

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS PROGRAMME
FRANCE 2020/21**

FRANCE COUNTRY NOTES

VERSION 4, 30 JULY 2020

Document compiled by British Council. Information correct at 11 August 2020. We are aware that information can change throughout the year. Please inform us should you discover any errors.

NOTES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS APPOINTED TO FRANCE IN 2020-21.

This document is the France Country Notes for the 2020/21 English Language Assistants Programme. Any previous country notes relating to previous years should be ignored for the 2020/21 academic year.

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in these notes. However the British Council cannot accept responsibility for any errors which may exist or for any subsequent changes.

FOREWORD

Congratulations on your recent allocation to a post as an English Language Assistant in France. Every year, around 2,500 Language Assistants from the UK support the teaching of English in 14 countries around the world. Each one is taking part in a programme that traces its heritage back to 1905. It began as an exchange programme to allow graduates from France to help English students learn French, with 'young Masters in English secondary schools' heading to France to perform a similar role. Shortly afterwards, a similar agreement was reached with the government of Prussia.

Since those early days, the programme has endured major global events, two World Wars, and the Great Depression to name a few. But while the global political, social and economic landscapes may have changed over the years, the Language Assistants initiative has remained committed to increasing language skills across the world.

This document contains important information and advice regarding a variety of practical and administrative matters affecting UK assistants in France. This document should be read carefully, retained for reference and considered in conjunction with any papers issued by our French partners and the French authorities. It is important that you take this information with you whilst undertaking your year abroad in order to be able to consult it at all times when problems/questions arise, although it is also available year round on our website.

If your permanent (UK) home address, personal e-mail or phone number should change at any time from now, please inform us immediately by sending an e-mail to languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org. We may need to contact you during the year with updates to these notes, invitations or urgent messages.

We hope that you find the following information useful and that you enjoy the year ahead.

Best wishes,

British Council Language Assistants Team

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1. CO-OPERATING PARTNERS

1.1. BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of [arts and culture](#), [English language](#), [education](#) and [civil society](#). Each year we reach over 20 million people face-to-face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

Our work in English aims to bring high-quality language materials to every [learner](#) and [teacher](#) who wants them. In developing and post-conflict countries, we teach English and train teachers through radio, web and TV broadcasts. We offer more than three million UK [examinations](#) worldwide, helping people gain access to trusted qualifications to support their career and study prospects.

Our work in [education](#) and [society](#) helps transform national education systems, builds more inclusive and open societies and increases [young people's opportunities](#). We encourage international students to come and study in the UK, and British students to experience life abroad. We bring [schools](#) around the world together, so young people and teachers from different countries can learn from each other.

Our work in the [arts](#) involves the very best British and international artistic talent. We help increase audiences for international work in the UK and for UK work globally. We bring artists together and support the development of skills and policy in the arts and creative industries. Through this work, we ensure that culture in its broadest sense plays a vital role in connecting with and understanding each other.

In these ways, the British Council builds links between UK people and institutions, and those around the world, helping to create trust and lay foundations for prosperity and security around the world.

1.2. PARTNER ORGANISATION IN FRANCE

[France Education International](#) administers the Language Assistants Programme in France. They liaise with the académies (local educational authorities) in France on the British Council's behalf.

Contact details

France Education International
1 avenue Léon Journault,
92318 Sèvres Cedex.

Tel: +33 (0)1 45 07 60 00

Fax: +33 (0)1 45 07 60 76

Email: assistant@ciep.fr

Web: www.ciep.fr/en/foreign-language-assistants-in-france
<https://www.ciep.fr/assistants-langue-france>

Coordinator for British Council ELAs

Brigitte Sénécal-Levasseur

Email: assistant@ciep.fr

2. ROLE OF THE LANGUAGE ASSISTANT

The role of a language assistant is a very important one and one that we hope you will enjoy. Please remember that you are a **paid member of staff** with the responsibilities and required professionalism that this entails. Please refer to our website for more information on your role as an English Language Assistant: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/study-work-abroad/outside-uk/english-language-assistants>

As a language assistant you are also an **ambassador for the UK and its culture**. The way you behave will influence how those around you view the UK and you should endeavour to be a positive example. If you set a bad example, you could damage the reputation of the programme and adversely affect the experience of future assistants.

“Be professional. It is a job so treat it as such. If you’ve got any problems, discuss them straight away and get the problem sorted out early on.” (ELA France 2015-16)

Your first-hand experience of life in the UK is an excellent resource and you should draw on this during your lessons. We provide a lot of advice to help you incorporate cultural content into your lessons – see [section 11](#) in this document below.

from your home country. (ELA France 2016-17)

2.1. TEACHING ENGLISH

It is important to be resourceful and use your initiative. If you do not think that you are being used sufficiently, make suggestions of topics that you could discuss with the students or activities that you could get involved with. This [document](#) contains useful information about teaching English but to get started the following links are useful:

- <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/getting-started-resources>
- www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-teens

It is also very important to make sure that you are familiar with the education system in France as it will help you know what to expect when you start teaching at your school(s). Please see the Eurydice webpage for specific information:

- https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/france_en

Please be aware that during your period of appointment as a language assistant, it is your school and not the British Council who is your official employer.



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3. POSTING INFORMATION

Each region differs as to when they organise appointments and send out information. The British Council is involved in allocating assistants to a region (**académie**) and sometimes age group, but has no control over choice of town, size of town, school environment or when information is sent out. We encourage each region to send information out as early as possible. You should also write immediately to your school(s) confirming acceptance of the post. If you do not receive a reply by mid-September it is a good idea to ring the school(s) to ask about accommodation and give them an idea of your anticipated arrival date.

