yogurt	¼ cup	2 fl. oz.	50 ml
	½ cup	4 fl. oz.	100 ml
	¾ cup	6 fl. oz.	185 ml
	1 cup	8 fl. oz.	250 ml
	1 pint (2 cups)	16 fl. oz.	475 ml

Weight	US (Standard UK)	Imperial	Metric
Grated Cheese/Chopped Nuts	1 cup	4 oz.	100 g
Yeast	1 cake	½ oz. fresh	15 g

TEMPERATURE

Fahrenheit	32	41	50	59	68	77	86	95	104	140
Celsius	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	60

Boiling point of water =	100° Celsius,	212° Fahrenheit
Freezing point of water =	0° Celsius,	32° Fahrenheit

To Convert:	
Celsius to Fahrenheit:	multiply by 9, divide by 5 and add 32 Fahrenheit
Fahrenheit to Celsius:	subtract 32, multiply by 5 and divide by 9

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Cooking Temperatures	Celsius	Fahrenheit
Gas mark 1	140	275-300
Gas mark 2	150	300
Gas mark 3	160	325
Gas mark 4	180	350
Gas mark 5	190	375
Gas mark 6	200	400
Gas mark 7	220	425
Gas mark 8	230	450
Gas mark 9	260	500

All temperatures are the approximate equivalent.

BODY TEMPERATURE

Normal body temperature is 98.6 Fahrenheit, which equals 37 Celsius.

Embassies in the UK

Full list of embassy contacts

Expat Organisations

Here's a selection of popular clubs and associations in the London area. Most accept any nationality and have a range of social events, great for meeting new friends.

AMERICAN WOMEN'S CLUB OF LONDON

The American Women's Club of London (AWC) is a non-profit and volunteer-run organisation dedicated to providing a welcoming environment for American women (and non-citizens with close ties to the US) residing in the UK. The AWC is non-partisan and does not endorse any political or religious group or position.

AUSTRIAN CLUB LONDON

Established in 1984 to maintain and upkeep the "Austrian Spirit" amongst Austrian expatriates in London and UK nationals with a strong bond to Austria. They offer events, networking, and outings for all to enjoy and learn the Austrian way.

BRITISH-GERMAN ASSOCIATION

Membership is open to anyone who enjoys German culture and is appreciative of a strong British-German relationship. Members can enjoy London-based social gatherings, cultural events, guest speakers, and more.

CANADIAN WOMEN'S CLUB

The club welcomes permanent and temporary Canadian expats or those with a Canadian connection. Enjoy a wide variety of events and activities, participate in charitable projects, and best of all, meet other Canadians.

CHILTERN AMERICAN WOMEN'S CLUB (CAWC)

Welcoming all nationalities, this group primarily meet in Gerrards Cross and Beaconsfield and their primary objective is to welcome and assist newcomers and their families in England along with philanthropic work.

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA WOMEN'S CLUB (KCWC)

KCWC is a non-profit, volunteer-run international women's club based in London. It welcomes women from around the world and offers a wide variety of social, cultural, and educational activities to help members connect and thrive in their London life. The club is non-political and non-religious in nature.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD WOMEN'S CLUB

Welcoming all nationalities, SJWWC is an activities-based social and civic non-profit organisation, dedicated to enhancing the "London Experience" for members and their families. Most members live in the northern section of London.

THE THAMES VALLEY AMERICAN WOMEN'S CLUB

TVAWC welcomes international families living in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, London and Surrey with most activities in Windsor, Maidenhead and Reading.

Further associations here

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Family Days Out

There are many resources to find things to do with your children, such as: Trip Advisor or Day Out With The Kids.

THEME PARKS & LEISURE CENTRES

Chessington World of Adventures
Thorpe Park
Legoland
Go Ape (various locations)

CASTLES & MUSEUMS

Hever Castle (Hever)
Berkhamsted Castle (Hertfordshire)
Chiltern Open Air Museum (Chilterns)
Buckinghamshire Railway Centre & Roald Dahl Museum (Milton Keynes/Great Missenden)
Leeds Castle (Kent near Maidstone)
Dover Castle (Dover, Kent)
Hampton Court Palace (Richmond)
The Museum of Army Flying (Stockbridge near Salisbury)
Warwick Castle (Warwickshire)
Windsor Castle (Windsor)
Buckingham Palace (London)
Waddesdon Manor (Waddesdon)

ANIMALS & NATURE

London Zoo (ZSL)
Richmond Park
SEA LIFE London Aquarium
Kew Gardens (Richmond)
Odds Farm (High Wycombe)
Hobbledown (Hounslow)
Hanwell Zoo (Brent Lodge Park)

WEEKEND TRIP IDEAS

Accessible by car, rail, Eurostar, Eurotunnel, and/or ferry:
Bath
Brighton, Portsmouth, Whitstable, other beaches
Cambridge, Cotswolds, Devon, Cornwall
English Heritage Properties (various locations)
Isle of Wight
National Trust Properties, Historic Houses (various locations)
New Forest & Beaulieu, Oxford, Stonehenge, Salisbury, Avebury,
Stratford-upon-Avon, York
Scotland & Wales
Belgium: Brugge, Brussels. France: Lille, Paris

PASSES/SAVINGS

If you want to visit historic buildings, beautiful scenery or the best theme parks in the UK, membership passes may offer you the best value.

Here are some options:

NATIONAL TRUST

Annual, family and lifetime memberships available giving entry to a huge range of historic buildings and scenic landscapes covering the whole of the UK.

ENGLISH HERITAGE MEMBERSHIP

Offering annual, lifetime or short passes if you have visitors, sites include castles, historic houses and even battlefields.

HISTORIC HOUSES

Offers free access to over 300 privately owned stately homes and gardens across the UK, with exclusive behind-the-scenes tours and events for heritage enthusiasts.

HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES PASS

This annual pass offers 6 Royal Palaces and exclusive events at these properties.

