



GERMAN EXCHANGE 2026



WHAT IS IT ?

It is a scheme run entirely by staff in two schools - Poynton High School and the Wilhelm Leuschner Schule in Niestetal, near Kassel in Germany. The exchange provides the opportunity for students from both countries to correspond with each other and to visit each other's homes. The first exchange took place in 1979 so there is a long history of a successful partnership.

INFORMATION MEETING

There will be an online meeting for families who would like to take part before they sign up on **Tuesday 15th July 2025** at 6pm. This will be through your young person's languages Google Classroom, please follow the link provided there.

There is no need to attend this meeting if you wish to repeat the exchange

WHO CAN TAKE PART?

Any student in Year 9 or Year 10 studying German who feels that he or she would benefit from the experience. The kind of person who will make most of an exchange is interested in other countries, their culture and language; someone who is tolerant of people and customs which are different from our own. Students will only be eligible if they have a good behaviour record within school.

WHEN WILL IT TAKE PLACE?

The provisional dates for the 2026 Exchange are as follows: -

NIESTETAL party to POYNTON : February 26th – 5th March
POYNTON party to NIESTETAL: June 11th-18th

It must be emphasised that these dates are subject to change due to flight availability and will be confirmed as soon as possible, after numbers have been established, and flights have been confirmed.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

It is very much hoped that the final cost will be £650 but this may change slightly depending on numbers This covers the cost of travel and personal insurance, but you will need pocket money in Germany. In addition, you will obviously be expected to meet the cost of looking after your guest when he/she is in England. A trip for our students with their partners is also included in the price.

HOW WILL WE TRAVEL?

We will be travelling by plane to Frankfurt from Manchester with Lufthansa (provisionally), with train connection to Kassel.

WHAT DO I DO IF I WANT TO TAKE PART?

This year there are only 20 places available which will be allocated on receipt of the non-refundable £100 deposit payable through Evolve. Priority will be given to students in Year 10 studying GCSE in the first instance.

Once deposits have been collected, you will be sent a link to complete. **Please complete it and attach a few recent photographs - this is very important.** Give as much detail about yourself as you possibly can as the form will help the organisers to find you the most suitable partner.

Please note that it is helpful if you don't mind hosting either a boy or a girl; there is never a guaranteed even gender split.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN?

You will be “matched-up” with someone in Germany. It is then up to you to exchange messages, photos, Christmas cards etc. before the first “leg” of the Exchange take place. There will be a parents’ meeting prior to each of the sections of the exchange. Everyone aged 16 or over resident in host families must undergo a DBS check (even if you already hold one for your work or any volunteering such as Scouts) There is no additional charge for this.

SUPERVISION

As in previous years, staff from PHS will accompany the group on the outward and return journeys and will remain locally for the duration of the exchange visit.

WHAT IF WE NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Please contact Mrs McGuire in school if you have any further enquiries. emcguire@poyntonhigh.org.uk

For students

The exchange is a wonderful experience, but it is not a holiday, and it is not like a normal school trip. It is a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in a new country and to embrace all things that that brings with it; food, daily routine, home life, travel and transport, school, and family to name but a few. There are things which you will find challenging, and you will need to be independent and responsible. You will need to fit into the culture and way of life of another family. You will need to follow their rules and their routines and be as flexible as possible. This may mean doing things that do not fit into your normal routine at home and may feel very different from what you are used to. This is exactly what we expect of our guests when they come and stay in your home. If you feel that you will be able to do all these things then the exchange is for you and the personal skills you will develop alongside improving your language skills, will be invaluable.