You should also ask them for some information about the school(s) that you will be working in. For example, it may be useful to know the age range of pupils, the average class size, the general level of ability, the social background of pupils, the facilities available and if you should bring any specific materials from home. It is also important to enquire about the dress code for teachers and any other general school information.

3.1. SCHOOL ALLOCATION

The maximum number of schools to which you can be appointed is three. Please contact us if you have been appointed to more than three schools. If the different schools are several miles apart and you have to travel between two on the same day, you are entitled to ask for help towards travel expenses. Under no circumstances should an assistant be required to buy a car just to get to their schools. After contacting your school, if you establish that there is no regular public transport which serves your school(s), and there are no lifts available to your school(s) please inform us of the situation. Please do not contact us without contacting your school first.

3.2. DATES OF APPOINTMENT

The period of appointment for UK assistants in France will be **1st October 2020 – 30th April 2021**.

Assistants are expected to work 12 hours a week. Those who have been appointed to more than one school will be asked to divide their time between the schools concerned. You can request information regarding how your timetable will be arranged from the head of the host school, which is usually the first one mentioned when you are sent details of your posting in the **arrêté de nomination**, however this information will most likely not be available until you arrive in France.

3.3. HOLIDAYS

Assistants are entitled to the usual school holidays. The [French Government's Education website](#) has further details regarding the school calendar. You should not be absent on other occasions without prior permission. Attending the induction course does not give assistants the right to take leave at a later date.

3.4. STAYING A CONSECUTIVE YEAR

To stay for a consecutive year as a British Council language assistant in France, you must apply through France Education International before March 2021. More information about this will be posted on France Education International's website later in the year.

3.5. PREDECESSORS

The British Council will share the contact details of assistants appointed to your area in 2019-20 if they have consented to this (due to GDPR rules). It should be noted that schools do not necessarily receive assistants from the same Anglophone country each year, and the British Council holds records of assistants from the UK only. Therefore, your host school(s) may be in a better position to offer you help with contacting former assistants and we would recommend contacting your host school to ask if they would be willing to ask their former language assistants to share their contact details with you. Past assistants have emphasised how useful it is to contact former assistants in their area and have described their advice as invaluable.

4. PRE DEPARTURE INFORMATION

4.1. FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Before travelling to France you should ensure that you check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) travel advice pages: <http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france> and ensure that you have subscribed to updates so that you receive any important changes to the FCO's advice.

During a crisis, advice for British nationals will be published on the travel advice website and updated regularly, so by [subscribing](#) you will ensure that you are aware of any updates. There is also now a [dedicated page](#) for advice concerning the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic in France.

We also recommend that assistants read the '[Advice for Travellers](#)' documentation provided by the FCO.

4.2. PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Assistants must be in possession of a standard 10-year passport before leaving the UK and are advised to ensure that it will not need to be renewed before October 2021. Those who are not in possession of a passport, or need a new one, should complete the application procedure as soon as possible either through a regional Passport Office or online at: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports>.

Assistants from the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are advised to check their passports to ensure that the following statement does not appear: 'the holder is not entitled to benefit from EU provisions relating to employment or establishment' as this means you will require a visa in order to work in France.

If you have dual nationality (UK/Irish/other EU) you should ensure that your passport is valid and you should use this one to travel while in France. This will save you considerable complications with the local authorities (Social Security etc.) This does not apply if one of your passports is French.

The rules on travel will stay the same until the transition period ends on 31 December 2020. During this time you can continue to travel to countries in the Schengen area or elsewhere in the EU with your UK passport.

After the end of the transition period, the rules on travel may change. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) will update their website with details of any changes to the rules as soon as information is available.

We would highly recommend visiting the www.gov.uk website for the most up-to-date official information for British citizens entering, living in and working in France. Pages of particular importance are the [Entry Requirements](#) page and the [Living in France](#) page.

4.3. TRAVEL TO FRANCE

You are responsible for the cost of your own travel and any travel to and from your place of appointment during the year. Booking in advance for all forms of transport is highly recommended. Past assistants have warned to check the baggage allowance for outward and return journeys when travelling by plane as sometimes the cheaper airlines have quite a low baggage allowance. The following websites may help you when booking your travel.

- www.skyscanner.net
- www.eurostar.com
- www.raileurope.co.uk
- www.directferries.co.uk
- www.eurolines.co.uk
- www.britishairways.com
- www.easyjet.co.uk
- www.flybe.com
- www.tui.co.uk
- www.opodo.co.uk
- www.expedia.co.uk
- www.ryanair.co.uk
- www.interrailnet.com
- www.airfrance.co.uk
- www.aircaribes.com (for outre-mer)

Working as a language assistant gives you a great opportunity to travel around France and you should make the most of your free time. Try to avoid coming home every holiday and experience as much of the surrounding area as possible.

4.4. TAKING A CAR ABROAD

You will need to research the laws on driving in France, including adapting your head lights for driving on the right. The website www.gov.uk/driving-abroad provides useful information about motoring abroad. You may need extra documents from 1 January 2021 and should stay updated [here](#) on any changes.

If you plan to take a car to France for the period of your assistantship, please ensure that you take out adequate insurance for the full period and **be aware that many insurance companies will only insure you for periods of up to 90 days**. Past assistants have advised looking into insurance well in advance in order to have the time to shop around for a suitable policy. All UK motor insurance policies offer the minimum legal protection required by EU countries and Switzerland. This gives third party cover for bodily injury or damage to property. The British Council is unable to recommend specific insurance companies.

