**Guidance notes to apply for approval for a school to operate a school-to-school student exchange scheme**



**Government Approved student exchange schemes**

The New Zealand government recognises the value of student exchange schemes as a way of developing the global citizenship skills of its students and enhancing their understanding and respect for other cultures, and their own national identity.

The Education (Domestic Students) Notice 2012 notifies that students on approved student exchange schemes from 1 July 2012 are classified as domestic students and can enrol in New Zealand schools in years 9 – 13 as long as the exchange scheme is offered by a Code Signatory school.

Exchange students are overseas students who are in New Zealand to study on an exchange scheme approved by the Ministry of Education. A list of all currently approved schools and exchange programme organisations (EPO) is published on the Ministry’s website:
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/InternationalEducation/ForInternationalStudentsAndParents/CodeofPracticeInfoForStudents.aspx>

**Who is eligible to apply to participate in an exchange?**

Any enrolled domestic student who is a New Zealand citizen or resident in years 9 – 13 and aged under 19 years is eligible to apply for the exchange. If your school wants to include an International Fee Paying student in the exchange, providing all the Immigration requirements for both New Zealand and the overseas host country can be met, they can take part in the exchange but they **cannot** be counted in your numbers for reciprocity.

**Obtaining government approval for your exchange programme**

If your school is not listed as having current approval you must complete a *School Exchange Application form*. If you have already obtained approval for an existing exchange scheme and would like to operate an additional scheme, you must complete a *School Additional Exchange Application form.* Each exchange scheme your school operates with an individual overseas school must have approval.

Students who wish to enter New Zealand under an exchange scheme must comply with immigration criteria set by Immigration New Zealand.

To assist with the application please refer to:

1. The Ministry’s student exchange web pages for providers: <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/InternationalEducation/ForProvidersOfInternationalEducation/StudentExchangeApprovals.aspx>
2. The Exchange Student Policy: <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/~/media/MinEdu/Files/EducationSectors/InternationalEducation/ProvidersOfIntEd/Exchangestudentpolicy1July2012updatedAug2013.pdf>
3. Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (revised 2010) (the Code): <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/caring-for-international-students-the-code-of-practice-for-pastoral-care/>
4. Education Outside the Classroom: <http://eotc.tki.org.nz/EOTC-home/EOTC-Guidelines>
5. The application form.

**Reciprocity**

All government approved exchange schemes are reciprocal, ie, there is reciprocity in the numbers of inbound and outgoing students and reciprocity in the conditions of enrolment, so that similar services are provided to inbound and outgoing exchanges students, including the costs of tuition and types of accommodation. Inbound student numbers should not exceed the number of reciprocal outgoing exchanges arranged for New Zealand students over three years. One-to-one reciprocity of numbers must be achieved by the end of three years. The rationale is that there is no additional cost to government of inbound students.

***Short or long-stay programmes***

Short-term exchange programmes are up to thee months (13 weeks). For all short-stay programmes, the Code school or EPO must provide to the Ministry, requested annually, the following details of each inbound and outgoing exchange students: name, school and duration of exchange.

Long-term exchange programmes are from three to twelve months duration.

***How do we apply?***

Please submit the completed application with all supporting documents to:

Post: Student Exchanges Courier: Student Exchanges

 International Division International Division

 Ministry of Education Ministry of Education

 PO Box 1666 117-125 Lambton Quay

 Wellington 6140 Wellington 6011

Or email to: international.division@minedu.govt.nz

**NB** Whilst the Ministry will accept and process applications by email, a hard copy of the signed (and witnessed if applicable) application form before any certificate of approval can be issued.

