

Young Learner Courses

Parent Information

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Better English Brighter Future

Dear parents,

We are delighted that you have chosen a British Council Young Learner course for your child and would like to extend a very warm welcome to you. We have prepared this guide to provide you with important information about our policies and procedures.

The British Council is a world leader in English language teaching and the provision of qualifications. Teaching English forms part of our purpose as an organisation to build engagement with the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people as well as supporting arts and education.

We believe that parents are central to our approach. Our global experience tells us that children have more chance of being successful with their learning and beyond when teachers and parents work together. Over the coming year, there will be different events and activities for parents to get involved in to find out more about their child's learning journey with us, and we look forward to seeing you at these.

We really want to hear your views and comments about any aspect of your experience with us. Please send us your views and comments or feedback to enquiries@britishcouncil.org.hk or speak to one of our Customer Service staff.

We hope that you and your child enjoy your time with the British Council.



Andrea Hales

Cluster Lead, British Council Hong Kong

Our Approach and Beliefs

Welcome to the home of English learning

Our Young Learner courses build real-life confidence in English, fostering creativity and developing skills for success on a global stage. Our fun, engaging lessons lead to real progress, and individual support from our expert teachers help every student unlock their potential. Here, English language is a learning gateway to new experiences, global connections, and a world of opportunities.

Finding the spark in every learner

At the British Council our classes are designed to spark young learners' imagination and keep them engaged. That means growing vocabulary with Academy Award®-winning animations, learning how to present and compare ideas, or developing speaking and writing skills with a magazine-based course. Every lesson helps build skills like leadership, collaboration, and critical thinking, opening up their future.

Get ready for the next step

Our English courses get young learners ready for the next stage of their life. Whether that's moving up a school year, or into their bright future. It's a lifelong learning adventure that your child will love.

We want every child to:

- enjoy their experience learning with us.
- communicate confidently in English.
- understand their learning progress.
- achieve their learning goals.
- recognise the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion.





Our Approach to English Language Teaching

The British Council provides learners with a rewarding and stimulating English language learning experience. We help you reach your full potential by respecting you as individuals, and by encouraging you to participate actively in your own learning.

Our teachers have internationally recognised qualifications in English language teaching, and they have the knowledge, skills, and experience to develop our learners' language communication skills and learning strategies.



In British Council, our teachers will...

-  Help you set learning goals
-  Tell you about the purpose of lesson activities
-  Create a friendly and inclusive atmosphere
-  Engage you with relevant lesson content
-  Help you understand other cultures better
-  Give you ideas to keep learning after class
-  Use a range of learning resources
-  Show you how you can learn independently
-  Use assessment to activate your learning
-  Give you helpful and timely feedback
-  Encourage you to reflect on your learning progress

A safe, secure, and inclusive learning environment

We ensure that all students and families feel included, safe and valued. We have safeguarding, behaviour, and diversity policies.

Important Information

Settling in procedures for very young students

It is very natural for young children to be upset during their first few lessons. Our teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled and experienced at helping children settle into their new environment. The following points will enable parents to make this transition as easy as possible:

- Prepare your child before the class by talking about the British Council course and what to expect. If you have time, bring them for a visit so they can see the teaching centre.
- Don't be late for class. It is unsettling for a child to walk into a strange environment for the first time. They need time to settle.
- Be positive about leaving your child in the teacher's care. Let them know that they will be safe and that you will be waiting to collect them at the end.
- If your child has separation anxiety, please let us know ahead of time so that we can discuss with you an intervention strategy to support them.
- Once you have handed your child over to the teacher, leave the class as quickly as possible - particularly if your child is crying. It may be difficult to leave your child when they are upset, but this is in their best interest.



Safety and Supervision

We regard all students below the age of 18 as children, according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989. We take our responsibilities towards the children in our care very seriously and we endeavour to make the British Council as safe as possible. However, we are in a public building which anyone can enter. For that reason, we have put into place some safeguarding procedures to keep the children safe, and we will need your cooperation in making them work.

Door Opening Times

To avoid congestion in the teaching centre corridors, we have staggered class start times and classrooms are not opened for students before lessons begin. Students will have access to their classroom when the class teacher arrives.