LEGOLAND ANNUAL PASS

Annual pass or lifetime options just for Legoland, without the cost of a Merlin Pass.

MERLIN ANNUAL PASS

Annual pass to 14 of the UK's top attractions including Thorpe Park, Legoland, the London Eye and London Aquarium.

RAILCARD

Find the right railcard for you so you get 1/3 off eligible journeys for a whole year. Linking this to your Oyster Card can allow you to get 1/3 discount on off-peak pay as you go travel and to buy discounted Off-Peak Day Travelcards.

UNIDAYS

Students over the age of 16 can qualify for a UNIDAYS pass, unlocking free and exclusive student discounts at various stores, restaurants and more. They would have to use their school email to register to UNIDAYS.

Healthcare

FOR ANY EMERGENCY DIAL 999 (POLICE, FIRE, AMBULANCE)

FOR MEDICAL ADVICE (NON-EMERGENCY) DIAL 111

NHS WEBSITE

One of the first things to know is how healthcare works in the UK. The National Health Service (NHS) is the UK's publicly funded healthcare system, offering most services free at the point of use, including doctor visits, hospital treatment, and emergency care.

To access NHS services, you need to register with a General Practitioner (GP) near your home. GPs are your first point of contact for non-emergency health concerns. Once you have a home address, you can find and register with a GP through the NHS: Find a GP. You will need to take proof of address and ID when registering with your GP.

For non-urgent medical help, dial 111 or visit 111 online. In emergencies, call 999 or go to the nearest hospital A&E (Accident & Emergency) department/Emergency Room Find nearest A&E hospital

You can learn more and access services at www.nhs.uk, including how to find dentists, order prescriptions, and check eligibility for free care.

PRIVATE HEALTHCARE

Private healthcare is also available and widely used by people who want faster access and more choice of specialists.

Private healthcare in the UK includes:

- Private hospitals and clinics offering consultations, diagnostics, and surgery
- Private health insurance, which can cover some or all of the costs
- Self-pay options, allowing you to pay directly for treatment without insurance

Many private providers offer fast appointments and access to top consultants. Some employers also include private health insurance as part of their benefits package. You may require a referral via your NHS GP to access private services using your insurance.

Private healthcare doesn't replace the NHS – it's a complement. You can use both depending on your needs and circumstances.

HOSPITALS

Find your nearest hospital. Smaller hospitals do not have an A&E department.

PAEDIATRICIANS

In the UK, most children see the GP for all routine visits and illnesses. Paediatricians are considered specialists, so your GP will make a referral to a consultant, if required.

DOCTORS

Go to Find a GP to search by postcode for local surgery/doctor listings. Your GP surgery is allocated based on your home address.

Find a private GP

DENTISTS & ORTHODONTISTS

Find an NHS or private dentist

NHS Dentistry is free if, when the treatment starts, the patient is:

- under age 18
- a full-time student under age 19
- a woman who is pregnant or has had a baby in the last 12 months

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OPTICIANS

Find an optician

WALK-IN CLINICS

Finding your closest walk-in clinics is important for accessible, convenient, and timely medical care for minor illnesses and injuries without needing a prior appointment.

PHARMACIES/CHEMISTS

Find a pharmacy

Pharmacy chains on most high streets:

BOOTS PHARMACY

Boots is a chain of stores that sells a wide range of medicines, health and beauty products, suncare, baby products and cosmetics. They also provide services such as travel vaccinations, flu jabs, opticians and repeat prescriptions.

Lloyds Pharmacy

Lloyds provide a similar range of goods and services to Boots.

TRAVEL CLINICS

Some immunisations are available at your local GP surgery, so check with them first.

Private London Travel Clinics with branches across London:

London Travel Clinic

MASTA Travel Clinic

Most private GPs will also offer travel services – Find a private GP

Household donations

Most town High Streets have charity shops that will take used donations of clothing, shoes, books, games and housewares. To find charity shops in your area: Find a local charity shop

Larger items and small electrical items can be taken to your local council operated recycling and refuse centre. Find information on your local council website or use this handy website for guidance on what can be recycled and where: Recycle Now

Language schools

Many of the Adult Education Centres offer language classes for adults. The local public libraries will also have information about language classes. Berlitz offer online and in person courses for many languages Berlitz language courses.

Legal issues

CHILDREN AND THE LAW

- **Driving**
  Young drivers must be 17 years old. Make sure you have car insurance even for learner drivers.
- **Alcohol**
  Please see the government guidance regarding alcohol consumption: Alcohol and young people. It is against the law to drink alcohol under the age of 18. However, at age 16, your child, when accompanied by an adult, can buy or be bought beer, wine, or cider to drink with a meal, but only in a restaurant or pub with an eating area.

NSPCC

The charity National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has excellent information on leaving children home alone, understanding the law on this and children's safety. The NSPCC operates the Child Protection Hotline which offers counselling and advice.

Libraries

Find your local library

To obtain a library card and borrow books for free, visit the library with ID. Once you have your library card, you can borrow from any of your county libraries. The library is also a great source for finding information on your local area; courses, volunteer opportunities, etc. Some libraries offer storytimes/ crafts for young children.

ACS
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOLS



INSPIRING
THE WORLD'S NEXT GLOBAL
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We ready students for a world that keeps changing.

The UK's largest IB and AP school group.

- Ages 2-18, day and boarding
- IB Diploma, IB Career-related Programme and Advanced Placement
- Shuttle and door-to-door busing

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Visit us www.acs-schools.com

Post Offices

Find a post office

Useful for government documents, postage, foreign exchange, bill payment, etc

Post & Package Delivery Services

Post & Package Delivery Services – Royal Mail, Mail Boxes Etc (for UK and international) InPost (for UK packages).

