



THE DOWNS SCHOOL

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Head: C R Prosser, BSc

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Deputy Head: J Preston, BA

15 November 2016

Dear Parents and Carers

YEARS 9 & 10 FRENCH EXCHANGE 2017

We are very pleased to be able to offer our students the opportunity to take part in our annual French Exchange. Our partner school in France is the College Rostand, Moûtiers. The school is a small mixed comprehensive in Moûtiers which is a small town situated in the heart of the Alps. It was the centre of the 1992 Winter Olympics and it is near to several very famous ski resorts such as Méribel, Courchevel and Val Thorens. Students at the school live in the town itself or in the surrounding villages. The school is therefore well matched to ours, having students who are used to living in the country and in an area of outstanding beauty. You can find further information on the school and the area on the following websites:

<http://www.ac-grenoble.fr/college/moutiers.jeanrostand/index.php>

<http://www.ot-moutiers.com/index.php?fr>

Students will stay in individual households as guests. They will be in contact with accompanying staff whenever they wish, but they will obviously not be supervised by school staff whilst carrying out the many activities which families will want to do with them. I shall be leading the trip accompanied by other members of school staff. The Exchange is reciprocal and staff at both schools will liaise to match students using the information provided on the attached application form so it is very important to put as much detail as accurately as possible. Students will have the opportunity to be in touch with each other by email etc before the trip.

A copy of a draft itinerary is attached. Students will spend the weekend with their families. During the following week they will spend some time in the French school, go on excursions, including perhaps a visit to Annecy (a beautiful lakeside town), and most probably downhill skiing and snow shoeing. French host families will arrange transport to and from school each day.

The trip includes:

- All travel to and from France and during our stay
- Accommodation and meals with the family
- An itinerary of supervised activities/excursions (a sample itinerary is attached)
- 2 dry ski slope sessions
- A trip hoodie
- Insurance

During the return visit the French students will carry out activities in school and visit places of interest with their own teachers during the week whilst lodging with the English family. French students will need to be brought into school each day as we cannot guarantee free places on school buses.

DATES

The Downs in France 29 March – 7 April 2017
College Rostand in England 12 – 18 May 2017

TRAVEL

By coach, using a local reputable company, going through the channel tunnel or by ferry. The coach (and the coach driver) will remain with us for the entire stay.

CLOTHES

Warm clothing. You will need to hire or borrow some ski clothing.

PASSPORT AND EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD

Your child will require a valid passport and an up to date EHIC card. This can be ordered without charge via the NHS website.

The school will arrange two sessions at the dry ski slope at Bracknell before we go, which are included in the price. These are of great benefit to those who have never skied before and form part of our risk management so students are required to attend. Details of the dates of these sessions will be given nearer the time.

Applying for a Place and Payment

If you wish your son or daughter to take part in the Exchange, please complete the attached application form and return it with one up-to-date passport size photograph to the trip post box outside Central Resources no later than **Monday 21 November 2016**.

We are asking for a voluntary contribution of approximately **£447**. This amount is non-refundable unless the trip is cancelled by the school. Please also note, if there are insufficient contributions to cover the costs of the trip, it may not be able to go ahead or the cost may rise slightly depending on the number of interested students. By booking a place through paying the non-refundable deposit of £150 you agree to pay the full cost of the trip. LIFT, FSM and EVER6FSM students can receive a contribution of £100 towards the cost of one school run residential trip per academic year (if they obtain a place). The initial deposit must be paid in full. Cancellation charges will apply to the remainder of the amount if a student drops out at a later stage. Details are available on request. This trip will be offered to year 9 & 10 students studying French. If oversubscribed, places will be allocated by a random draw. You will receive confirmation that your child has a place and a refund if unsuccessful.

Payment should be made via ParentPay. If you do not wish to use ParentPay, please put a cheque (made payable to 'The Downs School') and the completed slip below in an envelope marked "French Exchange" including your child's name and tutor group and ask your child to deposit it in the secure box outside the Finance Office. A receipt is not provided for this method of payment.

Payment will be in three instalments with the non-refundable deposit due by **Monday 21 November 2016 by 9.00am (£150)** and the second instalment by Friday 6 January 2017 (£197) and the final instalment by Friday 10 March 2017 (£100).

Our exchange programmes have been operating successfully for many years and provide a valuable and enriching cultural experience for our students. In the light of the current situation in France, we will always follow Local Authority and Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice, and liaise closely with our exchange school in France for local specialist up to date information, to ensure our students have a safe and successful visit.

In line with current Government and Local Authority guidelines, it is necessary for us to carry out a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check on UK host families and their members who are over 16 years of age living at the same address. This is a very simple process involving you completing an online application and providing us with identification documents. There is no charge for this. Further details on the process itself will be sent out once your child's place on the exchange is confirmed. If you have any queries concerning this in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Although this trip is open to all Year 9 and 10 French students we reserve the right to refuse to take those students whose poor behaviour may tarnish the good name of The Downs or whose actions may put themselves or others in danger. We also reserve the right to withdraw any student whose behaviour at school deteriorates between now and the departure date. In these circumstances any refund will be on the basis of individual circumstances at the time and will be at the school's discretion.

The school has personal accident and travel cover insurance for school trips and this includes winter sports insurance. Full details are available from the Business Manager on request and a summary sheet will be sent with place confirmation letters.

This is an exciting opportunity for your child to experience life in France and develop their language skills.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

H. Wright

Miss H. Wright
Trip Leader

ONLY TO BE COMPLETED IF YOU ARE PAYING BY CHEQUE TO THE SCHOOL
NB ONLINE PAYMENT VIA PARENTPAY.COM IS PREFERRED!

FRENCH EXCHANGE 2017

**DEPOSIT PAYMENT FOR A PLACE TO BE PAID NO LATER THAN
MONDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2016 9.00AM**

Cheques made payable to The Downs School

Student's Name Tutor Group

I give permission for my child to take part in the French Exchange trip. I enclose the non-refundable deposit (unless my child does not receive a place) payment of £150.00.

I have completed the application form and attached a photograph.

I understand it will be necessary for a DBS check to be carried out on UK host families and their members who are over 16 years of age living at the same address.

Signature of Parent/Carer _____ Date _____

Parent/Carer (please print) _____

Draft Itinerary - French Exchange 2017

Wednesday 29 March	Departure from school main car park 19.00
Thursday 30 March	Arrival at College Jean Rostand 16.00. Students are greeted by French hosts
Friday 31 March	Visit of a cheese factory in Beaufort Sledging at Les Saisies ski resort
Saturday 1 April	Weekend with families
Sunday 2 April	Weekend with families
Monday 3 April	Downhill skiing in Courchevel- with French Ski school Instructors
Tuesday 4 April	Visit to Grenoble and its museum Shopping time
Wednesday 5 April	am Visit to Jean Rostand and questionnaires completed in Moutiers pm All students will spend afternoon with families
Thursday 6 April	Other local excursion
Friday 7 April	Depart for the UK at 8.00am back to The Downs at midnight

The itinerary is subject to change and dependent on weather conditions