

# French Exchange

## Frequently Asked Questions

### General questions

#### **Who can go on the exchange?**

Anyone studying French in year 10 or year 12 can participate on the French exchange.

#### **How many places are there?**

The maximum number of students is 40 (across both year groups).

#### **When does it take place?**

The French group visit Hexham in November and we travel to France in March.

#### **Where is our partner school?**

We are partnered with Lycée Flaubert in Rouen, Upper-Normandy.

[www.lycee-flaubert-rouen.fr/](http://www.lycee-flaubert-rouen.fr/)

#### **When do I have to apply for a place?**

Letters asked for a deposit are handed out in the first week of the autumn term (September), this is a very popular trip and not all applicants are guaranteed a place. Names are drawn at random if necessary.

#### **Do I have to do the exchange?**

The exchange has proven to be extremely beneficial to those who have taken part in the past. However, you will not be at a disadvantage should you decide it's not for you.

#### **Can my parents make me do it?**

Students are asked to take a letter home and discuss it with their parents. If you really don't want to participate, you simply don't take a letter. *It is a good idea, however, to discuss this with your French teacher, as they may be able to offer you advice or put any worries to rest.*

#### **My parents don't want me to do it but I do, what can I do?**

You can ask your teacher to chat to your parents about the exchange. It may not make a difference but it is worth a try.

### **How much does it cost?**

The cost varies a little each year but an average price over recent years was £220.

### **How do you pay?**

There is an initial deposit when signing up and then payment is spread out in instalments. This can be negotiated should you have difficulty paying to deadline. Money can be paid in cash or by cheque at the finance office.

### **How are partners chosen?**

You complete a document about your interests, allergies, dietary requirements, etc. and the teachers try to match you up with somebody suitable. For example, if you are allergic to animal fur, we will find you somebody who doesn't have pets. If you are into sport, we will try to find you somebody who also has an interest in sport.

### **Will my partner be the same sex as me?**

You have the option of choosing to have a boy or girl. You can also opt for 'don't mind'. This 3<sup>rd</sup> option makes it easier for your teachers to match you up.

## **Questions about accommodating a French person.**

### **When do they arrive and leave?**

The French group arrives in the early evening on Saturday and you must collect your partner from Whetstone Bridge Road. They leave from school on the following Friday morning.

### **Does my partner need their own room?**

You may share a room with your partner or provide them with their own room. This will depend on your home and preferences.

### **What will they eat?**

Unless there are special dietary requirements, which we will know about in advance, your partner will eat whatever you eat in your family.

### **What happens on school days?**

Your partner will follow a programme of visits. Most days, you will stay in school while they visit the region. On one day, you will accompany your partner on a trip. There will also be one day on which your partner will be in school and shadow you to your lessons.

### **Do trips start and finish at school times?**

On one day, the French students will travel to Edinburgh and will need to be at school for an early departure and will arrive late in the evening. Your parents will need to make arrangements to bring your partner to school and collect him/her in the evening. We do a similar trip to Paris while in France, so this will be reciprocated.

### **I take a school bus, so how does my partner get to school?**

You will need to speak to the driver of your bus and/or the bus company. Your partner should be able to travel with you. There has never been a problem in the past but you will be required to pay the fares.

### **What do we do outside school time?**

How you spend your time with your exchange partner is up to you and your family. Your exchange partner will do whatever you want them to do and go wherever you choose to take them. You are not required to do anything special, but you may want to discuss with your friends and family how you can make the French person's stay more enjoyable.

### **I spend a lot of time do extra-curricular activities, does this make a difference?**

You have several choices. You could decide to take a break from some activities or at least reduce the amount of time you spend at clubs, lessons, etc. for one week. You could organise to take your partner with you. You could also arrange for friends who are also on the exchange to look after your partner some of the time. Remember that you need to spend as much time as possible with your partner, as you wouldn't feel happy about them doing lots of activities without you while you are in France.

