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From the Director: Andrew Boggis

## **SCHOLARSHIPS TO SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM 2017 – 2018**

### **Information for Parents of Slovakian Applicants**

*Students are asked to translate this paper for their parents if necessary in order to ensure that it is fully understood.*

The purpose of this paper is to describe the arrangements for the scholarships offered in the United Kingdom through *HMC Projects in Central and Eastern Europe*.

You will find further details of the nature and work of HMC Projects at [www.hmc.org.uk/projects](http://www.hmc.org.uk/projects).

HMC (Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference) is an association of the Headteachers of many of the leading independent schools in the United Kingdom. HMC Projects is a registered charity and is a company with limited liability. Its specific purpose, since its inception twenty-four years ago in 1992, has been to enable young students from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to study in the UK and, in doing so, to make contacts and friendships with British young people, to gain a better understanding of what the United Kingdom stands for, to perfect their mastery of the English language and to strengthen links between their countries and the UK. In consequence, almost 1600 students have received scholarships to spend a year in British schools. Quite apart from the benefit to the students, the British schools have also greatly enjoyed their presence and have gained much. The scholarship scheme is run by HMC Projects but students are placed not only in schools belonging to HMC but also in some other independent schools and some very good government boarding schools. There may well also be scholarships offered at two British International Schools, one in Switzerland and one in Madrid, Spain.

The British schools are of various types. Some are schools mainly for boarding pupils (boys and girls who live at the school during the school terms). Other schools have both boarding pupils and day pupils. Scholarship students from Central and Eastern Europe take up boarding places in their schools. The schools are located throughout the United Kingdom. Many of the schools are coeducational but some take only girls and others take only boys.

Scholarships for students in Slovakia are arranged through cooperation between three parties:

- **HMC Projects**

HMC Projects coordinates the general programme in the UK and liaises both with **The Open Society Fund** and with the schools. We ensure that students are met when they first arrive in the UK; we arrange the introductory Orientation Course; we ensure the students' safe travel to their schools and we provide (through the school) a Bursary of £300 for each student.

Once the student has arrived at the school, formal responsibility for each student transfers to the school.

Even so, our **Student Coordinator**, Mr Tony Lawrence, will play a key role in monitoring the continuing welfare of students. He is able to offer support and advice as needed. On the recommendation of the Student Coordinator financial help may be given to students confronted with exceptional expenditure (for instance cultural expeditions, field trips, etc.).

- **The Open Society Foundation**

**The Open Society Foundation** administers the programme in Slovakia, organises student interviews and provides support and advice for the scholars before their departure to the UK.

- **The School:**

Your son or daughter will become a full member of the school chosen by HMC Projects and you will be asked to sign the home-school agreement signed by all other parents. The School provides a full scholarship, covering all costs of tuition, food and accommodation, and accepts responsibility for the students at all times when the school is in session. The School will appoint a **Contact Person** (see below) to make arrangements for the students at times when the school is not in session.

We try to match our scholars with schools best suited to their individual talents but I should emphasise that all the schools within the scheme have been selected because we see them as entirely suitable and because we know that they will offer a very valuable experience to the students who are their guests. Once the school has accepted the student assigned to it, a change cannot be made.

### **A different way of life**

Students need to be ready to adapt to the boarding way of life and to desire positively to support the school's philosophy and rules. Inevitably our scholars do find that some features of British schools are very different from their schools at home – for example:

1. Students live in boarding houses. Normally about thirty to forty students live in one house, supervised by two or more members of staff. The houses are

usually for boys only or for girls only. For young people who have always lived at home it takes some time to become accustomed to this situation. Of course our scholars miss their homes but they quickly make friends and enjoy being members of their house and school communities.

2. Most students will share a room with another student, where they sleep, study and keep their personal belongings, clothes, books and other items. Most schools will expect their boarders to undertake communal responsibilities within their houses.
3. All boarding schools have rules designed to protect the needs and interests of each one of their members. For example one rule will be that students will be expected to be in their own rooms by a particular time at night and will be required to be quiet so that others may sleep. Another rule will be that students are not allowed to smoke or consume alcohol. Students in boarding schools are not normally permitted to seek or obtain paid employment outside school. At home rules of this sort are probably unnecessary. Our experience is that these rules do not usually create difficulties for students, but we must emphasise that students need to be willing to accept them – otherwise they should decline the scholarship.
4. In most schools (but not all) students wear a uniform during teaching hours and for special occasions. Schools will send full information about this to those who are selected for scholarships and there is no need for parents to spend much money on these items before the students leave for the UK.
5. An important difference is that students in Britain study far fewer academic subjects. This applies to all the present examination systems in the UK – A Levels, the IB (International Baccalaureate), Scottish Highers and Advanced Higher and the Cambridge Pre-University Examination. Students usually take four or perhaps five main subjects (from 15-20 different possibilities), plus a subsidiary subject and/or a general studies course.

