
2025 Student Exchange Program

Information Handbook

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Schools in the Exchange Program

The Exchange Program provides girls with the opportunity to experience a culture and an education system that are quite different to Ascham. This will broaden their perspective on education and increase their awareness of international issues. It is important to know that our exchange schools have their own programs and selection process, which is independent and sometimes quite different to our selection process. We are responsible for choosing our candidates and they are responsible for theirs. The schools try to match students as best they can within these parameters.

At this point in time, the possible opportunities for 2025 are listed below. Please note these **schools and dates are subject to change**. All travel is to occur the weekend prior and the weekend after the dates stated.

School	Website	Ascham to partner school	Partner school to Ascham
<u>Language Exchanges</u>			
Institut de la Tour, Paris, France	www.latourparis.com	Monday 1 December 2025 - Friday 2 January 2026	Monday 2 June - Friday 4 July 2025
Humboldt Gymnasium, Cologne, Germany	www.humboldt-koeln.de	Monday 7 April - Friday 2 May 2025	Monday 6 October - Friday 31 November 2025
<u>Cultural Exchanges</u>			
Durban Girls College, Durban, South Africa	www.dgc.co.za	Monday 7 April - Friday 2 May 2025	Monday 10 February - Friday 7 March 2025
Northlands School, Buenos Aires, Argentina	www.northlands.edu.ar	Monday 7 April - Friday 9 May 2025	Monday 3 February - Friday 7 March 2025
The Lovett School, Atlanta, USA	www.lovett.org	Monday 10 November - Friday 5 December 2025	Monday 28 May - Friday 23 June 2025
Nightingale Bamford, New York, USA	www.nightingale.org	Monday 22 September - Friday 31 October 2025	Monday 3 February - Friday 14 March 2025
Havergal College, Toronto, Canada	www.havergal.on.ca	Monday 7 April - Friday 2 May 2025	Monday 24 February - Friday 21 March 2025
St Mary's Cambridge, England	www.stmaryscambridge.co.uk	Monday 7 April - Friday 2 May 2025	Monday 21 July - Friday 15 August 2025
St George's Edinburgh, Scotland	www.stge.org.uk	Monday 15 September - Friday 10 October 2025	Monday 14 July - Friday 8 August 2025

Information on each of these schools is available on the internet. Please review each school before completing preferences on the application form. Due to the exchange program being a reciprocal arrangement, the exchange can only take place if there are students from both Ascham and the partner school.

What is involved in the exchange?

The main objective of the exchange is to participate in a different educational setting, to understand cultural differences and learn to make decisions independently. It may also incorporate some sightseeing and travel, but this is not considered its main aim. Exchange students are expected to be model students both here and overseas. In order to ensure a happy exchange when they are staying with families, the girls should be aware of the values of their host families and make sure to adhere to them and be respectful at all times. The Ascham girls are advised to arrange their own means of communication such as mobile phone, phone cards, Skype etc. They are advised to use these devices sparingly to contact friends and family in Sydney and they are also advised not to spend excessive amounts of time emailing.

There are many documents involved in setting up an exchange and girls and their parents should complete these and return them as requested. These forms are scanned and sent to the respective schools and can be accessed by relevant people.

Part of the Exchange Program is offering hospitality to those students who come to Ascham, especially from the schools that have welcomed or will welcome you. The Ascham exchange girls are responsible for the transfers of incoming exchange students to and from the airport and often for taking them out on weekends. In addition, once a girl has been on exchange she is expected to continue to demonstrate her interest in the Exchange Program; this includes meeting and greeting any exchange student who comes to Ascham, but especially those who come from a school where the student has been.

Girls who go on exchange should anticipate completing their school career at Ascham so that they can offer their experience both to host students and to prospective Ascham exchange students. We particularly value the ongoing contribution made in Years 11 and 12 by girls who were given the opportunity to go on exchange in Year 10. This is the full exchange experience.

Preparation for exchange

Documents

A number of documents must be completed. Please note that these will be forwarded to the exchange school and may be available to anyone who is looking after the exchange students. All documents should be filled in clearly and returned to Ms Beesley as appropriate. A Working With Children Check (WWCC) is a prerequisite for anyone in child-related work. Adults and any siblings over 18 who are hosting exchange students should send their WWCC number and date of birth to hr@ascham.nsw.edu.au who will have it verified.

