

9 September 2025

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing to you as your son/daughter participates in the Mandarin Excellence Programme (MEP) and we would like to offer Year 9 MEP students the chance 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:

- Only students who completed and passed all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in the Year 8 MEP hurdle tests in summer 2025 can take part.
- Students should have demonstrated consistently good behaviour and attitude to learning in Mandarin lessons.
- Students should have regularly attended after school Mandarin sessions during year 8 and should continue to do this in year 9.
- **This study visit is for students who are continuing with Mandarin at GCSE level; only students who intend to continue their MEP studies into Key Stage 4 can participate in the study visit. Due to the way that this trip is subsidised, please note that if you sign up for the study visit and then do not opt for Mandarin at GCSE, your place will be withdrawn and it may not be possible to return deposits.**

The majority of the cost of the trip will be met by the Department for Education and MEP delivery partners. However, flight costs, visa costs, coach travel to and from the airport and some other expenses will need to be paid for by families. Based on current information that we have received, this is estimated to be around £1400. This price is subject to change.

During the visit we will work with other English schools and MEP partners in China to develop your son/daughter's language proficiency within the context of an incredible opportunity to visit the country and learn about the culture. This would be organised through the Institute of Education (University College London's Faculty of Education and Society) and the UK Government, including the British Council, and will be staffed by experienced colleagues.

Dates will be confirmed, 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](#) However, 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.

**If you would like to express an interest at this stage, please could you confirm that your son/daughter is interested in taking part in this trip and that they are eligible to take part in the trip based on the criteria outlined above.**

**Please indicate your confirmation by filling out the Microsoft Form here:**

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponseP> <https://forms.office.com/e/Rr2dtUm8D>

We will be able to confirm whether your child has gained a place on this study visit programme by January 2026 at the latest, and we will then start to gather more detailed participant information to enable UCL to book flights and create visa invitation letters.

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 Languages**  
**The Castle School**