



UK-German Exchange Fellowships

Pilot programme 2021/22

Handbook

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Introduction

This handbook is aimed at teachers and pupils planning to take part in the 2021-22 individual pupil exchange programme and provides programme information and detailed practical guidance for participants.

It will explain:

- how the programme works
- who the programme is for
- who organises what
- how the funding works
- how the application process works

It also includes the following guidance and information:

- guidance on project work
- safeguarding information
- details of roles and responsibilities
- proposed timelines for planning and taking part
- a step-by-step checklist, including which documents will be required and when to submit them

Please keep all documents, including this handbook, for reference.

About the programme

This programme provides pupils from the UK and North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) aged 15-18 with the opportunity to spend 1-3 weeks at an existing partner school in Germany or the UK, carry out a project on a theme of their choice and stay with a host family. As part of this tandem initiative, two pupils at partner schools in the UK and NRW apply in conjunction with each other to take part in this two-way exchange with reciprocal visits to each country taking place within a (max) 12-month-period and by the end of December 2022 at the latest.

As part of the programme, participating pupils work on a curriculum-related project during their study trip, including elements of fieldwork or research. They will also have the chance to immerse themselves in the everyday life, culture and language of the other country and experience all aspects of life at their partner school, including attending lessons with their partner.

This **school partnership programme** is run and funded in partnership between UK-German Connection, the Ministry of Education in North Rhine-Westphalia and the *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf*. The participating partner schools are responsible for the visit logistics, overseeing the project work and safeguarding of the participants, with support and guidance from the programme organisers throughout.

An overview of the programme can be found on the programme organisers' websites here:

UK schools	https://ukgermanconnection.org/exchange-fellowships
NRW schools	https://www.brd.nrw.de/themen/schule-bildung/internationaler-austausch

Who can apply?

The programme is open to **pupils aged 15-18** (at the time of travel) at **UK and NRW schools with an existing partnership in the other country**.

Two pupils from the same school can apply to take part in the programme and visits at the same time. The matching and arrangements will need to be coordinated by the partner schools and each participating pupil must submit a separate application.

In principle, pupils undertake the visits on their own. If it is not possible for pupils to travel alone, a **member of staff may accompany the participating pupils** on their visit(s). If this applies to your school, you will be asked to provide details of arrangements and reasons for an accompanying teacher in the application form.

If you would like to find out more about support for an accompanying member of staff, please contact the relevant organisation (for contact details, see page 7 below):

UK schools	NRW schools
UK-German Connection	Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf

Who organises what?

UK-German Connection will provide clear and comprehensive guidance and support for participating UK schools and pupils, with the **Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf** providing support to the German schools and pupils. The programme organisers (UK-German Connection and the *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf*) will provide funding for the participating pupils, as well as template documents (e.g. pupil matching forms, risk assessment templates) should these be required.

The UK and German partner schools must assign a **mentor teacher** at each school, who will take on coordinating roles and work together to support pupils with their applications, visits and projects, and be the key points of contact with the participating pupils and programme organisers. A detailed role description for the mentor teachers can be found below (see p7).

The pupils' **host family** will be responsible for organising the exchange partners' time spent outside school, e.g. excursions, welcoming the exchange partner into family life.

If required, a **preparatory visit** can be made by each of the mentor teachers to the partner school to plan and discuss arrangements. Guidance and funding can be provided for this. To find out more, please contact the relevant organisation (for contact details, see 'contact and support' below):

UK schools	NRW schools
UK-German Connection	Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf

How does the matching process work?

The partner schools should work together to 'match' a pair of pupils, who would like to take part in the programme, including project work, a visit to the other country and hosting their partner's return visit.

UK-German Connection and the *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf* will be happy to provide guidance on the matching process, as well as a template matching form on request.

When do the visits take place?

Each partner must visit each other and either side can travel first. The timing of the visits is flexible and the visits should be arranged to suit both partner schools. Each visit should be between one and three weeks in duration and take place within a (max) 12-month-period and by the end of December 2022.

Visits can span term-time and holidays, though there must be a minimum of five full days spent at the host school during term-time. Holiday-time visits only apply to outgoing pupils, i.e. pupils can go in their own holiday time but the partner school must be in session throughout the whole period.

Where will the pupils stay during their visit?

Accommodation during each visit is normally with the exchange partner's host family. The participating partner schools are responsible for putting the accommodation arrangements in place. UK-German Connection and the *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf* can offer guidance on making these arrangements and factors to consider when planning the accommodation and logistics.

What are the travel arrangements?

The travelling participants are responsible for organising and booking their own travel. A grant will be available to cover travel costs, including transfers in each country.

For information on travel regulations, please see:

UK schools	NRW schools
https://ukgermanconnection.org/travel-germany	https://ukgermanconnection.org/einreise-uk

UK-German Connection and the *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf* can also provide some support with general questions about travel, including airline guidelines for unaccompanied young people.

What about insurance?