Many insurers offer 24-hour UK telephone numbers in case you need help in an emergency. Make sure you have these details with you when you travel abroad.

The website of the Association of British Insurers www.abi.org.uk has general information on driving abroad, including the document 'Motoring Abroad' which has useful information on Motor Insurance cover and Green Cards. A Green Card is an internationally recognised document that provides evidence that the policyholder has minimum insurance cover.

If you require information on driver licensing you can contact **Drivers Customer Services (DCS)** by [email](#), [webchat](#), [phone](#) or by post **Correspondence Team DVLA, Swansea SA6 7JL** (Tel: 0300 790 6802).

Information on vehicle licensing or registration can be obtained from **Vehicle Customer Services (VCS), DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1AR** (Tel: 0300 790 6802) There is also a website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency>. Until 31 December 2020, UK licences will be recognised in all EU countries plus Switzerland, for as long as they remain valid. Driving licence rules will stay the same until 31 December 2020.

Driving licence rules will remain unchanged until 31 December 2020.

To exchange your UK licence for a French one, you can apply to the Agence Nationale des Titres Sécurisés using their [online platform](#) (in French). You must be able to prove that you have been living in France for 185 days.

You must apply to exchange your UK or other EU licence for a French one in the following cases:

- it needs to be amended to include a/several new driving categories
- it needs to be exchanged because you committed a driving offence under the French Highway Code resulting in penalty points or a driving ban

If you are in the process of exchanging your UK licence for a French licence, do not try to renew in parallel with DVLA because this will invalidate your application. Applications in the UK with a French address cannot be processed.

For information on driving in France, read the guidance on:

- [driving licence exchanges and renewals \(in French\)](#)
- [what you need to drive abroad](#)
- [driving rules in France](#)
- [driving license exchange and renewals \(in English\)](#)
- [Registering your car abroad within 6 months](#)

For information on buying a car in France see [7.6. Buying a car in France](#) below.

4.5. DRIVING AND THE LAW

Alcohol limits: as of 2015, the alcohol limit in France is 20mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood for new drivers (those who have passed their test in the past 3 years), and 50mg per 100ml of blood for everyone else. **Do not drink and drive.** French police can breathalyse at random and drivers who test positive face fines up to €4500. Higher levels carry greater penalties.

Mobile phones: it is illegal to use your mobile phone whilst driving in France. This includes using a headset or headphones. Those in violation of this can face a fine of up to €135.

Further advice on driving and the law can be found here:

- www.rac.co.uk/drive/travel/country/france

4.6. INSURANCE

The British Council is unable to advise on private insurance packages; you are recommended to consult an insurance broker for professional advice and to check whether you are covered by your parents' insurance policy, if applicable. Undergraduate assistants should consult with their university to check what cover is provided for them and you may find that a "study abroad" policy purchased online is an option. Please be aware that some insurance policies, usually 'backpackers' insurance, do not allow for trips home during the year and it is important to check the small print of your policy to make sure that you are covered.

Insurance whilst in post

You are strongly recommended to take out Personal Accident Travel insurance for the period between leaving home and taking up your appointment, the time during your appointment, and also the period between ending your appointment and your return to the UK. This should include the following standard elements of cover:

- Medical costs for treatment in case of illness or accidental injury
- Benefits for permanent disabling injuries, e.g. rehabilitation and living costs

- Benefits for death and costs of repatriation
- Cover for loss or damage to your personal belongings
- Cover for cancelled flights, e.g. if the airline goes out of business or on strike
- Personal Liability cover. This provides legal support and covers financial costs if you cause injury or property damage to others and are found personally liable.
- 24hr emergency assistance helpline.

Many policies also have Legal Expenses cover, which is recommended in case you need legal assistance while overseas.

Personal Accident Travel policies are readily available on price comparison websites, or by using a search engine to search for 'travel insurance'. The UK Foreign & Commonwealth website offers additional advice on taking out Travel Insurance: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-insurance.

The British Council will not be responsible for you while you are in France, although we will offer support when necessary and advise you check the [Line of Referral](#) document if you have a problem. You are therefore required to take out comprehensive insurance to cover you **during your whole time abroad**. We recommend you research the various options available and consult other/former assistants before purchasing a suitable policy. However any insurance you purchase should include cover for emergency treatment and repatriation. Please note that it is unlikely that insurance companies will cover you in the event of a natural disaster (referred to as an 'Act of God' in insurance policies) or the outbreak of war.

Any package should cover medical expenses, air ambulance, repatriation, personal accident & civil liability, luggage & valuable items, and cancellation in extreme cases. **Please note that you should organise your insurance before you leave the UK.**

Many insurers are excluding Covid-19 as a cause of travel delay or medical expenses. Please check carefully that your policy does include, as a minimum, medical expenses as a result of Covid-19. Currently, providers such as Endsleigh and Alpha are still providing this cover

on their gap year policies, so they may be an option, if the other elements of cover meet your individual needs.

You can also hear more about insurance on our dedicated [podcast episode](#), where we talk about the importance of insurance with a former English language assistant who was involved in a major car crash in Spain, as well as the British Council's Head of Insurance for advice on policies.

Insurance for travel outside of France

Remember that normally your health insurance only covers you within your host country during your allocated time there, therefore if you travel outside the country during or after that period, you may need additional insurance.

Experience from previous language assistants has told us that holiday periods provide the possibility for travel around or outside of France. If you do leave France at any point, it is highly advised to take out insurance for the country / countries that you visit.

