

BRITISH COUNCIL SCHOOL EXCHANGE GRANTS 2019

FAQ

ELIGIBILITY & SELECTION CRITERIA

Can SEN/ special schools apply?

Yes.

What about 6th Forms and FE?

Yes, as long as the participants are aged 11-19.

Can independent schools apply?

No.

Do I need to have a partner school to visit?

Yes.

Can we visit our school partners who are not in a European country?

Yes.

How can I find a partner school?

If you are looking for a partner school in Europe, try eTwinning <https://www.etwinning.net/>

For school partners further afield, try British Council Schools online:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/partner>

Town twinning arrangements might also provide potential school links. You could check if teachers, parents or pupils have links with other schools.

The British Council will be hosting a series of “facilitated seminars” for groups from a range of schools to meet a partner school and develop a link, in France, Spain, Germany and China. Further details of these events will be available soon. Please email school.exchanges@britishcouncil.org if you are interested to participate in these.

Do we have to do homestay?

No but you must ensure a lot of contact (ideally daily) with pupils and try to involve their families if possible. This programme aims for pupils to learn through daily contact with a peer group. This must be shown through the activity itinerary you provide.

Can we get funding for a visit we have already planned?

If it meets the criteria – yes.

Does the focus have to be language learning?

No – Visits should have a curriculum focus. They do not need to focus on language learning, although we welcome those that do.

Do all the pupils travelling need to be Pupil Premium?

No – but you need to make your activity as inclusive as possible, to allow access for the most disadvantaged. There is no threshold for PP. Each application will be judged on the basis of the information provided in the application. However priority will be given to applications that show the school, or the exchange group of students, have significant levels of disadvantage (eg Pupil Premium, Opportunity Area, Index of Multiple Deprivation, Additional Needs etc)

Our mixed-age group of children includes some who are younger than 11. Are we eligible?

This Exchange Programme is for pupils in Year 7 and above.

Which schools can apply for the fully funded visits to meet with a partner school and plan a pupil visit?

The eligibility criteria is the same as for the school exchange visit.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

Funding

See the guidance document for details.

Our partner schools usually covers the costs in their country and we cover the costs in the UK – how will that work?

This funding is to cover the visit abroad for the UK pupils and it will be paid to the school in England.

In such cases, partner schools (UK and abroad) would need to have their own agreements to transfer funds reciprocally or reach an agreement that both schools are happy with.

Can we pay for dinner for our partners?

If the group will be eating together, it is acceptable for reasonable costs for some joint meals to be covered.

How can my partner school secure funding to make a return visit ?

If this is a concern for your partner school, contact us at schools@britishcouncil.org and we can help you to explore possibilities.

The grant won't cover all our costs. Can we charge the families of participating students for the rest?

Yes – but parents of pupils on Pupil Premium should not be asked to pay. You may also wish to consider other options such as fundraising events or donations from sponsors,

Can travel costs include the cost of hiring a coach (rather than public transport)?

Yes.

Can we apply for a grant if we have used a tour company to organise our exchange visit?

We do not support exchanges organised by tourist companies, as this programme cannot include any profit for a business.

Are grant applications considered per trip or per establishment? Could a school apply for more than one grant if more than one visit is planned?

The grant is per visit, so schools can apply for one grant per visit subject to the visits meeting the eligibility criteria. You would have to be explicit in your applications how the community impact, and follow-up, will build on each other, and not just be repeated.

HEALTH & SAFETY, SAFEGUARDING AND RISK

We need to take extra adults as pupils have additional needs, can we apply for additional grant?

Yes.

If pupils are staying with host families, must we DBS check the families?

There is no equivalent of the DBS check in many other countries.

Read our guidance document prepared with ASCL:

https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/guidance_paper_international_school_exchanges_and_visits_homestays.pdf

What plans do we need to make for travel after Brexit?

See the guidance sheet from the DFE here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-exit-no-deal-preparations-for-schools-in-england/eu-exit-no-deal-preparations-for-schools-in-england>

HOW TO APPLY

Can you accept scanned versions of the signatures from our partner school?

Yes.

DEADLINES

How soon before our planned visit do we need to apply?

We aim to give you a decision within four weeks of receipt of your application, and the first payment of 80% of the grant will be made on receipt of the signed grant agreement.

How far ahead can we apply?

Your visit can take place any time up until 19 April 2020.

PROCEDURES AND REPORTING

Our application has been rejected – will you give us the reasons why?

Yes.

What happens if the visit has to be cancelled for any reason?

You will need to return the grant in full.

How soon after the activity do we have to submit our report?

We would expect the final report to be submitted within one month of the end of the visit.