***What else do we need to send with our application?***

The only document we **require**with your application is a copy of the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or other agreement that you have with the reciprocating overseas school(s). At a minimum the MoU must include:

* 1. Full name and contact details of the overseas school
	2. Overall responsibility of the exchange scheme lies with the principals and boards or other management body of the participating schools
	3. Purpose of the exchange and the educational, cultural and (if appropriate) linguistic outcomes
	4. A no fees basis of each exchange
	5. The length of time of each exchange
	6. Reciprocal pastoral care provided both at home and with host families
	7. Risk analysis of activities outside the classroom will be undertaken
	8. Operation of the agreement shall cover the approval period granted to the school by the Ministry of Education for the exchange
	9. Statement that the agreement does not “constitute or create, and shall not be deemed to constitute any legally binding enforceable obligations on the part of either party. It can be terminated earlier if either school requests termination.”

*Schools may wish to consult independent legal advice in finalising any MoU.*

***What other requirements must our school comply with?***

Provision of information to exchange students in the prospectus or pamphlet

Initial information to intending inbound exchange students must be provided to students before they enter into any commitments with your school, and include the following:

1. Application requirements and procedures
2. Selection process and conditions of acceptance
3. Tuition agreement that includes the outcomes of the exchange for the student (this may be your international student enrolment form with sections on payment/refund of fees deleted. This form should be signed by the parent(s).
4. English Language Proficiency requirements or other pre-requisites (if applicable)
5. Travel arrangements, including from the home point of departure to accommodation
6. Medical and travel insurance requirements for the duration of the planned period of the exchange – the Code sets out the minimum insurance requirements
7. Information about accommodation given to exchange students/parents prior to arrival in NZ – if students receive this information early they may communicate with any host family prior to their arrival
8. Orientation programme on arrival
9. Circumstances in which the exchange could be terminated/withdrawn, and refund conditions. The circumstances in which an exchange could be terminated are the same as those set down for domestic and international students.

Orientation and support programme

Your school’s information and support programme for the exchange should include, at a minimum, the following:

1. Travel arrangements including for incoming and outgoing students en route between their natural and host families
2. Student support services available including 24/7 emergency contact procedures
3. Medical and travel insurance requirements/limitations
4. Cultural expectations/cross-cultural issues
5. Host family information including host family responsibilities/limits
6. School details including curriculum/reports/examinations (if appropriate)
7. What is expected of students as part of the scheme
8. Complaints/grievance procedures
9. Withdrawal and termination procedures
10. Personal Health Services
11. Road safety including driving/pedestrian and cycling safety
12. New Zealand law such as the sale of alcohol and tobacco, for incoming students

Contracts and agreements with exchange students (and their parents), host families and agents

Any contractual arrangements you put in place must comply with the Code. If these are used they should specify, at a minimum, all costs to the exchange student, including accommodation.

Good practice

Whilst the Ministry does not require you to submit copies of contracts, orientation programmes and information provided to exchange students and overseas partner schools, we are happy to receive copies to learn about and share good practice. If you are happy for us to share your information as an example for schools wishing to operate an exchange please submit these with your application or at any other time.

***What happens after I’ve submitted my application?***

Upon receipt the Ministry will acknowledge your application.

If there any queries with your application or if any information is unclear, we will contact you promptly.

After assessment for approval your application and supporting documents will be passed for peer-review before approval can be confirmed.

Please allow 2 – 3 weeks, in normal circumstances, to process your application. If your application is urgent, please contact us prior to submission for advice.

When your application has been approved, the Ministry will:

1. Send your exchange approval certificate and a covering letter to your principal.
2. Email a copy of your approval certificate and cover letter to the person managing the exchange.
3. For long-term exchanges, notify Immigration New Zealand with your details, the name and location of the overseas school, the number of inbound exchange students, the length of your programme, and expiry date of approval.
4. For new approvals, we’ll update the Ministry’s website with the name of your school as a school approved to operate exchanges.
5. Notify NZQA as Code Administrator for monitoring compliance with pastoral care requirements.
6. At each year end we will contact you with details of how you should submit your annual return about your exchange programme activity during the previous year.
7. Three months before expiry of your exchange scheme, we will remind you of the imminent lapse in approval and provide information on how to renew your application if the scheme continues to operate.

We welcome your interest in international education, if you have any questions please contact us at: Email: international.division@minedu.govt.nz

 Tel: 04 463 2864