

# ***New Zealand/German Student Exchange***

## **INFORMATION LEAFLET**

### **THE ORGANISERS**

International student exchanges are amongst the most valuable experiences for young people: An exposure to a different culture, to a new linguistic environment and to new social values represents a challenge which most participants cherish for the rest of their lives. While many New Zealanders trace their roots back to German-speaking countries, and while many students study the language, it can be difficult for them to organise an overseas stay that includes school attendance on their own.

Following discussions between the late Dr Volker Knüfermann and the Ministries of Culture of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, ***The New Zealand/German Student Exchange*** was set up in 1989. Both our German partner organisations (***AFS Interkulturelle Begegnungen e.V.*** on behalf of the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Culture, and the ***Bayerischer Jugendring***, on behalf of the Bavarian Ministry of Culture) have special sections dealing solely with international student exchanges. Their well-proven infrastructure benefits our programme considerably. The Exchange programme was originally approved by both the German and New Zealand Government and Immigration Departments. Following the introduction of the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students*, our Exchange programme received government approval from the New Zealand Ministry of Education and is listed as an approved exchange programme.

Since its inception, our programme has been highly successful. To date circa 3950 young Kiwis and Germans have participated in it, sharing in each other's culture and on many occasions, developing life-long friendships.

### **THE OPTIONS**

There are usually two options for our two-month Exchange programme: one with Baden-Württemberg, and one with Bavaria. Placement in families may be anywhere within the relevant state. **However, in 2024/25 we will only be offering the programme to Bavaria as follows:**

The New Zealand student travels to Germany to stay with his/her host family in Bavaria for the period early December 2024 to late January 2025. New Zealand students will attend school in December/January in Germany. The New Zealand partner in the Exchange will then host his/her German counterpart from mid-February to mid-April 2025.

Students in Years 10 to 12 can participate.

Due to the State education regulations in Germany, many of the German students applying for the Exchange are in Years 10 or 11. This may mean that the partner selected for you is somewhat younger than you. However, matches of this nature in recent years have worked very well as the students were well suited in terms of interests and family backgrounds.

## **TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**

Group air travel has unfortunately become more complex and more expensive given the worldwide pandemic response with fewer international flights, and significant increases in airport taxes and security charges. You will appreciate that we cannot avail ourselves of “specials” available on limited terms only. Because of the group booking required, we must confirm travel arrangements as a ‘package’, and changes may occur. We also consider the reliability of airlines and political circumstances that may impact on our travel plans.

The group normally travels with Singapore Airlines/Air New Zealand ex Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch as this is one of the most direct routes into Munich. (Departures from other airports involve an additional cost.) The 2023 package price was around \$4800.00 per person, including all airport and security taxes, fuel surcharges, the Group Leaders’ travel and insurance costs, as well as the travel and medical insurance compulsory for all participants. It further includes the group’s accommodation and transfers on the return trip if required (depending on the connections).

However, given recent increasing flight costs, we expect that the 2024 package price will be somewhat higher. Our travel agent is currently in negotiations with the airlines to secure a package deal for the 2024 group, and we will keep you posted.

The group will be accompanied by at least one Group Leader, who will be the students’ first point of contact in Germany for any questions and/or issues.

You would also have to allow for pocket money (we suggest a minimum of NZ\$1000 for the two months).

Once you have been advised that you have been accepted for the Exchange, further details will be supplied by our travel agent. They will keep you informed about travel arrangements through email and the Facebook group page. The travel agent will require a deposit of by a given date to reserve the seats required for the group; the full amount for travel and insurance usually will be due by mid-October.

## **COMMITMENT**

We ask you to consider your application carefully. Once you have committed yourself to the Exchange, we need to be able to rely on your cooperation. Late withdrawals, for example, are a major inconvenience logistically, may impact on the overall cost per person for the other participants, and most importantly they lead to huge disappointment for student matched with you.

Further, if we ask for additional information, you should reply promptly to any correspondence (most will be via email so please ensure your email address given on your application is checked regularly). Similarly, please make sure you advise us of any change of address (including email), phone numbers, or schools so we can keep our records up to date. This will assist greatly in the smooth running of the Exchange.

## **MATCHING OF PARTNERS**

The German Organisers are provided with your application form and your school's recommendation. Every effort is then made by them to match partners carefully. Factors considered include hobbies, academic interests, and personal characteristics. In this respect, **it is important that you put as much information on your application form as possible to help make the matching process easier.**

## **POLICE VETTING OF HOST PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

The parents and guardians (including any members of the household who are 18 years of age and over) must be police-vetted to be permitted to be act as host families. Once application forms have been received by the Exchange Organiser, all parents will be contacted to initiate this process. Parents/Guardians will be required to complete a *Request & Consent Form* and supply photographic identification (e.g., have a copy of their driver's licence sighted and verified by their employer). The Exchange Organiser will complete the form with the Agency details and submit to the Police Vetting Service for the information. **Participation of the students in the Exchange Programme will depend in part on the outcome of this process.**

## **NATURE AND INTENTION OF THE EXCHANGE**

We want to provide young New Zealanders and Germans with the opportunity to experience the other country, its people, language, and customs at the lowest possible price. A two month stay with the guest family ensures that students will be fully immersed in a new culture. Most host parents will undertake some sightseeing with their guests. No group trips, however, are included in this Exchange package. One reason for this is that the primary intention of this Exchange is not a tourist one - students would lose valuable time with their host families while travelling (and conversing in English, obviously). An equally important factor is that the total cost of the Exchange would have to increase substantially. We know that this would make participation in this scheme impossible for some families.

