

4. Determine the nature of the twinning arrangements to pursue.

To what type and level of activity will you commit yourself? Do you envisage activity throughout the year or a once-a-year festival or visit? If your twinning will be limited to written communication, will this be by mail or does your institution have the capacity to use electronic messaging? Will your twinning include student exchanges?

Which grade levels or special activities such as musical, artistic or athletic activities will form the basis for interchange?

Identify the personality of your institution. Twinning will work best with a counterpart that shares your interests as well as the level of commitment to the relationship.

Find out whether your municipality, province, school board or local Chamber of Commerce is already twinned with Japan. If so, you have a ready-made opportunity to facilitate your initiative and to complement on-going activities.

Review the resource requirements in light of the decisions made on the types of activities to pursue. Costs will be relatively modest for written communication -postage, some gifts, perhaps a video of the school.

5. Seek the necessary approval from your school system.
6. If there is no local twinning already in place, determine who or what organization can assist you in finding a partner.

If you do not have contacts in Japan, arranging twinning can be difficult. If you are in British Columbia, the International Division of your Ministry of Education will assist you. If you are in Alberta, ask the National and International Education Division of your Department of Education for the brochure and application forms for the Alberta International School Partnership Program.

If you are in another province, you will have to do a bit more work. Perhaps someone in your board has participated in the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program or a study tour and could put you in touch with a school which would be right for you. The JET Alumni Association might be of assistance to you. Or contact the Canadian Embassy in Japan or the Japanese diplomatic mission closes to you, but make sure you provide the information they will need to help make the best match.

The area responsibilities for Japanese missions in Canada is as follows:

Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces
Consulate-General, Montreal

National Capital Region
Embassy of Japan, Ottawa

Ontario
(except National Capital Region)
Consulate-General, Toronto

Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories
Consulate-General, Edmonton

British Columbia and Yukon Territory
Consulate-General, Vancouver

7. Once you have the name of your partner, decide what you will send as an opening greeting such as: photos; yearbooks; some school pins, crests or flags; perhaps a videotape of school activities or an audiotape with messages from key players; some information on your community, province and Canada more generally. There is a tradition of exchange of gifts in Japan which is important to bear in mind.

Then, begin your partnership.

