

Sister Cities

Student Exchange

Programme 2012

APPLICATION PACK



SISTER CITIES STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMME 2012

Purpose

The Sister Cities Student Exchange Programme is a cross-community programme that has been running from 2000. It aims to provide Newtownabbey's young adults with an opportunity to travel to Gilbert, Arizona to develop an understanding of a different country, its culture and people through a family living experience.

Sister Cities

Making the world a better place by bringing people together one friendship at a time was the dream of President Dwight D. Eisenhower 47 years ago when he introduced the Sister Cities concept. The program coordinates cultural, trade, educational, and sports programs that promote international and intercultural knowledge and understanding. The link with Gilbert was established on November 17, 1998 and was a first for both the Town of Gilbert and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

Gilbert, Arizona USA:

Gilbert is a young, affluent community in central Arizona. Incorporated on July 6, 1920, it is a relatively new community that has seen tremendous growth during the past two decades. Gilbert has experienced a rapid transition from a historically agriculture-based community to an urban center and suburb in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area. In the last two decades, Gilbert has grown at a pace unparalleled by most communities in the United States, increasing in population from 5,717 in 1980 to over 138,000 in January 2003. For further information on the town visit the website <http://www.ci.gilbert.az.us/>



The Programme

Four students will be selected to participate in the programme, two from Newtownabbey and two from Gilbert. Newtownabbey students will be matched with a student partner in the USA and will spend the duration of the programme with that student. The programme lasts approximately six weeks with half the time spent in Gilbert and half in Newtownabbey.

The first part of the programme involves the two selected students from Newtownabbey travelling to the USA to spend three weeks being home hosted by their matched student. They will be given a wonderful opportunity to learn about their hosts' local cultures and customs in ways not available to a casual visitor.

At the end of the three weeks, the Gilbert students will return with the Newtownabbey students to be home hosted in Newtownabbey. During their stay they will have a chance to closely experience a new culture and make lifelong friends by living with the family of their exchange student.

Requirements

Each applicant must:

- be an EU citizen,
- live in Newtownabbey,
- be in Year 13 and
- be in good health (and, upon request, be able to supply a doctor's statement of verification)

Travel Dates

It is expected that the exchange programme will commence around the last week of June and finish the first week of August. The dates are dependent on school exam timetables and we will set the dates to suit the selected students.

Cost

- Travel to the USA including insurance costs shall be paid for by Newtownabbey Borough Council.
- Students must provide their own spending money.
- Families/students will be expected to home host their exchange student for three weeks.
- Families/students will be expected to provide trips/activities for their exchange student for three weeks. These will typically aim to show the exchange students the sights in Northern Ireland, as well as to allow the student to take part in the life of a teenager in Newtownabbey; for example cinema, sport or cultural activities.
- Two day trips will be organised and paid for by Newtownabbey Borough Council including one to Dublin.
- A trip to Stormont including lunch with the Mayor will be organised and paid for by Newtownabbey Borough Council.

Responsibility of Parents/Guardians

- Parents/guardians are required to home host the foreign exchange student for approximately three weeks. You should have adequate space to ensure everyone is comfortable.
- Parents/guardians will be expected to invest time with the students during their three week stay in the Borough.
- Parents/guardians are required to participate in activities organised by Newtownabbey Borough Council.
- It is an essential element of the programme that families make contact prior to students travelling, this can take place via email or phone contact.

Passport

Obtaining a passport and any visas required is the responsibility of the delegate and his/her family. It is recommended that delegates apply immediately, if required, following their selection. Please note passports must be valid for 6 months for USA travel.

Application Process

Students should apply for the process using the application pack. The pack contains the following three forms, which must be completed and returned together:

1. Student Application Form – **To be completed and signed by the student and parents/guardians**
2. Nomination Form - To Be Completed By Teacher, Youth Worker or Equivalent **Please note, if this form is completed by a youth worker or equivalent, a reference will be sought from the teacher named on the student application form**
3. AccessNI – **To Be Completed By Parent/Guardians And Each Resident Of The Household Over The Age Of 16**

Completed forms must be sent to Carol Shane at the following address no later than **4pm on 25th November 2011**.

