



Welcome to the Round Square Students' Handbook for Felsted Pupils Applying for Overseas Exchanges

Round Square Membership

“There is more in us than we know. If we could be made to see it, perhaps for the rest of our lives we would be unwilling to settle for less.”

These are the words of Kurt Hahn, whose ideas inspired the creation of Round Square.

(<https://www.roundsquare.org>)

Many of life's important lessons come from practical experience. These lessons stick with us, helping us build character, discover our capabilities, and find purpose.

This understanding lies at the heart of the educational philosophy shared by 280 Round Square schools in 50 countries, across six continents.

Round Square focuses on experiential learning to empower schools to collaborate, share best practice, and connect both physically and virtually. This approach celebrates diversity, develops character, and builds leadership skills, equipping young people to be positive contributors to society and proactive future leaders.

The Round Square community shares six learning themes – called the **IDEALS** because the first letter of each theme put together spells IDEALS – Internationalism, Democracy, Environmentalism, Adventure, Leadership and Service.

As young people embrace the Spirit of the Round Square IDEALS, they uncover **12 key Discoveries** on their learning journey: inquisitiveness, tenacity, courage, compassion,

inventiveness, problem-solving, self-awareness, responsibility, diversity appreciation, sustainability commitment, communication, and teamwork skills.

Felsted is justly proud of its traditions, but we are also excited to be part of a worldwide community of schools who make a difference, go the extra mile and help others, both locally and internationally, and in so doing grow as people who are truly international citizens of the world.

Embarking on a Round Square Exchange

Congratulations on embracing the experience of a lifetime! As Felsted is a Round Square Global Member School, the opportunity to go on an international exchange is available to all of our students. However, only a small number take the leap that they need in order to make the most of this incredible opportunity.

Your exchange promises to be an opportunity that can shape your future in the best possible way. It will open your eyes and your mind to other ways of seeing and experiencing the world. It will allow you to develop an international network of friends and connections in different parts of the globe. It will allow you to take in a new culture and experience it first hand and, perhaps most importantly, it will allow you to alter your perspective concerning possibilities for the future.

This manual acts as a guide to making the most of your experience, it aims to support you in a way that is universal to every exchange, as opposed to a concrete guide that tells you about the best things to see and do in each city. It will also include important information you need to know before and during your trip.

The Round Square Network covers 50 countries, which makes it impossible to tell you about each one in detail. But the principles will remain the same and that is what we are aiming for here. The manual is not designed to be read in one go, so feel free to dip in and out of it and to refer back to it while you are on exchange.

1. How to forge long-lasting connections
2. Learning and using the local language
3. Keeping fit and healthy
4. Engaging with the culture
5. Giving Back to the Felsted Community
6. Reflection

This manual is also written on the understanding that you have chosen your school and that you have secured the dates for your exchange. If that is not the case, please contact Felsted's Round Square Representative, Ms Cabrera (rpc@felsted.org) to begin making arrangements.

The role of Round Square (<https://www.roundsquare.org>) in student exchanges is one of facilitator, enabling Round Square Candidate and Member Schools to connect and organise exchanges for the benefit of the students taking part. Round Square does not organise any exchanges itself and is not therefore responsible for individual exchange arrangements. It is important for students and parents to note that Round Square does not vet or monitor the arrangements made by the schools and does not have any contact with or role in selecting host families. Round Square provides schools with best practice protocols but you must satisfy yourselves that the arrangements made by the individual school you are considering allowing your child to visit are appropriate. Round Square therefore accepts no legal responsibility or liability for student exchanges whatsoever.

1. How to forge long-lasting connections

By embarking on your exchange you are committing to making a difference in your education and in the lives of the people you will meet. You are doing something that not very many other pupils do and this is sure to help you in your future. You can use your experience on your CV, you can use it for your own benefit at Felsted and you can use it when you apply to university or for an apprenticeship.

As part of your exchange you will either be staying with a local family or living in a boarding house at your host school. Each of these options will provide you with an opportunity to make new friends and start building on your connections. Connections are hugely important of course, as they can offer you insight into the local culture as well as providing opportunities in the future.

If you are staying with a family as part of a home stay, be sure to take your host-family up on any cultural outings that they might offer you. If they invite you to go and visit other family members, attend a birthday celebration or social function, visit a tourist site or take a cultural day trip, always be sure to take advantage of these opportunities. Even if you do not feel ready to fully throw yourself into such a new environment, engaging with the family and their recommended activities will make your experience most unique. To make your stay as comfortable as possible, please be sure to let them know of any preferences you might have with regards to food or living arrangements. If they know what to expect from the beginning, this will help them to provide you with the best possible experience. However, do not use this as an opportunity not to try new things. Culture is often best experienced through food, so try as many exciting new dishes as you can, whenever the opportunity arises. Even if it does not sound particularly appetising, do try it as the experience will help to forge a stronger

bond with the family.