Setting Up A Home In The UK

FINDING A HOME

There is no multiple listing service in the UK as there is in some other countries, so when you are looking for a home to rent or buy, you will have to contact the local estate agents for availability and pricing. There are websites that list available properties from multiple estate agents:

Zoopla

RightMove

Home.co.uk

Onthemarket

PrimeLocation

Estate/letting agents work for the landlord or property owner. Propertymark are a professional body that ensures agents listed with them meet high standards. Check their website for listings of local estate agents for buying or renting property: Find an estate agent.

PLUMBING AND HEATING

Landlords are responsible for making sure that gas fittings and flues are maintained in good order, and gas appliances that they own in their residential premises, and flues, are checked for safety every 12 months. They must also keep a record of the safety checks for at least two years and issue it to existing tenants and any new tenants before they move in. Be sure to have your boilers checked annually by a Gas Safe registered heating engineer. You can search for a registered engineer in your area: Find or check a gas engineer.

Tipping/gratuity

Some guidelines are:

- Restaurants: It is customary to leave 10–15% for good service. Many places will add the gratuity automatically to the bill. Read the fine print in the menu or on your bill when you get it. (You are not required to pay this and can even ask that it be removed). You aren't expected to tip in a pub when you are ordering and paying for your drinks at the bar. If you get exceptional service from your barman you can leave the equivalent cost of a half pint.
- Hairdressers: Not required, but if you wish to, you can either add on a few pounds or opt for 10% of the services rendered.
- Post Delivery Person, Rubbish Collector: It is not the custom to tip even at Christmas time.
- Taxi Drivers: Typically 10% of the fare. If you happen to head over to France, a 15% tip is usually included in your bill at a restaurant. In Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland you can add 5% to your bill total, but rarely up to 10%.

Housing/Utilities

AREA COUNCILS

In the UK, the local District Council Office is equivalent to the Town Hall, and takes care of community services such as rubbish and recycling, building permission, parking permits and schools. The Council is a good source of information for local children's clubs and playgroups. You can find your local council by entering your postcode or street and town at: Find my local council

COUNCIL TAX

Your local government levies council tax against your residence for public services. Even if you are renting from a private landlord, you are responsible for paying this tax. More information can be found here: Council tax information

ELECTRICITY

Voltage & Frequency: The UK uses a 230V, 50Hz electrical system, which is standard across Europe but may differ from other regions like North America (120V, 60Hz). Plug adapters are available for equipment with special 110/240 (dual-voltage) capabilities. An adapter DOES NOT change the voltage. Therefore, DO NOT use an adapter on any appliances with a motor without also using a transformer.

Plug Type: British power outlets use Type G plugs, which have three rectangular prongs; travelers will need appropriate adapters if coming from countries with different plug types.

Fused Plugs for Safety: All UK plugs are required to have built-in fuses (usually 3A or 13A) to protect appliances and wiring from electrical faults or overloads, adding an extra layer of safety compared to some other countries.

INSURANCE COMPANIES

To find competitive car, household, health and travel insurance, try a comparison site such as:

Compare the Market

Confused.com

Go Compare

Money Saving Expert

The largest car insurance companies include Admiral, Aviva, Direct Line, Hastings and LV.

Newsagents

Newsagents are located on the high streets in most towns. If you want to have home delivery of a newspaper, check with your local newsagent to see if you can get on the delivery list. You can get certain newspapers for free at tube stations like the METRO.

Pets

Bringing a pet to Great Britain

See this Government website for comprehensive information to bring your dog or cat to the UK, which in some cases can include quarantine. It also includes information applying to pets leaving and returning to the UK, for example, if you want to take your dog with you on holiday to France.

Pet insurance

To find competitive pet insurance, try a comparison site such as:

Compare the Market

Confused.com

Go Compare

Money Saving Expert

Largest pet insurance companies include: Petgevity, ManyPets, PetPlan, LV Everypaw and The Kennel Club

Dog insurance is recommended in the UK as bills for infections and injuries can run quite high.

Dog Boarding/Sitting
Talk to your vet about reputable local dog boarding and sitting services they recommend. Local providers in the Hillingdon area include:
Mutts and Moggies Motel - Kennels, Daycare, Grooming etc.
Woofsrus - Dog walking services

Removal companies

For moving your household items, contact the British Association of Removers for local companies who are members.
Find a moving company

RUBBISH/RECYCLING COLLECTION – HOUSEHOLD WASTE

Rubbish/recycling collection
Enter your postcode for local council information for your area.

Travel insurance

To find competitive travel insurance, try a comparison site such as:

Compare the Market

Confused.com

Go Compare

Money Saving Expert

Even if you have private health insurance, travel insurance in the UK is important. If you miss a flight because of illness, you will have to forfeit your entire holiday if you do not have travel insurance. It is often more competitive to buy an annual policy through your insurance company than to buy it through the holiday provider each time you travel.

Transport

DRIVING

- Familiarise yourself with the different types of traffic cameras. There are lots of cameras installed, violations are recorded on your licence and you may receive a fine. If you get too many points, you could lose your licence. This includes speeding, parking violations, driving without having paid road tax etc.
- It is against the law to use your mobile phone whilst driving. It can result in penalty points and a fine. Check Phone usage in car.
- GPS/Navigation Systems are very helpful when driving in the UK. If your car doesn't come equipped with one, you may want to consider buying a portable device or a mobile phone app such as Waze
- London Congestion & ULEZ zones are active in London and could mean your vehicle is chargeable. You should check this on both websites before travelling.
- To drive your own car in the UK, you will need the following:
- Valid driving licence
- Automobile insurance – see insurance on previous page
- Vehicle registration
- MOT The purpose of the MOT is to ensure that your car complies with key roadworthiness and environmental requirements. Once a car is three years old, it must have an MOT every year. Many garages do MOT testing which takes about an hour; look for one with an MOT sign. See MOT information
- Vehicle tax – all cars in the UK must have vehicle tax. See Vehicle Tax.

TRAFFIC INFORMATION

National Highways is a good resource for roadworks and traffic information.

