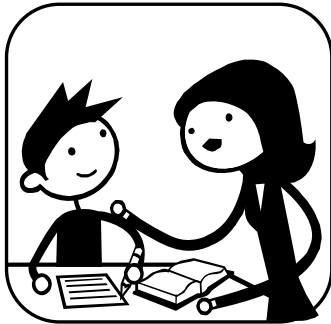


# Exchange Student in Germany



## Explore Germany

- Attend a German School & live with a German Host Family
- Age: students between 15 and 18 years
- Duration: school year, half school year or 3 month

## Broaden your horizon

More students every year make use of the opportunity to broaden their horizon by taking part in a students' exchange programme abroad. Living in Germany as an exchange student will give you the change to experience the German way of life first hand by becoming a member of a German family, school and community. At the same time you will be learning the German language through your every day social contacts. And not only will you be learning about Germany but you will also be giving us an idea of your own country.

Of course, leaving home for a length of time and having to adjust to a foreign country and a new language is quite a challenge. But facing this challenge is certainly worthwhile because through a stay abroad you will

- Experience and understand things you could never learn about through a textbook
- Get to know yourself in a way you couldn't otherwise and learn to reassess your own point of view and your values
- Become more mature and independent
- Make friends – often for a lifetime
- Improve your chances at school and for your future job.

## ICX – Who are we ?

*ICXchange-Deutschland* or *International Cultural Exchange-Deutschland* is an independent and non-profit German organization. We at ICX have been organizing students' exchange programmes since 1974. It is our aim to further international understanding, the exchange of ideas on an international level and tolerance in all spheres of culture. We are not bound by any political or religious creed. From the start we have – among other things – been involved in the organization of school and home stays in Germany for students from abroad. We offer foreign students a choice between a stay for

- a whole school year
- a half school year (1st or 2nd semester)
- three month

## Your host family

Your stay in Germany is made possible by the hospitality of a German host family. This family is willing to accept you as their own child, to share their life with you and to help you to adjust to your new surroundings.

The only reason they are doing this is their interest in the host experience, in making friends with a young person from abroad and in

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furthering international understanding. They do not receive any payments for this. So, in exchange, you can be expected to show interest in them and their family life, to adjust to their lifestyle, to participate in joint activities and also to share the daily chores in and outside the house.

For a while you will be one of the members of your new family and you should be willing to share a normal amount of responsibility for your life together. Your stay is not merely a holiday and your host family's home should not be mistaken for a guest house.

In order that the time you live together should become a rewarding experience for you as well as for your host family, everybody involved needs to be tolerant and to show understanding and interest in foreign cultures. But since you are the guest, you will be expected to be especially flexible, reasonable and ready to adjust.

Your host family has been carefully selected and has been prepared for your arrival. Basic criteria for the choice of host families are their willingness to care for the host child and their ability to provide a positive home environment. As hosting an exchange student involves additional expenses, host families must live in secure circumstances; though they needn't be rich.

Students' interests and preferences are being taken into consideration when placing them with suitable host families. However, you cannot expect that your host family shares all of your interest, and you must be open to new experiences.

## **There is no typical German host family**

Host families differ in social and professional position, in educational background and in family composition. Suitable families do not necessarily have children at your age; they might have small or grown-up children or could even be a single parent. They reside in all parts of Germany and live in urban as well as in rural areas.

We will send you your host family information material in good time for you to be able to contact your family and arrange any necessary details with them before your departure.

## **Your German school**

School attendance is an essential part of the programme. Like their German classmates exchange students must participate in lessons regularly, do homework, take tests, and comply with all school rules.

School in Germany might be very different from school in your country. Germany is one of very few countries that has three types of secondary school: the „*Hauptschule*“, the „*Realschule*“ and the „*Gymnasium*“. There are relatively few comprehensive schools.

## **The „Gymnasium“ in Germany**

At your age you will probably attend a „*Gymnasium*“, the most academically oriented of the three school types. There are quite a number of curricular subjects you will have to take, but in grades 11 to 13 there is some choice. There are scarcely any practical subjects.

Lessons are Monday to Friday from about 8 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. In the afternoons there might be some extra-curricular activities such as drama, data processing, choir singing or orchestra, but usually the afternoons will be free. In Germany the school year starts in August or September. The exact date varies depending on the „*Bundesland*“ where your host family lives.

