

ETWINNING SCHOOL MEDIA TOOLKIT AND PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

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1. THE PRESS

1.1 WHY BOTHER WITH THE PRESS?

The work you do is important and deserves to be shared and recognised. There is ample scope for you to secure coverage in local and regional media for your activity and this toolkit is designed to support you to do just that.

International activity, particularly involving young people, can provide interesting stories for the media, and eTwinning offers lots of [recognition](#) and opportunities for this. Whether you're involved in a European partnership, or a recipient of the prestigious eTwinning School Label or Quality Label, why not showcase your great work to your community?

Coverage in your local paper, or on a local radio or TV station, allows you to share your success with a wider audience and can provide good publicity for your school. Promoting eTwinning in the media also raises awareness of the programme amongst other schools so that they can reap the benefits of international activity too.

1.2 WHY USE A PRESS TEMPLATE?

Journalists are just like you – they've always got too much to do in too little time! If you can send them a press release that they can reproduce with minimum effort and that gives them all the facts they need in an accessible way, they will be happy to hear from you.

Proactively approaching the press using a press release also helps to ensure that your key messages – the people and things you really want to talk about in the project - are included in any coverage.

We have created the template below, which you can personalise to use with your local media.

2. PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

You can download the logos to accompany this story below:

- [British Council – eTwinning School Logo for web](#)
- [British Council – eTwinning School Logo for print](#)

[ADD NAME OF SCHOOL] RECEIVES A PRESTIGIOUS EUROPEAN AWARD – THE ETWINNING SCHOOL LABEL [\[SEE FULL DETAILS OF AWARDS HERE\]](#)

[insert date of issue]; [insert town of school], [insert city], UK: Teachers and students at [insert name of school/college/academy] have been celebrating after being awarded a highly regarded European award – the eTwinning School Label.

The school has secured the award as a result of their:

- Digital and eSafety practice
- innovative and creative approaches to pedagogy
- supporting continuous professional development of staff
- embedding collaborative learning practices with staff and pupils

[insert name of your school/s] has been involved with the eTwinning initiative for [insert number of years], working in partnership(s) with [insert name of partner school/s] in [insert country/ies where partner school/s are based] on collaborative international projects using eTwinning's digital tools. Amongst the projects undertaken was [insert brief description of the project and what the teachers and pupils did and/or produced].

eTwinning is the digital community for schools. Over 660,000 teachers in 44 countries **[AS OF MARCH 2019]** across Europe and beyond, have joined the community since it launched in 2005.

[insert name of teacher, teacher's title and name of school], said: "We are delighted to have been awarded the eTwinning School Label. Everyone at [insert name of school] has enjoyed working with [insert name of partner schools] on [insert name of project]. To secure the eTwinning School Label is a real honour for the students and teachers who participated in the project. The eTwinning project has brought [insert the benefits gained] to [the students/teachers/school/college/local community]."

For more information please contact [add contact details of teacher at school with email and phone number]

For more information about the British Council, please contact Nicola Norton, Senior Press Officer, via Nicola.norton@britishcouncil.org or 0207 389 4780.

For more information on eTwinning, please contact Karen Cleland, eTwinning Marketing Manager, via Karen.Cleland@britishcouncil.org or 0289 019 2249.

-TEMPLATE ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITORS

ETWINNING

eTwinning offers a platform for staff (teachers, head teachers, librarians, etc.), working in a school in one of the countries involved, to communicate, collaborate, develop projects, share and, in short, feel and be part of an exciting learning community.

eTwinning promotes school collaboration in Europe through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) by providing support, tools and services for schools. eTwinning also offers opportunities for free and continuing online Professional Development for educators.

Through participating in eTwinning, schools can:

- enrich learning and motivation of pupils and staff
- access high quality professional development
- raise standards across the whole school community.

eTwinning is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union and is managed in the UK by the British Council. The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

THE BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We work with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year we reached over 65 million people directly and 731 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. We make a positive contribution to the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government.

In these ways, the British Council builds links between UK people and institutions and those around the world, helping to create trust and lay foundations for prosperity and security around the world.

- EDITORS NOTES ENDS -

3. CONTACTING THE MEDIA

3.1 NEWSPAPER – TV – RADIO

Once you've edited your press release, you need to get it to the relevant journalists. When you call your local newspaper, ask to speak to the News Desk, and for TV or radio ask for the Planning Desk. Remember, TV will only be interested in the story if there is colourful, visually-stimulating activity they can capture.

3.2 YOUR STORY

You need to be able to summarise your story in 30 seconds so prepare a brief outline before you call. Ask for an email address to send them some more information and send across your release. Call back next day (or later that day) to check they've received it. Find out if they need any more info or are able to attend / send a photographer to your event.

3.3 TIMING

Journalists need news whilst it's still new! If you want to publicise an event or visit, make sure that you give them plenty of notice. If you want local media to attend an event you need to let them know about it well in advance - send them your press release *at least* a week before. If you are sending a press release and photos after an event, make sure you send it as soon as possible while it's still current, that day if possible. Find out when your local newspaper's deadline is for submissions so you can make sure you get it to them in time.

4. WHAT NEXT?

4.1 ON THE DAY

If you are inviting journalists to an event, make sure someone is dedicated to looking after them who can answer their questions and ensure they speak to enthusiastic participants that are prepared to answer questions (see 'Interviews' below).

4.2 PHOTOGRAPHY

Good quality, high resolution photographs of interesting and colourful activity can make all the difference to securing press coverage. Make sure that you've got someone assigned to take pictures at any publicity-worthy events so you can send them to the local press (if they are not able to send their own photographer along). Brief your photographer to get interesting shots of activity, not just a line-up of people in suits!

Make sure that you have the relevant **permission and parental consent** for those involved to use their photographs and quotes for the media.

4.3 INTERVIEWS

Prepare spokespeople to do interviews, which might take place either on the day if journalists attend your event, or on the phone.

Pinpoint other spokespeople - students, teachers and parents that have been involved- and make sure they are prepared to answer questions about their experience and are clear on the key messages.

If you are doing an interview, think about what you want to say and how you can best get your key messages across. Think about the audience – they won't all be teachers so try not to use lots of curriculum-speak!

Do try to make a reference to eTwinning and the British Council website so people can find out more about the programme: www.britishcouncil.org/eTwinning.

4.4 CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

If something happens as part of your partnership activity that has the potential to attract negative media attention you must tell your British Council eTwinning Regional Officer as soon as possible or contact the eTwinning UK team at the British Council.

If a newspaper or other media outlet calls you to find out about the incident, take their details and say you will call them back. Your British Council contact, working

with the British Council press office, can support you to prepare lines for a media response.

5. SUMMARY – FIVE TOP TIPS FOR MEDIA COVERAGE

- Make sure you are clear about why your activity is interesting, different and newsworthy.
- Find out who writes about schools / education at your local paper and invite them to relevant events at the school. Keep them updated on future plans that might be of interest.
- Make sure you always get media consent for those involved, particularly parental consent for students.
- Don't be put off if your local press doesn't seem that interested. Journalists are under constant pressure of deadlines and local media have seen big cuts - so staff can be extremely busy.
- Keep at it - follow up with a phone call and even if a journalist can't come to an event, send a follow up press release and phone call.