

# UKSA FAQs for parents/guardians

## How safe is it?

Everyone wears a buoyancy aid on the water – this keeps you afloat no matter how well you can swim. Everyone also wears a wetsuit to keep warm, even in the summer, and a helmet. We provide the buoyancy aid, wetsuit and helmets.

We have been welcoming groups of young people for over 35 years and are proud of our exemplary safety record. We have all the necessary safety systems and check in place on and off the water and are approved by external organisations like the Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority and the RYA. Our aim is always for young people to have fun and to be safe.

## What if my child can't swim?

Please don't worry. Everyone wears a buoyancy aid for all water activities. The buoyancy aid keeps the wearer afloat without needing to swim. We like to start trips with a water confidence and fun session to help the young people to get used to the water.

## My child has additional needs

We want everyone to have a great time at UKSA. If your child has additional needs or health conditions or allergies, we'll work with the school to provide the support or equipment your child needs. We can provide fridges to store medication.

## What happens in the evenings?

Students are always fully supervised on residential activity trips, and there's no time to be bored! We provide evening entertainments such as team games, water polo in the indoor pool, crabbing, disco, knot tying or a home cinema night. These sessions finish at 8.30pm and teachers will decide on bedtime and lights out.

## What is the food like?

All our food is freshly prepared on site with an emphasis on healthy eating. For breakfast there is a cooked option, as well as cereals, yoghurt, and fruit – students and guests can eat as much as they like! Lunch is a packed lunch.

Evening meals always feature fresh vegetables and a salad bar, with options for the main course including vegetarian or vegan. And there's always pudding!

We're happy to make ketchup sandwiches if that is the only thing your child will eat!

## Do you cater for food allergies and dietary requirements?

We can cater for students with food allergies or cultural and dietary requirements providing we know in advance. We'll ask the school for this information as part of the medical consent process. We have risk assessments in place for allergies and regularly cater for a wide range of food needs.

## What are the bedrooms like?

All accommodation is dorm rooms with bunk beds, sleeping between 4 and 8.

Rooms either have ensuite facilities or shared washrooms. Boys, girls and adults have separate bedrooms and bathrooms.

Every group has separate accommodation.

## Is bedding provided?

Yes. Every bed has a duvet and pillow (hollow fibre, not feather) with a sheet, duvet cover and pillowcase. The bedding is washed between visits in a commercial laundry at 80 degrees and ironed at over 100 degrees.

## What about pocket money?

Everything is provided at UKSA, so your child won't really need pocket money. Your school will advise whether to bring money for an ice cream, for example.

## Are there different schools on site?

UKSA is busy every week with up to five schools/groups plus older careers students. Every school has its own activity programme, allocated mealtimes and accommodation – there's no mixing. All adults wear a lanyard and ID card and the reception and main gate are staffed 24-7.

## What if my child gets upset or scared?

We know that a trip away from home and doing new activities can be challenging. Your child will be in a group with their friends and with teachers they know. We have a welfare team on site who can help and a room called the 'Mermaid Cave' as a safe space if it all gets a bit too much.

Our instructors won't force anyone to do anything they don't want to, but usually watching friends trying something new and enjoying it is enough to get the most reluctant young people involved.

## What if my child has a period?

Don't worry. If they don't have period products, we have a 'red box' with everything they'll need. They can ask a teacher, one of the watersports instructors or at reception. Any friendly face at UKSA will happily help.

## What about phones, consoles and expensive items?

Your school/group will have a policy about mobile phones and other devices. We discourage bringing expensive kit as it can get lost or broken, but we don't have a phone or tablet ban. We don't allow any phones on the water or during activities.

## What clothing is needed?

We provide wetsuits, safety helmets and buoyancy aids for all water activities. Participants need clothing that can get wet – a swimming costume, shorts and t-shirt or rash vest to wear under wetsuit, and a pair of wetsuit shoes or old trainers for wearing in the water.

We recommend that all clothes are labelled.

## Where can I buy wetsuit boots?

If you want to buy wetsuit boots or neoprene shoes instead of using an old pair of trainers, then these can be bought for around £10 online and they are often available for less in the supermarkets during the summer. Choose a style that fits snugly, or they could fall off.

## What else is useful to bring?

Bring two towels – one for watersports and one for showering.

Pack a plastic bag or dry bag for wet clothes in for the trip home.

Everyone needs a water bottle.

If you want tea and coffee, bring a lidded mug.

## What about looking good?

Watersports is not glamorous – please encourage everyone to leave jewellery at home and keep hairstyles suitable for wearing a helmet. False nails are likely to get broken!