

CLAPA

Companions

Creating penpal connections for
young people born with a cleft

Guide for Young People



www.clapa.com



companions@clapa.com

Registered Charity in England and Wales (No. 1108160)
and Scotland (SC041034).



Introduction

CLAPA Companions is a penpal service connecting people born with a cleft aged 6 - 15 through letters, emails, videos and audio messages.

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Good things about having a penpal



It will connect
you with a
new friend

Help you to feel
more positive
about your cleft
journey

You can share experiences (these
could be about your cleft or
something else)

Who can have a penpal?

Anyone who is...



Living in the United Kingdom



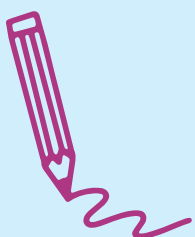
Aged 6-15



Born with a cleft lip and/or palate



Tell us if English is not your first language. This won't stop you from having a penpal.



You don't have to write or type your messages. You can send videos or voice notes if this would be better for you

How it works

1 Fill in our sign up form



2 We will send you details of your penpal



3 **Penpal A** sends the first message to CLAPA



4 CLAPA checks the content



5 CLAPA sends this message to **Penpal B**



6 **Penpal B** receives their message and replies via CLAPA



How it works

7 You can message your penpal for up to 6 months



8 Both penpals decide if they would like to keep in touch outside of CLAPA



9 If either penpal say no, then no contact details will be shared. If both say yes, CLAPA will share your penpals details with you so you can stay in touch



10 You are welcome to sign up to as many Penpal rounds as you like

Your messages



Do:

Be kind and polite in your messages

Share things about your cleft, your hobbies and interests



Don't:

Use unkind language that might upset someone



Checking Messages

Someone from CLAPA will read your message before it gets passed onto your penpal. This is to help keep everyone safe.

Keeping Everyone Safe



Your messages will be private between you, your penpal and the person checking the message.

If we are worried about your safety, the person checking your messages might share them with someone else at CLAPA who will decide what to do next.



What can't be shared

⊗ What cannot be shared ⊗	✓ What to say/send instead ✓
Name of school or a picture of you showing your school logo on your uniform	Talk about your school generally without using the name
Where you live	You can talk about the cleft team who look after you or the nearest city to where you live
Your email address, phone number, gamer IDs or Instagram handle	If you stay in touch outside of CLAPA at the end of the project you might want to share these
Your last name	Just use your first name
Videos, photographs or text containing violent or sexual content	Remember to be kind and considerate in all messages that you send
Using swear words and other language that might offend someone	Remember to be kind and considerate in all messages that you send

Ways to send a message

There are four ways to create a penpal message: it's completely up to you which you use. The options are:

Handwritten Letter



You can write a letter and post it to the CLAPA office, or scan it in and email it to us

You would have something look forward to in the post but this might take longer than sending an email



Email or Digital Letter

Send an email to CLAPA that we will pass on to your penpal



Video Message

Create a video message or recording to say hi to your penpal



Audio Message

Send a voice recording or audio message, so you can chat to your penpal without being on camera

The Technical Bits



To send a message by email, please send to:
companions@clapa.com



To send a message by post, please send this to:

**CLAPA Companions, CLAPA, The Green House,
244-254 Cambridge Heath Road, LONDON, E2 9DA**



To send a large file, that's too big to attach to an email, such as a video, you can use one of these two free file-sharing services: [OneDrive](#) or [WeTransfer](#). Here's a [guide to using OneDrive](#) and a [guide to using WeTransfer](#).



Get in touch at **companions@clapa.com** if you need any help

Conversation starters

- How old are you
- Share something about yourself
- Your favourite sports, games, music, YouTuber, TV show, animals, hobbies
- Somewhere you've been on holiday
- Your family, friends and pets
- What you do and don't like about school
- Something you've done that you're proud of
- Something you've done that was scary
- Something you've done that was really fun
- Something you're looking forward to
- What job you want to do when you're older
- A country you'd love to visit
- A celebrity you'd love to meet
- What type of cleft you were born with
- The best thing about you!