UK schools	NRW schools
<p>For pupils in the UK with current EHIC cards, they will remain valid until they expire. Participants with expired EHIC cards will need to apply for a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), which gives travellers the right to access emergency state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in Germany. Further information on GHIC: https://www.ghic.org.uk</p> <p>We also advise participants to check whether they are covered by an existing school travel insurance policy.</p>	<p>For pupils in NRW, the parents should check whether their insurance covers international healthcare. If not, additional international health insurance must be taken out.</p>

Guidance about travel and entry regulations is available on the website of UK-German Connection:

- for travel to Germany: <https://ukgermanconnection.org/travel-germany>
- for travel to the UK: <https://ukgermanconnection.org/einreise-uk>

If travel restrictions mean that the face-to-face visits cannot take place as planned, there will be the option to transfer to a **virtual tandem project**, whereby each pupil carries out their project work in close communication with their partner in Germany, e.g. via scheduled video calls, supporting each other with project research and the sharing of outcomes. Participating pupils and schools will need to demonstrate

the interactive nature of their virtual activity and outline their amended plans for joint project work, including methods of communication and outreach in both schools and communities. Virtual tandem projects can also be supported with a small grant to cover materials and expenses.

Who is responsible for the care and welfare of the pupils?

Partner schools are accountable for working together to ensure all appropriate safeguarding measures are in place, including:

- risk assessments
- sharing of emergency contact details
- gathering information on medical and health issues, including allergies
- discussing accommodation arrangements with the host family in line with school policies regarding home-stays
- a code of conduct for pupils

Further guidance and support, including templates are available on request

Should additional Covid-19-related health and safety measures be necessary at the time of travel, the schools are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate government guidance is followed.

The programme organisers (UK-German Connection and the *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf*) can provide advice and support but do not accept any accountability for the welfare or safeguarding of participants.

How does the funding / grant work?

Successful applicants will be provided with a grant to cover the cost of travel to the other country, as well as subsistence and project-related costs, such as materials and excursions during their stay in Germany or the UK. Further details of the grant and funding procedures can be found here:

UK schools	https://ukgermanconnection.org/exchange-fellowships
NRW schools	https://www.brd.nrw.de/themen/schule-bildung/internationaler-austausch

Project work

As part of participating in the programme, each exchange pupil must undertake a piece of **project work on the theme of their choice**. The two partners can work on the same or a different project or theme; these can be chosen individually and conducted in either English or German, but should be carried out in **collaboration**, discussion and reflection between the partners, and include input from a wider group of pupils in the school and the community. The project outcomes must be **shared and disseminated** to ensure a wider learning impact within both schools and local communities, with the participating pupils taking an active role in this. Four weeks after the visit, UK schools must submit their project report and a short visit report of 500 words to UK-German Connection and NRW schools must submit their project report to the Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf.

Projects should:

- be approached from a UK-German perspective and offer the pupils an insight into the culture of the other country
- involve an element of research, fieldwork or exploration, e.g. interviews with local people, community surveys, excursions, site visits etc.
- include a written element (500-1500 words) but can also include creative elements, such as photography, video material or artwork.

- involve communication and virtual/digital contact between the exchange partners before, between and after the visits
- include a curricular element; projects can also tie into project work already being carried out in school
- demonstrate added value in terms of authentic bilateral insight achieved through collaboration and interaction
- have outcomes, which are shared widely in both schools and communities, with the participating pupils taking on roles as ambassadors for their project and partnership.

Things to think about:

- a timeline for the project – when will it begin and end, and what are the necessary steps in between?
- what preparatory and follow-up work will be carried out?
- roles – who will do what?
- what materials and digital resources do we need?
- what will the project outcomes be and how will I present these?
- how will the project be evaluated?
- what support is required from others?
- how can the project outcomes be shared more widely after the project?

Ideas for possible project themes:

- Curricular topics, e.g. History, Geography, STEM ('MINT' in German), Citizenship, Art etc.
- Skills for the international world of work – how can we prepare ourselves?
- Living and learning in a post-Covid World.
- Going digital in the UK and Germany - the impact of technology and social media on young people.
- Sustainability – e.g. sustainable consumption – why our everyday choices matter; sustainable cities; green technologies.
- Creative arts – explore an intercultural topic through a creative medium of your choice, e.g. poetry, song, visual arts etc.
- UK-NRW relations – our shared history and our shared future.
- The importance of youth relations in a shared future.

How does the application process work?

Ahead of submitting applications to the programme, the partner schools should work together to agree on who will be applying, rough dates for the reciprocal visits and support the pupils in creating a brief project outline. Please refer to the **timeline** and **checklist** below.

The UK pupil should then complete their application together with their mentor teacher and submit it to UK-German Connection. The German pupil should submit their application to the *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf*. Applications can only be submitted 'together' as a pair; applications which don't have a partner application cannot be considered.

As part of the **application**, pupils should include the following elements:

- reasons and motivation for applying
- international / intercultural experience to date
- plans for sharing the project outcomes with the wider schools and communities
- plans for communicating with the exchange partner before, during and after the visit

The applications must be supported by a **reference / statement from the mentor teacher**, including comments on the pupil's -

- interpersonal and social skills, including their ability to work with others and participate actively in the programme

- intercultural and communication skills
- involvement in any extra-curricular activities
- proposed project idea, its relevance to the pupil's learning / wider impact on the school, and your plans to share the project's outcomes and experience with the wider school / community.