Mail to: Carol Shane
Economic Development Projects Officer
Newtownabbey Borough Council
Mossley Mill
Newtownabbey
BT36 5AQ

Selection Process

- The Council will undertake a shortlisting process based on the content of the application forms and references.
- Letters will be issued to all applicants to inform them of the outcome.
- If shortlisted, students and parents/guardians will be required to attend an interview conducted by Council staff and representatives from the International Linkages Committee. While the interview is relatively informal, it is in your interests to have carried out some research on Gilbert in advance.
- Students will be asked to design a question list for their exchange partners to bring to the interview.
- If successful, families will be asked to write a short synopsis on their family members and this will be shared along with the students' questions following selection.
- Absence from an interview will result in the student being disqualified.
- Newtownabbey Borough Council will make the final decision as to the selection of students.

Special Notes

Newtownabbey Borough Council, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to revoke the selection of any delegates prior to departure and also to determine the need for an early return to Newtownabbey of any delegate, at their parents/guardians expense, due to any misconduct.

Further Information

If you require further information on any aspect of the programme please contact Carol Shane by email cshane@newtownabbey.gov.uk or phone 028 9034 0073.

Sister Cities 2012 Student Exchange Programme

NOMINATION FORM

To Be Completed By Teacher, Youth Worker Or Equivalent

Newtownabbey Borough Council will be selecting two Year 13 pupils to represent Newtownabbey in our sister city, Gilbert, Arizona, USA. The students will firstly travel to Gilbert for three weeks and will then return to host their exchange student in their home in Newtownabbey for three weeks, making it essential that the students selected be capable of adapting to many cultural differences.

The selected students are expected to be of the highest quality and will be representing the Borough whilst in the USA. We therefore value your comments and can confirm that the information given will be confidential and available only to Newtownabbey Borough Council selection panel members. Please use additional papers as necessary.

PLEASE TYPE or use BLACK ink only

Name (Please Print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

School/Group Etc: _____

Tel Number: _____

Student's Name: _____

How long have you known this student and in what context? _____

What are the first words that come to your mind that would describe this student?

List the courses that you have taught this student; rate the difficulty Or List the type of activities the student would be involved in and rate the difficulty

Please check the appropriate box:

RATING	No Basis	Below Average	Average	Very Good	Excellent	One of the Best Ever
Reliability						
Maturity						
Motivation						
Communication Skills						
Flexible Attitude						
Sense of Humor						
Self Confidence						
Leadership Abilities						
Consideration of Others						
Independence						

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS (answer only if you feel qualified to do so):

How do you think this student would adjust to living with an exchange student for the summer?

From your observations, how do other adults and teenagers perceive this student socially?

How would you describe the student's temperament?

Applicable to teachers only - Has this student ever been suspended from school? If yes please provide information.

Are there any specific reasons we should select this student over any other student?

Are there any specific reasons we should not select this student?

Other remarks:

If there should be additional, pertinent information (positive or negative) that you would like to convey to Newtownabbey Borough Council, please contact Carol Shane or Nadean Lowe, Newtownabbey Borough Council at 028 90 340073/72.

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STUDENT APPLICATION FORM

Please attach
a recent
photograph

Candidates must answer each question.
Please either TYPE or use BLACK INK to complete the form.

