

School Exchange Activity in Okinawa **Guidelines of Application (For School Teachers in HK)**

The Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau (OCVB) would arrange a local host school after receiving an application of an exchange activity during school trips coming to Okinawa. Before applying a school exchange activity in Okinawa, please read the following guidelines carefully. Please note that this is a document for school teachers in Hong Kong. **If you are a travel agent, please refer to the guidelines for travel agents in HK.**

A. What to do during a school exchange activity

What you will do during a school exchange activity depends on your requests and on what the host school can offer. These are some of the examples.

- a. Campus tour;
- b. Participation of lessons;
- c. Participation of club activities;
- d. Japanese-style school lunch together with local students;
- e. Cross-cultural activities, such as traditional Okinawan drum dance *Eisa*;
- f. School cleaning with local students (In Japan, it is a part of education for students to clean their own school, in order to nurture their sense of responsibility to the school.);
- g. Sports or music exchange activities.

With the mission of facilitating the inter-cultural exchange, OCVB try their best to arrange a local host school for each application. However, OCVB do not guarantee to find a host school which fulfils all of your requests. Some local schools might reject arranging school cleaning due to safety reasons, while some find it difficult to arrange all of the requested exchange activities with your students due to tight curriculum. For most schools in Okinawa, a campus tour is the easiest to arrange.

You are reminded that a school exchange activity is a mutual-based and so the host schools might also request your cooperation, such as asking your students to prepare presentations to introduce their own country and school. Your students might also be invited to participate as a language partner in the English or Chinese language lessons. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

B. Application Procedures

You might submit your application to OCVB directly or through a travel agent. However, **it is highly recommended for you to apply through a travel agent** as the travel agent can arrange the tour holistically with the consideration of logistics and other programmes. Travel agents are also experienced in the application, which will contribute to a smoother and efficient process of arranging a host school and will prevent any miscommunication due to language difference. It is noted that OCVB basically **do not accept any application from schools which organise and arrange the trip to Okinawa without a travel agent.**

Please avoid contacting a local primary or secondary school in Okinawa directly if you do not have any relations with the counterparts. (For example, sending an email requesting for a school exchange activity to an email address stated in the website of a school in Okinawa.) For the safety of students, schools in Japan are usually not open to the public and people unknown. Some schools are also confused when they receive these emails of request from schools in foreign countries they do not know. This might also lead to warning from the Education Department in Okinawa. Your request might be rejected at a high probability in such case.

C. What you should submit for application

Please submit the following completed documents in PDF for application.

- (1) Application form (please download at <https://www.okinawapref.com.hk/educationaltour>);
- (2) Proposed name list of participants, stating the age and gender, their positions (students / teachers / parents) and information of food allergy of all participants;
- (3) Proposed trip itinerary with information of the flights and proposed place of accommodation; and
- (4) Letter of application to the host school, stating the proposed date(s), exchange activities and theme of the trip.

If the original copy of (3) to (4) is not in Japanese, **you must provide a copy of Japanese translation.** You might also request the travel agent to do the translation for you.

In your email of application, you should also **provide the English website of your school** or attach an English PDF file which briefly introduces your school, such as mission, number of students, school type (public / private) and etc..

D. Application Deadline

In order to provide sufficient time for OCVB to find a suitable host school and for the host school to prepare for the exchange activity, you should submit your application with all of the completed documents stated in Part C **at least 3 months before the trip.** If you still want to apply after the deadline of application, please first contact OCVB for advice.

If you submit the application through a travel agent, you are advised to start the procedures of selecting the travel agent earlier. In other words, **you should sign a contract with a travel agent and submit all the completed documents more than 3 months before the trip** so that the travel agent can submit the application for school exchange activities on time.

E. Fee

OCVB do not request any fee of application for arranging a host school. However, fees might be requested by the host school for lunch or for the tools necessary during the club activities.

F. Dates of exchange activities

Although there are not any restrictions on the dates of school exchange activities, local Okinawan schools are busy and tend to reject school exchange activities in certain periods, such as school opening and closing periods, exam periods and school holidays (please refer to the grey areas in the tables below). Moreover, every school also has a different schedule for hosting a school exchange activity. Although for most of the application in the past, OCVB successfully arranged a host school, in the event of difficulty of arrangement, OCVB will contact the applicant as soon as possible. In such case, your understanding is highly appreciated.

Periods of Difficult Arrangement of a Host School

April			May			June			July			August			September		
B	M	E	B	M	E	B	M	E	B	M	E	B	M	E	B	M	E
School Opening Ceremony & Orientation												Summer Holiday					

October			November			December			January			February			March		
B	M	E	B	M	E	B	M	E	B	M	E	B	M	E	B	M	E
Autumn Holiday (for some schools)									Winter Holiday						Graduation Ceremony & School Closing Ceremony		

- B: Beginning of the month
- M: Middle of the month
- E: End of the month

Notes: Exam periods and some school events such as school picnic are not stated in the tables as they vary from schools.

G. Other important points of notice

Once you have submitted your application, please avoid any changes or absence unless there are uncontrollable reasons, such as cancellation of trips due to epidemic or natural disasters. It not only takes OCVB a large effort to seek a host school, but also the host school and their students to prepare for your visit. This might lose the trust from schools in Okinawa and they might reject hosting other schools in the future. Therefore, you should only submit your application only when you are sure you and your students could come to Okinawa.

H. Links of Useful Information

1. Website of Study Tour Programmes in Okinawa:

<https://www.visitokinawa.jp/edu?lang=zh-hant> (Chinese)

<https://www.visitokinawa.jp/edu> (English)

2. Model Itineraries and Documents Related to School Exchange Activities:

<https://www.okinawapref.com.hk/educationaltour>

I. Inquiries

1. Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau 沖繩觀光會議局

Educational Travel Team

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