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Last Updated: Friday, 23 June 2006, 08:22 GMT 09:22 UK

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Ticket scam pupils travel to game

Youngsters from a Portsmouth school who were turned away from a World Cup match after an alleged ticket scam are on their way back to Germany.

Pupils from Mayville High School had to return disappointed last week after they arrived at a stadium but the tickets had not been supplied.

Following government talks with Fifa, the group of 23 will now see England v Ecuador on Sunday.

Portsmouth Football Club are paying for the accommodation and transport costs.

The boys were among nearly 400 youngsters from across the country who paid about £400 for last weekend's trip to Germany, which had been organised by tour operator Activ4.

It ended in disaster because the tickets were never provided by the expected supplier, Tickets For All, which is now being investigated by police.

Pupils from Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, Dorset, Lincolnshire and Suffolk were also affected by the alleged fraud.

Martin Castle, deputy headteacher at Mayville High School, will be accompanying the boys aged between 11 and 16 to Stuttgart.

He said: "They are very excited, they aren't talking about anything else at all and neither are the rest of the children in the school."

He added the group may also meet Sports Minister Richard Caborn and Fifa President Sepp Blatter at the match.

Quarter final

Portsmouth FC's co-owner Alexandre Gaydamak said: "These were unfortunate circumstances. I do believe that it is important for children to be involved in sports and it is great for them to now have the opportunity to go to the World Cup.

"I'm delighted my colleagues and I at the club have been able



Pupils now have tickets for England's game against Ecuador

“ They are very excited, they aren't talking about anything else at all and neither are the rest of the children in the school ”

Martin Castle

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to make the trip happen for them."

The Mayville High School pupils are set to leave from Portsmouth Football Club's ground at Fratton Park on Friday night and are expected to arrive back in the UK on Monday morning.

British Airways has agreed to fly the rest of the youngsters to Germany who are set to see a quarter final match next week.

A 38-year-old man and a woman in her 40s, both of Slough, Berkshire, who were arrested on Wednesday on suspicion of deception have been released on police bail.

Thames Valley Police said the deception being investigated involved a total sum of about £60,000 and that several other lines of inquiry were still being pursued.

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