Travel

With their parents, the girls will need to make all their own travel arrangements. Each exchange school determines the dates of the exchange and these must be respected. The dates given are the start date at the exchange school and the departure date from the exchange school. Parents are responsible for arranging valid passports and visas (if necessary), and flights. The Ascham exchange students are responsible for finding out what documents are needed. Copies of these documents should be sent to Ms Beesley as soon as they are available. Exchange students may apply in the regular way for one day's preparation leave before they fly out to their exchange destination. All travel should happen on the weekends either side of the exchange. Please take into consideration the dates of School programs and activities when organising flights.

Vaccinations and health checks

Some schools require exchange students to complete medical forms, including history of vaccinations. Some schools (international) require exchange students to have special vaccinations. It is important that you discuss your personal travel plans with a doctor so they can determine the correct vaccinations for your trip and any booster doses of childhood vaccinations that may be necessary.

The personal information sheets, which include flight details and the medical forms will need to be completed and returned when requested. A copy of these forms will be sent to the host school. If your daughter has any health concerns, consider carefully how she will manage these while she is on exchange. Ascham does not send any student on exchange who has had recent medical issues such as eating disorders or severe anxiety.

Background information about Ascham, Sydney and Australia

Girls should be aware that while they are on exchange they are representing Ascham, and indeed their country. It is therefore important that they know certain basic facts about Ascham and Sydney, NSW and Australia. Exchange girls are strongly advised to discuss current issues with their family so they will be able to talk about where they live to their hosts overseas. Girls may be asked to give a speech about Ascham and/or Sydney/Australia.

Costs

The financial arrangements are that the Ascham parent continues to pay Ascham fees and the host school charges no fees. Parents are responsible for arranging transport (passports, visas if necessary and insurance), paying fares, pocket money and travel money for any extensive excursions. The cost of hosting a student can add up so please ensure your family considers this before applying for exchange.

No fees are exchanged between schools, but there are always extras. Some schools charge for more incidentals than others do. Girls may wish to take advantage of excursions, concerts and other outings that will be extra. A number of the girls in the past have found that even the cost of travelling on public transport and a drink at a café can add up so be prepared for this. Girls should take a debit card and perhaps a credit card for emergencies. Girls have also used Travelex's Cash Passport as a means of getting cash. This can be managed by the parents over the internet and is widely accepted in ATMs all over the world to withdraw money. If items are charged to a school account, the girls should make sure to settle that account before they leave the school. Girls should also check that they do not have any outstanding library books.

If an exchange student wants to take extra lessons, such as private music tuition or tennis lessons, then this may be arranged. Our girls must ensure that payment is made for these lessons, if required.

Gifts

Often it is nice to give host families a small gift to show appreciation. Girls should think about this and take some things from Australia with them—small, light and interesting items are recommended. Girls might also consider gathering some photographs so that they can show their hosts what Sydney/Australia and Ascham look like. Girls should also think about how they can best record their own experience while on exchange. When leaving their host school, exchange girls are often asked to give a speech and girls may consider presenting a book or DVD on Sydney/Australia to the school library of the host school.

Expectations of exchange

As an exchange student, an Ascham girl is a guest in someone else's home and school. They are expected to behave in a courteous manner at all times and respect the 'house rules' of their host. They are also expected to respect and follow all rules and regulations of the exchange school. This is the case in reverse also, when you have the visiting exchange student in your home, she should adhere to your 'house rules' and be courteous and polite at all times.

School uniform

Whether wearing the Ascham school uniform or the uniform of their host school, girls must be clean, neat and tidy at all times and follow the school rules, including any rules regarding jewellery or makeup. Most exchange schools in the program will send our girls a handbook detailing the Code of Conduct and uniform. Some uniforms are similar to ours, others are much more informal. Sometimes girls are asked to wear their Ascham uniform; make sure that you check the weather and that girls take the appropriate uniform. Other times, the exchange school will arrange a uniform for our students. If in doubt, ask your girl's exchange partner.