In other words, HMC Projects scholars will study a smaller number of subjects in greater depth than they would have done at home. The consequence is that they will think more deeply about the subject, rather than just study to absorb information. Of fundamental importance is the fact that they will be speaking, listening, reading and writing in English all the time, so that their command of English will develop enormously during their time in the UK. When they are selected and assigned to their schools, they will become actively involved in the selection of their course of studies, with full information supplied by their school.

6. Another important difference is that, whereas many European schools aim to provide only teaching in the academic subjects, British boarding schools offer also a wide range of other activities which give opportunity for students to develop sporting or other talents. For example, many schools offer excellent opportunities for music with orchestras and choirs. All schools offer drama and debating. Facilities for sport are excellent. Scholars can be assured that they will be able to enjoy themselves besides working hard. It is indeed important that they do make time for these other activities since these contribute to the lasting friendships which are for many the most important feature of the year in Britain.

7. **The Scholarship is initially for one year only.** Although many former HMC Scholars have stayed on for a second year, this is entirely at the discretion of the school; and some former scholars have then gone on to university in the UK. However the scholarship does not carry with it the opportunity to study at a British university.
8. It is important, therefore, that students should consider carefully whether or not they would wish to accept a scholarship from HMC Projects to study in the UK for one year. They should find out from local universities and from their own schools which examinations or courses of study (if any) will be necessary if they are to resume studies at home without disadvantage when they return. In general this has not been a problem for students in the past and certainly the benefits of the year in the UK have far outweighed any disadvantages, although a few students have needed an extra year on their return to their own schools.

### **Eligibility**

1. To be eligible for the HMC Project Scholarship a student should be sixteen years old and not older than seventeen years and six months on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017, i.e. a student's date of birth must be between 1st March 2000 and 1st September 2001.
2. HMC Projects Full Scholarships are intended to benefit those whose parents cannot afford to pay full United Kingdom boarding school fees. Schools participating in the Scheme consider this to be part of how they offer public benefit. HMC Projects has therefore decided that the combined parental income of applicants must not exceed £30,000 as assessed during 2016.

**The parents of applicants must sign a declaration that their combined annual income during 2016 will not have exceeded the equivalent of £30,000.**

Applicants, whose combined parental income exceeds £30,000 during 2016 and so who are not eligible for full scholarships, are welcome to apply for a Reduced Fee Scholarship.

3. The parents of applicants invited to interview must also complete a separate financial declaration form.
4. A student may not accept an HMC Projects scholarship if he or she is holding a place at another British Independent school.

## **After Selection**

We shall aim to inform successful candidates that we intend to offer them a scholarship by the end of February 2017 or the beginning of March 2017.

Two more things have to happen:

1. Parents will be asked to return the attached form, indicating that they have understood how the scholarships are awarded and that they agree to their son or daughter taking up the scholarship in the school which has awarded it.
2. We have to wait until the school has agreed to accept our nominated scholar.

**Until both have happened we cannot guarantee that a successful scholar will be placed.**

Scholars will therefore not learn which school they will attend before April 2017, since we have to await the outcomes of all the interviews before we select the right school for each of the selected scholars and also obtain the agreement of the schools to accept our nomination. In April we shall write with the details of the school and with further procedural information. The school will also get in touch at this time and will normally send a prospectus of the school together with any formal documents for signature.

(Some unsuccessful students who perform very well at interview may have their names added to a list of reserves. Although it is very unusual for a full scholarship place to become available, all reserve candidates are offered the opportunity to apply for a reduced fee scholarship along with those specifically selected by the interviewers for a reduced scholarship. There is a degree of choice of school for these students and the schools will choose their preferred applicants from those who apply. Reduced fee scholars pay partial fees to the school: typically, 20-25% of full fees. They do not pay an administrative fee and so receive no bursary or any other benefits from HMC Projects. They are however invited to the Orientation Course.)

## **Travelling to the UK and to the new School**

**The Open Society Fund** will coordinate travel arrangements to the UK.

Most HMC Projects scholars will travel to the UK on or around Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016, when our three day Orientation course in Cambridge will commence, but some will travel before that date because the school year starts earlier in their schools. We shall confirm the exact dates at a later stage.

The students flying to Britain on or around 1<sup>st</sup> September, and also some students who will be flying from Edinburgh or Glasgow following the earlier commencement of their terms in Scottish schools, will be met at the airport and taken to Cambridge. A few students will travel directly to Cambridge from their schools in England.

