



ABINGDON

From the German Exchange Organiser: Alexandra Cardinal von Widdern

8 May 2015

Dear Parents/Guardians,

re: German Exchange 2015/16

As every year we are again 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 for almost 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 at both IGCSE and 6th 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 Münster, the Volkswagen Autostadt in Wolfsburg or the Mine Zeche Zollverein in Essen, 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.

This year the German party will be with us for ten days from 27 September – 7 October 2015. It is worth pointing out that boys travelling to school by bus will need to ensure there is capacity on their route. The English party will be in Germany 10 - 18 February 2016 which runs into the half term holiday. The cost of the exchange will be approximately £380 and include 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 £380 should suffice.

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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 would like your son to take part in the exchange would you please complete and return the attached form, confirming a billed, non-refundable deposit of £150, by **Monday 11 May** at the latest.

Please note that by completing the consent form (providing the trip proceeds) you are committing to the total cost of this trip. The non-refundable deposit secures your son's place, but thereafter the School will proceed to make bookings and reservations to procure the best possible deals. The balance of payment being applied to your School bill is a means of spreading the cost rather than a reflection of when liabilities are incurred.

Please also check your son's passport will be valid until after February 2016 and if not, apply for a new passport as soon as possible. If the passport is valid, please attach a copy and EHIC card to the consent form.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.C. von Widdern', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alexandra Cardinal von Widdern - Head of German
Modern Languages Department
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