From Head of French: Mrs Maud Cottrell

21 September 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians,

*Re: 4th Year French Exchange 2019*

I am writing to invite your son to participate in the French exchange for the coming academic year.

The value of such an exchange cannot be overstated, particularly at this point in the boys’ French career. This is a fantastic opportunity for the boys to improve their command of the language and to experience family life in Provence, an invaluable asset for both IGCSE and 6th form study. The partnership has been running very successfully for fourteen years between Abingdon School and the lycée de La Nativité, an independent, co-educational school in Aix-en-Provence. (http://www.la-nativite.fr/lycee-2/) Girls from St Helen and St Katharine’s will also take part in this exchange.

Aix-en-Provence is a vibrant, attractive city in the deep South of France about 20 miles away from the Mediterranean coast. This year, as well as enjoying wonderful hospitality from the boys and girls at La Nativité, we will get to know Aix well, and will visit les Baux de Provence, Marseille, Nîmes and the surrounding area, including the spectacular Pont du Gard.

The first leg of the exchange, during which the French party comes to stay with us will be during term time. The provisional date is between **Friday 8 March and Saturday 16 March 2019**. This will not disrupt your son’s timetable, as the French party will be going on visits during the day or staying at school with us to attend lessons. Your involvement during this part of the exchange will be to look after a French pupil in the evenings and at the weekend. **Please note that if boys have to play a game, take part in a competition for the School or a DofE planning day during the weekend of 9 and 10 March, their attendance will be compulsory.**

If your son takes the school bus, you will need to check if there is a spare place for his exchange partner, if not you will need to make other arrangements for the week when the French party is at Abingdon. Many of the buses are likely to be full so please make sure you contact Tom Peeke, the joint bus coordinator, to find out. His e-mail address is tpeeke@shsk.org.uk

The second leg of the exchange, during which our party goes to France will take place between **Friday 29 March and Saturday 6April 2019**. These are also provisional dates but will only vary by a day or two depending on travel arrangements. Your son will be more or less in total French immersion during the week and a great deal of learning will take place. **Please note that this is during** **the week of the CCF camp**, **so boys participating in this camp will not be able to go to France. They can host an exchange partner if they wish to, however they will be placed on a reserve list as priority will be given to boys who can fully participate in the exchange.**

The exchange is open to all boys studying French in the Fourth year. **There are 17 places available therefore we shall operate a first come first served policy and a reserve list will be opened if the trip is oversubscribed.** **The provisional cost of the trip is £420 (cost revised since the letter sent to the boys on Wednesday)** based on last year’s experience but the price may vary slightly depending on transport, the final itinerary and the numbers of pupils signing up. The final cost will include all transport, transfers, visits and insurance cover.

If your son would like to participate in this exchange, please fill out the electronic form, which can be accessed with this link **by Wednesday 26 September:**

[**https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScYAxyDijipMyFkW\_xM8Fe3KamzFGrPSobYn1m0xFlg8I7Shw/viewform?usp=sf\_link**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScYAxyDijipMyFkW_xM8Fe3KamzFGrPSobYn1m0xFlg8I7Shw/viewform?usp=sf_link)

and upload a copy of his passport and his European Health Insurance Card ensuring both documents are valid until the end of May 2019. If it is not the case, please apply for a new one as soon as possible.

**Full payment for the trip should be made via the WisePay trip page, to which an invitation will be sent out separately upon completion of the consent form.** Parents unable to make payment by this method should contact the trip leader to arrange alternative means of payment. **Please note that by filling out the form (providing the trip proceeds) you are committing to the total cost of this trip,** asthereafter the School will proceed to make bookings and reservations to procure the best possible deals.

Due to government’s update on Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) statutory guidance, the School is obliged to obtain a criminal records check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for all supervising adults (in most cases the parents or guardians) who are resident in the accommodation where the exchange student is to stay as part of a school organised trip. The School will bear the cost of this DBS check and we will do all we can to facilitate the administration of the DBS checks.

In order to complete a DBS check, all supervising adults will need to make a 15-20 minute appointment to come into school to see the HR team before **12 October (just before October half term break)**. The normal working hours of the HR team are 8.30am - 5.30pm Monday-Friday. This is to allow enough time for the check to be completed, as **the completed DBS check must be received before the arrival of the French party (8 March 2019) for you to be allowed to host**.

If you have any further questions about the DBS checks, please do not hesitate to contact either Mark Hindley (mark.hindley@abingdon.org.uk) or the HR Department (hr.team@abingdon.org.uk) whereas questions about the exchange should be addressed to me at maud.cottrell@abingdon.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Maud Cottrell - Head of French

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