The incoming exchange students are expected to wear the Ascham School uniform. These are available to borrow from the Uniform Shop or providing your own Ascham uniforms to the exchange students if your daughter has spares. Borrowed uniforms must be returned laundered to the Uniform Shop as soon as possible after the exchange student's departure. Incoming students are asked to bring brown or black school shoes. Incoming exchange students are also asked to bring appropriate clothing for PE lessons or sports use.

Clothing

It is important that girls research the type of weather that they will experience on exchange and take appropriate clothing. Good walking shoes are advisable.

Luggage

- Refer to airline requirements
- 1 handbag, laptop, mobile phone, chargers, adaptors etc

Girls should know that:

- they may be travelling so they should take a bag for weekends
- they will be expected to carry their own bags

Health and safety

Even though the girls will be going to safe places, they must still be aware of what is going on around them at airports and when out and about. They should keep their passport and airline ticket on them at all times when travelling. It is also recommended that girls have photocopies of their passports and insurance details and keep one in their bag and another at home. In case of loss, these are so much easier to replace if the girls have all the necessary details. Girls should also take copies of their passport photos with them. During their time away girls may choose to go sightseeing independently. They should never do this alone, but instead travel with at least two other students. When travelling, girls should take a small card with the name of the school and contact details on it, just in case they get lost while sightseeing.

Girls should not leave bags unattended at airports, nor should they ask someone else to take care of their bags for them. Girls must carry the address of their host family with them just in case they are asked for this information at the airport.

Duty of care

General advice on duty of care:

- The school and living arrangements experienced while the girls are abroad may be different from those to which they are accustomed. It is important that they follow directions from the host family, host school teachers and other people in authority.
- Ascham is not involved in the process of host family selection at all, but generally the girls are hosted on arrival by the family of a girl who has been or will be at Ascham on exchange.

Ascham School is not able to directly supervise the girls during the Exchange Program. It is therefore vital that if the girls feel uncomfortable, unsafe or harassed that they advise the Exchange Coordinator in their school, the Ascham Exchange Coordinator and their own parents as soon as possible of any concerns.

Ascham School has a duty of care to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of its students. Ascham, however, will not have control over your daughter's day-to-day activities during the exchange. Ascham relies on the student, parents and host school to advise if there are any problems during the exchange.

It is a requirement that all parents hosting students read the information on sleeping arrangements, and obtain a Working With Children Check and provide Ascham with the clearance number and date of birth.

Responsibilities of the student

The exchange girls have responsibilities during the program, including but not limited to, responsibility to:

- attend the host school for all scheduled classes and demonstrate active engagement
- follow the rules of the host school
- be sensitive to the cultural environment in which they are living
- be aware of their own safety at all times
- immediately notify the interstate/overseas Exchange Coordinator and Ascham Exchange Coordinator of any concerns they may have in relation to their safety or wellbeing.

Responsibilities of the parents

It is important for the success of the program that the parents:

- are involved but encourage their daughter to accept responsibility in making arrangements as appropriate
- discuss with their daughter what to expect during the program and how to deal with new and different situations
- assist their daughter in finding out about cultural requirements, school travel arrangements, money arrangements
- assist their daughter in organising safe travel to and from the host country and within the host country
- provide a mobile phone.

Exchange students are advised not to be in constant contact with parents as they are encouraged to immerse themselves in the life of the family and school where they are. If, however, when your daughter is in touch, she raises any concerns regarding her safety, please contact the Ascham International Exchange Coordinator.

Hosting exchange students is an important part of the program

All adults involved in providing accommodation are required to obtain a Working With Children Check for volunteers. You must ensure that you are available to host when your daughter's exchange partner arrives. All parents of girls who have applied for exchange are expected to participate in the program and attend the information meeting, provide transport for visiting exchange students to and from the airport, provide accommodation and full board, meet school requirements and organise some weekend activities. Some exchanges take place over the holiday time. If you apply for one of these exchanges you must be able to host your exchange student.

The hosting family agrees to:

- bear the costs involved in hosting a visiting exchange student
- communicate with the visiting exchange student and her family before her arrival
- provide exchange student with the transfer from and to the airport on the day of their arrival and their departure
- provide suitable accommodation for the visiting exchange student
- follow all normal school procedures and protocols of Ascham School while in loco parentis
- provide the transfers to and from School during the stay of visiting students
- take the visiting student sightseeing in and around Sydney.

