

Welcome to France

BASIC INFORMATION FOR YOUR YEAR IN FRANCE

It is **important** that you read this entire fact sheet to have realistic expectations of this exchange program.

FRANCE



CLIMATE

France has a temperate climate with **4 distinct seasons**: fall, winter, spring and summer. Students should bring winter clothes even they are placed in the South of France.

RELIGION

Most French people are **Catholic but are not very religious**. If they go to church, it's generally only once a week on Sunday mornings.

SCHOOL



SCHOOL SYSTEM

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Terminale *Term*
Première *1ère*
Seconde *2nde*

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Troisième *3ème*
Quatrième *4ème*
Cinquième *5ème*
Sixième *6ème*

Baccalauréat
(High school diploma)

As an exchange student, you will be registered in «Seconde» or «Première» according to your age and language ability. The main subjects studied are French, History, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Maths, Economics, Foreign languages, Sports (only two hours per week). The school year starts at the beginning of September and ends early June.

Typical French schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00 am					
9:00 am	FRENCH	ENGLISH		PHYSICAL EDUCATION	SPANISH
10:00 am		PHYSICS	MATH	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	FRENCH
11:00 am		PHYSICS	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	PHYSICS	MATH
12:00 pm	MATH		PHYSICAL EDUCATION	FRENCH	HISTORY
1:00 pm	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
2:00 pm	HISTORY	BIOLOGY	SPANISH	ENGLISH	GEOGRAPHY
3:00 pm	GEOGRAPHY	BIOLOGY	FRENCH	BIOLOGY	STUDIES
4:00 pm		HISTORY	GEOGRAPHY	MATH	
5:00 pm					

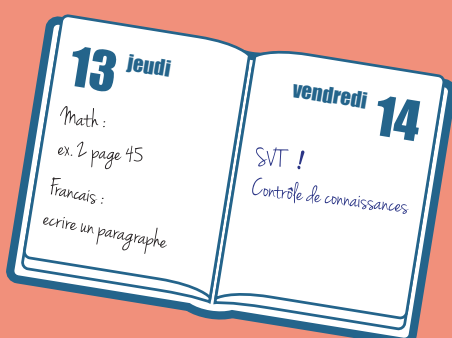
You will attend an average of 25 hours per week. You will have class in the morning and the afternoon.

3 terms

8 weeks of vacation

3 grade reports

25 hours per week



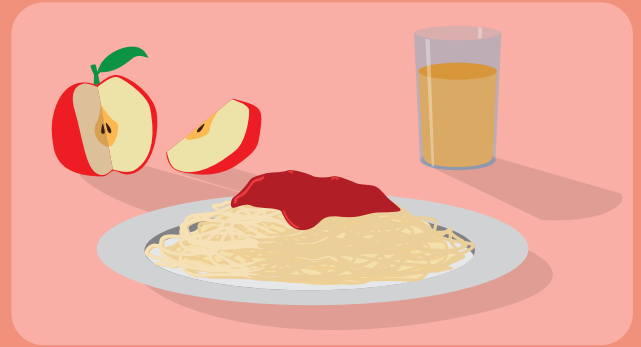
You will be required to do your homework and return your assignments no matter how hard it is, **you must try!**

SCHOOL BOOK

You will have to purchase your school books. At the end of the school year, it is sometimes possible to resell the books at the local bookstore. You should try to buy secondhand books or to rent them from the school, if possible.

SCHOOL LUNCH

Most French students have lunch at school. We recommend that all foreign students do the same, as it is a good way to make friends. You will not be able to bring sandwiches from home to school. You must pay for your school lunch. It costs between 450 and 900 euros for the year.



SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

If your host family lives far away from your school, you will have to ride a bus. You will have to pay for your school transportation. The cost varies from place to place.

