FAQ for Counsellors

GENERAL

Who is LEOlingo Süd?

LEOlingo Süd is a small, family-owned company, originally founded in 2006 as LEOlingo by Andrea Baer and Sabine Goerner (now North). LEOlingo Süd, based in Bavaria, southern Germany, and run by Andrea, offers both day and overnight English and French language camps to German children between the ages of 7 and 16. The camps are not about overloading the children with grammar and vocabulary, but about helping the children to speak and understand the language in everyday situations through games and fun activities lead in the target language.

To find out more, click here to see some of our past and present counsellors talk about their experience at LEOlingo Süd.

How does the application process work?

The first step in the application process is to complete our detailed application form which you will find on our website and email it back to Andrea (baer@leo-lingo.de) together with a photograph of yourself. Added reference letters from former employers are always helpful. If we believe you would be a good fit for our LEOlingo Süd programme, the next step is to complete a video interview. We aim to let all applicants know results of the interview within approximately 3 weeks.

Do we need a permit/visa and which other documents do we need to send in?

If you are successful, you will need to send us a copy of your passport, a police check (not older than one year), a valid first aid certificate, a copy of your visa or work permit (if you are a non EU-citizen and already have one), and a copy of your international health insurance (you can obtain one for the duration of your stay). Once we have all the necessary documents from you, we will send you your contract for the summer, which will need to be signed and sent back to Andrea.

If you are a non-EU citizen (including applicants from GB), it is important that your passport is valid for at least 3-6 months after the end of your employment with LEOlingo Süd – you should check the exact specifications with your local authorities. You will also need to apply for a work permit, a working holiday visa or a residence permit with work permit ('Aufenthaltstitel'). From 2025 on the costs for that will be about 120€. LEOlingo Süd is happy to cover half of these costs. As some consulates or employees abroad are not familiar with the necessary documents or the specific work/visa we require, we have come to an agreement with our local foreigners' office that we will prepare and hand in all necessary documents for the work permit by email before your arrival, so that they can start checking everything. Canadians, Americans, British, Australians and New Zealanders are allowed to come to Germany as tourists, without a visa, and apply for the visa once they have arrived. If you ae planning to travel before your work period, it would be ideal to come to Neumarkt i.d. Opf. in the beginning of your trip, so that we can organise everything together and give them time to prepare the Aufenthaltstitel. The visa application process takes a while, and we need you in person to start the process (fingerprints, passport, photo of you). After initializing the process, you are free to travel. Please note, that you may stay in the Schengen area for 90 days within a 180 days period. You need to apply for a different work permit, if you want to stay longer.

More detailed information will be provided once you have accepted your job offer.

What happens if I don't pass the training week?

Almost everybody passes the training week - you are there to learn our programme and how to deal with certain situations that may or may not arise. If you are willing to learn and to do the job and if we can see a development of your skills, there is absolutely no need to worry. Nevertheless, if you behave in an unacceptable way, if you are not able to take appropriate responsibility for the safety of the children, or if you confront us with a disruptive attitude, we cannot take the risk of employing you further.

In this unlikely case, you would be responsible for covering the costs of board and lodging on your own for the rest of your time in Germany, as well as the costs for your trip home. We can, however, help you to organise a host family to stay with until your flight home.

Are we insured?

As most counsellors have/require their own health insurance, we don't have a general health insurance policy for all counsellors. If you need a work permit (non-EU citizens), you are required to provide proof of health insurance for the duration of your stay in Germany. In the past, many of our counsellors have used this company (click "Provisit Germany"), if you want to get an idea of prices. But even if you are an EU citizen and health insurance is not required you should be sure to have coverage with either your own insurance or an extra insurance in case you need to see a doctor here, or if you have to go to a hospital, as the costs can be quite high.

LEOlingo Süd has standard liability insurance for the campsites, which will cover things that get damaged. In the case of a child breaking something, the child's family normally has insurance for themselves, and we use this insurance (as we have to pay a certain sum on our own). LEOlingo Süd also has an insurance for accidents, which covers kids and counsellors.

What are the working hours?

The working hours for a day counsellor (at Day Camps and at Overnight Camps) are from 9am to 5pm, plus any time needed for preparation and cleaning up at the end of the day/camp.