### **What does my family have to pay for?**

Your family should pay all fares, entrance fees and food and drink for your partner throughout the week. This will be reciprocated when you travel to France. *You must also provide your partner with a packed lunch on trip days.*

### **What happens if we don't get on?**

In most cases, partnerships have worked very well. As a linguist, you must find ways to communicate and try your best to build bridges. If there is a big problem, your teacher will be able to offer support and solutions. Remember that your partner will be in a new environment and may feel a little homesick. It is up to you to make this leg of the exchange work well.

### **Who is responsible for activities organised outside school time?**

The school will provide a programme for the exchange. Any activities on the programme will be supervised by school staff. Any other activities are the responsibility of your parents. In the past, we have not organised activities outside school but students have grouped together to organise trips and visits.

### **Is there an emergency contact number?**

Both your partner and you will be provided with a 24 hour emergency contact number for the lead teacher on the exchange and the partner school's lead teacher.

You must also make sure that your partner has your numbers (mobile, home, parents) and address in case you get separated.

### **Is there anything else I need to think about?**

It is a good idea to get some magazines, DVDs or use the internet to stimulate conversation. You may wish to organise group activities with other participants on the exchange. It is important to put yourself in your partner's shoes and think about what you would like to get from the exchange, so that you can provide a similar experience for your partner.

### **Questions about our trip to France.**

#### **Where are we going?**

We will travel to Rouen in Upper-Normandy. Rouen is a historic city about 2 hours from Paris. Our partner school is located to the north of the city centre and you will stay with your partner's family in or around Rouen.

## **Which documents do I need?**

You will need a **valid European passport and a European Health Insurance Card** (EHIC). The latter is available **free of charge** via NHS online (beware of sites charging for this service).

## **How do we get there?**

We leave on Friday morning and travel by coach and ferry. We will arrive in Rouen in the early evening.

## **What will we do while we are there?**

You will spend the weekend with your host family. We will then spend the week visiting northern France. Highlights include a daytrip to Paris, a visit to the coast, a morning in school and a visit to a cheese manufacturer.

## **What do I need to take?**

More information will be given out nearer the time. However, sensible shoes, clothing for both hot and cold weather, some spending money and sun cream are the essentials. If you require medication, you must also make sure you have enough for the duration of the trip. You will also need a packed lunch for the trip to France.

You are responsible for your possessions, so beware of taking valuables, as they will not be insured.

*You will also need a **mobile phone** which has been activated to work abroad. You will not be allowed to go on the trip without one.*

## **Do I need to take a gift for my host family?**

You will see what type of gift your partner's family have chosen when your partner visits in November. However, you may wish to offer something different. If your parents wish to send alcohol, this must be packed up securely with your name on it and handed to a member of staff by your parents at the coach. *You are not allowed to go through customs with alcohol.*

## **Will I need any money?**

You may wish to take a small amount of money to spend on souvenirs, additional snacks, etc. However, your host family should pay any fares, entrance fees and food while you are there.

### **What will I eat while I'm there?**

Your host family will serve you the same things they eat. Try new things, enjoy the variety of food in France and talk to them about what you like and dislike. If you have special dietary requirements, this information will be passed on to your host family.

### **What happens if I don't like where I am staying?**

If you feel that there is a problem and you really don't feel comfortable with your host family, you inform your lead teacher immediately. There will be a 24-hour emergency phone number in operation.

Talk to your teachers at any time about anything you are unsure about, even if you think it is trivial.

### **Will I be required to do any school work during the trip?**

Before heading to France, you will need to speak to subject teachers and collect any work. Make sure that your homework is done before you go! During the trip, you will be encouraged to note down new vocabulary and reflect on your experiences. This is done in the form of a (very thin) work booklet.

### **Is there anything else I need to know?**

Going abroad without your parents for the first time is a big step. However, this is a fun way to experience France in a unique way. QEHS teachers have a lot of experience organising exchange trips and they are always highly successful.

**For any other information, talk to the lead teacher, Mr Harbron, or chat to other students who have already been on the exchange.**