

About the English College in Prague

In a nutshell:

The English College in Prague is a unique and special school. It was founded in 1994 in the wake of the Velvet Revolution as a moderately selective independent day school, offering a British-style Grammar School education to students aged 13-19 (Years 8 - 13 in UK terms). Although all non-language lessons are taught in English it is on the Czech Register of Schools (as a Czech grammar school). It is a member of HMC and unlike many international schools is a non-profit-making, fully incorporated charity, free of the whim of an owner, commercial organisation or franchise constraints. Around 70% of its students are Czech and 30% are international students from over twenty different countries. Currently, most students leave the College to attend university in the UK. For those applying to Czech universities the most popular choice is the prestigious Charles University. A large minority proportion of students go to European or American universities as well as the Far East and Australia.

Our Unique History

The College traces its traditions back to the Prague English Grammar School, which existed in Prague from the 1920s but suffered closure under both the Nazis and the Communists. It seeks to maintain the traditions and rigour of an English Grammar School within the Czech educational framework and its governors are drawn from both the UK and the Czech Republic, symbolised by its two patrons – Karel Schwarzenberg and HRH the Prince of Wales. The founding Czech patron of the English College until his death in 2011 was former president, Václav Havel.

Our Staff

The teaching staff consists of a dynamic mix of recent and more experienced graduates, the majority of whom are native English speakers or have been trained in the UK system. The average class size is around 15-22 in Years 1-4 and between 12 and 18 in Years 5-6. Teachers without other areas of responsibility are expected to teach approximately 27 forty-five-minute periods per week as well as play an active part in the pastoral and extra-curricular life of the school. The turnover of staff is quite low due to the fact that many staff have settled and started families in Prague. All staff here are

committed to some degree of primary research in their teaching practice. For example, in addition to the usual August induction week and the thrice-yearly whole school staff training days, all staff have included in their timetable a weekly cross-curricular teaching and learning group meeting in which they plan and discuss classroom research. At present staff are researching novel assessment strategies, but over the next 2-3 years will be researching homework strategies, student feedback methodologies, embedding literacy issues and the IB's own approaches to teaching and learning. Everything is done at our own pace with collaboration and consultation central to our core way of working.

Our Educational Philosophy

The school is founded on the principles of liberalism, reciprocity and international mindedness. These are principles we actively engage with through assemblies, lecture programmes and in class. They are particularly relevant given the recent history, conflicts and oppression from extreme regimes in Central Europe. Sitting within this, our educational philosophy is underpinned by putting relationships first. We value relationships between student and teacher and of course the relationships with parents. We also actively promote a culture of academic aspiration and individualised expectations, through these good relationships, which are supported (but not led) by CEM data and a strong pastoral system.

Our Community

Around 90% of our graduates belong to the ECP Network, paying regular visits to the school to speak to current students about universities, careers and life. In addition, there are regular school and social events where former students and staff return to Prague to catch up with former peers, colleagues and friends. There is an active Parents' Association that overcomes the language barrier and provides a valuable two-way link between the two most important groups of people in our students' lives. We take an active interest in the future lives of our graduates (and staff), celebrating all those for whom ECP was once a part of their lives.

Examinations

The College prepares students for a mixture of IGCSE exams, Common European Framework language exams (DELTA, Instituto Cervantes and Goethe Institut), as well as ensures that all students in Years 1-

4 follow an authorised Czech Curriculum. Students choose between taking externally-assessed and our own internally-assessed exams at the end of Year 4. All students study for the International Baccalaureate in Years 5 and 6 and just over half of the cohort also takes the Czech Maturita examination in Czech Language and Literature in addition to the IB. The College has more than twenty years' experience of teaching the IB and many of our staff are IB examiners.

Our location

The College is situated in the Eastern suburb of Vysočany in Prague 9, right next to a metro station so it is directly accessible in fifteen minutes from the heart of the inspirational and historic city of Prague. Accommodation in central Prague is getting slightly more expensive but is still affordable on the ECP salary. Renting a flat in a less central area of Prague is relatively inexpensive and is a good option for those wishing to release more of their salary for travel, entertainment and savings. While Prague is well-known, the wider Czech Republic is much less explored. One can ski in the mountains on winter weekends in the Krkonoše or Jizerské hory, walk in national parks, two of which translate as the Bohemian Paradise and Bohemian Switzerland. Šumava is a beautiful area on the German and Austrian border. Many are drawn to Český Krumlov, a beautiful 14th century town with a unique castle overlooking the Vltava river, however those looking for quieter but equally spectacular panoramas travel to Telč, Kutná Hora, Olomouc or Kroměříž. Unique sandstone formations rise from the ground in Prachovské skály and Adršpach. Walking and cycling is well catered for in the countryside, especially so in South Moravia where the vineyards produce wonderful delicious local wine. In short, there is much to explore, all within 2-4 hours of Prague. Germany, Austria, Poland, Slovakia are all only an hour or two further on.

What we offer:

Salary

The salary offer is dependent upon experience, at the discretion of the Headmaster. The English College has its own salary scale, but in broad terms the teaching salaries we offer are similar to the main-scale UK salaries. Notwithstanding relatively expensive city centre apartments, the cost of living in the Czech Republic is considerably lower than in the UK; eating out, socialising and, in particular, travelling around

one of the most beautiful cities in Europe are significantly cheaper than both UK and other Western European countries. In summary, one can live very comfortably here while at ECP. We do not differentiate between locally or internationally hired teachers in the interests of equality, and as a mark of our desire to maintain a unified and cohesive staff room.

Benefits

We offer assistance, both practical and financial, for those moving to the Czech Republic and successful candidates will be flown out to Prague wherever possible in the term prior to their employment for an acquaintance visit. We usually offer 10% school fees at ECP for parents of children of the relevant age. Unfortunately, being only a senior school, we cannot offer educational benefits for children under the age of 12 if you are looking for English speaking education. We also offer considerable continued practical support for staff to ensure that their life in a different culture is as enjoyable as possible. A particular benefit, which is relatively unusual for schools abroad, is that, following a successful probationary year, we offer permanent contracts, allowing you to have the confidence to invest in the local culture. This allows members of staff to qualify for Czech mortgages and other financial opportunities. We also offer subsidised and ongoing Czech language lessons on-site during the school day, which many staff have taken advantage of for a number of years.

The College contributes to a Czech occupational pension scheme. All employees enjoy the arrangements of the Czech health and social security system and contributions are recognised for all EU citizens in their home country.

