European Christmas Tree

Decoration Exchange 2022

#EuropeanChristmastree



**Information booklet for**

**co-ordinators**

**International Relations,**

**Durham County Council, Durham UK**



**What is The European Christmas Tree Decoration Exchange?**

* A cultural exchange project where primary schoolchildren make Christmas tree decorations to send to other schools across Europe.
* Pupils send a presentation about how Christmas is celebrated in their community and what they hope for in 2023,
* A photograph of the decorated tree is sent to international@durham.gov.uk.

Co-ordinators invite schools in their region to take part in the exchange and act as the point of contact for those schools.

Participating schools are organised into exchange groups of no more than 30. Therefore, each school will send and receive up to 29 decorations from the other schools in their group.

**Benefits**

For schools: Pupils learn all about the geography of our continent and are introduced to cultural differences and similarities. ICT and foreign language skills are developed.

For co-ordinators: It creates links to schools in your region. You can also generate media coverage and organise events and other activities around the exchange.

**Aims**

Young people in primary schools learn about other countries in Europe through a creative and fun activity.

Each school learns about their own culture and traditions through making their decorations and putting together an information pack on Christmas in their region.

It is hoped that schools will maintain the contacts with those in their groups and continue to work in partnership in the future.

**Outcome**

Each school should use the decorations they receive from partners to decorate a Christmas tree in a prominent area in their school or local community.

Schools will also receive an information pack from each of their partners to explain how Christmas is celebrated in other European countries.

**The role of the co-ordinator**

To recruit up to 10 primary schools which will commit to the project. You need to explain the timeline: what is required from schools and by when.

We provide the enclosed information for you to send to the schools. You need to add your own details on pages 4 and 5 so that schools know how to contact you. If you cannot answer any questions about the project which the schools may have, you can ask colleagues in our office for help.

Each co-ordinator can only register up to 10 schools and we will provide a form for you to do this

International Relations would be grateful if you could keep us regularly updated on your schools’ progress on the project and let us know about your events surrounding this project. Please keep in touch and add photos to our Facebook account and use the project hashtag **#EuropeanChristmastree**

**What you need to do:**

If you wish to take part you need to:

* promote the project and find a maximum of 10 primary schools in your region to participate in this project and ensure that they:
	+ are committed to the activity,
	+ are able to cover the cost of making up to 29 decorations and posting decorations to their exchange partners in different countries,
	+ are able to keep to the timetable below,
* send each school the enclosed handbook and **ADD your contact details where shown on pages 4 and 5,**
* register the school details, using the enclosed Excel form by **Friday 14 October,**
* maintain good contact with International Relations for the duration of the project, and act as liaison between the schools in your region and International Relations.

**What happens next for schools?**

Once you have sent me their details, schools will be organised into groups and asked to send the following to ALL schools in their group:

* A message about their school; picture of the school and possibly of pupils,
* A message about how Christmas is celebrated in their country (food, special traditions etc) and how this time is marked by non Christian members of the community,
* A description of what the sending class wishes for 2023,
* A hand-made decoration to hang on the school’s Christmas tree: this could represent the area or country where the school is based.

The messages can be printed or sent electronically. The decoration should be carefully wrapped and posted **BEFORE 11 November.**

**In addition, schools must send a photograph of their decorated tree to** **international@durham.gov.uk** **We will create a special Instagram account to share more widely.**

**Additional Information**

A Facebook group will be created and invitation sent to all participants. This will be a closed group, so people have to request to join it. Teachers can join the group and add photos and information about their decorations, their school, Christmas traditions in their country and more. Schools do not have to post photos of children if they do not wish.

We have created the hashtag **#EuropeanChristmastree** and would encourage its use when posting on social media

**Timetable**

**14th October**

Deadline for registering your schools with us. Please use the attached Excel spreadsheet to provide all details of your schools.

You will need FULL postal address as well as an email contact for each school.

**28th October –** Schools will be contacted with information about their group. They should start to prepare their packs.

**Friday 11th November -** Final deadline for your school(s) to post out their Christmas decorations and information packs.

It is very important that all schools follow this deadline, as the postal service at Christmas time can be very slow, particularly for large packages. Please stay in touch with your schools and make sure they are following the deadlines!

**Monday 5th  December -** By this date everyone should have received all decorations and information packs and trees will be decorated for pupils to enjoy before the Christmas holidays. Please send photos of the decorated trees to us and also upload to the facebook group.

**Contact**

Project Co-ordinator

Brian STOBIE

International Officer

Address

International Relations

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