Public Transport

There are a few different modes and resources available for navigating the London public transport system and your way around the area. They include:

1. Printed Tube Maps – usually available at most tube stations
2. TFL (Transport for London) Website and App to plan routes using trains and buses
3. National Rail services via sites including: National Rail, Trainline, SWR, Chilterns Railways
4. Oxford Tube – This is a coach that runs from Oxford to London Victoria, stopping at the following, non-exhaustive areas - Hillingdon, White City, and Marble Arch. The buses can be tracked on the Oxford Tube website or app

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5. Regular navigation apps like Google Maps, Waze, and CityMapper are also good apps to use to plan your journey via public transport

Normal contactless payments are accepted on a majority of public transport modes however you can also use Oyster Cards or buy single/return journey tickets. You can check fares using this website and check if you or a member of your family is eligible for any discounted travel. Students will have their own fares.



5 | LOCAL TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR ACS PARENTS



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Cafes

CHISWICK & HAMMERSMITH

1. ANTIPODE – Inspired by the coffee culture of Melbourne, Antipode delivers top-notch flat whites, creative brunch plates, and a laid-back, music-filled vibe. Standout dishes include brioche French toast and smashed avocado with dukkah.
2. ARTISAN COFFEE – A local favourite known for ethically sourced beans and minimal interiors, Artisan offers expertly crafted coffee and a tempting selection of pastries and sourdough toasties. The buzzing yet relaxed atmosphere is perfect for a quiet morning or casual meet-up.
3. MA MA BOUTIQUE BAKERY – This elegant Korean-French bakery specialises in beautifully crafted cakes, matcha-infused pastries, and pillowy-soft milk bread. Minimalist and photogenic, it's a go-to for matcha lovers and those seeking a delicate, modern twist on traditional bakes.
4. MARI DELI & DINING – A hidden gem along the Thames Path, this family-run Italian deli serves handmade focaccia, pastries, and strong espresso. Its riverside location and authentic charm make it ideal for a relaxed weekend visit or post-walk treat.
5. WAFT COFFEE – A bright, dog-friendly café with friendly service, fresh pastries, and outdoor seating. Loved by locals for its cozy atmosphere and consistently good coffee – perfect for everyday visits.

EALING (SOUTHALL, EALING, ACTON, GREENFORD)

1. GINGER & MOORE – A charming, family-run café with a cozy interior and a strong brunch menu. Expect hearty toasties, vibrant salads, and smoothies – alongside great coffee. A friendly atmosphere makes it easy to visit with little ones in tow.
2. PULP – A cheerful, bright café known for its fresh juices, seasonal salads, and wholesome food. Their focus on natural ingredients makes it a favourite with health-conscious locals and a great choice for lighter lunches or smoothies with the kids.
3. WA CAFÉ – An elegant Japanese-European patisserie offering refined cakes, delicate buns, and matcha-infused bakes. The presentation is Instagram-worthy, and the flavours are subtly sweet – ideal for a quiet moment of indulgence.

GERRARDS CROSS & CHALFONTS

6. FEGO – Part of the beloved local chain, Fego offers a cosmopolitan café experience with a global menu – think shakshuka, pancakes, and fresh juices. With its friendly staff and relaxed setting, it's a firm favourite for weekend family breakfasts.
2. GAIL'S BAKERY – Located in the heart of the high street, GAIL's brings its signature sourdough breads, flaky pastries, and expertly brewed coffee to this commuter village. With stylish interiors and plenty of space, it's a popular stop for locals and families alike.

OTHER

1. BAGERIET – In the heart of Covent Garden, Bageriet is a charming Scandinavian-style bakery known for its authentic Swedish pastries, crisp rye breads, and delicate open-faced sandwiches.
2. BREAD AHEAD – Renowned for its exceptional sourdough breads and doughnuts, Bread Ahead's flagship bakery at Borough Market is a must-visit for lovers of artisanal baking. Their famous doughnuts and rustic loaves are perfect for a special treat or weekend family outing.

Restaurants

*Note – many recommendations can be found in various locations!

CHISWICK & HAMMERSMITH

1. BILL'S – Bright and cheerful, Bill's offers a diverse menu with plenty of kids' options. A popular choice for weekend brunch or after-school dining.
2. CHATEAU CHISWICK – A stylish French-inspired brasserie offering elegant small plates, grilled meats, and a curated wine list in a refined yet relaxed setting.
3. CHISWICK FIRE STATION – A lively gastropub set in a converted fire station, offering hearty British fare in a spacious and welcoming atmosphere. Great for families and groups.
4. CÔTE BRASSERIE – Classic French cuisine in a warm and inviting setting. Ideal for a relaxed meal with family or friends.
5. CURTAINS UP – A quirky, theatre-themed restaurant in Baron's Court serving contemporary British dishes. The fun décor and friendly vibe make it a favourite for families and group
6. HIGH ROAD BRASSERIE – A relaxed and family-friendly spot serving modern British dishes made with seasonal ingredients. Perfect for casual lunches or dinners with the kids.
7. LA TROMPETTE – An award-winning fine dining restaurant known for its modern French cuisine, impeccable service, and elegant atmosphere – perfect for special occasions.

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8. PAD THAI STORY – Authentic Thai dishes with fresh, vibrant flavours and a range of vegetarian and mild options. A cosy spot suitable for families wanting something a bit different.
9. SAM'S KITCHEN – A laid-back, all-day eatery offering hearty brunches, seasonal small plates, and a strong focus on local, sustainable ingredients.

