EU School Trips: guidance on visa requirements for international students

Since the UK left the EU, the British Council's 'List of Travellers' scheme no longer exists, so international students travelling to EU countries as part of a UK school trip may now be required to obtain a visa.

1. ***Does the student normally require a visa?***

Firstly, it is important to note that not all international students require a visa to travel on short trips to EU countries, in the same way that UK passport holders do not require a visa.

To confirm whether a nationality would normally require a visa, please view Annex 1 and Annex 2 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council. A list of nationalities normally requiring a visa is found at Annex 1 (this includes China, Egypt, Nigeria, Russia, Thailand, Vietnam and many more). A list of nationalities automatically exempt from the visa requirement for short trips is found at Annex 2 (this includes Canada, Japan, Mexico, UK, USA, Hong Kong SAR and many others).

2. ***If the student would normally require a visa, will the country offer an exemption?***

Where a visa would normally be required, the country may exempt UK school pupils from the visa requirement where they are travelling in the context of a school trip. This possibility is set out in Article 6(2) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

A good starting point for considering the stance of various EU countries (and having something official to refer parents to) is the EU Commission website. The EU Commission has published a table that sets out which countries *should* exempt school pupils who would normally require a visa to enter their country for a school trip. This table is copied below for ease of reference:

2. Exemption from the visa requirement in accordance with Article 6(2)

2.1. Visa exemption granted to school pupils who are nationals of a third country listed in Annex I to the Regulation, reside in a third country listed in Annex II to the Regulation and are travelling in the context of a school excursion as members of a group of school pupils accompanied by a teacher from the school in question

Yes = visa exempted

missing notifications from: CY

School pupil	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	IS	NO	CH	LI
UNITED KINGDOM	yes			yes	yes			yes (1)	yes		yes				yes		yes	yes		yes				yes						yes
Any other country listed in Annex II					yes (2)							.(3)					yes			yes				yes						

Comments:

(1) Spain: Subject to reciprocity and overall EU-UK relations

(2) Germany: It is a precondition that the school pupils are registered in a list, which corresponds to the requirements defined in Article 1.b and the Annex of Council Decision of 30 November 1994 on a joint action adopted by the Council on the basis of Article K.3.2.b of the Treaty on European Union concerning travel facilities for school pupils from third countries resident in a Member State, and are not engaged in a gainful employment.

(3) Cyprus: a national collective visa is required.

(4) 1) Depending on the reciprocity; 2) for school pupils up to high school (as per their notification)

We would strongly advise schools to obtain direct confirmation from the relevant country's consulate to confirm their stance. BSA has obtained direct confirmation from many countries which correlate with the above table, however the following inconsistencies should be noted:

- **Liechtenstein** and **Luxembourg** *do not* have an exemption in place (as confirmed directly with authorities).
- **Germany** effectively *do not* exempt school pupils, as their exemption relies on the British Council List of Travellers scheme.
- **Spain** *may* exempt school pupils; authorities have been unable to confirm and continue to investigate.

3. *What if there is no exemption, or the situation is unclear?*

Where there is doubt it is safest for pupils to obtain a visa, e.g. a Schengen visa.

4. *The destination country does offer an exemption, but is there any official documentation we should carry with us to present at the border?*

Frustratingly, there is no specific documentation to carry with you. Where seeking to rely on a country's visa exemption, it is recommended though not strictly required that the team leader carry the following to facilitate entry:

- Correspondence with the relevant consulate confirming adoption of visa exemption (where applicable)
- A printout of Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (codification) (legislation.gov.uk)
- A printout of the EU Commission website, Table 2.1
- A list of all schoolchildren on the school trip, on school letterhead, containing:
    - Names of travelling pupils
    - Description of the purpose and the circumstances of the intended stay (dates of travel, method of transport, nature of school trip, intended accommodation)
    - Name of accompanying school teacher/s and position at the school (border officials can then cross-reference names with passports).
- For each student:
    - Parental consent letter (a suggested template can be found within the BSA immigration hub). Above and beyond this, if you have copy passports / ID for parents then these could be affixed to the signed consent letters.
    - You will note from the template parental consent letter that a copy of the full birth certificate / adoption certificate / certified translations (as applicable) may be affixed to each consent letter, so the border official can cross-reference parent names with the document/s.
    - It may also be worth carrying copies of the front / back cover and ID pages of each passport, and copies of both sides (front/back) of any valid UK BRPs.

5. Is there anything else we should prepare for?

It should also be noted that schools have experienced some pushback at borders of countries even where correspondence can be shown from the relevant consulate confirming that the visa exemption is in place. So, schools should prepare for this and where possible factor in extra time to their journeys where border officials may need to make enquiries.

Please contact the BSA Group Legal team on legal@bsagroup.org.uk or +44 (0)207 798 1583 should you require further support.

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