



St. Catherine's
RC Primary School



SPANISH EXCHANGE

Programme Information Booklet 2027



Nigrán, Galicia • Manchester

Information for Year 5 families considering participation in our long-running cultural exchange.



Love

Faith

Respect

Perseverance

Compassion

Inspiration

Welcome to our Spanish Exchange

A special partnership between St Catherine's and our two partner schools in Nigrán.



This booklet provides key information to help families decide whether they and their child would like to take part in the 2027 Spanish Exchange programme.



Please note: the information in this booklet is created from knowledge of our long-standing Spanish Exchange programme in previous years. However, there may be changes to information as required to ensure the most effective running of our programme each year.

A long-standing school tradition

2027 will be the 19th year of our Spanish Exchange programme. It was established by Mrs Taylor, who retired last academic year. This is the first year the exchange will run without Mrs Taylor and Mrs Chidgey, so we ask families to bear with us as we organise this year's programme.

Aims of the cultural exchange

- To develop links with international schools that enrich children's language development.
- To foster friendship between two communities and develop cultural understanding.

The Spanish Exchange is an incredibly special part of life at St Catherine's. It gives children opportunities to use Spanish for a real purpose, build friendships and experience another culture first-hand.

The exchange has two parts

1 • Nigrán

St Catherine's children travel to Nigrán with a parent/carer for one week. Predicted timing: mid-late April 2027.

2 • Manchester

Spanish children visit Manchester for one week and stay with host families. Predicted timing: mid-late May 2027.



Part 1: The trip to Nigrán

Predicted dates: one week in mid–late April 2027.

Parent/carer accompaniment

A parent or carer aged 18 or over must accompany your child on the trip. Children stay with their parent/carer throughout the visit when not in school.

Accommodation

- Accommodation is at Playa de America campsite.
- Chalets have basic cooking facilities, including a hob, cutlery, crockery and a fridge.
- Most chalets have two bedrooms. The expectation is that each parent-and-child pair shares accommodation with another parent-and-child pair.

During the school day

- Each child will be paired with a Spanish child who will be their penfriend.
- Children spend school days in the school attended by their penfriend; they will not visit both partner schools during their time there.
- Teachers are responsible for children during the school day when they are in school. Parents are responsible for their children outside this time.
- There are usually some activities planned for the weekend too.



Preparing your child for a cultural exchange

We encourage children to embrace the experience fully. Mealtimes, bedtimes, food and the home environment may be different from what they are used to. Please discuss these differences with your child before the trip so they are not unexpected challenges.



Part 2: The return visit to Manchester

Predicted dates: one week in mid–late May 2027.

The return leg is an important part of the exchange. Spanish children visit St Catherine's, experience life in Manchester and stay with English host families.

Hosting

- There is an expectation that families who travel to Nigrán will then host a Spanish child on the return visit.
- All adults living in a host household will be required to complete a DBS check.
- Support is also needed to host Spanish teachers.
- Lots of fun and enriching activities involving the whole school take place during the week.

Activities outside school

- Activities in school are organised by school staff; activities outside school are the responsibility of parents.
- Parents must work together to organise out-of-school activities.
- Plans **MUST** allow all Year 5 children and parents to be involved, not only families hosting a Spanish child or those who travelled to Nigrán.
- Parents are strongly recommended to fundraise in advance so Spanish children can take part in different activities outside of the school day during their visit (the fundraising will pay for their participation, food, etc).

An exchange for the whole year group

The return visit should feel inclusive. Activities planned by parents must be open to all Year 5 children and parents.



Costs and flights

Costs

- All costs are approximate and based on estimates from the previous academic year.
- 2026 cost of a two-bedroom chalet for one week: £239
- Coach travel between Porto Airport and Nigrán is usually kindly covered by the two Spanish schools.
- Food and drink are generally reasonably priced in Nigrán.
- There is a supermarket very close to the campsite, which can help keep food and drink costs lower.
- Flight costs can vary greatly.