EALING (SOUTHALL, EALING, ACTON, GREENFORD)

1. 101 THAI – A casual and friendly spot serving vibrant Thai cuisine with plenty of vegetarian options. Perfect for a relaxed family meal.
2. BOBO SOCIAL – A vibrant and stylish bar and restaurant offering an eclectic menu of modern dishes alongside creative cocktails, perfect for families and groups.
3. EAST PAN ASIAN RESTAURANT – Offering a diverse menu of Chinese and other Pan-Asian dishes, East is a popular choice for family groups looking for variety and generous portions.
4. LA RUEDA – A lively Spanish tapas bar serving authentic small plates and a great selection of wines, ideal for sharing with family or friends.
5. MOMO JAPANESE RESTAURANT – A cozy Japanese eatery offering sushi, ramen, and other classic dishes in a relaxed environment. Suitable for families seeking a casual dining experience.
6. MONTY'S – A cosy Nepalese restaurant offering authentic, flavourful dishes in a warm and inviting atmosphere, great for family meals.
7. NANDO'S – Famous for its flame-grilled peri-peri chicken, Nando's is a reliable, family-friendly chain with a casual vibe and kids' menu.
8. ROSA'S THAI – Serving authentic Thai dishes made with fresh ingredients, Rosa's is popular for its welcoming atmosphere and balanced flavours. Great for family dinners.
9. SIKULO – An authentic Sicilian restaurant in Northfields serving traditional Italian dishes like wood-fired pizzas and homemade pasta in a cozy, family-friendly setting.
10. TA KE SUSHI – A popular Japanese restaurant serving fresh sushi and traditional dishes in a casual, friendly setting.
11. THE GRANGE PUB – A traditional British pub with a welcoming atmosphere, serving hearty classics and seasonal dishes, great for casual family outings.
12. THE ROSE & CROWN – A traditional British pub with a family-friendly atmosphere, serving classic pub favourites and seasonal dishes. Ideal for a casual outing with kids.

13. TOSA – A modern Japanese restaurant offering fresh sushi and a range of traditional dishes in a stylish setting. Great for families who enjoy authentic Japanese flavours.
14. THREE UNCLES – A Hong Kong-style restaurant specialising in classic Cantonese dishes and dim sum, perfect for families seeking authentic Asian flavours.
15. YASHAM EXPRESS – A fast-casual Lebanese eatery offering fresh, flavourful Middle Eastern dishes, ideal for quick, family-friendly dining or takeaway.
16. MOLANA – A popular spot in Ealing offering authentic Persian cuisine with rich flavours and generous portions. Great for family gatherings and sharing meals.

GERRARDS CROSS & CHALFONTS

1. JACK AND ALICE – A stylish, family-friendly restaurant offering a modern British menu with fresh, seasonal ingredients. It's popular for relaxed lunches and weekend dinners.
2. LOMITO – A cosy eatery specialising in authentic South American cuisine, featuring delicious grilled meats and vibrant flavours. Great for families wanting something a bit different.
3. MALIK'S RESTAURANT – A well-regarded Indian restaurant offering a wide range of traditional dishes with rich, authentic flavours in a warm, family-friendly setting.
4. ROYAL SARACENS HEAD – A historic pub offering classic British dishes in a welcoming atmosphere, perfect for casual meals with family and friends.
5. THE GRIFFIN, AMERSHAM – A historic pub combining traditional décor with a menu of hearty British dishes and seasonal specials, ideal for casual dining with family or friends.
6. THE THREE OAKS – A charming countryside pub serving classic British fare with a modern twist, featuring a cosy atmosphere perfect for relaxed family meals.
7. THE WILDWOOD – A popular chain serving Italian-inspired dishes including pizzas and pasta, with a relaxed and family-friendly environment. Great for casual meals with kids.

HILLINGDON (UXBRIDGE, HILLINGDON, ICKENHAM, RUISLIP)

1. CAFFE CHENNAI – A vibrant South Indian restaurant serving authentic dishes like dosas and curries in a casual, family-friendly setting. Perfect for those craving traditional Indian flavours.

2. NONNA ROSA – A family-run Italian restaurant in Uxbridge known for its homely atmosphere and traditional dishes like pizza and pasta. Great for a cozy family dinner.
3. SKVP (Sri Krishna Vada Pav) – A casual eatery serving authentic and affordable Indian street food, specialising in the popular Mumbai snack Vada Pav. Perfect for a quick, tasty bite.
4. The White Bear Pub – A cosy, characterful pub and brasserie serving seasonal, French-inspired food with a great wine and cocktail list. It offers a stylish yet relaxed setting with fireplaces, a bright dining area, and a lovely garden.
5. MORELLO LOUNGE – A quirky, art-deco café-bar with vibrant décor, a relaxed vibe, and a broad menu including great vegan, gluten-free, and brunch options.
6. ZAZA – A cosy, stylish Italian restaurant set in a historic cottage, serving fresh pasta, pizzas, and grills in a warm, elegant setting.

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

1. DISHOOM – A stylish Bombay-style café serving delicious Indian dishes with a vintage charm. Perfect for families looking to enjoy rich, authentic flavours in a relaxed setting.
2. JACUZZI – An elegant Italian restaurant known for its authentic pasta dishes and refined ambiance, perfect for a sophisticated dining experience.
3. KITCHEN W8 – A stylish neighbourhood restaurant serving modern European cuisine with a focus on seasonal and locally sourced ingredients, ideal for casual yet polished meals.
4. MEGAN'S – A bright, Mediterranean-inspired restaurant offering fresh, wholesome dishes and a warm ambiance. Perfect for families who enjoy light, vibrant meals.
5. MAROUSH – A vibrant Lebanese eatery offering a variety of traditional Middle Eastern dishes with fresh, bold flavours in a welcoming atmosphere.
6. WINDSOR CASTLE PUB – A charming, historic pub offering hearty British fare in a welcoming environment. Ideal for a relaxed family meal or weekend outing.
7. THE IVY CHELSEA BRASSERIE – Part of the renowned Ivy collection, this brasserie offers an all-day menu of British classics in a chic and family-friendly setting.
8. YASHIN OCEAN HOUSE – A sleek, contemporary sushi and seafood restaurant praised for its high-quality ingredients and stylish setting, perfect for a relaxed dining experience.

