



25 March 2024

Good morning

Thank you for providing passport details and paying the deposit for the study visit to China in July 2024. I am writing to share more information with you, most importantly regarding the visa application process. A visa is required to visit mainland China. We have received some guidelines on applying for visas from the Mandarin Excellence Programme, and now need to begin this process. Details of this are below.

As previously advised, the default rooming list will be 2 students sharing a twin room. We will discuss this with students so that they can share with someone they feel comfortable with.

We are expecting to receive a FAQ document containing information on food/vaccines/phones & internet/spending money and so on after the Easter holidays, and will pass this on as soon as we have it. Once we have this information, we will also arrange a meeting one evening after school, so that we can go through details with you and answer any questions. This is likely to be soon after the Easter holidays.

Visas:

It has been recommended that schools apply for visas through the China International Travel Service (CITS), as they have previously processed visas for MEP trips. You will apply for an individual tourist visa, but we will co-ordinate this as a school so that all applications, documents, payments and passports are sent together. It is essential that all of the necessary information is provided in order to avoid any delays with the visa application process.

The cost of the visa application is £230 – please make payment via Scopay or credit/debit card (in person or over the phone) or by cash or cheque (made payable to The Castle School) by Monday 15 April at the latest. Note that we are still awaiting final flight costs, but the cost of these is likely to be in line with the total previously quoted, ie around £600.

Please begin to collect the documents below now. We are waiting for a visa invitation letter to be issued to us as a school. Once this is received, we will need to submit visa applications promptly for all students. This is likely to be very soon after we return from the Easter holidays. Therefore, please ensure you have all items below, and get in contact with us as soon as possible if there are any issues:
sfloyd2@castle.bep.ac .

CHECKLIST OF DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED BY CITS

Please note that the list below includes the basic documents required for all of the Chinese visa applicants, and CITS may need more supporting documents depending on different applicants' situations.

You should start to prepare the following documents now:

1. Original Current Valid Passport (passport valid for at least 6 months after the return date of your trip).

2. One completed printed Visa Application Form (**see the attachment**), **signed by both parents**.

The form can be filled in on a computer then printed or printed first and then filled in by hand, but the form must be signed in handwriting.

3. One original recently taken passport size photo (colour with white background, no hats or head coverings, full face in view, no fringe, no glasses). **Note that there are very strict photo requirements (please refer to the attached photo guidance)**; we have previously had applications returned to us due to the photos not meeting the requirements. **We recommend using Timpson or similar and telling them that you require photos for a Chinese visa application.**

4. A copy of any previous Chinese Visas in the applicant passport. If it is on the applicant's previous passport, please send a copy of the visa and the passport information page (photo page of the old passport) as well.

5. For non-UK passport holders please contact us as soon as possible. CITS will send you an alternative document list (if required) accordingly.

The following documentation will be required for all of the students (standard practice for all applicants under 18 years old):

1. A copy of the passport information page of both parents or guardians (the copy must be the full page with photo and signature).

2. A copy of the Birth Certificate (Certified Copy of an Entry) with parents' names shown. If any personal information on the Birth Certificate does not match with the passport information provided (such as a name change), an official proof of change document will be needed.

The Birth Certificate should be in English. If it is not in English, please let us know as soon as possible.

3. If the parent(s) have a non-British passport, the original and a photocopy of the parents' UK legal status (work visa, study visa or residence permit, or code to share) will need to be provided.

Note: The visa application form may ask for itinerary details and the inviting organisation. IOE will provide your flight information. The name and address of the inviting organisation in China is:

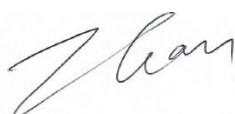
Centre for Language and Education Co-operation

129 Deshengmenwai Street, Xicheng District, Beijing, 100088

Tel: +86 (0) 10 5859 5768 Contact: Zhang Hejia, zhanghejia@chinese.cn

Kind regards

Yours sincerely



Mr S Floyd and Mr Z Gan

Trip Leaders