4.7. GRADUATES WITH STUDENT LOANS

If you will be overseas for more than 3 months, you will need to complete an **Overseas Income Assessment Form** to enable the Student Loans Company to calculate how much you need to repay. On the Overseas Income Assessment Form you should provide them with details of your circumstances and prospective income. You will also be required to provide evidence of income or means of support. They will then send you a repayment schedule showing how much you need to pay each month. Your monthly payments will be based upon the earnings threshold for your destination country. More information can be found online here: www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk/portal/page?_pageid=93,6678653&_dad=portal&_schema=P ORTAL

4.8. BREXIT

The UK has now left the EU. From the 01 January 2021, the transition period will end. The Government has launched a new [website](#) to help

businesses, organisations, individuals and families check what they need to do to prepare for the UK leaving the EU.

Language Assistants have a responsibility to keep themselves informed of changes to the French government and UK government's advice on Brexit and the impact this may have on British nationals living in France.

The government's website contains specific advice on [Living in France](#). The website contains links to sign up to [e-mail alerts](#) on different topics relating to Brexit. We recommend that assistants sign up to these alerts and continue to check the government's website for any updates.

It is important to note that the government's website includes the following disclaimer:

Disclaimer - Please note that this information is provided as a guide only. Definitive information should be obtained from the French authorities. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will not be liable for any inaccuracies in this information.

Assistants should also read the [French government's guidance](#) for UK nationals (in English), and the [French Interior Ministry's website](#) on how to secure your residency rights (in French).

We advise English Language Assistants in France to read advice which may be published on the French government's website. We also recommend that assistants follow the British Embassy in France on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

The British Embassy in France is holding a series of outreach events across France, to update UK nationals on Brexit. Assistants should consider attending these events to keep informed of changes which may relate to their local areas - [British Embassy Citizen Outreach meetings in France](#). You can also sign up for the [Embassy's newsletter, Voisins Voices](#). Read [previous newsletter editions](#).

The [Withdrawal Agreement](#) sets out the terms of the UK's withdrawal from the EU and provides for a deal on citizens' rights. It sets out a transition period which lasts until 31 December 2020. During this time you can continue to live, work and study in

the EU broadly as you did before 31 January 2020.

If you are resident in France at the end of the transition period, you will be covered by the Withdrawal Agreement, and your rights will be protected for as long as you remain resident in France.

Any rights that are not covered by the Withdrawal Agreement will be the subject of future negotiations. Read this [guidance page](#) for more information

In the meantime, make sure you are registered as a resident in France (more details provided below). The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) will update this guidance as soon as more information becomes available.

You should also read the FCO's [guidance on living in Europe](#).

5. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Please see the [Foreign Commonwealth Office website](#) for more information regarding healthcare in France.

5.1. SÉCURITÉ SOCIALE

Assistants serving on the official scheme contribute automatically to the **sécurité sociale (la sécu)**. Sécurité sociale decrees that on average 70% of the cost of medical treatment will be reimbursed as well as 35-65% of the cost of prescriptions (**NB**: some are not reimbursed) and 80% of hospital fees. Please note that this can vary depending on circumstance.

Registration with the sécurité sociale should be arranged through the school intendant (bursar) or staff at the inspection académique who will be familiar with the procedure. You are now **not** require a certified translation of your full birth certificate if it is in one of the following languages: **English, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, Polish, Romanian or Swedish.**

You will subsequently receive an **attestation d'affiliation à la sécurité sociale** and a **numéro d'affiliation** pending issue of your **Carte Vitale** (social security card), which may take several months to come through. It is very important that you keep the attestation carefully and note this number as it will have to be quoted on any claim for reimbursement that you make before the card is issued.

If you have already worked in France before your assistantship and were enrolled in the French social security system at that time, you should use this number again and not go through the process of obtaining a new one. Give the **numéro d'immatriculation** to your school intendant.

Contributions paid to the French social security scheme may be taken into account in assessing certain benefits under the UK social security scheme on return to this country. Further information may be obtained from the **Inland Revenue, Centre for Non-residents, Room BP1301, Benton Park View, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE98 1ZZ** (Tel: 0845 915 4811)

5.2. VISITING A DOCTOR

Since 1st July 2005 all residents in France have been asked to choose **un médecin traitant** as their general practitioner. This doctor must also be consulted for referral for any specialist treatment. For a certain time you can go to a specialist without having seen your médecin traitant before but the fee for the specialist will be higher so do enquire about the cost in advance.

Over 95% of all doctors and dentists in France support a trade union agreement that sets their fees; these practitioners are said to be **conventionnés par la sécurité sociale**. There are "**médecins conventionnés**" (those who adhere to the medical agreement) and "**non-conventionnés**" (those who do not adhere to the agreement), but within the "**médecin conventionné**" group there are two sectors, 1 and 2. Both sectors adhere to the medical agreement, but secteur 1 doctors have their fees set, whereas secteur 2 doctors have more freedom about how much to charge. The patient will be reimbursed the same percentage in both cases. The website

<http://annuaire.sante.ameli.fr/> allows people to check which Sector the doctor is in. As for the “non-conventionné” doctors - the reimbursement rate is lower than for “conventionné” doctors. It is worth knowing that for minor medical issues pharmacists provide excellent advice free of charge, and in emergencies they are licensed to prescribe medicine as well.