In addition, if your daughter is a boarder, the hosting family agrees to:

- inform the Head of Boarding of dates and the arrival and departure times of the visiting exchange student into and out of the boarding house. Please note that if your visiting exchange student arrives at Sydney airport after 8:30pm then they cannot enter the boarding house that evening and you will have to arrange your own accommodation for that night.
- take the exchange student out sightseeing at least twice during their stay
- invite the visiting exchange student to your home at least once during their stay.

Should you be considering having your daughter apply for exchange, we ask that school fees are paid up to date.

Code of Conduct guidelines

Students who are participating in the Ascham Exchange Program are ambassadors for their school and country. At all times, they should conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. This includes:

- taking responsibility for their own behaviour
- respecting the rights and property of others
- being courteous at all times, and always using appropriate and acceptable language
- being respectful of cultural differences
- following the conduct code and rules of the host school and host family
- participating positively in all aspects of the exchange
- being appreciative of the hospitality shown by the host school and host family
- wearing the school uniform of the host school or dress in an appropriate manner
- not engaging in dangerous or risk taking behaviour
- not smoking or drinking alcoholic beverages
- not taking any illegal drugs
- always travelling in a group of at least two students or with an adult.

Report writing

It is each exchange student's responsibility to write a number of reports. When she arrives at her exchange school, she should email Ms Beesley to let her know that she has arrived safely. When she has been on exchange for a few weeks, she is expected to email a report to Ms Beesley with appropriate photos. At the end of the exchange she is expected to write a report that may be used in news items on the Hub or Charivari. When the student returns from exchange she should see Ms Beesley to talk to her about her experience and debrief. As a group, students may wish to present on their findings and experience during a Year group/Senior School Assembly. The purpose and aim of all feedback is to support the continuation of the International Exchange Program from year to year.

Expectations regarding Ascham work

You must see your teachers before you go on exchange as it is expected you keep up to date with your work. An 'Exchange Departure Card' is required to be completed by you and your teachers before your last week of School. The work agreed to be completed following this discussion will become a requirement for the next 'card signing' period.

Year 10 Exchange | Ascham Exams

Students participating in an exchange during Terms 1, 2 or 3 will be required to complete examinations for all subjects in Term 4. Students departing in Term 4 and/or are at Ascham for only part of the examination period will have an adjusted timetable and sit all exams.

Hosting students

It is important for the Ascham exchange girls to take an active interest in hosting students from our exchange schools. Girls should make sure that the stay of the incoming exchange students is as enjoyable as theirs was when they were with them.

The girls should strive to maintain communication throughout the exchange experience, including the period between an overseas student visiting Ascham, and an Ascham student then travelling interstate/overseas. The Ascham Exchange Coordinator should be kept in the communication loop, especially if arrangements change. Year 11 and 12 girls who have been on exchange should continue to be involved in meeting and greeting exchange students, particularly those who are from the school where they have stayed. It is also important that you arrange some social outings for girls from the same school with the other hosting families.

Sleeping arrangements

Host families may be able to offer their exchange student a single bedroom or other sleeping accommodation just for herself but it may be that the guest will be sharing a bedroom with another member of the family. The following accommodation arrangements must be in place. The exchange student must:

- only share a room with a person or persons of the same sex
- have her own bed (this may be a fold-up bed or other temporary guest bed)
- have access to night-time bathroom facilities—this should not be via an adult's bedroom
- have privacy for dressing and undressing
- know the exit route in case of emergencies such as fire.

Ideally there should not be a great age difference between the exchange student and the person sharing the same bedroom. As a guest, the exchange student should be sensitive to the privacy and property of her host by being tidy and courteous.

Feedback from those who have been on exchange

- Go on any trips offered
- Never say 'no' to opportunities and participate
- Don't be afraid to introduce yourself
- Try not to be homesick—just imagine everyone else back home doing assignments and when you get back everything will be the same
- Carry a phone with you at all times however expect to reduce addiction to mobiles and email as it dilutes the experience
- Little things will go wrong, but if there is a major problem, especially a health problem, the difference between how you deal with it at home and how it may be dealt with overseas can be enormous. Talk to someone: your parents, the Coordinator of the exchange in your exchange school, or email the International Exchange Coordinator
- You are expected to write a report on your exchange and send pictures, so keep this in mind when you are away.