



# Esperance - Ile de Ré, France Student Exchange Program Information Kit



# Our French Connection



## Destination Ile de Ré

Ile de Ré is an island off the west coast of France near La Rochelle, on the northern side of the Pertuis d'Antioche strait. Its highest point has an elevation of 20 metres. It is 30 kilometres long and five kilometres wide.

Our original twin township of Saint Martin de Ré is a small town of about 2,000 permanent inhabitants, but this increases significantly during the summer season. It is the largest of ten small towns on the Ile de Ré, on the west coast of France adjoining the Bay of Biscay.

The tourist website [www.holidays-iledere.co.uk/](http://www.holidays-iledere.co.uk/) provides valuable visitors' information.

## Esperance Twin Towns Committee

The Shire of Esperance established the Esperance Twin Towns Committee, comprising of representatives from the Lions Club of Esperance, Esperance Senior High School, community members and the Shire of Esperance, to administer the exchange program and to support the twin town ethos of increasing the friendship between Ile de Ré and Esperance.

## Lions International

The Exchange Program has been developed jointly with the Lions Club of Esperance. The Lions Club is involved in the Exchange for the purpose of contributing to the international objectives of Lions International.



The French connection with Esperance dates back to December 1792 when the ships 'L'Espérance' and 'La Recherche', commanded by Admiral D'Entrecasteaux, anchored in the bay and carried out some exploration. Esperance Bay, the Recherche Archipelago, Cape le Grand, Pink Lake, and Frenchman Peak (le Chapeau) were all recorded and named by these navigators. Captain Rossiter, of the French Whaler 'Mississippi', named Rossiter Bay, Lucky Bay and Mississippi Bay in 1841.

During the Australian Bicentenary in 1988, Australian towns were encouraged to develop twin town relationships with towns in Europe that had a special significance to their early exploration or heritage. St Martin de Ré was chosen as Esperance's twin town because of the early French explorers in the region and it is a coastal resort town similar in many ways to Esperance.

In April 1988 a delegation from St Martin de Ré visited Esperance to officially exchange an 'Agreement of Privileged Relations and Friendship'. There have been several delegations over the years from and to St Martin de Ré by various Local Government dignitaries, including a delegation to Ile de Ré from Esperance in 2008 and 2018 to celebrate the 20th and 30th years anniversary of the Twin Town Association.

On 24 May 2014, the status of the Association St Martin de Ré evolved to include the ten villages on Ile de Ré. With this expansion the Association changed its name to

'Association Ile de Ré – Esperance'.

The Esperance Twin Towns Committee looks forward to many years of continued friendship and student exchange visits with the Association Ile de Ré - Esperance.



*Photo, C. Stewart.*  
**Saint-Martin de Ré delegation.**  
 Left to Right: Deputy Mayor - G. Bouthillier  
 Mayor - D. Guenon  
 Deputy Mayor - J. Lafontaine  
 Deputy Mayor - J.P. Goumard

## Esperance girls head to France

ESPERANCE Senior High School (ESHS) Year 10 students Jessica Crisp and Emily Williams have been chosen to go on a French exchange program. The two girls will go to the French island of St Martin de Ré, where they will stay with previous French students who have come to Esperance.

On Monday May 30, the two girls met with the Esperance Shire Executive Manager Rod Hutton, Lions Club representative and former ESIS Principal Doug Murray, and the Student Exchange coordinator for Twin Towns Committee Catherine Loomes, Lions Club and Twin Towns Committee member every year to send two students to St Martin de Ré. Ms Crisp and Ms Williams will leave for the island on July 1, and will be overseas for a month. In order to apply, students had to be turning at least 15 in 2011 and have some knowledge of the French language. While in St Martin de Ré, the girls will spend time with their host families and will also meet the mayor of the town. Ms Williams and Ms Crisp both said they were looking forward to going to France. "I love the food, I can't wait to eat crepes," Ms Crisp said. "I can't wait to meet French teenagers," Ms Williams said. The girls will return home on July 31, and will have the French exchange study visit Esperance in 2012.