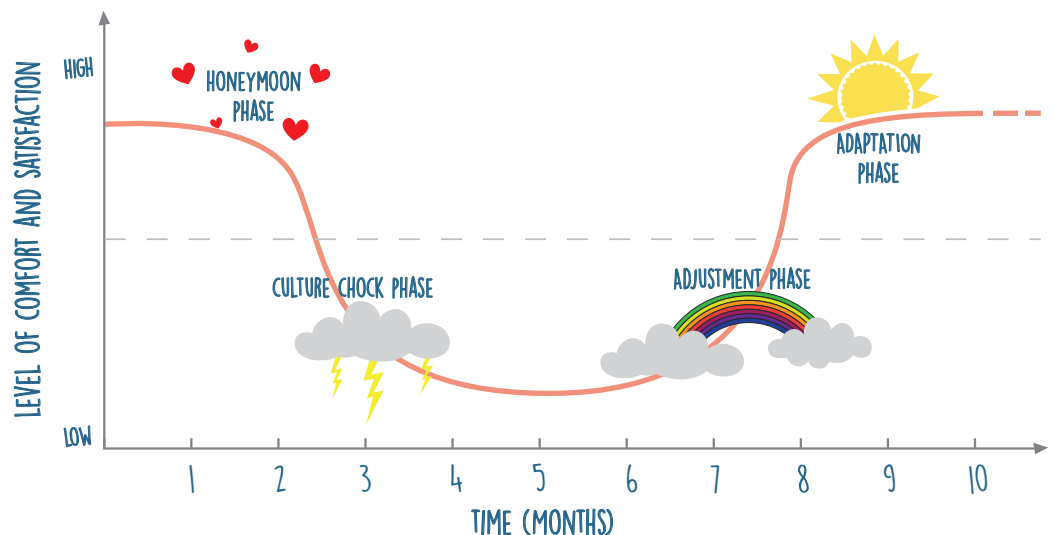
PLACEMENT

Students are placed in volunteer families all over France, mainly in small towns or suburban and semi-rural areas. Once you are placed, you should write to your host family. French host families also appreciate hearing from the students natural parents.

FAMILY

All families are different and thus have their own habits and way of life. Your host family will feel responsible for you and will expect you to tell them of your whereabouts. You will not be allowed to go out at night to bars or night clubs. At home, host parents expect you to participate in their family life and not to spend too much time withdrawn in your bedroom. All members of the family have dinner together and like to talk about their day and their plans for the next day. There is often a big family lunch on Sunday. The French don't usually snack between meals.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT CURVE



French families expect their kids to **tidy and clean their room regularly**. It is a sign of **self-respect**. They also expect their kids to have **good grades**. In France, students repeat a class if their grades are not good enough. This explains why parents are sometimes over concerned about school, as some foreign students have said. You should have a **positive attitude towards school** and do homework like the other kids in the family. French families never get tired of helping their exchange students with their French and have high expectations of their new «child» from abroad! We recommend that you do something outside of academic classes : sports, drawing, music, etc.

POCKET MONEY

You will need about **200 Euros per month**. You should bring a Credit Card (Visa or Mastercard). You must avoid carrying large amounts of cash. You will be responsible for your personal expenses, and should never be left without pocket money.

PIE ORGANISATION

VISA AND IMMIGRATION

If you do not belong to the European Union, you will have to apply for an exchange student visa at the French Consulate of your home country. **P.I.E. will provide you with the documents and you will have to apply as soon as you receive the documents.**

When you receive your visa, you must make sure that it's a **visa type D**.

If you are 18 years old, you will be delivered a «visa étudiant» and a "formulaire de demande d'attestation OFII", you must bring that document to France. You will have to apply to the OFII (French immigration and Integration Office) when you get to your host family's home. The cost of that declaration is around 60 Euros (to be paid in France). We will give all the necessary information to your host family.

At the end of the program, you must return to your home country at the date planned by P.I.E and the sending office. It is not possible to stay in France after the end of the program.

TRIP

PIE organizes a one week trip to the Riviera (1,5 mile from Monaco) during spring vacation. The cost is about 450 euros. The price includes accommodation, breakfast and dinner. 3 or 4 escorts are responsible for the group. You will visit well-known cities such as Monaco, Nice and enjoy the sun and beaches of the south of France!

RULES

You must sign the program rules.

You must abide by the decisions made by the sending office, PIE, its representatives and the host family. Students who have already graduated in their home country and who are 18 upon arrival in France must follow the same rules as the younger students.

REPRESENTATIVE

The volunteer representative will contact you on a regular basis and check how things are going. It is recommended that you also keep in touch with your representative regularly, even if everything is going well. Most representatives don't speak English.

LANGUAGE AND ORIENTATION CAMPS

PIE organizes a 9 days language camp in Paris for the program. This camp is about cultural differences, program rules, French school, French customs and general information about France. PIE also provides French classes (3 different levels) and visits of Paris.

The language camp is mandatory for all students who have studied French less than 2 years. We highly recommend that all students even those who have studied French more than 2 years attend to the camp.

If you do not take part to the language camp, please note that a 3 days orientation camp is organized by PIE in Paris (program rules, French school, French customs, and one visit of Paris).

At the end of the camp, you will go to your host family by train, plane or will be picked up directly by your host family.



Best wishes.

**Programmes Internationaux
d'Échanges**
National Office

**39, rue Espariat
13100 Aix-en-Provence
France**

Phone : **+33 (0)4 42 91 31 00**
E-mail: **courrier@piefrance.com**