If you are a night counsellor at an Overnight Camp, you are responsible for the children from 5pm to 9am the next day. Each evening, the night counsellor(s) runs a 2 ½ hour evening programme (7 – 9.30pm). During the rest of your working hours you are in charge of general supervision of the kids, getting them ready for bed/breakfast, caring for them in case of illness or homesickness, organising meals etc. Night counsellors are also responsible for organising the Happy-ning, our end of week show. Every counsellor is generally a night counsellor only once during each 6-week working period.

Preparation before and after the actual working hours will be necessary, as well as travel times to the next campsite. We also expect team members to help each other out when they are not working, especially at overnight camps.

Do we work every week?

In general, you will get one week off (in special cases, two weeks) during a working period of about six weeks plus training. Many of the counsellors use this opportunity to travel. During this week off, you will not get paid and will have to organise your own accommodation and food (from the first Friday evening on until the second Sunday afternoon).

The work can be very exhausting. At the start you may think that you don't need a week off but, from our past experience, the counsellors are happy after 3 or 4 intensive weeks to have a break. As we can never anticipate all changes/illnesses of counsellors that can happen, we cannot give a definite answer in advance as to exactly which week you will have free.

We might have the option to add you to an experienced team at a school camp before the summer season will start, if you are available before end of July. This would be a training on the job, for which we could only give you a compensation of 100-150 Euro per week plus board and lodging. You will still have to participate at the regular training week before the main summer season.

What information do I get before a camp starts?

Before you come to Germany, you will receive an arrival information pack (with all addresses, dates, telephone numbers, an organisational overview, etc.) and a shortened version of our training handbook.

A few days before each camp each week, you will receive information on your exact place of work, lodging, travel plans from camp to camp, children's names, ages, etc. and an explanation of some mandatory tasks that will need to be done during the week, such as filling out the feedback forms, etc.

Where do the other counsellors come from?

They mostly come from English-speaking countries like USA, Ireland, UK, Canada, but also from French-speaking countries.

I am a native French speaker. Can I work for the whole period?

We only offer French camps for one or two weeks. Those camps take place at the same time and campsite as the English camps. Before and after these French camp weeks, there will be only English camps. All French counsellors will have to be prepared to work as English counsellors before and after the two French weeks. This means, that you need to be bilingual in English and French. Sometimes counsellors who feel more confident in French, might need to be a night counsellor at English overnight camps instead of a day counsellor. Besides this, it should be noted that the training and the communication in the team will be in English.

Do we work at the weekend?

Normally you don't - although most Overnight Camps start on Sunday afternoon/evening, and you will need time to travel to your next campsite and to prepare for the next camp. The campsites can be 1-2 hours away from each other. On the weekends, LEOlingo Süd will cover work-related transportation costs that may occur between the assigned campsites.

During one weekend – after the second week of camp – we might need to organise a mandatory training and feedback weekend where counsellors have the opportunity to give feedback on how the first 2 weeks have gone for them and get feedback from us, as well as learn anything new that they feel they were lacking to make the final weeks at camp run as smoothly as possible.

Where do we stay at the weekends?

LEOlingo Süd provides accommodation for the entire week, also on regular weekends, either at our campsites themselves (in the case of overnight camps), at hostels or with German host families. However, you need to inform us in time (by mid-week), when you need a place to stay on the weekend or if you prefer to travel and organise your own accommodation. If you would prefer to go travelling on your weekends, you are certainly welcome to, but these weekends should be funded solely by the counsellor. If we get no information about your plans by Wednesday, we will assume that you will organise your own accommodation.

For both weekends included in the "week off", counsellors are responsible for their own accommodation and food (from the first Friday evening on to the second Sunday afternoon).

What is there to do in our free time?

There are beautiful towns and areas located around the campsites, such as Munich, Regensburg, Nuremberg, Salzburg, the "Fraenkische Schweiz", the "Fraenkische Seenland" (lake area) and many small, medieval towns (Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Bamberg). Prague is also only approximately 3 hours away from Nuremberg by bus. Many counsellors like to just "hang out" and others go hiking or head for the museums.

How old are the other counsellors?

The counsellors are generally between 19 and 29 years old.