If you are living in a boarding house, get to know your neighbours as quickly as possible. If you are in a dorm, this will be easy to do. Find out how many people you might be sharing with and take some gifts with you from your home country - this will help you to make friends and settle in quickly. Be sure to find out from the other pupils when the best social events take place and whether or not there are any school trips that are happening while you are on exchange. Also be sure to find out information about the school campus. Due to the fact that they live at the school throughout the year, host pupils will know the best places to get a coffee or find a tasty dessert, and which parts of the nearest town or city are best to explore. Also be sure to get to know any other exchange pupils who are staying at the same time as you. They may come from a range of different backgrounds, and if it is possible to forge ties with other pupils from different parts of the world, this will add to the richness of your experience.

2. Learning and using the local language

There are apps for learning almost every language represented in the Round Square community of schools. Many of these apps are free or have a small subscription fee. They will prove invaluable in making a strong connection with people if you are going to a country where English is not the first language. Even if you download the app before you take off and learn a few words and sentences while you are on the plane, the adults that you interact with in particular, will be most impressed if you are able to muster a few words in the local language.

However, it is not essential to have formally studied the language that you are going to be surrounded by. Many of our past exchange pupils have visited Argentina or Colombia without having a strong grasp of Spanish. As long as you have a willingness to learn some new words and work outside of your comfort zone, you will do well.

Even for countries that speak English as a first language, there will always be idioms or colloquial phrases that get used at school or at home. Learning as much as you can about local terminology in places like Ghana, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand is always going to be helpful.

3. Keeping fit and healthy

In order to make the most of your experience, it is highly recommended that you remain fit, healthy and active while you are at your home school. It is well known that long distance travel has the potential to make you feel drowsy and jet-lagged, which could disrupt your first few days at your host school. There are a few simple rules for lessening the effect of jet-lag and physical exertion, which can hopefully allow you to have the best experience possible:

- 1) Drink plenty of water. Airline stewards are always very helpful in offering Coca Cola, fruit juice, coffee and tea as part of the in-flight service. However, all of these have the potential to make you feel more drowsy and disengaged when you fly. By sticking to water, you retain your highest level of hydration and suffer absolutely no side-effects.
- 2) Get as much sleep as possible. Even if it means that you are out of sync with your surroundings for a few days, by sleeping when you are tired you will reduce the amount of minor damage that long haul flights can do to your body. Always ensure that you get between 7-9 hours sleep per night. If you make this an absolute priority, you will get the most out of your experience.
- 3) Monitor your steps and keep active. As a minimum, try to hit 10,000 steps per day. The more that you can achieve this by interacting with new friends and classmates overseas, the better.

These are by no means failsafe measures, but they will help you to remain as positive, happy and alert as possible while you are away. If your exchange is only a few weeks long and you are travelling a long distance, this will certainly have a positive impact on your experience.

4. Engaging with the culture

Engaging with the culture means more than taking part in activities, learning some of the language and accepting invitations to take part in tourist trips and social events. Engaging with the culture involves doing some background research and finding out about things that interest you, that are also relevant within the cultural context of the area that you are visiting. This can take on many forms, from learning about historical facts and figures, to brushing up

on films and music. Indeed, popular culture is an easy access point and will bring you up to speed on what the people from your year group will be interested in and talking about.

Be sure to do some research on what's on at the cinema, what the highest grossing films were over the last couple of years and what's top of the download charts for that country. YouTube can also be exceptionally helpful in understanding subcultural and countercultural trends. You are also sure to be able to find out about popular memes. Whatever you are able to determine from these cultural insights, they will certainly prove to be helpful when integrating into your new environment. This integration will help you to obtain further cultural insights as you immerse yourself in your surroundings.

5. Giving back to the Felsted Community

Going on exchange is not an exclusive opportunity. It is a possibility that is open to every pupil at Felsted. Due to the positive impact that it can have, we want to share your exchange experience with as many people as possible. There are a number of ways that you can do that and I encourage you to speak with Ms Cabrera (rpc@felsted.org) as soon as possible to put your plans in action.

The best thing to do would be to speak at Chapel, House Assembly or both. This would provide you with the chance to reflect on your experience and present on the highs and lows of your trip, while also giving you practice in your presentation skills.

In addition to, or perhaps instead of, speaking publicly, it is always possible to contribute to the Felsted Newsletter. This is read by staff, pupils and parents alike and it's a great way to write with confidence about what you have experienced. This does not have to be a long article, but it should provide an insight into your experience so that others have an idea of the challenges you overcame and your own personal recommendations to other pupils who would like to go on exchange in the future.

6. Reflection

Reflecting on your experience will help you to think about how the experience changed you. It is crucial to take some time out to think about the friends that you have made, the things that you have seen, the activities you have taken part in and the impact that all of these things might have on your life moving forward. Think about how you can continue to maintain and develop the new relationships that you have kindled. This would be good practice both before and after you have given back to the Felsted community. It is also worth contemplating how the exchange may be used for work experience opportunities or even university application. However you choose to use these experiences moving forward, you should consider the fact that what you have achieved is above and beyond what most of the pupils do here at Felsted, and for that, you should be very proud of yourself.

Other important Information

Emergency Arrangements and Dealing with Problems

These arrangements are discussed with your host school before your trip. The Round Square Rep at your host school remains your main point of contact in case of emergency.

