



From German Exchange Organiser: Alexandra Cardinal von Widdern

11 January 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians,

***German Exchange 2019/20***

As every year we are organising the opportunity for your son to participate in an exchange visit to Germany and I am writing to give you some preliminary information.

The German exchange is undertaken jointly with girls from St Helen's School and our hosts in Germany are the pupils and their parents at the Ratsgymnasium, a co-educational grammar school in Bielefeld. The link between the two English schools and the Ratsgymnasium is very firmly established and many successful visits have already taken place over the last 50 years.

The value of such an exchange cannot be overstated, particularly at this point in the boys' German career. The pupils acquire first-hand knowledge of the country whose language they are studying and the fluency they gain is an invaluable asset for both IGCSE and 6<sup>th</sup> form study. Great care is taken to place pupils with appropriate families. However, you should be aware that individual circumstances might vary. For instance, transport arrangements will not necessarily be the same as your own and your son will enjoy discovering a different daily routine. Although the majority of the time will be spent accompanied by members of Abingdon staff, either within the school or on group excursions, your son will spend a significant amount of time with his host family, when there will always be a member of our staff at the end of a telephone. Possible excursions include trips to the university town of Hamelin, the football museum in Dortmund, the local theatre, the ice rink, the cinema and a tour of Dr. Oetker World. The boys will also spend time in lessons at the host school. A highlight of the week is the traditional England vs. Germany football match for the boys.

The traditional and likely (but as yet provisional) dates are the following: The German party will be with us for ten days from Sunday 29 September – Wednesday 9 October 2019. It is worth pointing out that a place on the school bus for exchange partners cannot be guaranteed as the Joint Bus Service is becoming increasingly busy, but every effort will be made to accommodate your son and partner. The English party will be in Germany from Wednesday 12 – Thursday 20 February 2020 which runs into the half term holiday. The cost of the exchange will be approximately £480 and includes all travel costs, excursions and insurance. The exact cost will depend on the number of participants, the exchange rate and fuel taxes but we anticipate that £480 should suffice.

I would like to stress that the German exchange is only open to boys in their fourth year at Abingdon (i.e. current third year boys) and we hope that all boys will wish to participate. If you

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would like your son to take part in the exchange would you please complete the online form (link below) by **Friday 25 January** at the latest.

Online consent form link:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe1bvWyJ1xOpBPG8Jg6YXhysiJRDf\\_tEFfgHiMqiEXCdimlMA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe1bvWyJ1xOpBPG8Jg6YXhysiJRDf_tEFfgHiMqiEXCdimlMA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

Please note that by completing the online consent form (providing the trip proceeds during the dates advertised) you are committing to the total cost of this trip being added to your next bill for the Summer term payable in April 2019. The School will proceed to make bookings and reservations to procure the best possible deal - mindful of the impending Brexit negotiations the school is taking all reasonable measures to limit the potential financial impact of fluctuations in the exchange rate. Nonetheless it is not possible to eliminate all the risk. To be fair to all parties, as a precaution, rather than include extra contingency provisions which may not be required, the School reserves the right to vary the trip price for any unpaid elements of the trip, if at the date of final payment there has been a significant change in the Euro/£ exchange rate.

Due to government's update on Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) statutory guidance, the School is obliged to obtain a criminal records check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for all supervising adults (in most cases the parents or guardians) who are resident in the accommodation where the exchange student is to stay as part of a school organised trip. School will bear the cost of this DBS check and we will do all we can to facilitate the administration of the DBS checks.

In order to complete a DBS check, all supervising adults will need to make a 15-20 minute appointment to come into school to see the HR team by **Friday 24 May** (just before summer half term break). The normal working hours of the HR team are 8.30am - 5.30pm Monday-Friday. This is to allow enough time for the check to be completed, as the completed DBS check must be received before the arrival of the German party for you to be allowed to host.

If you have any further questions about the DBS checks, please do not hesitate to contact either Mark Hindley ([mark.hindley@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:mark.hindley@abingdon.org.uk)) or the HR Department ([hr.team@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:hr.team@abingdon.org.uk)) whereas questions about the exchange should be addressed to me at [alexandra.widdern@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:alexandra.widdern@abingdon.org.uk)

**Please also check your son's passport will be valid until after February 2019 and if not, apply for a new passport as soon as possible. Any renewed passport information will need to be with us by Friday 13 December 2019. As soon as you have a passport valid for the time of travel, please upload a scan or picture of both passport and EHIC card to the online form (you can return for amendments).**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A.A.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alexandra Cardinal von Widdern  
MFL Co-ordinator  
Modern Languages Department