9. FLAT IRON – Known for its affordable, high-quality steak served in a minimalist, friendly environment. Ideal for casual dining with family or friends.

SLOUGH & IVER

1. LA PALMA – A cosy Italian trattoria serving traditional pasta dishes and wood-fired pizzas. Loved for its welcoming atmosphere and authentic flavours.
2. THE SWAN – A traditional pub with a cosy setting serving classic British dishes and seasonal specials. Perfect for family-friendly casual dining.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD

1. MY TORTELLINI – A casual Italian eatery specialising in fresh pasta and classic dishes made from scratch. Ideal for quick, tasty meals with family.
2. CINDER – A sleek neighbourhood spot serving flame-grilled sharing plates, fresh ceviches and craft cocktails in a stylish, relaxed setting.
3. MAISON SOUTINE – A charming Parisian-style bistro serving classic French dishes and fine wines in an elegant, artfully decorated setting
4. BABBO – A warm, stylish Italian restaurant serving classic dishes with elegant flair in a welcoming atmosphere.

OTHER

1. BENIHANA – A lively Japanese teppanyaki restaurant where chefs prepare meals tableside, serving dishes like hibachi steak and miso black cod, perfect for fun group dining and special occasions.
2. CAMDEN MARKET – A bustling market famous for its diverse street food stalls, offering everything from global cuisines to vegan treats. Great for families wanting a lively, informal dining experience.
3. COCO ICHIBANYA – A popular Japanese curry chain offering customizable curry dishes with a variety of toppings and spice levels, perfect for casual dining and quick, comforting meals.
4. COCO GRILL & LOUNGE – An upscale Anatolian restaurant offering a fully halal menu with grilled meats and unique non-alcoholic cocktails, featuring chic decor and stunning views of Tower Bridge and the Thames.
5. THE IVY ASIA – A vibrant pan-Asian restaurant offering a theatrical dining experience with bold flavours, signature cocktails, and eclectic decor, located on King's Road in Chelsea.
6. SEVEN DIALS MARKET – An indoor food hall in Covent Garden featuring a wide variety of independent food vendors. Great for families wanting lots of choices in a fun atmosphere.

Family days out

CHISWICK & HAMMERSMITH

1. CHISWICK HOUSE AND GARDENS
   A stunning Neo-Palladian villa set in 65 acres of landscaped gardens, perfect for peaceful walks and family picnics, with seasonal access to the house and kitchen garden.
2. KEW GARDENS
   A UNESCO World Heritage site boasting over 50,000 plants, iconic glasshouses, and beautiful walking trails, ideal for nature lovers and families.
3. RICHMOND PARK
   London's largest Royal Park, known for its wild deer, extensive trails, and open spaces, great for cycling, walking, and picnics.

EALING (SOUTHALL, EALING, ACTON, GREENFORD)

1. BRENTFORD CYCLING ROUTES
   Scenic, mostly traffic-free cycle paths along the Grand Union Canal, perfect for cyclists of all abilities.
2. GUNNERSBURY PARK
   A large park featuring ornamental gardens, woodlands, lakes, sports facilities, and the local history Gunnersbury Museum.
3. WALPOLE PARK
   A charming Regency park in central Ealing with gardens, a lake, a children's playground, and the historic Pitzhanger Manor.

GERRARDS CROSS & CHALFONTS

1. BURNHAM BEECHES
   An ancient woodland reserve featuring majestic beech trees, peaceful trails, and a rich variety of flora and fauna.
2. CHILTERNS CYCLEWAY
   A scenic 170-mile circular cycling route through the Chiltern Hills, perfect for exploring countryside villages and rolling hills.
3. CLIVEDEN HOUSE WOODS
   Beautiful woodland trails surrounding the historic Cliveden estate, ideal for nature walks and seasonal events.

HILLINGDON (UXBRIDGE, HILLINGDON, ICKENHAM, RUISLIP)

1. BATTLE OF BRITAIN BUNKER
   A historic WWII command centre offering guided tours and interactive exhibits about the Battle of Britain.
2. COURT PARK
   A local green space perfect for walks, picnics, and outdoor play.
3. HILLINGDON LIDO (LEISURE CENTRE)
   An outdoor swimming pool complex with lanes, a splash area, and family-friendly facilities.
4. NORTHALA FIELDS
   A unique set of artificial hills providing panoramic views, walking trails, and kite-flying spots.
5. RUISLIP LIDO
   A large reservoir with a sandy beach, miniature railway, café, and plenty of space for family walks and picnics.

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

1. HOLLAND PARK
   A peaceful Royal Park known for its beautiful gardens, woodland walks, a Japanese Kyoto Garden, and an outdoor theatre.
2. KENSINGTON GARDENS
   Adjacent to Hyde Park, this expansive green space features the Serpentine Gallery, the Albert Memorial, and the Diana Memorial Playground.

SLOUGH & IVER

1. BLACK PARK
   A vast country park with woodlands, lakes, and open grassland, popular for walking, picnics, and wildlife spotting. Has a Go-Ape and other activities.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD

1. HAMPSTEAD HEATH
   A vast, wild green space with woodlands, ponds, and panoramic views of London, perfect for walking, swimming, and picnics.
2. REGENT'S PARK
   A beautifully landscaped Royal Park featuring formal gardens, a boating lake, playgrounds, and the famous London Zoo.

OTHER

1. CHESSINGTON WORLD OF ADVENTURES
   A theme park combining thrilling rides, a zoo, and a sea life centre, great for families.
2. HYDE PARK
   One of London's largest Royal Parks, offering open spaces, the Serpentine lake, and various events.

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3. LEGOLAND WINDSOR
   A family-friendly theme park featuring Lego-themed rides, shows and interactive play zones.

