

Languages Connect Funding for School Exchanges Scheme

Encouraging more senior cycle students to avail
of language exchange opportunities.



Introduction

In 2018 the Funding for School Exchanges Scheme was launched by the DES. Post-Primary Languages Initiative are facilitating this project and last year received **64 applications for the funding**. Ten schools from Donegal in the north down to Cork in the south were selected to receive **€15,000** over a three year period for their school exchange programmes. Students from these schools have travelled to partner schools in **France, Germany and Spain**, and in addition to the valuable opportunity to develop their foreign language skills some will have made lifelong friendships and come across ideas that will have a lasting impact on their lives.

Post-Primary Languages Initiative is delighted to announce that under **action 1.D.1 of Languages Connect funding** will be given to an additional **10 schools, bringing the total number of funded school exchanges in 2019/2020 to 20**. School exchanges play an important role in learning a language and there has never been a more important time to embrace language learning.

Purpose of Funding for School Exchanges Scheme

- The Funding for School Exchanges Scheme is part of an awareness raising campaign and focuses language teachers on the importance and benefits of undertaking a school exchange.
- Exchange experiences will provide excellent opportunities for increasing awareness of the value of learning languages.
- Students who are confident in their language skills are more likely to be open to the idea of doing an Erasmus placement if they progress to Higher Education.
- Funding will encourage schools that may have issues with funding to run a school exchange. Students will benefit from the exchange (improved language skills, new way of thinking, CV, independence, confidence, appreciation of what they have, new friends, experience other culture, experience life with other family, potential future work experience). Teachers may also benefit from the exchange (e.g. language skills up to date, job-shadowing/team-teaching opportunities with exchange teachers in Target Language country).
- Schools that receive funding as part of the Funding for School Exchanges Scheme will organise exchanges during term-time, which will allow students to experience school in the Target Language country, facilitate teacher participation, and enable non-language teachers to assist with the programme which facilitates a whole-school approach.
- Funding offers the possibility to a school of offering a scholarship to a student, who would not otherwise be in a financial position to go on the school exchange.
- Opportunities will be created to acknowledge the teachers involved, promote the work being done to other schools via events and the media, and raise awareness of the importance of school exchanges.
- 3 year funding is proposed with the aim of making an exchange programme in the school more sustainable in the longer term.

Funding

- 10 schools will be awarded €15,000 each to cover identified needs. This will be €5,000 per year over 3 consecutive years, to be paid at the beginning of each year.
- A yearly report, including a financial report, and evaluation must be submitted each year by the end of April detailing what the funding provided has been used for.
- Further funding for year 2/3 will be subject to provision of this report and spending of the funding allocated in accordance with the plan submitted and the criteria as set out.

Funding may include:

Contribution towards exchange costs divided across the whole class, scholarships for particular students, administrative support, activities which provide opportunity for language learning in the target language country.

Funding may not include:

Substitution, hotel accommodation



Criteria

1. All DES recognised post-primary schools are eligible to apply.
2. The exchange must be with a school in a Target Language country of one of the curricular languages taught in the school. The country and language involved in the exchange should be the same each year as continuity is recommended for the development of exchanges.
3. The exchange must enable students, or in the case of schools that have existing exchanges must enable an increase in the number of students, to avail of a language exchange.
4. Where more than one language is taught in a school, more than one application may be submitted by that school.
5. In order to demonstrate commitment and continuity, applicants who are awarded funding must commit to running the exchange for 3 consecutive years.
6. Applicants must demonstrate a whole-school approach to the exchange.
7. In order for students to experience school life in the Target Language country, the exchange must take place during term-time in the target language country.
8. Students must stay with host families in order to experience immersion in the Target Language.
9. Applicants should demonstrate that the exchange is open to a significant number of students.
10. There must be a minimum of 10 students going abroad on the exchange
11. Applications should include a plan for the exchange for the three years.
12. One or both parts of the school exchange must take place in the academic year 2019/2020.
13. Schools must show a willingness, both within and outside the school community, to promote the value of school exchanges through photos, social media, etc., for use by Post-Primary Languages Initiative (PPLI).

Review process

Members of the PPLI team, the Department of Education and Skills and independent experts with relevant experience will review the application forms in order to select the ten schools for participation in the project. Shortlisting may apply and schools could then be visited and/or interviewed during the summer term as part of the selection process.

In selecting the 10 schools, the project team will determine the extent to which the proposal:

- Supports the teaching and learning of the foreign language
- Is specific to the needs of the relevant learners
- Demonstrates a whole school approach
- Is open to a high percentage of students in the school
- Sets out a clear plan
- Proposes promotion of the value of the language exchange upon return (support will be provided with this by PPLI)
- Supports the aims of "Language Connect – Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017–2026"

School type will also be taken in to consideration.

Closing date

Friday 12th April 2019. Schools awarded funding will be informed by Friday 31st May 2019.

Application link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Funding4Exchanges2019>