Flights

- We fly from Manchester to Porto. Nigrán is approximately 90 minutes from Porto Airport.
- Flight costs vary greatly and are outside the school's control. We work to identify the best options possible, but choices are often limited.
- **Please do not begin searching for Manchester-to-Porto flights for April before dates are confirmed, as searches can contribute to prices rising.**
- Once confirmed dates are shared, families may book straight away. Prices can then rise and continue to fluctuate.
- Parents are fully responsible for booking their own flights, including ensuring all booking details are correct.
- Flights can sometimes arrive into Porto or Manchester very late, or depart very early.
- If the cost of flights is the one thing preventing you and your child from taking part in the Nigrán leg, please speak to Mrs Quiligotti or Miss Jones.

Flights costs are not within our control

We understand that the cost of flights can be one of the most frustrating aspects of the Spanish Exchange programme. Unfortunately, flight prices are entirely outside of the school's control and can fluctuate considerably, particularly once demand increases.

We will always do our best to identify and share the most suitable flight options available. However, we ask parents to please be understanding that we cannot influence or guarantee flight prices, either before or after the exchange dates are confirmed.

Flight booking and commitment

You do not need to book flights immediately in order to commit to the programme.

Important: wait for confirmed dates

Please do not search for or book flights until the school has confirmed the exchange dates. Parents are responsible for their own flight bookings and the school cannot accept responsibility for incorrect bookings or changes in flight prices.

When dates are confirmed

- You may book your flights as soon as the confirmed dates are shared.
- You can also choose to wait and book later, up until the trip, although prices may fluctuate.
- A parent commitment form will be collected from all families who wish to participate. This will be treated as your formal commitment to the exchange programme.

What parents arrange themselves

Flights Booking the correct flights and passenger details.	Check-in Completing airline check-in requirements.
Luggage Selecting and paying for any required luggage.	Travel documents Ensuring passports and any other required documents are correct and valid.

Please remember that the exchange involves international travel. Families are responsible for checking current travel requirements relevant to their own circumstances.



Nigrán and our partner schools

A coastal community in Galicia, northern Spain.

Nigrán is in the region of Galicia in northern Spain. It is on the coast and is an incredibly beautiful place to visit, with many lovely places nearby.

Our partner schools

- CPI Palacios
- Mallón



One penfriend • one school

Each St Catherine's child is paired with a Spanish penfriend. During the Nigrán visit, children are based in the school attended by their penfriend rather than moving between both partner schools.

What makes the exchange special?

Language

Children use Spanish in a meaningful, real-life context.

Friendship

Children build relationships with pupils from another community.

Culture

Families experience different routines, food, traditions and ways of life.

Community

The partnership brings together children, parents, staff and our wider school communities.



Expectations for participating families

The success of the exchange depends on families engaging fully with both parts of the programme.

- Parents and children are expected to engage, appreciate the experience and make an effort. The hospitality shown by our Spanish families is generally very generous, however, as with our school families, every family is different.
- Families travelling to Nigrán are expected to commit to hosting on the return visit.
- All adults living in the household during the return visit must complete the required DBS checks.
- Parents are responsible for organising activities outside school during the return visit.
- All Year 5 children and parents must be able to take part in parent-organised return-visit activities.
- Parents are highly recommended to fundraise to help pay for activities for Spanish children during their Manchester visit.
- Parents must be transparent with one another, and with the school office, about money raised and how it is spent.

A shared commitment

Taking part is more than travelling to Spain. It includes supporting the return visit, hosting, safeguarding requirements and working collaboratively with other Year 5 families.

Please consider before committing

Can your family commit to both legs of the exchange and the responsibilities that come with them? Please use this booklet to discuss the experience together before returning the commitment form.



International travel

Parents are responsible for checking and meeting all travel requirements for themselves and their child.