JESSICA Crisp and Emily Williams hold their itineraries after they were chosen to go on the Esperance exchange program, with a map of the French island they will visit behind them.



EXCHANGE students Rachel Dudgeon and Ashlee Sommerville with some of the girls they will be taking with them on their visit to St Martin de Ré, presented to them by Catherine Loomes, President of the Lions Club Phil Jones and Shire President Ian Micket.

## Students off to France

# The Esperance - Ile de Ré Student Exchange Program

The purpose of the program is to foster better international understanding and goodwill for students from years 9 to 12. Students need to be aware that this program is not a glorified holiday. The program is designed to provide the opportunity for Esperance youth to learn about the wide variety of international, social, economic and political institutions of human society; for the personal development of students and to equip them with skills to become better citizens and the leaders of tomorrow.

It is envisaged that the program will be a broadening and enlightening experience for participating students, host families and communities alike. At the conclusion of the exchange, the students, the host families and the host town participating in the program will have gained experiences of lasting value and contributed to goodwill and understanding between Esperance and the Ile de Ré region specifically, and France and Australia in a broad sense.

## Responsibilities

The Esperance Twin Towns Committee is responsible for:

### Outbound students:

- shortlisting, interviewing and selecting outbound students
- arranging host families in Ile de Ré
- arranging the booking of airfares, Perth to France return
- liaising with student families and host families for other travel arrangements as required

### Inbound Students:

- coordinates school attendance for inbound students
- arranging host families in Esperance
- liaising with student families and host families for other travel arrangements as required

### Hosting:

The family of the outbound student must reciprocate hosting an inbound student the following year.

## Exchange Period

Students from Ile de Ré spend four weeks, usually in July, in Esperance. This usually consists of one school week before the July school holidays, the two weeks of the school holidays, and the first week of school after the July holidays.

Similarly, students from Esperance spend four weeks on Ile de Ré, usually in July, which is a part of the French students' summer school holidays.

## Exchange Reporting Requirements

A journal will be provided to each outbound student for their exchange. Each student is to record experiences, memories, new phrases learnt, places visited, interesting facts, history learnt, and thoughts and feelings experienced on their journey in French and English. The Journal will be submitted to the Esperance Twin Towns Committee as part of the Post Exchange Presentation.

## Post Exchange Presentations

When students return from the Exchange visit, they will be required to make a presentation to the Lions Club of Esperance and the Shire of Esperance. The presentation aims to share the experience, outline details of the Exchange visit, what they learned, what they did etc. The Esperance Twin Towns Committee will provide assistance and a briefing on the requirements of the presentation.

## Costs Associated with the Student Exchange

**Transportation:** the outbound student family must fund one third of the airfare from Perth to France return, as well as all insurances (sickness, accident, travel), passports, visas, immunisations, airport taxes, clothing costs and spending money. (1 full return flight approx \$2,400)

The Esperance Twin Towns Committee and the Lions Club of Esperance will cover the remaining two thirds of the airfare from Perth to France return.

**Accommodation and meals:** are covered by the host families in France.

**Other Costs:** Students should have sufficient financial support to ensure their wellbeing during the exchange and other unusual costs.

# Exchange Rules and Guidelines

The selection of students recognises the student's ability to represent the Shire of Esperance, the Lions Club of Esperance and their School, on an international level. To set the standard of conduct by exchange students, the rules and guidelines set out within this document are to be followed at all times. Any student in breach of the rules and guidelines will result in immediate return home.

**Laws:** Students must comply with the laws of the countries that they travel through, and of the host country, France, at all times. If found guilty of any law violation, the student will be returned home as soon as possible, as soon as they are released by authorities. No assistance will be provided by the sponsor families, the Shire of Esperance or the Lions Club of Esperance.