Shops

CHISWICK & HAMMERSMITH

1. PLANET ORGANIC
   A well-known health food shop offering a wide range of organic groceries, natural supplements, and eco-friendly products.
2. CHISWICK HIGH STREET
   A vibrant shopping street featuring independent boutiques, cafes, and a variety of high street stores, perfect for a leisurely stroll and shopping.
3. NATOORA
   A local food market focusing on fresh, organic, and specialty food products with an emphasis on quality and sustainability.

EALING (SOUTHALL, EALING, ACTON, GREENFORD)

1. BEN'S
   A popular local deli and grocery store offering fresh produce, deli meats, and specialty food items.
2. FRANKS DELI
   A family-run delicatessen known for quality meats, cheeses, and prepared foods.
3. HYPER MARCHÉ
   A large supermarket in Southall providing a wide selection of international groceries, fresh produce, and household essentials.
4. LOON FUNG
   A well-known Asian supermarket offering a variety of Chinese and other East Asian ingredients and fresh produce.
5. TIAN TIAN MARKET
   A vibrant market in Southall offering fresh fruits, vegetables, and a wide range of international food products.

GERRARDS CROSS & CHALFONTS

1. HEIDI AND HUDSON
   A stylish independent boutique in Gerrards Cross offering a carefully curated range of women's fashion and accessories. Known for its quality brands and friendly, personalized service, it's a go-to spot for timeless wardrobe pieces.

HILLINGDON (UXBRIDGE, HILLINGDON, ICKENHAM, RUISLIP)

1. ALMY'S
   A well-stocked grocery store offering fresh halal meats, produce and a variety of international food products. Known locally for quality and friendly service.
2. CHIMES SHOPPING CENTRE
   A modern shopping mall in Uxbridge with over 70 stores, including major retailers, a cinema, and various dining options.
3. HILLINGDON FOOD CENTRE
   A family-run supermarket providing a wide range of international groceries, fresh produce, and halal meats, popular with local families.
4. RUISLIP HIGH STREET
   A bustling high street with a mix of independent shops, cafes, and high street brands, ideal for everyday shopping and dining.

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

1. DAMASCENE ROSE DELI
   A cozy Middle Eastern deli offering authentic dishes like falafel wraps, mezze, and roast chicken, known for fresh flavors and friendly service.
2. WHOLE FOODS MARKET
   A flagship organic grocery store with a wide selection of fresh produce, prepared foods, and specialty counters including sushi and coffee.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD

1. NATURAL NATURAL
   An organic and health food store specializing in natural and eco-friendly products, including groceries and personal care items.

OTHER

1. BICESTER VILLAGE
   An open-air luxury outlet village offering discounted designer brands like Gucci, Burberry, and Prada in a relaxed, stylish setting just outside London.
2. BRENT CROSS SHOPPING CENTRE
   A popular North West London mall featuring high street staples like M&S, Zara, Apple, and Fenwick, with family-friendly dining and ample parking.
3. JOHN LEWIS
   A British department store icon offering everything from fashion and homeware to tech and gifts, with a rooftop café and family services.

4. OXFORD STREET
   One of London's busiest shopping streets, home to a wide mix of flagship stores including Zara, Uniqlo, Nike Town, and Marks & Spencer.
5. REGENT STREET
   A grand shopping boulevard featuring premium high street brands like & Other Stories, Apple, and Hamleys in beautifully preserved architecture.
6. SELFRIDGES
   A world-famous department store known for designer fashion, beauty, luxury food halls, and immersive window displays.
7. WESTFIELD WHITE CITY
   One of Europe's largest malls with over 300 shops, dining options, a cinema, and plenty of family-friendly entertainment.

Leisure Facilities

CHISWICK & HAMMERSMITH

1. PERFORM (THEATRE & ARTS)
   A leading performing arts school for children, offering engaging weekly classes in acting, dance, and music across West London.

EALING (SOUTHALL, EALING, ACTON, GREENFORD)

1. AKTIVA CAMPS
   Locally run holiday and after-school clubs offering sports, crafts, and drama activities in a safe, engaging environment for primary-aged children.
2. OXYGEN FREEJUMPING
   A spacious indoor trampoline park offering wall-to-wall trampolines, inflatable zones, and fitness sessions – great for kids and teens.
3. CAMP BEAUMONT
   Well-established holiday camps across London and the Home Counties, offering age-specific programmes with activities from archery to performing arts.
4. CERAMICS CAFÉ
   A creative studio where families can paint their own ceramic pieces, ideal for all ages and perfect for birthdays or rainy-day fun.
5. MOBILE CLIMBING WALLS
   Available for hire in West London, these portable climbing setups are great for parties, school events, or festival fun.

6. SOUTHALL PARK & LOCAL OUTDOOR GYMS
   Several local parks (e.g. Acton Park, Lammas Park) now feature outdoor gym equipment, pump tracks, and cycling-friendly layouts.
7. TENPIN ACTON
   A vibrant leisure hub offering bowling, karaoke, escape rooms, laser tag, and arcade games – perfect for group outings.

GERRARDS CROSS & CHALFONTS

1. WYCOMBE LEISURE CENTRE
   A modern facility in nearby High Wycombe offering swimming pools, fitness classes, a gym, and sports halls for all ages and abilities.

HILLINGDON (UXBRIDGE, HILLINGDON, ICKENHAM, RUISLIP)

1. BETTERHEALTH (SWIMMING)
   Provides swimming lessons, fitness classes, and water-based activities at local leisure centres across the borough, suitable for all ages and abilities.
2. LITTLE FOXES FOOTBALL
   Child-focused grassroots football sessions hosted at local pitches, designed to build skills, teamwork, and a love of the game from a young age.
3. PAINT & PLAY (SOUTH RUISLIP)
   A creative, hands-on studio offering pottery painting, craft workshops, and seasonal art classes – ideal for family downtime.

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

1. HYDE PARK TENNIS
   Public tennis courts set within Hyde Park, offering hourly bookings and coaching options with a scenic tree-lined backdrop.