For similar reasons, official in-person group meetings for participants before travelling to Germany – other than the pre-departure meeting at the Auckland airport - are not normally organised. Again, they would add to the total cost of the Exchange. Online sessions will be organised to give students and families the opportunity to ask questions about the Exchange.

As this Exchange has been operating successfully for many years, most schools will have had students participating in the Exchange. It is recommended that local meetings be organised for people to share their experiences and we would like to suggest that you take the initiative here.

Once you are selected, we will provide you with access to a closed Facebook Group page that acts as a resource with questions answered, reference documents and handy tips for preparing for the Exchange. (Parents and German Teachers as well as the Travel Agent and Group Leader(s) are also invited to be part of this group.) All students and families will be provided with the *Exchange Guidelines 2024* and other information throughout the process.

## BERLIN TRIP

Our partner organisation may offer participants in this Exchange programme the opportunity to go to Berlin on a short (normally 5-day) trip during the Exchange programme. This will be arranged by the partner organisation as they do for other exchange students (e.g., from Australia and Canada) coming to Germany. ***It is optional for participants of the New Zealand / German Student Exchange and will incur additional costs of between depending on the final programme. It will also be dependent on the Covid-19 situation at the time in Germany.*** More details to follow.

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

School attendance is required of all German students while in New Zealand. The Exchange was approved on those terms only by the German organising authorities, i.e., the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Culture and the Bayerischer Jugendring. Similarly, the New Zealand students are expected to attend school in Germany.

This arrangement allows for the maximum possible contact between German and New Zealand students and that both sides derive the maximum benefit from this arrangement both in terms of language and cultural awareness. It is understood that the host families can always make a special case to their schools for a short absence from school to undertake a special outing with their Exchange partner (that is one or two days), provided that the liaison teacher (usually the German Teacher) at the school and the Exchange Organiser are consulted prior to the trip, and have been given all relevant contact details in case of emergencies, etc.

## INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

**Permission will not be granted for independent travel in New Zealand or Germany during the period of the Exchange.** As far as international travel arrangements are concerned, we understand that families have relations in Europe and may wish to use this opportunity for their son/daughter to visit them. In these cases, our policy is to allow for visits at the conclusion of the Exchange period. A written request must be made to us. Momento Travel Group Ltd. has been instructed not to accept any requests for individual arrangements unless they have received prior approval from us.

## ROLE OF THE FAMILY

Some of you will have already had previous experiences with student exchanges. As the host family, you should generally feel that you can assume the same rights and responsibilities that you would exercise with your own children. Occasionally there might be minor problems: students will be tired after a lengthy journey, and they might find food, school, and general living conditions different from those at home: a little patience and humour helps in most cases. However, feel free to contact us in cases of emergency, be they of a personal or medical nature.

## **ROLE OF THE ACCOMPANYING GROUP LEADER(S)**

The accompanying Group Leader(s) will be available in case of problems and emergencies. While the New Zealand Group Leader(s) will contact students by telephone after approximately 1.5 weeks in Germany, their role is **not** to visit families or schools. Students will be provided with a list of their fellow New Zealand students so that they can contact them by phone (or meet them if they live nearby). A WhatsApp group will be set up so that communications can be sent to all participants at one time by the Group Leader and or Exchange Organiser. Students are requested to follow the Group Leader's instructions: no responsibility can be accepted, for example, for students wandering off at airports, customs, or railway stations.

Similarly, the function of the German Group Leader is not to visit students in New Zealand but to provide a contact service for questions, issues, and emergencies.

## **EXPENSES FOR OUTINGS, CINEMA, TELEPHONE CHARGES ...**

Most families in Germany would meet expenses incurred in joint family outings, i.e., for meals, visits to the theatre, pictures, museums, etc. It would, therefore, appear sensible to us if New Zealand families could take a similar approach. However, if students wish to undertake any activities independently (e.g., go to the movies with a friend they have made at school), they should meet the expenses themselves.

Host families in New Zealand are responsible for school uniform costs incurred.

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

- ✓ **Please ensure ALL sections of the Application Form are completed in full.**
- ✓ **Email your completed Application to the Exchange Organiser at [nzfrgexchange@gmail.com](mailto:nzfrgexchange@gmail.com) no later than Friday, 15 March 2024.**
- ✓ Ensure the Medical Certificate and the School Recommendation form are scanned and emailed to the Exchange Organiser.
- ✓ Make an online payment of the \$400.00 Application Administration Fee to:  
 KL McGuinness-King – German Exchange  
 06-0317-0368743-01  
 Use your name as the reference/code details so the Application and payment can be reconciled. Late applications incur an additional charge of \$50.00 (total payable \$450.00).

Once we have received your application form, including your school's recommendation, we will forward your papers to Munich where exchange partners will be carefully matched. You can expect to be advised of the name of your German exchange partner in mid to late June.

## **LATE APPLICATIONS**

Late applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Due to the considerable extra work and costs involved in processing individual late applications, an additional administration fee of \$50 will be charged (i.e., total due \$450.00).

Once you have been accepted for the Exchange and have been matched with your partner, you will be provided with additional guidelines to assist you in preparing for your Exchange. We suggest that you keep all communications about the Exchange handy for future reference. We look forward to receiving your application. If you have any questions, please email Kristina at [nzfrgexchange@gmail.com](mailto:nzfrgexchange@gmail.com)

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