

FAQs

Note that all of the following 'facts' are based on previous trips, but the nature of the South Africa project is that it changes every year. Therefore, these answers should only be used only as a rough guide.

When will the trip be?

In previous years, the trip has started around mid-July and ran for 6-10 weeks.

Accommodation?

This is one of the most variable aspects of the trip but is taken care of by college. Accommodation is of a good standard. In previous years, Grahamstown accommodation has included staff housing at St Andrews College, a rented flat, and accommodation at the College of Transfiguration. At St Matthew's High School, Keiskammahoek, which is a boarding school, accommodation is always in school facilities.

What will I be teaching?

Generally, you will be matched to a teaching activity based on your skills and all qualifications you have already. Having completed a GCSE in a subject is enough to help the younger students with that area and you may be asked to fill in shortages the schools are experiencing at the time of your trip. Every year maths and English skills have been in high demand.

Age range of students?

You may find yourself teaching a wide range of students. In previous years, Chad's volunteers have taught in primary schools and secondary schools, but it has more often been secondary education. The schooling system in South Africa means pupils do not advance a grade until they pass it, so each class may be of mixed ages.

How much teaching responsibility?

We have been trying to focus the trip more and more on teaching support rather than being the main teacher at our partner schools. However, due to the needs and, often, lack of resources, there is a strong probability you will take on classes of your own. This has been the case in previous years. When not leading classes, in previous years, students have taken either the top or bottom set of pupils to offer additional support. They have also run after school clubs based on further study or extra-curricular activities, such as exam revision classes, President's award training, and football.

Free time?

You should find yourself with some free time during the trip, and in the last couple of years there has been free time built into the schedule (the length of which has been between a long weekend and a full week). In previous years, volunteers have had weekends and evenings off as well. There are plenty of ways in which to spend your spare time during the trip. In the past, volunteers have gone hiking, gone on beach trips, visited Hogsback, and often used the longer period for visits to Cape town.

Is teaching in English?

Teaching in South Africa is in English by law, however for the majority of students, this is not their home language.

Fundraising?

In previous years, volunteers have been asked to raise an amount approximately equal to the costs of flights (but they are booked by St. Chad's College, not by volunteers) and an allowance for subsistence has been provided by college. This means the cost to each volunteer is in the region of the price of return flights from the UK to Port Elizabeth. Remember that you will be part of a team when it comes to fundraising, and fundraising ideas in the past have included pub quizzes, bake sales and other sponsored activities.

Contacts in South Africa?

Over the last few years the main contact for St Chad's College in South Africa has been Tim Barnard. He has welcomed several generations of Chad's students, and puts in effort to get to know them all. He acts as a first contact if there are any issues on the trip and has never let us down.

WiFi / connection to outside world?

You will most likely find it harder to get connected during your trip in South Africa than at home, but it depends on your accommodation, and there is usually some connection to be found somewhere. In Grahamstown students have had access to WiFi at St Andrews College and in internet cafés. In Keiskammahoek there is a satellite link that provides internet access to the school. Volunteers can use this internet access, but in one previous year it wasn't functioning, so volunteers were left without internet connection for some time.

What happened after the trip?

We are currently in the process of trying to build stronger relations with our partners in South Africa. Part of this in the future may involve getting Chad's students to run skype tutorials with students during the time our volunteers aren't present. Therefore, if you are returning to Chad's after you come back from the trip we hope that you will maintain involvement with the trip, helping to further develop the program. This may involve advertising the trip in college; lending support in preparation and fundraising to the next group of volunteers; writing blog posts for the college website and generally helping when needed.