SLOUGH & IVER

1. EVREHAM SPORTS CENTRE
   Community centre with a range of sports facilities including a swimming pool, gym, and courts.
2. (EVERYONE ACTIVE) THE CENTRE
   Offers a swimming pool, gym, sports halls, and fitness classes for families and individuals.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD

1. REGENT'S PARK OPEN AIR THEATRE
   A popular outdoor theatre venue offering family-friendly shows and cultural events during the summer.

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2. THE ST JOHN'S WOOD SPORTS CENTRE
   Local facility featuring tennis courts, gym equipment, and sports classes.

OTHER

1. HIGH WYCOMBE RUSH
   A high-energy trampoline park featuring jumping zones, foam pits, and fitness sessions – perfect for birthday parties or energetic weekend outings.
2. WATERMANS ARTS CENTRE, BRENTFORD
   A family-friendly arts venue offering cinema, theatre performances, workshops, and riverside café views.

6 | GENERAL LONDON THINGS TO DO



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With London on your doorstep, here's some suggested things to do.

Shopping

Department stores: Selfridges, Harrods, Liberty London, John Lewis (Oxford Street).
Markets: Borough Market, Brick Lane, Spitalfields, Covent Garden, Camden, Carnaby Street, Notting Hill and Portobello Market
General bookstore chains: Waterstones, TGJones, Foyles
Malls: Westfield Stratford and Shepherd's Bush
Clothing/sports stores: H&M, Zara, Next, Primark, TKMaxx, JD Sports, Sports Direct
Electrical/hardware stores: Currys, Argos, Robert Dyas, John Lewis
Homeware and furnishings: IKEA, Dunelm, Homesense, B&M

Museums & Galleries

Discover London's world-class museums, from Tate Britain and Tate Modern to the National Portrait Gallery, British Museum, Saatchi Gallery, Natural History Museum, V&A, and the Science Museum. Many offer free entry, with special exhibitions ticketed.

Attractions

Explore London's top attractions, from the London Eye and a Thames Uber Boat ride to historic landmarks like Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London, Buckingham Palace, and Windsor Castle. Visit Hampton Court and the Royal Observatory Greenwich, enjoy the London Aquarium, and discover cultural highlights including The Globe Theatre, Madame Tussauds, Battersea Power Station, Pall Mall, and the London Transport Museum.

Parks/Open Spaces

London's parks are perfect for families, with wide open spaces, playgrounds, wildlife, and plenty of room to explore and relax together:

Alexandra Palace
Hyde Park
Kew Gardens
Notting Hill
Primrose Hill
Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park
Regents Park
Richmond Park
The South Bank
St. James' Park

National Trust and English Heritage venues offer a mix of outdoor spaces, walks and historical sites, ruins and houses. Annual membership to these is very reasonable.

Theatres

Why not go to see a Pantomime at Christmas – they are great fun. See all the big shows in the West End such as The Lion King, Matilda, Wicked, Six, The Phantom of the Opera, Back to the Future, Hamilton, and a Shakespeare production can always be found at various venues around the city. You can sign up to websites such as SeeItFirst or ShowFilmFirst for discounted tickets to gigs and events in the city and surrounding areas.

Concerts/Gigs

Search for your favourite artist/band or look at the venues to see who is playing: O2, Wembley Arena, Brixton Academy, Hammersmith Apollo, Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and The Royal Albert Hall. Ticketmaster, AXS, Eventbrite are all good websites to see what's coming up.

Further Information

TIME OUT
Great for recommendations of places to eat, shows, concerts and things to do.

VISIT LONDON
The official London visitor guide with great information and tips for anyone visiting London, with ticket booking available.

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7 | PSO INFORMATION

What Is The PSO?

The PSO (Parent School Organisation) is a vibrant part of our ACS Hillingdon community. It brings together parents, teachers, students, and school leaders in a shared mission to support and celebrate our school. If your child attends ACS Hillingdon, you're automatically a member – welcome!

We're lucky to have a dynamic and enthusiastic PSO team that takes pride in organising many of the memorable events that make our school experience so special. From festive gatherings to community-building activities, the PSO adds a special spark to the school year.

The PSO Board is made up of dedicated parent volunteers who work closely with the school on a wide range of initiatives – everything from welcoming new families and improving communication to supporting cultural groups and coordinating school-wide events.

At the heart of the PSO is a supportive network of parents who generously give their time and talents. Whether you have a little time or a lot, we warmly invite you to get involved and help make a difference. It's a great way to connect, contribute, and be a visible part of your child's school journey.

Each grade or division at our school has a dedicated Grade Representative, a parent volunteer who helps build a sense of community and connection among families. Grade Reps share important school updates, help organise events, and are a valuable first point of contact for new families. If you have questions about daily routines, upcoming activities or simply want to feel more connected, your Grade Rep is here to help.

We can't wait to meet you at one of the welcome events in the first few weeks of school! Until then, feel free to say hello through your grade level WhatsApp group – there's always someone happy to help.

Cindi Lane-Hand
PSO President

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8 | READING LIST

Recommended books

FOR CHILDREN

Picture books

We're Moving House

The Colour Monster Goes to School

AGES 7-11

Coming to England: An Inspiring True Story Celebrating the Windrush Generation

Back to School, Mallory

LATE TEENS/UNIVERSITY

Girl Gone London: An American's Guide to Surviving Life in the UK

Misunderstood: The Impact of Growing Up Overseas in the 21st Century

FOR PARENTS

Supporting a move

Britain – Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture

Moving On: Activity Books and Guide to Support Children Relocating to a New Country

Thriving Abroad: The definitive guide to professional and personal relocation success

Memoir-style

The Anglo Files – A Field Guide to the English

Notes from a Small Island

Watching the English

THIRD CULTURE KIDS

Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds

Raising Up a Generation of Healthy Third Culture Kids: A Practical Guide to Preventive Care

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