

24 October 2025

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing with updated information regarding the opportunity for Year 9 Mandarin Excellence Programme students to travel to China in July 2026. [Mandarin Excellence Programme: China visit July 2024 | British Council](#)

In order to obtain a place on this study visit programme, students need to meet the following criteria:

- Students will have passed all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in the Year 8 MEP hurdle tests in summer 2025.
- Students demonstrate consistently good behaviour and attitude to learning in Mandarin lessons.
- Students regularly attend after school Mandarin sessions.
- Previously the study visit to China has been only for students who are continuing with Mandarin at GCSE level; we are awaiting confirmation about whether this will be the case this year.

If you are not sure whether your child meets the criteria, but are keen for your child to take part, please contact Mr Floyd or Mr Gan at the school.

The majority of the costs will be met by the Department for Education and MEP delivery partners. However, flight costs, visa costs, and travel to and from the airport will need to be paid for by families. Based on the information received this month, flights are estimated to be £950. Costs of transport to and from a London airport will also be added. Depending on nationality, a visa may also be required, at an estimated cost of around £200.

Dates will be confirmed soon, but are likely to be in early July, with up to 12-13 days away from home including travel days. Students will travel to a host university institution in a major city in China. The host city in China will also be confirmed at a later date, as this is dependent on availability of university accommodation and availability of seats on flights.

In summer 2025, year 9 students from The Castle School spent time in Shanghai. You can get a flavour of the study visit by looking at [@castleschoollanguages](#) on Instagram and/or by reading our blog here: [The Castle School Shanghai 2025 – Mandarin Excellence Programme Study Visit](#) The destination may be different in 2026.

Most days, students will have morning classes and afternoon/evening activities, where they are expected to practise their Mandarin. This includes weekends. It is expected that students engage fully in the programme and are aware in advance of the high expectations in terms of participation and engagement in the classes. We have travelled with St Gregory's School in Bath in previous years and plan to do the same this year.

In order to reserve a place on the study visit, a **deposit of £100** is required. Please pay this on Arbor by Friday 7 November to reserve your place, as we will need to confirm numbers with the Mandarin Excellence Programme early next term.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S Floyd', written in a cursive style.

Mr S Floyd
Head of Faculty for Modern Foreign Languages
The Castle School