A few things to consider:

- Ensure that the doctor or dentist you choose is **conventionné(e)**
- A visit (**consultation**) with a médecin traitant for sector 1 costs €20 - €30 and you must pay this on the spot. The doctor will give you a **feuille de soins** or **feuille de maladie**, a form which states how much you were charged and is to be forwarded to the sécurité sociale in order to be reimbursed by bank transfer. You may be given a prescription (**ordonnance**) too.
- When you buy what the doctor has prescribed, the pharmacist will enter the details into the computer. You will normally pay the sum which is not reimbursed by social security only (i.e. 35% of the cost of the prescription).
- In order to join some sports clubs it is sometimes necessary to obtain a certificate to prove that you have a good level of health.

5.3. ADDITIONAL COVER

Since the sécurité sociale generally reimburses no more than approx. 70% of medical expenses incurred (0-65% for prescribed drugs, 80% for hospital costs), assistants are **strongly advised to take out additional medical insurance**. As employees of the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale you are entitled to subscribe to the **MGEN** (Mutuelle Générale de l'Éducation Nationale). This cover will only commence 3 months after you join and start paying your subscription. Every school in France has an MGEN representative, usually a teacher, whom you should contact early in the year if interested in joining the scheme.

Assistants who register as 'regular' students at a French university can obtain additional medical

cover at a reasonable price by joining the **LMDE** (La Mutuelle Des Etudiants). Both the premium and the cover with the LMDE are slightly less than with the MGEN.

5.4. SICK LEAVE

Please note that if you take sick leave before having completed 4 months and 4 days' service you will not be entitled to sickness benefit (**indemnité journalière**) which usually amounts to 50% of your gross allowance and is calculated on a daily basis. As of mid-2012, for all French workers, the first day of sick leave is unpaid.

An important point to note is that the official date of the beginning of the working period is the date inscribed on the **procès verbal d'installation** by the Head of the School. If you are an assistant serving in one of the départements d'outre-mer you should check the procedure with the rectorat as this might be different to that of mainland France. You **must** obtain a medical certificate with dates if you are off work for illness at any time.

Further information about the sécurité sociale and procedure to follow in case of absence is contained in the France Education International's publication **Le Guide de l'assistant de langue** under the section '[Votre Installation en France](#)'.

Further details can be found below, in section [9.1 Absence from School](#)

5.5. EHIC CARD

According to current guidelines on gov.uk Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) will be valid up to **31 December 2020**.

You should obtain a UK-issued European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). **As long as it is valid**, the EHIC card will also be useful for any trips to other EU countries. It covers any medical treatment that becomes necessary during your trip, because of either illness or an accident. The card gives you access to state-provided medical treatment only. It provides no top-up on the cover of the national health scheme while you are in France during the period of your contract. To apply for a

card please use the following link: www.ehic.org.uk. You can also obtain an application form from the post office.

Residents of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are not eligible for the European Health Insurance Card. Residents of the Isle of Man need to take out fully-comprehensive insurance (which should include repatriation by air ambulance) before travelling to another country. Applicants from Guernsey should contact the Health and Social Services Department for advice. Applicants from Jersey should contact the Employment and Social Security Department for advice.

5.6. MEDICATION

If you take regular medication, please ensure that you have a supply before you leave. It is also important to find out where your nearest doctor, dentist and hospital are as soon as you arrive. You should ask your school for information about the facilities in your area and always advise staff and your landlord of any medical conditions.

“Bring medicines that are hard to get in the place you're going to (E.g. your specific contraceptive pill, branded things like day nurse / your preferred hay fever tablets - the brands I wanted were unavailable)” (ELA Spain 2014-15)

In addition to health insurance, it would be wise to consider insuring your personal possessions. You should also check your parents' household insurance as this sometimes covers possessions away from home. **Furthermore, cover for personal liability is often overlooked but it is extremely important.** If you were the cause of an accident of any kind – e.g. cycling on the road – the resulting costs, practical and legal, could be prohibitively high.

5.7. MENTAL HEALTH

Although working abroad can be enjoyable, it can also be challenging. Lack of familiar support systems, disrupted daily routines, language barriers, culture shock and unexpected situations

can intensify stress levels rather than alleviate them.

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. **It is advised to read this information even if you are not currently suffering from mental health problems.**

The Foreign Commonwealth Office provides information about mental health and travel via the following links.

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health
- www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-advice-for-people-with-mental-health-issues

The leaflets hyperlinked below contain guidance on travelling abroad and mental health, and information about how the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) is able to assist British nationals with mental health needs abroad. The leaflets detail the type of assistance you may find in the country. The leaflet also explains some of the differences between English law and practice and that of other countries.

Mental Health: Travelling Abroad

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584029/FCO_MentalHealth_web_130117.pdf

Mental Health: Travelling Abroad Checklist

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/466425/Mental_Health_Checklist_-_Final.pdf



6. ARRIVAL

6.1. INDUCTION MEETING

The French local authorities will organise a 1 or 2-day 'induction course' or information meeting (**un stage**) for all foreign language assistants which may be held in a virtual format this year. Please note, the British Council has no involvement whatsoever in the organisation of these meetings. You will receive details about your *stage* from your **académie** (local education authority) so this is just for your information. The format of the stage varies from académie to académie but it provides you with useful information about your placement directly from the local education authorities and is a great chance for you to meet other assistants in your region. **Attendance is expected.**

The arrangements for the stage in each académie are made by the local **Inspecteur/Inspectrice pédagogique régional d'anglais** (IPR) in conjunction with the **Centre Régional de Documentation Pédagogique** (CRDP). It is paid for by the French government and if the stage is more than one day long, accommodation is provided free of charge, usually in a local youth hostel or university hall of residence (**résidence universitaire**).