**Stealing:** is prohibited and no exceptions will be made.

**Drugs:** Only prescribed medicines by a licenced physician are allowed. Do not possess or use illegal drugs at any time. Do not take other people's luggage or parcels into or out of any country you may travel to. A helpful act can lead to detrimental activity such as drug smuggling.

**Driving:** Students are not allowed to operate a motorised vehicle of any kind. A 'motorised vehicle' includes cars, scooters, boats, tractors, motorbikes, snowmobiles, aircraft or any other vehicle. Although some students may have a driver's licence, serious legal problems could arise should the student be involved in an accident.

**Dangerous Activity:** Students are to refrain from engaging in any activity that could unnecessarily endanger or threaten the health, safety or well-being of themselves or other participants. Such activities would include, but not be limited to, skydiving, bungee jumping, extreme sports, and operating heavy machinery.

**Alcohol:** Drinking of alcoholic beverages is strongly discouraged. Buying alcohol is illegal below the age of 18. Drinking alcohol is not forbidden to minors in private, but supplying minors (below 18 years old) with alcohol that results in intoxication is forbidden. Smoking: is strongly discouraged.

**Romance:** Refrain from serious romantic activity and avoid romantic attachments during the exchange period. Abstain from sexual activity and promiscuity.

**Employment:** Students are not to undertake any full or part time employment for reward.

**Touring and travelling:** is permitted with adult supervision. Students must not travel alone or with other students. All travel must be approved by the host family and the student's own family (in writing). Students are not permitted to make travel arrangements on their own. Invitations received while under the supervision of the host family must be approved by the host parents.

**Costs:** Passport, visa, outward and return transportation costs, excess luggage, airport taxes, other unusual costs or costs associated with an early return will be the responsibility of the student.

**Travel Arrangements:** from Perth to France will be made through the Esperance Twin Towns Committee.

**Hosting:** is the responsibility of the reciprocating families or, failing that, the host Lions Club.

**Host Families:** are responsible for students socially and physically. Students will respect their wishes and requests. Our society may be different from French society and some guidance and restrictions are to be expected and advisable.

**Formal Events:** Students will be required to attend events and meetings during and after the Exchange visit pertaining to the exchange program. Formal events include Committee meetings, Council meetings, Lion Club meetings, pre and post formal events, and events and functions arranged by the host families. Students will be notified of meeting dates and requirements.

# Student Information

The Exchange Program is a unique cultural experience. As an ambassador, you are representing the Shire of Esperance, the Lions Club of Esperance and your School, on an international level. Your behaviour will be a reflection of all Australians and you must maintain high moral and ethical standards at all times.

This information aims to provide some guidance and advice for students participating in the Exchange Program.

Before you leave, there are several things that you need to do in preparation for your Exchange visit.

## Travel Preparation

The Esperance Twin Towns Committee will advise you of the departure and return dates and arrange the purchase of your airflight tickets. The Esperance Twin Towns Committee will also liaise with your family and the host family to ensure safe and appropriate travel is arranged between the airport and respective homes.

## Travel Documentation

You will need to arrange and obtain all necessary travel documentation including your passport, visas, insurances (sickness, accident, travel) prior to departure.

## Destination Preparation

Research where you are going. Obtaining information about where you are going will help you build your knowledge and will help your friendships and experiences. Also, find out about the weather – this will help you pack appropriate clothing.

## Clothing

Clothing in France is expensive. Ensure that you take a good, serviceable and versatile selection of clothing with you. Consider different needs for clothing, including from formal events to casual wear. Remember that although you are travelling during the spring/summer time in France, you may need some warm clothing as well. Take comfortable shoes and also include some Esperance and Australian T-shirts.

## Gifts/Souvenirs

You may wish to consider taking some small gifts/souvenirs for your host family. Gifts/souvenirs reflect your appreciation and have special meaning for the recipients. The Twin Towns Committee can assist with suggestions of suitable Australian orientated gifts/souvenirs you may wish to take.

