



ABINGDON

From the German Exchange Organiser: Sarah-Jane Poole

22 April 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians,

***re: German Exchange 2016/17***

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 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 at 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 Münster, the Universum Museum in Bremen, 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 2 October – 12 October 2016. 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 from 8 - 16 February 2017 which runs into the half term holiday. The cost of the exchange will be approximately £420 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 £420 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 would like your son to take part in the exchange would you please complete the online form (link below) and return a cheque for a non-refundable deposit of £150, by **Monday 25 April** at the latest.

Online consent form link: <https://form.jotformeu.com/60814201579353>

Several boys taking German next year may have been asked to take part in the Bielefeld Orchestra tour which clashes with the exchange. The tour's *raison d'etre* is largely to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our important link with the Ratsgymnasium, with a Festive concert on the Saturday of the exchange. In this situation, boys should subscribe to the Bielefeld exchange (not the music tour) and have the best of both worlds, in that they can participate in the Bielefeld concert, whilst enjoying the benefits of living with a German host family and participating in all the exchange activities. It is very likely that there will be future opportunities for music tours, but the German exchange is only open to boys in the Fourth year studying German.

Please note that by completing the online 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 in July 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 2017 and if not, apply for a new passport as soon as possible. If the passport is valid, please upload a scan or picture of both passport and EHIC card to the online form.**

Yours sincerely

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