First Name/s: _____ Surname: _____
(Please ensure names are as stated on passport)

Address: _____
_____ Postcode: _____

Home Phone No: _____ Mobile Phone No: _____

Email Address: _____

Sex: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Current School: _____

Name of Teacher who will complete the nomination form or who the Council can contact to obtain a Reference : _____

Primary School: _____ Country Of Birth: _____

List school/church/community activities in which you participate

Hobbies

Work Experience

What are your plans for the future (education and career)

Have you travelled abroad? Yes / No If yes, where to? _____

Have you, or any of your brothers and/or sisters participated in an exchange programme? Yes/No
If yes please provide details:

Has your family ever hosted an exchange student? Yes/No
If yes, who, which country, and dates of stay _____

What is the state of your health? _____
Please note all medical conditions must be declared to comply with travel insurance requirements

Are you taking medications? Yes / No If Yes, please explain
Please note all medications must be declared to comply with travel insurance requirements

Family Information

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Occupations: _____ Occupation: _____

Daytime Phone No: _____ Daytime Phone No: _____

Mobile Phone No: _____ Mobile Phone No: _____

Email Address: _____ Email Address: _____

Do you have any brothers/sisters Yes/No
If yes, please provide details Number of Brothers: Number of Sisters:

What attracted you to this programme and why do you want to participate?

CAREFULLY READ the following before signing:

1. In the event of illness, do as your host family advises. If emergency treatment is required or you become seriously ill, your host family will advise your parents.
2. Exchangees are not permitted to drive any motorized vehicle.
3. While staying with your host family, you will be expected to participate in family life, which may include performing routine household tasks or chores. Be alert to the fact that your host family will have "family rules" by which you are expected to abide and that your host family may have a different approach to young people than your own family does.
4. During the exchange, you may travel with your host family or participate in other organised trips. You may not travel alone to distant points unless you have the prior written permission of your own parents/guardians and your host family. Trips should be planned well in advance with definite place of residence. A copy of your itinerary should be left with your own family and your host family. Hitchhiking is not allowed.
5. The drinking of alcohol is not allowed during the exchange. Drugs, other than medication prescribed by a doctor, are forbidden.

I understand that if chosen, I must abide by all rules of responsible conduct expected of me while living with a host family. I understand that my failure to do so will result in me being sent home at my parents/guardians expense.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

My son/daughter has my permission to apply for and participate in the Sister Cities Exchange Programme with Gilbert, USA. I (we) have read and understand the attached sheet explaining the programme and our responsibilities. As the applicant's parent/guardian, and in the event my son/daughter is selected for the student exchange programme, I hereby agree to authorise the host family in the above-mentioned city to act for me in an emergency or accident or illness. I understand that my child's failure to abide by all rules of responsible conduct will result in him/her being sent home. I understand that in such an event we are responsible for any additional expense incurred.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

The complete application pack must be returned to Carol Shane at the following address no later than **4pm on 25th November 2011**.

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Newtownabbey Borough Council
Mossley Mill
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Access Northern Ireland

As this programme will involve substantial access to children it is our policy to ask for an Enhanced Disclosure check to be carried out by Access NI. Access NI enables organisations in Northern Ireland to make more informed decisions by providing criminal history information about anyone seeking paid or unpaid work in certain defined areas, such as working with children or vulnerable adults. Access NI is part of central government and operates under the provisions of Part V of the Police Act 1997.

An Enhanced Disclosure contains all of the information in the Standard Disclosure including spent and unspent convictions and cautions plus other relevant information held in police records. It also clearly indicates whether the applicant is on the ISAs Childrens list or Vulnerable Adults list and therefore is barred from working with those groups. Relevant information in police records can include information about attempted prosecutions that were unsuccessful or behaviour that might be indicative of criminal activity.

Both the Council and the Applicant will receive copies of the Disclosure Certificate

This check will also be carried out for any persons who are aged 16 or over living in the household. Any information which we receive will be treated confidentially, and will be discussed with you before we make a final decision.

We will ask for your check only if your child is selected to participate in this programme. However, you must tell us now if you have ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or cautioned by the police, or bound over. You must include all offences, even minor matters such as motoring offences, and 'spent' convictions, that is things which happened a long time ago. You must not leave anything out.

**EACH PARENT/GUARDIAN AND RESIDENT OVER THE AGE OF 16
MUST COMPLETE AN INDIVIDUAL FORM**