The dates for all the stages will be available on the [France Education International website](#) from early September onwards.

You may already have heard from your académie with details about the stage. If you have not received any information from the académie however, then this may be because your stage takes place after the official start date of 1st October. In this case, details of your stage will be waiting for you at your host school.

If the course takes place before 1st October:

The French académie which appoints you will send you details before you leave the UK. They may well arrive separately from the **arrêté de nomination** because they may be sent from a different office. Look out for a sheet marked **Stage d'accueil** (or **Stage de formation**) **des assistants de langue**. It may have a map and

perhaps a stage programme attached to it. You need to complete the reply slip (**bulletin réponse**) and return it to the address it specifies.

When the stage is over you should go straight to your school so that you give yourself time to settle in before taking up duty on the starting date of 1st October. You are advised to arrive during school hours if you are unable to inform the school in advance of an exact arrival time. There is, naturally, nothing to stop you from going to the school before attending the induction course in order to introduce yourself and sort out your accommodation.

If the course takes place on 1st October:

In a few académies the stage may take place on 1st October itself; if this is your situation, the school will expect you as soon as the stage is over.

If the course takes place after 1st October:

You should be ready to start work in your school from 1st October and attend the induction course subsequently as instructed.

- **Travel:**

You are expected to arrange and pay for your own travel. You should not book travel until you have received confirmation from the British Council that your International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) has been received and approved. Neither the British Council nor the French local authorities can be held responsible for any assistant's flight cancellation or re-booking costs.

- **Accommodation:**

Accommodation will only be provided if the stage is more than one day long. Unless a specific rendez-vous is given on the French course information sheet, you should "check in" at the reserved accommodation in the afternoon or early evening. Staff at the hostel or résidence universitaire may not be available to give you the key to your room if you arrive later. If a late

evening arrival is unavoidable you should check in advance with the CRDP or place of accommodation to ensure this will not cause a problem.

- **Programme:**

You will be provided with a copy of the course programme by the French co-ordinators but as a general rule you should expect the course to start at 9am on the morning following your arrival. However the arrangements vary considerably from one académie to another, and you must read your stage information sheet (in French) very carefully. The subjects covered during the stage will also vary but will probably include talks on the French education system, administrative formalities when living/working in France, teaching English as a foreign language, the local area, and the do's and don'ts of being an assistant.

Please note:

- It is not possible to attend a course in an académie other than the one in which you have been appointed.
 - Accommodation arrangements permitting, it is sensible to arrive in France a few days before 1st October in order to settle in.
 - France in general does not cater well for vegetarians, and the CRDP/university restaurants providing meals at the induction courses will be no exception.
-



7. SETTLING IN

“It was quite difficult to integrate at the beginning but if you keep trying it will eventually happen!” (ELA France, 2016-17)

7.1. ACCOMMODATION

“Always contact your responsible [mentor teacher] to see if they have any advice before paying deposits/making plans etc., especially before you leave the country. My initial plan was to live elsewhere and commute to work, but I was informed that I'd be able to live on site, with no additional responsibilities, for an unbeatable price. (ELA France, 2016-17)”

The British Council is not in a position to provide or to help find accommodation. Equally your school(s) are not obliged to provide or find you accommodation, but they may be able to offer you somewhere temporary to stay for the first few days or weeks, thus giving you some time to look for permanent accommodation. You should however not assume that your school will do this and should discuss your arrival and initial accommodation arrangements with them in advance. Please note that if your school does offer you accommodation you are not obliged to accept it but remember, if you do accept it, you will have to abide by the school's rules.

The first thing to do when looking for permanent accommodation is to ask your mentor teacher if they can recommend anything. For example, they may know a local family with a room to rent, or already have somewhere in mind for you to stay. If your school cannot help, your best contacts are your predecessors at the school or in the area. Previous assistants are also often able to offer advice on how to find accommodation locally.

Consider going to your teaching location to arrange accommodation in advance of the induction course or of starting your job. Past assistants have emphasised the need to look for accommodation as early as possible. The first

weeks of your assistantship will be busy as you will be finding your way around an unfamiliar town, dealing with bureaucracy and trying to make a good impression at school. Having accommodation lined up can make this easier. For temporary lodgings while you look for something permanent, investigate the possibility of staying in a youth hostel. Remember that you will need your passport to check into hotels/hostels. **Do not** take out a contract on your accommodation **until** you know the location of your schools.



“Don't panic if you don't have accommodation before leaving the UK. I was really scared about having nowhere to live when I got to France, but it's definitely easier to stay in an Airbnb for a few days to properly visit houses in the country, rather than signing for a house before you've seen it and it being rubbish.” (ELA France, 2016-17)

Once you get to France the following suggestions may be of interest:

- search for a room or flat on the internet
- advertise on the school/staff notice board and ask around the staff; do **NOT** advertise in local papers or public places
- buy the local newspapers early in the morning and phone likely numbers immediately

