

TMR/tp

21 June 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re German Exchange 2023

I am delighted that your son/daughter has chosen to learn German at Wildern. One of the benefits of learning German is the opportunity to take part in Wildern School's annual exchange visit with the Ernst-Sigle Gymnasium, a grammar school in Kornwestheim, Eastleigh's twin-town in Germany. This highly successful twinning programme has been running for thirty-eight years.

Participation in this exchange programme will offer your son/daughter the chance to use a foreign language in an authentic context. This will improve language skills, motivation and self-confidence. Students who have been involved in the exchange invariably return to school with a greater enthusiasm for language-learning, which ultimately leads to improved examination results.

Besides the obvious educational value of the exchange, there are many other persuasive reasons for taking part. These include experiencing the country, culture and family-life of Germany as it really is, and the forming of long-lasting Anglo-German friendships. I am particularly thrilled that our exchange visits have in some cases led to enduring friendships between respective parents as well as children!

The exchange programme

Whilst in Germany there will be a number of organised events for students. These will include:

- a civic reception offered by the mayor of Kornwestheim
- a sampling of lessons in the German school
- day-trips to places of interest in Southern Germany, including the Mercedes-Benz museum and the Ritter Sport chocolate factory
- a walk through the famously picturesque Black Forest

When the German group visits England, there will be organised excursions for the German students on each school day. English students will carry on attending school as normal.

Dates for the 2023 exchange

English students to visit Germany: **Sunday 26 March to Sunday 2 April 2023**
(The last week of the Spring term leading into the first weekend of the Easter holiday)

German students to visit Hedge End: **Sunday 9 July to Wednesday 19 July 2023**

Safeguarding checks for host families

The Department of Education advises that where children are staying with host families, this is classed as a 'regulated activity' and, as such, all adults must undergo a 'DBS Children's Barred List' register check. Recently, Hampshire County council has instructed all its schools that this procedure must be followed.

In order to take part in the exchange programme that involves hosting a German youngster, you will need to agree to a safeguarding check. Once your application to take part in the exchange has been received, further details will be sent to you about the checking procedure.

Although the same system of safeguarding does not operate in Germany, all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the suitability of German host families.

The cost of the 2023 exchange

The cost per student of this year's exchange visit will be **£450**. There are 20 places available. Given the possibility of fluctuating exchange rates and flight prices, it is possible that the cost may turn out to be slightly more. If this is the case, you will be advised and the payments changed accordingly. I hope this won't be the case and will do all I can to maintain this price.

Please complete the parental agreement form online through your Parentpay account to give consent for your son/daughter to attend this trip. You will be asked to provide your emergency contact details and any relevant medical information. If a deposit, or full payment, is required this will also need to be paid at the time. If you have not already activated your Parentpay account and require your login details please do not hesitate to contact the Finance Office at finance@wildern.org.

If you would like your son/daughter to take part please complete the online Parentpay medical and consent forms, accompanied by a deposit payment of **£125 by Friday 8 July 2023**.

The minimum payments schedule will then be as follows:

£125 by the end of September 2022	(£250 balance)
£100 by the end of November 2022	(£350 balance)
£100 by the end of January 2023	(£450 balance)

In the event of oversubscription we will endeavour to take into consideration any students who may have missed out on trips previously due to oversubscription and will allocate any further places by drawing names out of a hat. In the event of a place not being allocated you will be informed and any monies received will be returned.

The personal information form

Once your son/daughter has signed up via ParentPay, and had their place confirmed, they will need to fill out a personal information form available from me. This is an important document which will be used to match English and German youngsters. When completing it, please ensure that:

- All information is entered clearly in **BLOCK CAPITALS**.
- Your school email address is included.
- A current passport-size photo is attached.
- Information is given that creates a distinct impression of a person.
- Bland statements such as '*I like hanging around with mates*' are avoided!

It is hoped that your son/daughter will be given the details of his/her German partner by October half-term.

Teachers accompanying residential visits carry enormous responsibility for the students in their care particularly when travelling abroad. The Senior Leadership Team therefore reserve the right to refuse or withdraw a place to any student whose behaviour in school has been or becomes a problem.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further queries about this year's German exchange programme.

Yours sincerely

Mr T Russell
Director of Learning - MFL