



# TEACHER'S GUIDE TO ORGANIZING A SCHOOL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

[www.ForumLanguageExperience.com](http://www.ForumLanguageExperience.com)



At Forum Language Experience, we connect schools in the United States with schools in Spain and France and support them in building a school exchange partnership. We prioritize the safety of students and work in the countries where our offices are located, ensuring that groups have access to 24/7 in-country support while traveling.

### **1) WHAT IS AN EXCHANGE PROGRAM?**

An exchange consists of a group of students and their teacher(s) traveling abroad, integrating into the life of their partner school, and residing with the families of the students whom they will, in turn, receive. During their stay abroad, students will participate in daily life like any other member of the school community and of the family. Although not mandatory, we encourage schools to organize activities for their visiting students to promote better integration and exposure to their local community and culture.

### **2) WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN EXCHANGE PROGRAM?**

An exchange program gives students the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in a different culture, practice and improve their target language skills, and develop meaningful relationships with peers from a different part of the world. Travel costs are significantly lower than other travel abroad programs because participants are hosted by their counterparts and spend the majority of their time in school or with their host families. Exchange programs are highly regarded by our partner schools as they create successful long-term partnerships that engage the entire school community.

### **3) BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR AN EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

1. **Authorization** to run the exchange program at your school.
2. **Capacity** to host a group of visiting students in families between nine days and two weeks. Capacity to accommodate, in class and within your school, a group of visiting students attending school between four and seven days (to be determined by schools).
3. **Minimum group size** of nine students and one Organizing Teacher who will both travel and host. You may be required to adapt your group size based on your partner school's number of participants.
4. **Receiving families** should be chosen by the Organizing Teacher based on the family's capacity to receive students in a welcoming and safe environment.
5. **Activities** (either curricular or extracurricular) coordinated by the Organizing Teacher and school for the visiting group are encouraged.

### **4) ROLE OF FORUM LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE**

- **Match your school with a school abroad** based on the information provided on the Exchange Request Form.
- **Advise and support Organizing Teachers** during the planning of the exchange.
- **Book minimum services** (flights, insurance, and transfers between the airport and the receiving school).
- **Organize and book excursions** based on each group's requirements.



## 5) ROLE OF ORGANIZING TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

- **Confirm with your partner school the details pertaining to the exchange:** dates, lengths of stay, visits, activities, academic program, and other services that will be offered to each other.
- **Select and match the students** participating in the exchange program, ensuring that host families will provide a welcoming and safe environment. The hosting school is responsible for pairing the students and their host families.
- **Maintain regular contact** via email or phone with your partner teacher and Forum Language Experience.
- **Provide visiting teacher(s) with accommodation.** Should you not be able to host, please specify it on the School Exchange Request Form.

## 6) STEPS TOWARD ORGANIZING AN EXCHANGE PROGRAM

- 1) **Fill out the [School Exchange Request Form](#).** Based on your school's profile, we will look for a compatible partner school abroad.
- 2) **A tentative exchange partner is found.** This process can take between one week and six months. Forum Language Experience will put the two teachers in contact. Organizing teachers will then confirm the following points pertaining to the exchange: travel dates, number of days at school, estimated group size, weekends with families, excursions and activities, daily expenses, and accommodation for group leaders.
- 3) **Finalize your itinerary** with your Forum Consultant. Your itinerary will include airfare, medical and cancellation insurance, and airport transfers at destination. It will also include excursions as requested by your group.
- 4) **Schedule an Information Meeting** to recruit interested students and families. Ideally, both schools will have an equal or similar number of student participants. If this is not the case, schools may need to recruit additional host families (families of students who will host but not travel).
- 5) **Enroll your students.** Students will enroll through your group web account and make their trip deposit payment at the time of enrolling to confirm participation. Additionally, they will complete a Student Profile Form to assist in matching exchange partners.
- 6) **Match your students** with their exchange partners. Organizing Teachers will work together to confirm compatible matches based on the Student Profile Forms. Additional details, such as school curriculum, dress code, local transportation, and school meals, should also be confirmed between the schools at this time.
- 7) **You are ready to go!** Approximately three to four weeks before your group's departure (to the host country), Forum Language Experience will post on your group web account your final itinerary, airline tickets and additional guidance and support documents for your travel abroad.



**7) REFERENCES & TESTIMONIALS**

<p><b>Keene High School- Exchange in Almeria, Spain</b>          43 Arch Street, Keene NH 03431          Tel. (603) 352-0640  <a href="http://www.keene.k12.nh.us">www.keene.k12.nh.us</a>          Ms. Marilyn McMaster</p>	<p><b>Seven Hills School – Exchange in Marseille, France</b>          5400 Red Bank Road, Cincinnati OH 45227          Tel. (513) 728-2400  <a href="http://www.7hills.org">www.7hills.org</a>          Ms. Ann Griep</p>
<p><b>William Fremd High School – Exchange in Malaga, Spain</b>          1000 South Quentin Road, Palatine IL 60067          Tel. (847) 755-2600  <a href="http://www.fhs.d211.org">www.fhs.d211.org</a>          Ms. Lissette Parreno-Egas</p>	<p><b>Sharon High School – Exchange in Rouen, France</b>          181 Pond Street, Sharon MA 02067          Tel. (781) 784-1554  <a href="http://hs.sharon.k12.ma.us/pages/Sharon_High_School">http://hs.sharon.k12.ma.us/pages/Sharon_High_School</a>          Ms. Kathleen Turner</p>

“I would 100% recommend an exchange program to other students; it’s the best opportunity in the world to meet new people, to be able to experience a new culture, to try new foods, and just get out of your comfort zone.”

-10<sup>th</sup> grade student from William Fremd High School

“Our students have had an amazing experience with their host families. They have been welcomed as another son or daughter into their families. They have attended graduations and weddings, gone to the countryside with their families, and have really been welcomed with open arms into every aspect of their host families’ lives. The connections they’ve made are something I know will last them for the rest of their lives.”

-Spanish teacher from William Fremd High School

“Believe it or not, I'm not inquiring about the pending trip to Spain!! I just wanted to express to you what a great experience and pleasure it was to host a Spanish student... It was truly a wonderful experience for Lindsay as well as my husband and me. Our student was terrific. I never imagined saying good-bye would be so difficult. I could sense that our student, Isa, was sad about leaving prior to departing for the bus. I wrote her parents a letter that I asked Isa to read prior to leaving, so I was sure she was able to not only translate it, but read my handwriting. That is when the tears began. Thank you SO much for all of your hard work putting together such a great program for our kids to enjoy and learn from.”

-Parent from Keene High School