Will I be working with the same people or do the teams change often?

Weekly changes between campsites, as well as work partners, can be expected. All counsellors, even those with no German abilities, are expected to be able to work completely alone with their group of 12 children, but there will be at least two groups per campsite. We try to place at least one German-speaker at each campsite.

Which airport should we arrive at?

The closest airport to where the training will take place (Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz) is Nürnberg (Nuremberg), followed by München (Munich) and Frankfurt. You can also ask for flight and rail combination offers or connection flights from Frankfurt or München to Nürnberg.

Will we be picked up at the airport?

As every counsellor is arriving at different times and places, we are unfortunately not able to pick everyone up. You will receive information on how to arrive at the station where the training week will take place. Once you have arrived at the station, you will be picked up and brought to the training school by LEOlingo Süd.

Are the flight costs covered?

No. We suggest that you take out flight insurance. We cannot cover any tickets that have to be cancelled. Most counsellors "shop" around for their tickets. Many travel before they start to work and come via various routes. It can often be much cheaper to book a flight to London and then use Ryanair (www.ryanair.com) or Easyjet (www.easyjet.com) to fly to Germany.

How is the train travel?

The German train system is generally pretty good - but it can be expensive. If you are planning on buying a ticket for the fast ICE trains, you should book early in advance because they are a lot more expensive on the day (the website is www.bahn.de). There are however also special offers that run constantly and can be bought on the day. For example, in Bavaria the Bayern-Ticket can be used to travel anywhere within Bavaria on the regional trains for one day. If you are travelling between the different states of Germany, you can use the "Quer-Durchs-Land-Ticket". Within the last years the German government offered the Deutschland-Ticket, a monthly ticket for 63 Euro (valid for all regional trains within Germany for a whole month). LEOlingo Süd will purchase it for the month of August for every counsellor – for work and private purposes. You are welcome to subscribe for July or September for your personal objectives (please inform us in that case, so that we can combine the subscription).

Where and how does the training take place?

Our one-week intensive training in summer usually takes place in a school in Neumarkt (Oberpfalz) or a town nearby and consists of both theoretical work and practical work with groups of local German school children. Click here to see some of our past and present counsellors talk about their experience at one of our LEOlingo Süd training weeks. The training week takes place one week before the Bavarian summer break. 2027 our training will start on July 24th. It is obligatory.

What other meetings are required?

We might want to run a follow-up training weekend after the second week of camp. This is a good chance to clear up any problems that might have cropped up and learn new things to make your time at camp more enjoyable.

How much will I get paid?

If you are responsible for the *day* programme, you will get 230 Euro per week, increasing to 270 Euro per week after the second work week, plus accommodation during the whole week as well as board and lodging during the camp week (valued at approximately 300-350 Euro per week). If you are responsible only for the *evening* programme at an Overnight Camp you will get 180 Euro, increasing to 210 Euro per week after the second work week, plus accommodation/board and lodging (valued at approximately 350 Euro per week). In general, each counsellor will be responsible for the evening programme for only one week over the summer period. In case of starting earlier on a Sunday afternoon (all overnight camps), each counsellor will get 30 Euro extra.

The training week is not paid but board and lodging are free.

Am I responsible for my own meals?

At Day Camps you will normally stay with a host family and get breakfast there. Most of the host families also like to have dinner together with their guests each day. If they don't, you can buy your supplies and ask them politely if you could use their kitchen to prepare your own food (in this case, please make sure that everything is cleaned up and left how it was). At all Day Camps you and the kids will get lunch together. It might be that you have to prepare tables, hand out food to the kids or clean dishes with the kids.

At Overnight Camps, you will eat all your meals together with the kids. In case you have specific dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, lactose-intolerant, etc.), please inform us in advance. Normally it is no problem for campsites/host families to prepare vegetarian or lactose-free meals for example, but please be aware that this may not always be the case and you may have to prepare your own meal once in a while.

When will I get paid?

Payment will be made after every week of work in cash (you don't need a German bank account). Alternatively, we will be happy to transfer the money, if you have an account within the EU.

What happens if I cannot work for the whole duration of the German summer break?

