



NEWSTEAD WOOD SCHOOL

"creating opportunities for success"

2 November 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Year 9 French Exchange to Bondues – 17-25 May 2024

The French Department is very pleased to offer the exciting opportunity for our Year 9 students of French to participate in an exchange with our partner school Institution de la Croix Blanche, in Bondues, near Lille: www.lacroixblanche.org

As part of this French exchange, our students will visit France from 17-25 May 2024, and the French group will visit us at Newstead Wood in June – the proposed return dates are currently 19-27 June 2024 (tbc).

The success of this home-to-home residential experience rests on **the principle of reciprocity**: your child needs to be ready to be an engaged guest in France and ready to be a good host to their French partner in your home and at school when the French partners come back to us in June. This trip will be in partnership with St Olave's who have worked with the school in France for the past 30 years. It is a large private mixed Roman Catholic secondary school with which St Olave's has run a letter exchange with their present Year 9 classes. All members of the hosting French families over the age of 18 will be DBS checked and all students attend our partner school. This trip will only be for students choosing to study French for GCSE.

This will be an invaluable experience for our pupils, enabling them to immerse themselves in the French way of life, to understand the cultural background and to give them the opportunity to use their language in situ, thus building their confidence. Students who have taken part in previous exchanges have always come back very enthusiastic and have felt it was the trip from which they benefitted the most, linguistically and socially.

The French and English students will be paired up according to their age and interests, once we receive all information sheets. These will be shared with you once we have received your deposit.

Dates, Travel and Accommodation:

The English group will be making the first step: participants will be staying in France with their exchange partner for one week from **Friday 17 to Saturday 25 May 2024**. English parents are paying **for their own** child's trips and excursions while in France.

We will be travelling by **Eurostar directly to Lille**, thus keeping the cost of this exchange at an affordable level.

For our excursions this year, we will use a local coach company used by our partner school, fitted with seat belts. During excursions, your child will be supervised by me and one of my colleagues. We will have contact

Headteacher: Mr Alan Blount, MA, BSc, QTS

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Newstead Wood School
Avebury Road
Orpington
Kent

t: 01689 853626

e: office@newsteadwood.co.uk

w: newsteadwood.co.uk



with the students on days when they are in school as well as on excursion days. This means that I will see your child every day except during the first weekend, when their host family will likely take them on their own outing. You and your child will be given a school mobile phone number on which I can be contacted if there are any concerns.

The exchange is designed for a group of Year 9 students of French, who choose to study French for their GCSE. The group will be accompanied by 2 members of staff. For this trip to be viable there needs to be a **minimum of 20 participants**. There is no maximum number, but you are encouraged to respond as early as possible to ensure the cheapest fares on Eurostar.

We will spend a day and a half in the French school, when our students will be able to follow their French host in their lessons. The French host family will either provide a packed lunch or pay for your child's meal.

We are planning to spend part of a day on the beach of Boulogne with a sailing school where instructors offer an introduction to sand-yachting, followed by a visit to Nausicaa (one of the National Marine Biology Research Centres and a huge aquarium). We will also visit a coal-mining museum to find out about life as a coal miner in the 19th century and we will go to a bakery where students will be involved in shaping croissants and baguettes and taught how to make French bread. French parents may well take your child on a trip to a theme park, or Bruges or Paris.

Return Visit from the French Group

The French group will be coming to us **between 19/20 and 26/27 June 2024**. They will be coming into school for 2 days, during which they will accompany their friends to their lessons. On the weekdays they are not in school the French group will go on excursions to London. The weekend will be spent with you as their host families. You will need to provide a packed lunch for the French student when they travel to London, and on days they are in school you can either provide a packed lunch or pay for their lunch in the canteen.

Cost, travel and health documents:

The cost of the exchange is **£300 per student, based on 20 students taking part**. This will cover include travel, insurance, and the excursions. Students may wish to bring a small amount of pocket money with them, for their own use, but only for souvenirs.

If your child would like to participate, please pay a **deposit of £110 on WisePay by Friday 10 November 2023** in order to secure the Eurostar tickets as soon as possible. Please be aware that **payment constitutes permission for this trip**. Should you have any financial concerns with regards to payment please contact finance@newsteadwood.co.uk in confidence.

A further instalment of £100 will be due by **10 January 2024**.

The final instalment of £90 will be due by **10 March 2024**.

Please provide me with a photocopy of your child's passport and a copy of an EHIC/GHIC card in the student's name **as soon as possible** after paying the deposit, by email to pbongout@newsteadwood.co.uk. Please send this even if the passport will be invalid by the time your child travels as we need to be aware of any non-British passports at the time of paying for the tickets. Students will need valid passports by the time they travel and a valid EHIC or GHIC card. The EHIC is still valid post-Brexit as long as it is still in date. You can apply for a GHIC card [here](#)). Passports must be less than 10 years old on the date of travel to France and valid for at least 3 months from the date of return to the UK. If the student's EHIC card has expired, you can still enrol your child on the trip and notify me that you have applied for its renewal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Bongout." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Mrs P Bongout
Assistant Headteacher