The application forms are available here:

UK schools	https://ukgermanconnection.org/exchange-fellowships
NRW schools	https://www.brd.nrw.de/themen/schule-bildung/internationaler-austausch

Deadline for applications: 15 November 2021

The selection process takes place in November and December and participants will be informed of the outcome of their application by Christmas.

What happens next?

Once participants have been selected, there will be introductory and guidance webinars to give participants and mentor teachers the chance to find out more about the programme and get answers to any questions they may have.

After the visits

Participants are required to submit a project report and a short visit report of 500 words.

UK participants	NRW participants
Submit project report and visit report to UK-German Connection four weeks after the end of the visit.	Submit project report and visit report to the <i>Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf</i> four weeks after the end of the visit.

Participants will also be required to complete an online evaluation form about their participation in the programme and to spread the word within the wider school community.

We strongly encourage exchange partners to stay in touch with each other after the visits have taken place. UK-German Connection and the *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf* will be happy to provide guidance on ways to keep connected, as well as information on opportunities to stay involved with UK-German youth initiatives.

The role of the mentor teachers

The mentor teacher at each partner school should take on a coordinating role with the following responsibilities:

- coordination of the project and communication with the mentor teacher at the partner school, including the 'matching' process
- supporting pupils with their application and providing a reference
- acting as the key points of contact and communication for the participating pupils and programme organisers
- creating a proposed itinerary for the exchange partner's visit and supporting the exchange pupil during their visit and time at school, including a timetable and time allocated for project work
- providing support for the pupils' project work, including choice of theme, planning, problem-solving and reporting / presentation.

Contact and support

If you would like to find out more about any element of the programme, or discuss your ideas, please don't hesitate to contact:

UK schools	UK-German Connection Alison Dolamore partnerships@ukgermanconnection.org https://ukgermanconnection.org/exchange-fellowships
NRW schools	Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf Dezernat 43.03 – Internationaler Austausch Rainer Bäcker Rainer.baecker@brd.nrw.de https://www.brd.nrw.de/themen/schule-bildung/internationaler-austausch

Timeline

1. Before application

- Mentor teachers liaise with their partner schools to gauge interest and feasibility, as well as Headteacher support.
- Mentor teachers advertise or recruit within their own schools and work together to match pupils
- The partner schools agree on how the mentor teachers and exchange partners will communicate with each other
- Pupils should choose themes and come up with a rough project plan
- Teachers and pupils discuss timelines and logistics and decide on rough dates for the visits (1-3 weeks in duration per visit), as well as options for, and conditions of, being hosted at school
- Agree on host family arrangements
- Discuss the necessary safeguarding procedures

2. Application

- The mentor teachers in each country work together with their pupils to submit applications to the programme organisers. The two partner schools must agree on the participants, dates, project themes and host family arrangements before submitting their applications.

Checklist for your application:

- agree on visit dates with your partner school
- decide on a project theme and create an outline plan
- ask for headteacher's consent
- ask for parental consent
- include a teacher's reference / supporting statement
- include your reasons and motivation for applying
- include international / intercultural experience to date
- include plans for sharing the project outcomes with the wider schools and communities

3. Confirmation of acceptance

Once schools have been notified of the outcome of their application, the following next steps will need to be taken:

- look into and book flights / travel (government travel advice)
- check the validity of the pupil's EHIC card (see above for guidance on insurance)
- arrange travel insurance or check you can use an existing school policy

- arrange a virtual meeting for the exchange partners (and mentor teachers) if this hasn't happened already and discuss:
 - project work
 - travel arrangements
 - host family arrangements, including dietary requirements
 - safeguarding arrangements
 - a more detailed and concrete itinerary / timetable
 - activities outside school

Documents to be submitted:

UK schools	NRW schools
Application form	Application form
Confirmation of participation and consent form (following acceptance onto the programme)	Confirmation of participation and consent form (following acceptance onto the programme)
> submit to UK-German Connection (see contact details on page 7)	> submit to <i>Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf</i> (see contact details on page 7)

4. Before the first visit

Participants should:

- share emergency contact details between the two schools and families
- participants save these numbers into their telephones
- mentor teachers to brief participants on what to do in emergency situations
- agree on a system of communication and how to report any incidents of concern
- revisit the code of conduct
- make a list of things to take on the visit

5. After the visit

- Pupils act as ambassadors by sharing the project outcomes and experience with the wider schools / communities
- UK pupils finalise their project reports and visit reports and send these to UK-German Connection / German pupils submit their project reports and visit reports to the *Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf*
- Pupils and schools will be asked to complete an online evaluation form about their participation in the programme and their projects
- Pupils will receive a certificate on successful completion of the visit and the submission of their project reports.
- Participating pupils will be invited to attend a post-visit group event to celebrate their activities and share their project outcomes.

Good luck with your applications! We look forward to hearing about your projects!

If you have any questions about the programme in the meantime or would like to arrange a call, please don't hesitate to contact us via partnerships@ukgermanconnection.org (UK schools) or Rainer.baecker@brd.nrw.de (NRW schools).