Parents of kindergarten and primary students **must not** leave children without supervision anywhere in the building, including the public toilets on the first floor. Parents or guardians should stay with their child until either the class teacher or designated teaching assistant arrives in the classroom. However, after dropping their child off, parents or guardians must make their way to the 3rd floor or out of the building to wait for their children. This is to keep the corridors clear for quick evacuation in case of emergencies. Having a clear corridor also means that we can immediately spot a stranger who may have wandered into the building and invite them out.

Student Pick-up Policy

As we are unable to supervise any children outside class time, we ask parents to ensure that students are dropped off and collected on time before and after classes.

Pre-school, kindergarten and primary

As part of our safeguarding policy, we have pick up procedures that we follow to protect the children in our care. Parents will be given a 'pick up pass' that is used to collect children after each lesson. You must fill in the names of every authorised collector on the pass and each authorised collector must be 14 years old or over. We suggest that the pick up pass is kept in your child's school bag. The person who collects your child must have a photographic ID which matches one of the names on the pass. Students in Upper Primary classes may arrive and depart unaccompanied providing you give your written authorisation on our 'permission form' which is kept by the class teacher. Authorised students will receive a red lanyard from their teacher, which they need bring and wear in order to leave unaccompanied.

If you forget to bring your pick up pass or your photo ID, then a member of staff will accompany you and your child to our Customer Services area where they will verify your ID.

Secondary

Children attending our secondary classes can arrive and depart unaccompanied. However, parents need to ensure that students do not arrive earlier than 10 minutes before class time as they will not be allowed access to their classroom.

If a secondary student asks to leave class early, a member of our Customer Services staff will contact parent(s) to seek permission before we allow the student to leave.

Fire safety

All students will be informed about fire procedures in the first lesson. The assembly point is indicated in each classroom, and we conduct regular fire drills which may cause disruption to classes. This is necessary to ensure the highest standards of fire safety are achieved.



Behaviour

We know that children and young people learn best in a safe, positive and structured environment. In order to ensure a secure and happy environment that is conducive to learning for all, we expect students to behave appropriately. Inappropriate behaviour includes (but is not limited to):

- bullying or harassment of peers,
- using abusive language directed towards a teacher or another student,
- possession of dangerous objects in the centre,
- stealing or damaging others' property,
- fighting or violence,
- smoking in the centre,
- disrupting a class,
- vandalism.

If a student displays any of the above inappropriate behaviour(s), and is aged over 9 years old, the following steps will be taken:

1. The teacher speaks to the student.

If there is no improvement:

2. Parents are contacted, to inform them of the inappropriate behaviour(s). The Senior Teacher shares steps that are being taken so that you can discuss the behaviour with your child at home.

If there is still no improvement:

3. We arrange a meeting between the parents, the student, a customer services staff member and a senior teacher to discuss and agree on intervention strategies to support the student. The parents and the student sign a *Behaviour Agreement** to demonstrate their commitment to trying out these strategies.

If there is still no improvement:

4. If sufficient improvement is not consistently demonstrated, the student will be suspended. After the period of suspension, a 'Return to Learning' meeting will be arranged with parents, a customer services staff member and the relevant senior teacher to discuss expectations and consequences for any further inappropriate behaviour(s).

*A *Behaviour Agreement* is a behaviour management tool to support and encourage positive behaviour in a more formal way. The aim of the agreement is to re-establish a positive learning environment and outlines specific, positive behaviours which will be expected and evaluated in the subsequent three lessons.

The British Council believes staff, parents, carers and children are entitled to a safe and secure environment. Behaviour that will cause harm or distress to users of the premises is contrary to British Council values. Depending on the extremity of the behaviour and the urgency of the case, some of the above steps may be skipped. In extreme cases, such as bullying or violence, the student may be immediately and permanently suspended.

Bullying

To guarantee a safe and positive learning experience for all our students, the British Council has a zero tolerance policy to all forms of bullying. Bullying can be very difficult to detect and victims may not even be aware they are being bullied as it can manifest in many forms. Some of these include:

- offensive gestures or comments
- starting rumours / passing notes
- emotional or physical attacks
- stealing / hiding objects
- physical violence
- exclusion

If your child is not happy, we want you to tell us. If your child cannot speak to the teachers, there are other members of staff who are available to listen to you. If you suspect your child is being bullied, it is important that you get in touch with us as soon as possible so that we can take appropriate steps to deal with the situation delicately and with discretion.