It might be possible to arrange an earlier departure date, but this is only possible for a few team members and if we know in advance. You should be aware that in general you are expected to be able to work until the end of the season as the last two camp weeks are normally fully booked. Our counsellor positions are sought after by many university students. We have had the experience that some have to return home by the end of August and nevertheless state that they will be able to work the full period. If suddenly 20% of the counsellors leave earlier than expected, the whole team would suffer. It is almost impossible to find trained last-minute replacements, expensive to cancel camps and it puts pressure on team members having to take over a double workload in the last week or work with an insufficient partner. Please let us know in the interview or at least before you sign the contract, if you need to leave earlier.

Am I required to follow an exact programme?

LEOlingo Süd has a set programme with certain core points/goals, which are mandatory. All counsellors will be provided with a detailed LEOlingo Süd handbook full of activities and programme parts, which will all be taught and discussed in detail during training.

Do I have a choice as to where or with whom I work?

LEOlingo Süd will try to take any personal preferences into account, but it is important to create teams with different skills - for example, one should be able to speak German, one should be male/female, one should be good with sports, etc. It takes a lot of time and thought to prepare the working schedules for the summer. We can't always put everyone with everyone. Some people are better with older children/younger children, some are better at sports/arts and crafts, some are better at overnight camps/day camps, etc. This is why it is not always possible to make last-minute changes or fulfil every counsellor's wish for every week. One change might lead to some others.

Can I choose between Day and Overnight Camps or between day and night programme?

You can tell us your preference. We will try to fulfil everybody's wishes as best we can, but the skills of our whole team need to be taken into consideration to create optimal teams. Everyone is required to work at least once as a night counsellor.

Can I choose my accommodation?

LEOlingo Süd organises accommodation on behalf of counsellors for the entire week and generally we do so according to what is possible in the town where you will be working.

If you would like to travel independently on the weekends, we ask you to tell us by Wednesday latest. Counsellors are then responsible for their own accommodation and meals.

What if I can't speak German?

For the camp itself, you don't need to speak German. However, LEOlingo Süd will only accept counsellors who feel secure enough to 'survive' in a foreign country – alone and together with a group of children. In general, Germans speak some English.

What's different about Germans or Germany?

This is difficult to say as it depends on the person who is asking this question. There are some stereotypes that contain some truth. Examples:

- Germans are very punctual. For working conditions, German punctuality means 15-20 minutes in advance.
- For German host families and landlords, cleanliness is very important. They expect you to return rooms and things in the way they have given them to you – or cleanre. They won't understand if you don't and they would be very upset. The landlords might also check during the day how tidy you are. You should be sure to leave everything neat and tidy before you go outside or have a break.
- You will be expected to ask before using things of your host family, e.g. using their computer/phone or helping yourself to food and drink.
- Germans are very straightforward and therefore sometimes considered as rude. Don't expect a German to swallow his criticism or to say it in a roundabout polite way. They will tell you straight and directly if they do not agree with something you are doing or saying. They will also tell you positive things when they really mean it.
- Germans are not used to and tend not to use extravagant compliments. They are at times more reserved and can appear cooler towards you, however you will also find that a German befriended is a friend for life and a very warm friendship can follow.
- Germans are not prudish. Open showers are normal. In schools, sports centres, swimming halls, there generally won't be a "view protection". Male and female sections are separated so that nobody of the other sex will see you naked.
- It is no problem to embrace a little kid and comfort them when they are hurt or crying. In Germany, people would be surprised if you did not comfort the kid in such a situation. However, we recommend having an extra person with you or a counsellor of the kid's gender.
- Germans are ecological and separate their garbage into many different categories. If you are unsure, ask either your host family, a kid or one of us to clarify how their rubbish system works. There are different rubbish bins; 1. for glass, 2. for paper, 3. for packaging and cartons with a certain sign (the "green point"/"yellow bag", almost every packing has this sign, so it is quite simple) 4. for organic rubbish, and 5. for materials that cannot be recycled (for example ashes, cigarettes).
- Germans are also energy conscious. Lights, heating and water are only turned on during use. Some examples: As soon as they exit the room or the house, lights, radios, TV etc. are turned off. They try to not leave the water running unnecessarily whilst they are showering or brushing their teeth, and they do not take long showers.