For parents

We are so grateful that so many of our families want to get involved with the exchange and the fact that they have been running for so long shows how well they work. It is not, however, a holiday and we would urge you to make sure that an exchange is right for your child. They will need to be resilient and flexible; it will not be like being at home! There will be times when even the most confident students will feel overwhelmed or homesick and this is completely normal and very common when travelling without parents, often for the first time, and staying with a family in a foreign country that they don't know very well. This will quickly pass, and the benefits far outweigh any uncomfortable feelings. Staff are always contactable on the emergency phone for students and parents and issues can be quickly dealt with once staff are aware. We would encourage as many students as possible to take part in the exchange but please discuss carefully with your child, exactly what it involves and urge them to speak to their languages teacher prior to signing up if they are not completely sure that it is for them. We also ask for a level of resilience from parents, as we know how easy it is – and how tempting – to message them all week and check in frequently, but this can often exacerbate feelings of homesickness and it is usually best to wait for them to get in touch first and keep communication to a minimum to allow them to enjoy the experience to the full.

Exchange FAQs

1. Is this right for my child?

Please read all the information carefully and ask any questions prior to signing up. There are a limited number of places, and we want to ensure that those taking part are going to be able to really get the most out of this amazing experience.

2. How often should I contact my child?

We appreciate that it can be hard but try not to contact your child, let them contact you and messaging seems to be better than long phone calls which can cause homesickness. Constant contact from home can prevent students from fully immersing in life with their host family.

3. What if my child feels homesick?

It is normal to miss home, particularly at the start, but once they are fully settled, this will quickly pass. Make sure that they have something which will distract them, a book, phone etc. If it is overwhelming, then they should contact staff on the emergency phone

4. What is TripAid?

TripAid is an app where staff can contact students and students can contact staff with questions or messages that are not urgent. Students should use the emergency phone to contact staff if there is something which cannot wait. TripAid is not available for parents.

5. How can I contact staff?

Parents also have access to the emergency phone though we ask that you only call in an emergency. If there is a problem with your child on the trip, it is much easier to deal with effectively if the student contacts staff directly so we have all the information first-hand and can fully understand the situation.

6. What should I do in an emergency?

Please call the emergency phone immediately but we would expect that staff would already have been made aware either from the students or the host family.

7. What to do if my child doesn't like the food?

If your child is a very fussy eater, urge them to try new things, families put a lot of effort into making sure the food is nice. You can always send a few cereal bars or similar in their suitcase and on trips there are plenty of opportunities to buy meals if necessary.

8. What to do if my child doesn't get on with their partner?

We do our very best to match partners well, but it is not always possible to find someone with exactly the same interests. Most of the time this does not cause a problem and with a little flexibility and resilience, most students can get on for a week. If there are serious concerns, these should be raised with staff.

9. How much information should I put on the form?

The more information we have, the easier it is for us to match partners. We have found that the most important thing is stating clearly who your friends are so that we can try, as far as possible, to match you with a partner who has similar friends. This provides more opportunities to meet up while away which decreases the likelihood of many of the issues mentioned above occurring.

10. What if my child has never travelled before?

We all travel as a group for the main journey, but most host families rely on public transport. We expect students on the exchange to fit in with their host family's normal routines, so once students are paired up with a host family, it is a good idea when you first get in touch to ask how they will be travelling to school so you can be prepared for this. Students will be expected to be responsible for travel cards, documents and passports.

Comments from students:

I did the exchange and had a partner who was a different gender, I thought it would be awkward, but it wasn't at all. The trip we did with our partners was very enjoyable and I am sure that the return trip will be just as exciting

The exchange was such an amazing experience that everyone of us will remember for years to come.

Even though my partner and I probably won't keep in touch, I had a great time on all the trips, and it was a worthwhile experience.

I felt a bit homesick for the first couple of days, but I had a great time and cannot wait to the exchange again next year

This list is not exhaustive, please encourage your young person to speak to their languages teacher to ask any questions they may have. Otherwise please email emcguire@poyntonhigh.org.uk for the German Exchange or jwallace@poyntonhigh.org.uk for the Spanish Exchange

Please take the time to read through this information if you are interested in securing a place for your young person. Information about how to sign up will be available once we return to school in September.