



HELP IN FRANCE

Assistance for British people moving to or living in France

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A Guide to the Education System in France

This article has been compiled to give you an idea of the structure of the education system in France. If you need further information, please do not hesitate contacting us.

Schooling in France is free and mandatory between the ages of 6 and 16 but nearly all French children will begin school aged 3 or even younger.

Private schools are either subcontracted by the state or 'hors contrat' (totally privately funded).

There are roughly 158 school days, which is less than in many English speaking countries although the school days in France are longer.

In all public schools, the children have four fortnight breaks in each school year (see calendar for 2008-2009 below).

Religious instruction is not taught by public school teachers. Laïcité (secularism) is one of the main precepts of the French republic.

Ecole Maternelle (children aged 2-4 to 6)

Attendance is optional and placement is not guaranteed for young children when attending at 2 (they will also need to be potty-trained).

The aim is to teach the child some degree of autonomy and how to live in society.

Ecole Primaire (children aged 6 to 11-12)



Like in some other educational systems, French primary school pupils normally have a single teacher who teaches the complete curriculum.

Ecole Primaire lasts 5 years. These are called : CP (cours préparatoire) CE1 and CE2 (cours élémentaire 1 & 2) and CM1 and CM2 (cours moyen 1 & 2)

Starting in 2008, the children will go to school 6 hours a day, 4 days a week : Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday (24 hours/week).



The 2 first years (CP & CE1) the weekly schedule will be : 10 hours for French, 5 hours for maths and 9 hours for sport, foreign language, art and discovery of the World.
The following years (CE2 - CM1 - CM2), the schedule will be : 8 hours for French, 5 hours for maths and 11 hours for sport, foreign language, science, technology, art, history-geography, civic instruction and morals.

Collège (6ème to 3ème) (children aged 11-12 to 14-15)

The subjects your children will be taught at college will be : French, History & Geography, Foreign languages, Art, science and technology, civic education, sport, information & communication technology.

At the end of the 3ème, students sit for nationally administered exams to obtain a diploma called the brevet des colleges. The school marks for the whole of the final year (3ème) are taken into account for the final mark at the exam.

The 4 days school week will commence at colleges in 2009-10.

Lycée (Seconde to Terminale) (16 to 18 yrs)

The three years in Lycée lead to the Baccalauréat which guarantees entrance to a state university and is comparable to English and Welsh A-levels.

There are 3 "baccalauréat general" :

Literature and language (L)

Science & maths (S)

Economics and social sciences (ES)

(The S bac is considered the hardest.)

There are also some eight "baccalauréat technologique" or diplomas based on specific technical skills.



Higher education

A Baccalauréat guarantees access to a publicly funded university.

The very best students can also decide to take another one or two years of preparatory classes or prépas so they can sit for an entrance exam, concours, into only a handful of top schools known as "Les grandes écoles" for engineering, business and politics or administrative studies

How to register your child for school




If you would like to send your child to a public Maternelle or Ecole Primaire, contact the Service des Ecoles at the Mairie in your town.

If your child is coming from outside France and is entering a college or lycée, contact the Rectorat (the educational district's administrative head)

2008- 2009 HOLIDAY CALENDAR

Depending on where you live in France, the dates for school holidays will vary.

CALENDRIER SCOLAIRE 2008-2009



Zone A (blue)		
Caen, Clermont-Ferrand, Grenoble, Lyon, Montpellier, Nancy-Metz, Nantes, Rennes, Toulouse, DOM, TOM		
Toussaint	du 25 Octobre 2008	au 5 Novembre 2008
Noël	du 20 Décembre 2008	au 4 Janvier 2009
Hiver	du 7 Février 2009	au 22 Février 2009
Pâques	du 4 Avril 2009	au 19 Avril 2009
Été	du 2 Juillet 2009	au 1 Septembre 2009
Zone B (yellow)		
Aix-Marseille, Amiens, Besançon, Dijon, Lille, Limoges, Nice, Orléans-Tours, Poitiers, Reims, Rouen, Strasbourg		
Toussaint	du 25 Octobre 2008	au 5 Novembre 2008
Noël	du 20 Décembre 2008	au 4 Janvier 2009
Hiver	du 21 Février 2009	au 8 Mars 2009
Pâques	du 18 Avril 2009	au 3 Mai 2009
Été	du 2 Juillet 2009	au 1 Septembre 2009
Zone C (red)		
Bordeaux, Créteil, Paris, Versailles		
Toussaint	du 25 Octobre 2008	au 5 Novembre 2008
Noël	du 20 Décembre 2008	au 4 Janvier 2009
Hiver	du 14 Février 2009	au 1 Mars 2009
Pâques	du 11 Avril 2009	au 26 Avril 2009
Été	du 2 Juillet 2009	au 1 Septembre 2009

C : Créteil
P : Paris
V : Versailles

LOCAL TAXES IN FRANCE

There are two types of local taxes in France:

- **Taxe d'habitation (council tax)** : assessed on the occupants of all types of accommodation. The basis of the community charge is the rental value of the property, irrespective of it being owned or rented by you.

You will receive the bill in October for payment by 15th November at the latest.

Discounts can be granted for the disabled, the elderly and those on a low income.

- **Taxe Foncière (Property Tax)** : also due by any owner of a property in France before the end of each year (usually it has to be paid before 15th October). Owner-occupiers are liable for both taxes.

Persons aged between 65 and 75 can benefit from an automatic reduction of a maximum 100 euros on their 'taxes foncières' if the house is their permanent home and they are on a low income.

THE HELP IN FRANCE NEWSLETTER

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