Safeguarding Policy

In our work we meet many children and adults who are potentially at risk for a variety of reasons. We aim to create a safe environment in which no child or adult will experience harm or exploitation during their contact with us. Please read our full Safeguarding Policy [here](#).

If you have any concerns or see anything you are unsure about, please report it. You can ask to speak to either of our Safeguarding Focal Points:

Siobhan Cox (Safeguarding Focal Point)

Amy Evetts (Deputy Safeguarding Focal Point)

All reports will be handled delicately and confidentially. You can also report any safeguarding concerns via Safecall. Safecall provide an independent and external way for you to raise any serious concerns you have. All call handlers are experienced, and security checked. The Hong Kong number is 3077 5524. It's an anonymous 24 hour service in English and Cantonese.

Online Safety

While we blend Information Communication Technology and computer-based learning into our young learner courses, students must not access social networking sites or personal email accounts during lessons or on our public computers. Please also remind your children not to give out any personal information online.

Use of photography/videos

The collection of personal data by British Council, including the use of video or audio recording equipment or taking photographs in the classroom, is not allowed without the permission of the parents, the teacher and students. As such, please do not take photos of other children or staff on our premises. If a member of staff sees you taking photos/videos, you may be asked to delete them in line with our policy.

Teachers may, on occasion, film, record or photograph a lesson for the purposes of language practice and assessment, teacher training, quality assurance, or to show typical classroom activities to parents. Any video, audio or photographic created for such purposes will not be used outside the British Council, and will be destroyed after their use. Please inform us if you do not agree to your child's image or voice being used for these purposes.

Special Educational Needs and Differences

We are committed to providing an inclusive learning environment in which children are supported to achieve their potential in a spirit of inclusion and acceptance. We value the abilities and achievements of all our students and recognise that parents hold key information and knowledge of their child. If your child needs any additional support in class, please notify us by filling in the form available at our Customer Services Centre. Having this information enables us to support your child more effectively. Your information is held in the strictest confidence.

Attendance and Absence

If your child misses over half of a lesson, they will be recorded as absent in class registers.

For safety reasons, the teacher will not allow a Secondary child to leave a class early without permission from a parent or guardian. A member of Customer Services staff will call parents to gain permission in such cases. In cases of planned absence, please tell us as soon as you can.

We will not make up or refund lessons missed due to personal commitments, truancy or illness.

If your child is absent without us being told in advance, we will inform you by SMS to confirm and check the reason for the absence.

If your child has a cold, flu or any other contagious illness, they should not attend lessons. If a child's health poses a threat to other students, they will not be allowed to join the class.

Reports and Certificates

Reports

Phonics, Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary students will receive a report after their last lesson. This report contains comments on performance, provided that students have attended at least 75% of their course. Please join Parent Briefing sessions in the first lesson to learn more about your child's learning journey this semester and to meet their teacher.

Certificates

All Kindergarten, Phonics and Primary students will receive a certificate upon completion of the course. Secondary students can request a certificate by contacting Customer Services.

If a certificate is lost or damaged, you can request a replacement within one year from the date of your last lesson at a charge of HK\$100.

Class transfer procedures

Changing class times

Transfer of your child to a different class time is possible while the registration period is still open. In order to change class, places in other classes must be available and supporting reasons must be provided and it subject to department approval. Please be aware that there are extra charges for transferring from weekday (Monday to Thursday) to weekend (Friday to Sunday) classes.

Great care is taken by our English Services Consultant to place students in the appropriate level depending on their age and proficiency. However, on rare occasions, we find it beneficial to transfer students to another level. Teachers, parents or students can make this request. In these cases, teachers will gather evidence of a student's work in class and meet the Senior Teacher responsible for that course. However, students may only transfer if:

- the senior teacher agrees, and
- if there is a place available in another class.

Customer Services then informs the parents about the transfer and the procedure is complete.

In these cases, the final decision rests with the teacher's professional judgement in conjunction with the senior teacher.

Change of Teacher

While we make every effort to timetable the same teacher for the duration of a course, we reserve the right to change class teacher without notice according to operational need.

Liability

The British Council shall not be liable to any party in respect of the following:

- for any loss or damage to your property or any property in your possession in the course of engaging with the British Council or participating in courses as arranged by the British Council;
- for death, or any injury or incapacity (except as may be required by law).