Health and Safety and Safeguarding Arrangements

Your host school must send a copy of their safeguarding and health and safety policies prior to your visit.

Returning Home and Settling In

Upon returning to Felsted, you will be asked to meet with Ms Cabrera to discuss your experience. You are also provided with a questionnaire about your exchange, to help improve the process for future exchange students.

Experience from former Felsted Exchange Pupils

This section has been put together by Felsted pupils who have been on exchange in the past. Please have a good read through and get some ideas as to how you might be able to contribute to future additions of this handbook.

Max W

Age at time of exchange: 16

Destination: Athenian, USA

Length of Exchange: 2 Weeks

Max's Words:

My exchange was a once in lifetime experience, there is so much I could say about it but here are the highlights of my trip to San Francisco. Firstly, the family (The Arlens), Sandy, Roger, Lexi and Eric, were the nicest family I ever met, I could not of asked for better one if I tried. They live at the bottom of Mount Diablo, the views from their house were amazing. The Athenian school was just incredible, right at the bottom of Mt. Diablo national park. Whilst there, I had to choose lessons that I wanted to participate in, and I decided to choose ones that I don't do at Felsted School, for example a philosophy module on Plato. All the lessons I chose were extremely interesting but 70 minutes long each.

Whilst with the family, we went on some incredible days out, with Roger's amazing planning and Sandy's super entertainment. My favourite day out was probably the day we went to Cal University because there was a big American football game on that day, so we got to see the whole marching band perform. Using my culinary skills I also tried to compete with Sandy's awesome meals by cooking dinner one night, which was a success.

Overall, I could not have asked for a better exchange and experience, especially The Arlens Family!



Amber A

Age at time of exchange: 14

Destination: Anglo Colombiano, Colombia

Length of Exchange: 2 Weeks



Amber's Words:

Looking back, choosing to take part in a Round Square exchange to Colombia was one of the most pivotal moments of my time in education. Not only have I gained experience of living in a different culture, developed my linguistic ability and made many friends that I am still in touch with, but this exchange has given me the confidence to always step out of my comfort zone and engage with everything there is to offer around me. Doing an exchange in year 10 was the best decision for me because the confidence and skills I gained led me to partake in other events throughout my schooling that have now, alongside the exchange, made me stand out in applying for work experience placements and university applications. Doing an exchange really displays your interest in a subject outside the classroom and the courage to experience new things, which is an impressive attribute to have.

Imogen G



Age at time of exchange: 16

Destination: Cate, USA

Length of Exchange: 2 Weeks

Imogen's Words:

It was during a PE lesson, about midway through the summer term of Year 11 when a friend mentioned to me how she had been researching Round Square exchanges, and was attracted by the possibility of being able to spend a period of time at another school, only paying for flights. My interest was piqued and made casual mention of it to my mother that evening. I have always been fascinated by the way that education is carried out in different countries, and after much research, settled on America as a perfect place to go for an exchange. After a slight technical hiccup, my destination changed from a school in Florida to one in California a few weeks before I was meant to set off, but now fixed on the idea of an exchange, I made sure to overlook this change and start preparing to travel to LAX.

After arriving at Cate School, late on a Monday evening, I was thrown in at the deep end with activities, lessons and sports, and immediately felt welcomed into a tight-knit community of about 250 students. It was easy to adjust to the relaxed Californian lifestyle, although starting lessons at 8am was a little bit alarming, but I soon got used to it! It sounds cliché but I felt so accepted by the students and faculty, everyone was eager to say hello, and help me out if required (although I suspect this had a little to do with the novelty of hearing an English accent that became rapidly Americanised!)

A thing that shocked me then, and remains with me today, two years on, is the lack of competition that existed between students, especially in a school that excelled academically with frequent Ivy League acceptances. They were willing to welcome a new student into their midst and together we celebrated each other's successes, something that often gets lost in English schools, and although this may sound like a small factor, it allowed me to feel a lot more comfortable in my own abilities, and learn to treat education as something that improves a person, not just a phenomenon that provides yet another platform for competitiveness.

In addition to this very important point, which has shaped even how I approach study at university, going on a Round Square exchange gave me the opportunity to try things that I would otherwise have never been able to do; I climbed a mountain, did arts and crafts with children at a local homeless shelter, played lacrosse and watched the sun set over the Pacific Ocean more than a dozen times. I would encourage everyone to take up the opportunity to embark on an exchange if given the chance, as I am certain that the experiences I had and the friends that I made during one month will stay with me for the rest of my life.

Who are the Round Square Representatives at Felsted?

Ms Rocio Cabrera

Ms Cabrera is a Spanish teacher in the school and, together with Mrs Martin, works on all Round Square initiatives. Ms Cabrera deals with advice and the process of managing the exchange. Ms Cabrera can be contacted to discuss the idea of an exchange, answer any questions and give suggestions.

Email: rpc@felsted.org



Mrs Kathy Martin

Mrs Martin is the Assistant Director of Global Education at Felsted. She is primarily responsible for Felsted International Summer School, which now encompasses Felsted's fourth term and welcomes students from around the world throughout July and August. Mrs Martin is also responsible for the LEAP programme for new overseas pupils, and the Round Square Exchanges.

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