**The Orientation Course** is the one occasion in the year when we try to get as many of the students on the scheme together in one place. Mr Tony Lawrence, our Student Coordinator, will explain his key role in helping students during their time in

Britain. We explain more fully to our scholars the way in which British schools function, including the nature and shape of the academic curriculum, and we provide guidance as to how to make the most of their opportunities. Through discussion groups and informal conversation during meals and throughout the course, there will be frequent opportunities for students to raise issues and ask questions.

At the end of the Orientation Course careful arrangements will have been made for each student to travel on to his or her school. The cost of such travel is met by HMC Projects. Students will be fully informed about their journeys and they will know who will meet them on arrival.

If for any reason a student is not able to attend the orientation course (usually because of term dates), we shall ensure that he or she is well briefed before travelling to the UK.

### **The Shape of the School Year**

The school year in Britain is divided into three terms, with holidays at Christmas, Easter and in the summer. At the end of each term the school will ensure that the student knows the arrangements for travelling home and for returning to the UK after the holiday. Parents have full responsibility for our scholars during school holidays.

In addition, most schools close for a half-term break in the middle of the term. The length of this break will vary from school to school – from a few days to a maximum of two weeks. At these times a member of the school staff (the Contact Person) will undertake the responsibility of making suitable arrangements for the student during the half-term break. This member of staff will contact parents to ensure that they agree with these half-term arrangements. **On the Parental Consent Form attached to this information, you will see that parents are asked to authorise the School's Contact Person to make half-term arrangements on their behalf.**

### **Medical**

HMC Projects asks parents of applicants to sign a Health declaration – see below.

Schools will ask parents to provide information relating to any previous or current medical condition, physical or psychological, from which their child suffers. Schools will hope to be able to welcome students with any controllable condition but must be informed of it beforehand. Schools have the right not to accept students into a residential community if the medical condition could cause extreme difficulties and had not been declared in advance. Parents should not worry about this but schools may wish to seek further information in some cases so that they can be sure that they can give the necessary medical support to students.

Schools will expect all new students to be adequately and currently protected by immunisation against MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella), Polio and Tetanus.

If you hold a passport from a EEA country you will be entitled to all the benefits of the UK's National Health Service.

### **Financial**

We charge an **administrative fee of £1,750**, payable to HMC Projects by parents of all HMC Projects scholars as a necessary contribution to the funding of such

expenses as interviews, orientation course, student bursaries and half term support. The latest date for payment is **1<sup>st</sup> July 2017**. **Thereafter, this fee is not refundable.**

We must emphasise that the cost of living in Britain is much higher than at home.

The full scholarship awarded by the school to your son/daughter will cover all tuition fees and residential boarding fees including meals and laundry during term time. However, there are likely to be some extras that will be added to a termly account presented to parents by the school at the end of each term, to be paid before the start of the following term. This might include such things as weekend trips away from the school site, certain stationery requirements and specialist activities which are not part of the school's core curriculum. It is impossible to give a precise figure for such items, as much will depend upon the individual school and the choices of your son/daughter. On average parents might expect this termly account to be in the region of £50-£100 per term. Students will receive advice and guidance both from their school and from HMC Projects as to how they can keep such costs to an absolute minimum.

At the end of each term all students are expected to return home. This will mean that parents will need to budget for a minimum of 3 return flights per year. Schools also have a half term holiday in each of the three terms when the school will close for at least a week. Students will not be able to remain at school during this shorter break. They can return home during the half term holiday or they can stay in the UK with family friends/relatives, friends from school or, in the Autumn (October) and Spring (February) half term holidays, they can join one of the holidays arranged by HMC Projects. These holidays carry a 50% subsidy from HMC Projects and will cost approximately £150 per week. Parents and students will decide whether it is cheaper to return home or to join one of the HMC Projects holidays. Travel costs to and from school to the nearest airport will also need to be taken onto account. All travel costs can be kept to a minimum by booking tickets well in advance. Internal travel in the UK is cheaper with the purchase of a Young Person's Rail or Coach Card. Your son/daughter will be given advice about how to purchase these cards upon arrival in the UK.

To help with these expenses and particularly to assist your son/daughter when they first arrive at the school, HMC Projects provides each student with a £300 Bursary Fund which is paid into an account at the school to be used as necessary and appropriate by each student. Of course this will not cover the whole year and parents should be prepared for the additional expenses during the course of the year as indicated above.