## Finances

Be prepared with a small amount of cash for when you first arrive in France. Investigate the best cash access options for you and have it ready in time for your trip.

## Journal

Have your journal with you and write down your experiences, thoughts and feelings, track your adventures, and record contact details of the people you meet. This will help with preparing your post Exchange presentations. If you struggle with writing/making notes in French, ask your host family to help. They will be more than happy to do so!

## Photos

Carry your camera with you. Photos are the best way to record your memories and bring visual information home to show your family and friends, and assist in post Exchange presentations.

## When you get there

Contact your family – as soon as practicable - to let them know you have arrived and settled in with your host family.

## Functions and Public Speaking

Students will be involved in civic functions, presentations and social occasions where formal duties will be required. Often public speaking can seem a little daunting. Here are some tips to help you through:

Have a speech ready, in French. This is a really important aspect of any public speaking engagement and shows your interest in the Exchange Program and the country you are visiting.

Plan and practise your speech in front of a mirror. This helps with identifying breath breaks, smiling and audience expectation.

Allow for adjustments with your speech – each audience and each situation is different.

Smile when you talk.

Project your voice – aim to talk to the furthest person away from you.

Eye contact – look at the audience. Scan the room with your eyes so that each person feels like you are talking to them.

If you lose your place, don't panic. Repeat your last point, take a breath and find your spot.

Using palm cards is an easy way to segment your speech and help to restructure your speech as needed.

Alternatively, if your speech is on one piece of paper, use your hand to scroll as you talk. It will help you locate your position within your speech.

Remember there is usually time limits on talks. Allow time for questions. The audience will be fascinated about where you come from and what Australia is like.

You will be talking about things you know well and you will find speaking to groups much easier than you imagine. Smile, and enjoy yourself. Your audience won't bite.

The more often you speak, the easier it will become. Don't let any opportunity to speak pass you by and get in there and enjoy being a novelty.

## Your Time During the Exchange

You will have the opportunity to eat many new foods. Have a taste before you ask what it is. Be adventurous and you may be pleasantly surprised.

Be of an open mind and have a positive attitude. All your experiences might not be what you had expected; however, if you keep your mind open, you are guaranteed to learn something from each experience.

If you are not sure of something or a situation, Ask. Listen. Learn. Practise.

You are on exchange to make friends with the people of France – don't limit your friendship to other exchange students. Be brave and get amongst the action.

Try to see other people's points of view and think about their comments and what you can learn from their view.

Be diplomatic and tactful when you don't agree with a point of view that someone has expressed.

Get involved! Don't wait for people to ask you questions – make the effort and you will be rewarded.

# Your Host Family

## Your Host Family

Host families will make every effort to make students feel welcomed. Students must be aware that they will have to adjust and adapt to living in a different home environment, community and country. Students are expected to obey the rules of the family and to generally adapt within that home life, school and the community.

It is also important that students make every effort to be communicative and to take an interest in all aspects of the French culture they may be presented with. Students will only take away with them what they put in, and host families will not appreciate a student who makes little effort to be involved or shows no interest in learning.

- You are a member of the Host family in every respect. When you arrive at the host family's house sit down with them and find out what their rules are and how the host parents would like to be addressed. In France people are quite formal in their greetings, it is normal to address all adults as Monsieur / Madame or by title.
- Take time to get to know the family, and adapt to them. Asking questions at the beginning will help establish your boundaries.
- Settle in as quickly as possible, your time in France is relatively short.
- Make the effort to fit into your host family, be courteous and considerate. Keep your living area tidy and offer to assist in day to day functions around the house – yes, even in France you might get dish-washing duties.
- Learn what religion your host family is. Show an interest in understanding their beliefs. You don't have to convert or become religious yourself – or sell your religion to anyone else either.
- If you have a problem, within your host family, make an attempt to solve it with them first. Just like your own family, the host family will not be mind readers. It takes, at least, two people to communicate and sometimes you have to put yourself into situations you aren't comfortable with to resolve issues with other people.