- ring the local university halls of residence or check their flat share adverts and notices, or advertise on their notice board that you are looking for a room
- ask local friends'/acquaintances' landlords if they have any further accommodation to let
- write to or visit as soon as possible any student or youth organisation in the area that might have details of available lodgings: the local tourist office may have a list of such organisations
- find out about local religious organisations as they often know of rooms to let
- accommodation agencies may be able to help but you should be very wary of paying large fees and deposits, and always read the small print in any leases or agreements to be signed. Look for small agencies as often their fees are lower
- if in or near a university town, visit the university accommodation office (**service logement du CROUS**) and check student noticeboards. In university towns accommodation ads are often displayed on noticeboards at the **Restau-U** (U=universitaire), in university buildings (students advertising at the beginning of the year for people to share with), in bookshops, laundrettes and supermarkets.
- some towns have lists of rooms and flats available which are produced and distributed by the **mairie**, citizens' advice bureau, tourist office or equivalent organisation within the locality; (sometimes the mairie owns or keeps a flat specially for foreign language assistants)
- if your home town or university town is twinned with your town of appointment or a place nearby, it would also be worth contacting the local mairie. A special effort is sometimes made to help assistants from twin towns in their search for accommodation
- **De particulier à particulier** is a weekly publication which advertises flats to rent. It also has a website which is worth a look (see list of useful links below)

- families sometimes advertise for lodgers on noticeboards. If you are interested in this possibility you must clarify whether or not you will be allowed visitors and will be expected to help with housework or children (12-15 hours per week is typical)

Some websites you may find useful are:

ACCOMODATION TYPE	USEFUL LINKS
Temporary accommodation:	www.hihostels.com www.hostelbookers.com www.hostelworld.com www.airbnb.com
Permanent accommodation:	www.pap.fr www.leboncoin.fr www.unhaj.org www.cidj.com www.appartager.com www.avendrealouer.fr www.vivastreet.com

Beware! Some ads in papers do not make it clear if the rental is handled by an individual or an agency. Check when arranging a viewing; otherwise you may have to pay an agency fee which may be the equivalent of one month's rent.

When you go out looking for accommodation, take a dossier of papers with you including as many of the following as possible: your **arrêté d'affectation**, **bulletin de paie**, **lettre d'un garant**, **relevé d'identité bancaire** (or RIB), **pièce d'identité**. In France "tout ne marche qu'avec des papiers!"

Landlords may ask for 1 month's rent as a deposit (**une caution**) and 1 month's rent paid in advance. Always ask (insist if necessary) for a receipt for the money you pay, both deposit and rent. If you do live in privately rented accommodation, check your contract carefully to see how much notice you must give to move out – in France a minimum of three months' notice is usually the legal requirement. You may also have to give this notice in writing by registered mail.

Assistants who intend to rent accommodation privately through a landlord or letting agency should be aware that they are legally obliged to take out an insurance policy in case of accident. This is usually known as assurance habitation or assurance logement and can be obtained from the MAIF.

A formal contract to rent an apartment sometimes requires the signature of a **garant** (guarantor). If you do not know anyone resident in France who is prepared to act as your guarantor (i.e. undertake to pay your rent/debts should you default), it may help if you have a formal letter from your parents, written in French, stating their financial guarantee: see suggested format enclosed in your Summer pack. Alternatively, your responsible or a friendly teacher at school might be prepared to 'take the risk'. It is worth trying to find a French guarantor as a number of landlords are reluctant to accept a guarantor from outside France.

We recommend that you take photos of your room and the flat when you move into your long-term accommodation and when you leave to help you get back any deposit you may have to pay, which is usually dependent on the accommodation being in the same condition as when you first arrived. When you leave your accommodation, remember to cancel any personal contracts, e.g. internet or utilities.

When you do find accommodation, please ensure that you have checked health and safety issues (temporary and long term) such as fire alarms and exits, gas leaks, electrics, water etc.

When looking for accommodation please consider your safety above all else. When you have found somewhere to live, even if it has been arranged for you, do not sign any agreement you are not comfortable with and make sure that there is a period of notice written in the contract to avoid problems, should you decide to change your accommodation during the year.

When signing a rental agreement, please be aware of the notice period given. It is recommended to include a 'diplomatic clause' in the rental agreement to allow for a shorter notice period in the event that the rental agreement needs to be terminated prematurely due to force

majeure (including in the event of a pandemic or a travel warning officially issued by a government). This is advised particularly in the light of the current Covid-19 pandemic.

- **Foyers**

Living in a **foyer** is particularly recommended if you can find a good one and is a good place for making French friends. However, bear in mind that most of them have night curfews and strict arrangements regarding overnight guests (there might be a charge for guests and restrictions on the nights that they can stay).

Some foyers do not accept assistants on the principle that you are officially employed rather than full-time students. However, there are **foyers de jeunes travailleurs/-euses** for young people in employment. The atmosphere is sometimes very international; the facilities can be excellent. In addition, if you stay in a foyer you can claim **APL** (see [7.2 Housing Benefit](#) below) and the management may even arrange this for you. Foyers often ask for a deposit of 1-2 months' rent.

"I would recommend looking into Foyers des jeunes travailleurs - they are very basic but they are a great place to meet people and get help with the CAF and other administrative tasks." (ELA France 2016-17)

7.2. HOUSING BENEFIT

Assistants are entitled to claim housing benefit (**aide personnalisée au logement** or APL) from the French state if they have an official rental agreement and the rent exceeds 25% of their net monthly allowance. The right to housing benefit and the amount of the rebate varies according to the individual's previous earnings, but it is possible to get back up to half the rent. You should register your claim as early as possible with the local CAF (**caisse d'allocations familiales**). Check with them what documents are required for your application, but it is advisable to bring copies of previous payslips, rental agreement, etc. A piece of advice to note: check that your room/flat is 'declared' by your landlord/landlady and ask for an official contract: otherwise you are not eligible for APL.