- Parents are responsible for booking flights, checking in and booking luggage.
- Please check current government travel advice and make sure you have all documentation required for travel.
- Ensure your passport is valid and check any passport-validity requirements for travel to Spain.
- If you have a different surname from your child, you are advised to carry a copy of your child's birth certificate and may also need a letter of consent from the other parent, a marriage certificate, or other evidence of your relationship to your child.
- You must make your own enquiries about any specific travel circumstances, including visa requirements.
- Parents must arrange appropriate medical/travel insurance for themselves and their child.

Please verify your own circumstances

Travel requirements can vary and may change. School cannot be responsible for individual travel documentation or for information that later proves to be inaccurate. Families must make their own checks before travelling.



Parent commitment and meetings

Formal commitment is followed by further information and preparation meetings.

The commitment form

- A form will be sent to parents asking whether you wish to participate in the Nigrán leg of the Spanish Exchange.
- You do not need to have booked flights in order to commit.
- The parental commitment form will be treated as your formal commitment to participating in the programme, and subsequent planning will be based on the responses received.

Parent meetings

- Additional meetings will take place before the Nigrán trip.
- We ask parents to prioritise attendance wherever possible.
- Written information will be shared, but it cannot fully capture the conversations and detail provided during an in-person meeting.

Please ask questions

The purpose of this booklet is to help you make an informed decision. Further meetings will give families opportunities to discuss arrangements in more detail before travel.



Penfriends and preparation

Every child is part of the international partnership, whether or not they travel to Nigrán.

Penfriends

- All children will be assigned a penfriend, whether or not they participate in the Nigrán leg.
- Generally, each Spanish child is paired with two St Catherine's children: one who is travelling to Spain and one who is not.
- Children travelling to Nigrán will be based in the school attended by their penfriend.
- Your child's penfriend will often stay with you on the return visit, but this is not guaranteed. Depending on which Spanish children travel to Manchester, it may be another child your family met in Nigrán.

Before the exchange

- Children communicate with their penfriends during Spanish lessons.
- Children produce work to send to our partner schools, sharing information such as hobbies and family members. Parent consent will be requested before letters or other work are shared with penfriends.
- Google Meets are usually arranged so children can meet virtually and speak Spanish to one another. These may include rehearsed Spanish phrases or sentences and Spanish songs.

What if my child doesn't go to Nigrán?

The Spanish Exchange is about much more than the trip to Spain. Every child has a special, enriching experience as part of the programme, whether they travel to Nigrán or remain in Manchester.

During the week of the Nigrán visit, children who remain in school enjoy a special off-timetable week, with a range of exciting and engaging activities planned. These may include workshops, special projects, visits and trips out, giving children opportunities to enjoy experiences that are different from their usual school week. We ask parents to make a contribution towards the costs of these activities.



When our Spanish friends make the return visit to Manchester, all children are involved in the exchange experience. Activities are planned inclusively across the year group, and we make it clear that children and families should be included regardless of whether they travelled to Nigrán.

Ultimately, travelling to Spain is just one part of our wider Spanish Exchange programme. Our aim is for every child to benefit from the friendships, cultural experiences and exciting opportunities that make the exchange such a special part of life at St Catherine's.



Before you decide

A quick summary of the main commitments for families.

Commitment	What this means
Travel	A parent/carer aged 18+ accompanies the child to Nigrán for one week.
Accommodation	Parent and child stay together, usually sharing a two-bedroom chalet with another parent-and-child pair. This is booked through school and then payment is made to school.
Flights	Parents book and pay for their own flights and related arrangements after dates are confirmed.
Hosting	Families travelling to Nigrán are expected to host a Spanish child during the Manchester return visit.
Safeguarding	Adults living in host homes complete the required DBS checks.
Return activities	Parents work together to organise inclusive out-of-school activities for the return visit.
Fundraising	Parents are strongly encouraged to fundraise for activities for the Spanish children. Please involve all Year 5 families in this process.
Commitment	The parent commitment form is treated as a formal commitment to the programme.
Meetings	Parents are asked to prioritise attendance at pre-trip information meetings.
	Next steps A parent commitment form will follow, and further meetings will take place for families who choose to participate. Flight details will be shared this half-term and flights can be booked once these details have been sent to parents.

