

Organising a school trip to China – TASKS TO COMPLETE

INITIAL PLANNING STAGE (at least 18 -24 months prior to first trip depending on whether exchange school is needed)

Research travel companies and school tour groups.

Seek advice and recommendations from other schools with experience of school trips and exchanges with China.

Discuss idea with other relevant department if wanting to do a cross-curricular trip.

Gain idea of approximate price per student and length of standard trip with approximate group number.

Seek informal student feedback on interest in participating in trip.

Discuss idea with the SLT responsible for International Dimension/Overseas Trips to check viability of trip based on research and decide on type of trip and approximate price - residential trip/ exchange trip/ part residential/part exchange trip.

Determine approximate dates/time period (including whether trip will run during a school holiday) and approximate group number and year group(s) of students with SLT, including number of teachers on trip.

Inform Trips Officer and complete any necessary paperwork needed at this stage.

Obtain Headteacher and Governing Body approval and make any necessary changes.

If seeking exchange partner school, contact British Council, CI IOE, specific companies looking to pair schools together and complete pre-check visit by teachers and SLT/Headteacher. Agree terms of partnership (dates, numbers of students, aims of partnership exchange) and sign partnership agreement.

SECONDARY PLANNING STAGE (approximately 12-14 months prior to trip)

Negotiate dates and total numbers of students with partner school and then with member of staff responsible for School Diary.

Get quotes from different tour companies and choose a tour company to use which is both cost effective for students but also suits school requirements the best.

Approximately 12 months prior to dates of trip, agree itinerary with chosen tour company and total price per student including accommodation, transport, transfers, activities, food and drink, and free teacher places.

Complete risk assessment and risk assessment action plan.

Discuss deadlines (deposits, payments) and agree overall cost per student (to include contingency) with Business Manager and Trips Officer.

Identify home base contact (usually HoD).

Complete planning sheet for educational visits (or equivalent planning sheet issued by trips officer).

Draft initial information letter to parents/students with deadline for deposit and documentation to be submitted, including information on methods of payment (cheques or online system) and ensure letter is authorised if required. Remind parents in letter that visa is needed at own cost, and passport must have 6 months remaining validity from the date of entering China.

Promote trip to students through lessons, assemblies, school website, Twitter etc and give out letter.

Check on uptake of students, particularly as deadline for deposits draws near and chase students/send reminder.

Agree staff participating on trip (minimum 1 teacher : 10 students), ensuring both genders are included if mixed group of students, and request cover. Identify if First Aid/Epipen Training for participating staff will be required and arrange as necessary with First Aid Officer (at least one teacher on trip to be fully trained).

Upon deadline, check on numbers and whether visit is viable. Update tour company (and partner school) on final numbers.

Trips Officer to send forms to parents for completion (Code of Conduct, copy of passport, information sheet (detailing whether family can host Chinese student on return leg of exchange), parental consent forms, medical information sheet).

FINAL ORGANISATION STAGE (3 months and less before trip)

Diarise and inform parents of China Trip Information Evening (to be held approximately 5 weeks before trip).

Chase outstanding payments and documentation from students.

Send over all names, dates of birth and passport numbers to airline/company organising flights.

Two months prior to the trip, request supporting documentation needed for visa application (official invitation letter with detailed names of visiting students and itinerary) from partner school or tour company.

Six to eight weeks before the trip, send families information on applying for the students' visa, along with supporting evidence, and request a copy of the visa to be sent to school once received.

Students complete personal information sheet (interests, allergies etc) to send to partner school to help with matching host families.

Request details of exchange pairings including contact details from partner school and ensure written confirmation is received from the Headteacher of partner school confirming overseas host families/homes are considered suitable to host students.

Finalise itinerary with tour company and partner school.

Complete online submission of visit to Outdoor Education Unit of local authority for approval in conjunction with Trips Officer.

Hold information evening with parents and students to discuss behavioural expectations, go through itinerary, ensure all visas have been received, provide contact details of host families, give out telephone tree and answer parents' questions. Instruct students to contact exchange partners to introduce themselves.

Compile student handbook/workbook with key phrases/words and activities to complete while in China.

Request money to be exchanged into renminbi from Finance Officer and ensure school mobile phone works in China.

Buy cultural presents to give to partner school in China.

Ensure you have all documentation, including copies of passports, medical information and medicine, contact details of each student.

Visually check all students have passports before leaving school in coach.