

23 January 2018

EA/JB

Dear Parents and Students

Exchange to Spain 2018

As some of you will be aware, we were not able to run our Exchange trip in October 2017 because of a lack of uptake. This was such a shame as we have been holding an Exchange with our partner school for the last 6 years and it was disappointing not to be able to get the numbers we needed. However, I am not one to throw in the towel easily and would like to launch a new proposal to you!

The Exchange goes to a town called Mataró, close to Barcelona. Normally we go out on the first leg in October and the Spanish come to us in March/ April, thereby keeping it all to the one academic year. However, as we were unable to go out in October 2017, we are proposing to do the Exchange the other way round, ie the Spanish students will be coming to us first and we will be going out to Barcelona at the end of the first term or during the second term of the new academic year. This will mean that the Exchange will run over 2 academic years.

We are currently in the process of finalising dates with our Spanish colleagues and they are looking to come out around **13/14/15 March 2018**, before the Easter holiday. Obviously, the nature of an Exchange is that you will have a student from the Spanish school staying with you for one week and then your son/daughter will return to their family home on the return leg. This can often be off putting for students and parents. However, please let me reassure you that we take the safety of all students participating in the Exchange very carefully. Like us the Spanish school knows the families wanting to take part and they obviously know the students well. The preoccupation for some of our students is normally based on the fact that they believe they would feel uncomfortable in someone else's home and that they don't have the level of Spanish to partake. From my experience of running Exchanges, the host family is just as worried! They want to ensure that their visitor is made to feel at home and as comfortable as possible. For those studying Spanish, the experience of staying with a family and trying to speak a second language is particularly valuable, but the level of our student's Spanish in Year 10 and even Year 11 can sometimes be a stumbling block. We, therefore, always try to ensure that our less confident students are placed with Spanish students (and/or parents) with a good to high level of English. This ensures that they can use English if necessary, but they are expected to try and speak in Spanish first and turn to English as a last resort. After all, life is not all plain sailing and we find ourselves in situations where we have to be prepared to take ourselves out of our comfort zones!

However, on an Exchange students get the best of any kind of school trip. We meet up at the beginning of the day as a group and visit some of the most wonderful sights of that area; Sagrada Familia, Parc Guell, Barcelona, Girona, Tarragona to name but a few and then in the evening we join our Spanish friends and spend time with them and their families. It really is such a busy and fun trip that after the initial feelings of embarrassment, our students don't have time to think about feeling awkward or homesick and they generally have a wonderful experience.

Our Exchanges to date have been very successful and have been enjoyed by everyone involved. Equally as important is the fact that students' listening and spoken skills improved at GCSE and A Level. Taking part in the Exchange enables students to talk and write about their personal experiences in spoken and written exams, as well as improving their listening skills and being able to practise their Spanish, whatever the level, with the aim of communicating. Furthermore, it enables them to experience Spanish family life, Spanish youngsters' thoughts and beliefs, and also to gain an invaluable insight into the region itself. I would like to think that all students would seriously consider this opportunity as an important addition to their course.

Any students currently in Year 11 who may not be continuing with Spanish in Year 12 are more than welcome to take part in both the hosting and the visiting legs of the Exchange. Any student who applied for the trip in October last year is guaranteed a place on this year's trip if they still wish to take part.

I would hope that we can run the exchange at a cost of between £350 and £370, dependant on a minimum interest of 25 - 30 students. The cost will include all travel by air and coach in the UK, excursions, entrance fees and insurance. Food and lodging will obviously be provided by the host family.

I should add that participation is also dependent upon a good attitude towards work, and **we reserve the right to withdraw students who are not meeting the required standard.**

In order to secure the best possible price for the flights as quickly as possible when we have finalised the return dates, I need to ask for an **initial deposit of £75 by Monday 5 February 2018 and a further deposit of £75 by Monday 5 March.** These deposits will be non-refundable as soon as the flights have been booked. A second interim payment of **£120** will be due by **2 July**, with the remaining **£100** due by **5 September.** Payment should be made via ParentPay.

All students on the visit must have their own passport and I will need to have a copy of this in order to book the flights. **Please hand in your reply slip, a photocopy of your passport information and the completed Exchange application form to the Main Office.** Once received, the trip will appear on your ParentPay account to enable payment to be made.

I appreciate that you may have questions that you would like to ask, if so please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours faithfully



Emma Albuixech
Head of Languages

Enclosures

**Spanish Exchange Visit 2017/2018
CONSENT FORM
(Please return in an envelope to the Main Office)**

Student's Name: **Form:**

I / We give my/our consent for my/our son/daughter named above to participate in this visit as outlined in the attached letter.

(Both parents with parental responsibility should give their signed consent for foreign visits. Please note that where parents are separated both parents with parental responsibility are still required to give their consent to participation in foreign visits unless the main carer has been designated by a Residency Order.)

I wish to register my son/daughter for a place on this visit and agree to pay £75 deposit by 5 February 2018. I understand that by registering my son/daughter we agree to host a Spanish student in March 2018 . I agree to pay a second instalment of £75 by 5 March 2018 and I am aware that these deposits will be non-refundable once flights have been booked.

Email address for account notification:

I am aware that further contributions will be due as follows and that payments by instalments will be accepted in the interim:

- 2 July £120 Third Payment
- 5 September £100 (Final Balance will be due by this date)

*ParentPay allows parents/carers to pay with a debit or credit card. Please tick the box above and return the form to school to register your application for a place on this visit. Once the trip is deemed viable, Mrs Green (Finance Office) will then activate a ParentPay account for you for this visit. **Your deposit online will be due by 5 February 2018.***

Signed: **Main Carer:** YES / NO / JOINT

Print Name: **Relationship to student:**

Signed: **Main Carer:** YES / NO / JOINT

Print Name: **Relationship to student:**

Please also enclose a photocopy of your son's/ daughter's passport details and the completed Exchange Application form