Towards the end of the first year in the UK your school may wish to offer a second year's scholarship to your son or daughter. If that happens, the financial and other terms, under which the scholarship is extended, will be entirely at the school's discretion. Parents should be aware that there will be no HMC Projects Administration Fee to pay for the second year. However, HMC Projects will not be able to offer any financial support for this year and students will not have access to the HMC Projects subsidised holidays at half term.

### **A Commitment for scholars and parents alike**

In our '**Information for Students**' document we emphasise that acceptance of the HMC Projects scholarship represents a commitment, not least **because it is a scholarship which would otherwise have been won by another very deserving candidate. It also represents a very substantial amount of money given that**

**full boarding school fees at an United Kingdom independent boarding school now cost around if not more than £30,000 p.a.**

It follows that parents must fully support their child's application. Being separated for a large part of the year will, in most cases, be a new experience for parents and children alike. Every HMC Projects scholar is entitled to come to the UK confident that he or she is there with the full support of parents.

For the vast majority of our students, the HMC Projects scholarship has been a wonderfully positive, fulfilling and enjoyable experience. This is because they have met the opportunities and the challenges with enthusiasm and commitment.



## **Summary of Responsibilities**

- **The Open Society Foundation**

Administers the scholarship scheme in Slovakia.  
Provides support and advice before departure.  
Is responsible for communicating financial arrangements to parents.

- **The School**

Provides a full scholarship for tuition, food and accommodation.  
Accepts responsibility for the student when the school is in session.  
Has full authority in regard to the student when the school is in session and keeps in contact with the student's parents.

- **HMC Projects**

Coordinates the programme in the UK.  
Works closely with **The Open Society Foundation**  
Arranges for the students to be met on arrival in the UK.  
Arranges an Orientation Course during the first few days.  
Arranges and funds the transport of students from the Orientation Course to their schools.  
Provides a Bursary of £300 to each HMC Projects scholar.  
Provides help in making half-term arrangements, including supervised stays in youth hostels.  
Provides financial assistance, when necessary, for attendance of field trips, cultural visits, etc.

- **Parents**

Sign an agreement with the School accepting the normal conditions of the School.  
Declare that their combined annual income during 2016 will not exceed **£30,000**.  
Complete a separate financial declaration form if their son/daughter is invited for interview.  
Sign a Consent Form authorising the Contact Person appointed by the School to make arrangements for mid-term breaks and any other times when the School is not in session.  
Parents are responsible for their sons/daughters during the school holidays at Christmas and Easter and will, unless otherwise agreed with HMC Projects, meet travel costs for return journeys at these and other times.  
Parents will pay the termly 'Extras' bill charged by the School and meet such personal costs of their son/daughter as are not funded by HMC Projects.  
Parents pay a fee of £1,750 to HMC Projects. This payment is due by 1st July 2017 at the latest. Thereafter the fee is not refundable.

## HMC PROJECTS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

### PARENTS' CONSENT FORM

**This Consent Form must be signed by the parents of a student, who has been offered a scholarship. This form should be returned to The Open Society Fund (who will pass it on to HMC Projects)**

To The Director, HMC Projects in Central and Eastern Europe

**Name of student .....**

**Country: SLOVAKIA**

I have understood the paper dated September 2016, giving details of the general arrangements for my son or daughter to take up a scholarship at a school in the United Kingdom.

I confirm that combined parental income during 2016 will not exceed the equivalent of **£30,000**.

I give my provisional agreement for my son/daughter to be nominated to a school for a scholarship for the academic year starting September 2017 under the arrangements set out in the paper from HMC Projects and I understand that I shall subsequently be asked by the school to sign the normal forms of agreement with them.

If my son or daughter is offered and accepts a scholarship I agree to pay the administrative fee of £1750 to HMC. An invoice will be sent in March 2017 and payment is due at the latest by 1st July 2017.

I agree that the Contact Person nominated by the School may act on my behalf to make suitable arrangements for my son/daughter when the school is closed during term-time. These arrangements may include independent travel in Great Britain.

#### **Your son's/daughter's HEALTH**

Please answer the following questions and offer any extra information or detail which may be relevant.

- Is your son/daughter in good health? Yes/No
- Is he/she is currently protected by immunisation from MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella, Polio and Tetanus).

Yes/No

- During the past five years has he/she received hospital treatment for any operation or condition?

Yes/No

If yes please give details.....

- Does he / she have any medical conditions?

Yes/No

If yes please give details.....

- Is your son/daughter at present receiving medical or psychological treatment for any condition, except those named above?

Yes/No

If yes please give details.....

- Does he/she have any medical or psychological problem known to you which may require specialist or hospital treatment?

Yes/No

If yes please give details.....

Signed by parents or legal guardian .....

.....

Please PRINT name(s) .....

.....

E-mail address(es) .....

.....

Date .....