## **Take school seriously**

We expect you to take school seriously and to participate in lessons actively. Language difficulties should not discourage you. If you take enough interest, your language abilities will quickly improve so that you will soon be able to understand your lessons and to take an active part in class. Your teachers will gladly assist you in finding the right class and the right courses and you can turn to them with any school problem.

## **School cost are on your expense**

All costs for textbooks and supplies for school as well as for transportation between home and school are at the participant's expense

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## Counselling

During their stay in Germany all students are counselled by ICX representatives. These representatives are called local coordinators („örtliche Betreuer“). In cooperation with the ICX office in Oldenburg they will carefully supervise the students and their host families and schools. Your local coordinator will have got to know your host family personally. He or she will have interviewed, screened and prepared them for the exchange experience.

During the programme he or she will come to visit you and your family from time to time and will also be in regular touch with your school to inquire about your integration and achievements at school.

Your local coordinator is a person to confide in. If you need a bit of advice, you can always turn to him or her for help. We will inform you of the name and address of your local coordinator when we forward the host family documents to you.

## Orientation meeting in Berlin

The programme starts with a four-day orientation meeting normally taking place in Berlin. This meeting is intended to further prepare all participants for their stay in Germany. In workshops basic aspects of the programme, such as life with a German host family, the German school system, insurance matters, programme guidelines and so on will be discussed.

The participants also get a number of practical instructions, e.g. how to open a bank account, how to use public transportation, how to deal with local authorities, or what to do in case of sickness.

The Berlin programme also includes an extensive sightseeing tour and some cultural events, thus offering the students the chance to explore Berlin a bit and to enjoy the unique atmosphere of this cosmopolitan city.

Moreover, this meeting gives the students the opportunity to get to know each other as well as ICX staff members and representatives. The orientation in an international group is fun and makes the first step into a new phase of life much easier.

All costs for accommodation in a hotel, full board, sightseeing tour, cultural programme and transportation from the hotel to the host family station are included in the programme fee.

## Duration of the programme

The programme starts in August and January with the general orientation meeting in Berlin. The end of the first semester programme is January 31. The full academic year programme and the second semester programme end with the beginning of the summer vacation which ranges from mid June to end of July depending on the „Bundesland“ where the student is placed.

## Insurances

ICX takes out health insurance for all its exchange students. This insurance covers all costs for necessary medical and dental treatment including medicines during the students' stay in Germany.

Students, who come from European Union countries, can travel with the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which entitles them to free-of charge medical and dental treatment.

## Requirements of programme participation

You are entitled to apply for the exchange programme if you are a secondary school student, between 16 and 18 years old and physically and mentally in good shape. Good academic achievements and a minimum of three years study of German at school or of 300 German lessons at a language school are required.

If you are capable of adjusting to a different lifestyle and of approaching foreign surroundings openly and without prejudice and if you are willing to participate actively in family and school life, you stand a good chance of being accepted to the programme.

## **Good to know**

### **Immigration & Visa regulations**

Exchange students from other countries than the European Union and of the European Free Trade Association and the USA may enter Germany only with a valid visa. They have to apply for it in due time (at least 2 month prior to the beginning of the programme) at their nearest German consulate or embassy. ICX will take care of the necessary prerequisites. The validity of the visa is normally limited to 3 month. For the period of time beyond the 3 month these students will also need a resident's permit, that they will receive from the aliens registration office where they are registered.

### **Travelling Expenses**

All expenses for your journey to Germany and back home are not included in the programme fee. Students travelling by plane must be in possession of a return ticket.

### **Pocket Money**

You will need about € 150,- a month for your personal expenses such as clothing, cosmetics, phone calls, public transport, school material and books as well as for going out.

### **Application**

Your application must be sent to us on the ICX application forms. You must fill in the full application material in order to be considered. We inform you about two weeks after we have received your application whether you are accepted or not. The valid application dates are given on the enclosed programme leaflet. Please try to send us your application as early as possible as your host family and your school are chosen carefully which can take quite a time.

### **Contract & Payment**

With your acceptance for participation in the programme we will offer you a contract which becomes valid by your and your guardian's signature. As for payment of the programme fee, we request a deposit of € 500,- which will be due as soon as the contract is returned to us. The balance payment will be due on July 15 for full academic year students and 1st semester resp. On December 15 for 2nd semester students.

If you should wish to withdraw from the programme, this is possible at any time before your departure. ICX must be informed of this in written form. In the case of withdrawal from the contract the cancellation fee will be € 500,-.

## **Contact**

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us. We are looking forward to meeting you!

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