## Get to know your host family

Prior to your departure you will be able to communicate with your host family and start to get to know them. Here are some helpful questions to build your relationship with your host family:

- How do your host parents wish to be addressed – Monsieur / Madame or by their first name?
- What are you expected to do daily ie. make your bed, tidy your room etc.
- What is the procedure with dirty laundry? Where is washing kept till wash day? Do you do your own washing? Would they prefer you to wash your own underwear?
- Can you use the iron and washing machine yourself?
- Where can you keep your toiletries?
- What time are meals?
- Offer to have a permanent job ie. clear the table, wash the dishes etc.
- Can you help yourself to the fridge, or must you ask first?
- What areas are strictly private ie. bar, study, sewing room etc?
- If you need coat hangers, ask now!
- Can you put pictures or posters up in your bedroom? However, do not mark the walls e.g. with tape. (When you leave your room should be exactly as it was on your arrival.)
- What time must you get up on weekdays? Weekends?
- What time must you go to bed weekdays? Weekends?
- What time must you be in at night, if you go out?
- How often can you go out per week?
- Can you invite friends to stay the night?
- Can you invite friends around in the day?

## During your stay

### Communication

- What is the procedure for posting letter in France?
- Does the family have email access, if so are you permitted to send emails?
- Are you able to access the internet? If so is there a cost for this?

### Telephone rules

- Do you ask first? Do you need to keep a log and pay for calls? May your friends phone you?

### Overseas telephone rules

- Reverse charges? Get the party to call you back immediately? Suggest a log calls and pay prior to leaving.
- Does the host family have any pet hates ie. tardiness, being interrupted, wearing no t-shirt to the dinner table, music, chewing gum etc?
- If you are having a problem, how would like host parents like you to handle it ie. by writing a note explaining you feelings, by asking to discuss the issue, by discussing the issue with your advisor or a Twin Towns Committee member or by learning to live with the problem?
- If the family goes out, who pays for entrance ie. student or host family?
- If you have any special eating requirements or tastes say so now.
- Do you have to take lunch to school with you, or do you buy it? The family should be supplying all meals and accommodation, so make sure you ask who pays for the lunches.
- If the family has servants, please ask for advice on how to deal with that situation.

### Homesickness

Very few students escape their exchange without at least one bout of homesickness, so be prepared for when it sneaks up on you.

In the early days of your exchange, you will be full of excitement of a new country, people, and customs, not to mention being the centre of attention. This level of excitement is difficult to sustain. There will be days

# During your stay

where you will be tired and combined with concentrating on a foreign language, will leave you mentally tired. This is when you might begin to a bit vulnerable.

## The signals of Homesickness

- Being miserable without knowing why
- Crying for no reason
- Getting anxious or upset about little things that used to not bother you
- Wondering what people at home are doing; feeling as if you are missing out
- Getting fed up with new food, new smells, new scenery, and wanting the familiar
- You just want to hide in your room and ignore the 'alien' world outside the door.

## What to do about it?

- Recognise the homesickness signals
- Talk about it – reach out to someone. Everyone involved in the Exchange Program will expect that you will have days like this.
- Keep busy – get out and have a great time, participate and make memories of your time in France.
- When you really just want to go home and be surrounded of all the familiar things, take some time to think about the experience you are participating in. Your family and friends would love to have the chance to be where you are. Make the most of it for yourself and for the people at home.
- Remind yourself that this is a short trip. One month will go very quickly and you will be back home before you know it.

## What not to do

- Don't be the miserable one – looking sad and lonely and not participating is not going to be a benefit.
- Don't try to eat your way to happiness.
- Don't go home at the first sign of homesickness. This should be the last resort. Have a chat, get out and about even a good old cry will get you through. Remember tomorrow is another day of opportunities and possibilities. Lucky you!