Please see the website www.caf.fr where you can do a self-assessment to check your eligibility for APL, download the relevant forms and calculate the allowance you might receive. It is becoming increasingly more common that people get the ALS (Allocation de Logement à Caractère Social) which works the same way as the APL.

“Bear with CAF, it may be one of the most stressful things, go in to the office and ask if you need help, they are helpful ... communication can be slow. I only received my CAF payments in May 2017, having arrived and applied in October 2016.” (ELA France, 2016-17)

7.3. TAXE D’HABITATION

In France **taxe d'habitation** (equivalent to UK Council Tax/ Northern Ireland Rates) is due from every individual who on 1st January is registered as officially renting a flat (furnished or unfurnished) or living in property that they own. The liability for **taxe d'habitation** is not related to the amount a person earns or to whether he/she pays income tax. This means that English language assistants are liable as much as any other citizen in France

NB The French authorities will issue you a demand notice which may well reach you after your return to the UK, even a year later. The French authorities issue bills for the **taxe d'habitation** in October after you complete your assistantship. To avoid administrative complications and the possibility of being charged interest, you are strongly advised to settle the account before you leave France and this can be done by going to your local **Centre des impôts**. Should you rely on the tax office to catch up with you after your departure, you must at least ensure that you pay promptly when they do, or you will be charged 10% interest on each subsequent bill. Bear in mind that once you return to your studies, you might find it much harder to pay than you would at the end of your assistantship. If you persist in refusing to pay, you run the risk of court action or ending up on an international credit blacklist.

For more information regarding this, visit the government website that explains all the criteria

for the tax, including information about who may be exonerated from this tax: [La taxe d'habitation](#)

7.4 CREATING SOCIAL NETWORKS

Even if you have been to France before it is possible that you will find some things strange at first and will need a little time to settle in. On arrival, the thought of making friends and mixing with the locals can seem like a daunting task, but as long as you are prepared to put yourself out there, it is a part of the experience which previous assistants have found the most enriching. Give yourself some time to adjust – you don't need to feel like a local within a week and in the beginning you will have a lot of administrative matters to deal with.

“Get involved in activities in your area. Going to the tourist information centre, looking online, walking around can be great ways to find out what's going on. Join a choir, orchestra, sports team, boules club, whatever - it may seem daunting but a great way to meet people (even if you don't see them outside of the context of the activity) and get in some language practice.” (ELA France 2016-17).

Here are some other ways to meet people within the area:

- Live with students/native speakers;
- Enrol for an evening class, join a sports club, music group, choir, etc.;
- Enquire about joining the local university and attending lectures;
- Get involved in the local culture and join clubs that you couldn't join in the UK; and
- Volunteer for a charity, society, festival, etc.

Former assistants have recommended that you don't spend all your free time with other assistants, as you will not be able to integrate into your community and life in France. On the other hand, don't feel that you must cut yourself off from them – assistants can provide a very good support network for each other, as you understand each other's experiences. Don't forget that there may be language assistants from

other countries in your area. You may wish to ask your employer if they have contact details for them.

As a golden rule, **try to say yes to every social opportunity presented to you that does not compromise your personal safety.** Accept invitations to places and activities even if they do not sound interesting as you might meet other people there who do share your interests; however at all times, please follow the advice given in the [FCO – Support for British Nationals Abroad](#) document.

- **Start at school**

The best way to start is with colleagues at school. Make sure that you always seem positive, enthusiastic and willing to learn. Socialise as much as you can with colleagues and accept all invitations to events, dinners, etc. Tell people what your interests are and ask them to let you know what's going on in the local area. Do keep in mind that teachers can be very busy, especially during exam periods.

Apart from your work in the classroom you may be able to attend other classes in subjects which interest you. You will find that you become much more integrated into school life and gain considerably more from your stay if you become involved in activities organised by the school, such as sports days, theatre or music productions or modern language societies. Go to school 'open days' or parent evenings as these are also a good way of meeting people. If you hear about something happening which interests you, ask if you can become involved. Don't wait to be invited as people may assume that you're not interested.

“Get to know the teachers in your school(s) as they may offer to show you around a few different places and recommend things to do and places to go wherever you are based.” (ELA France 2016-17)

- **Previous Assistants**

It is also a good idea to get in touch with other people in the area before you leave. One useful way to do this is to get in contact with a previous assistant in your region and ask them to give you

any e-mail addresses or numbers of contacts they made.

- **Languages**

Another excellent way to meet new people is to set up language exchanges with local people who want to practise their English. You could also enroll at a local language school, join Erasmus societies (at a local university), offer English lessons to colleagues/locals, join a club and join assistant groups on social networks such as Facebook.



“There are a lot of people who would love to learn English so the best way to integrate is to arrange Language Exchanges. This can be done by joining groups on Facebook or by asking friends/colleagues if they are aware of anyone who would be interested in an exchange. This way, you learn more about the culture and can seek advice from your language exchange buddy on activities and things to see and do around the city.” (ELA France 2016-17)

- **ESN**

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is a non-profit international student organisation. Their mission is to represent international students, thus provide opportunities for cultural understanding and self-development under the principle of **Students Helping Students**. ESN can sometimes assist with finding accommodation in university towns and cities. Assistants completing their third year abroad can often affiliate to local ESN groups and register for an ESN student discount card. Often ESN groups run events and trips throughout

the year which provide a great way to meet new people and explore France on a budget.

- **Social media**

There are often Facebook groups for people who are new to the city/town, which organise different events to help people make new friends - just search for 'new in "city name"'. Previous assistants have also suggested joining a local Couchsurfing group as they often organise social activities.

You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites while you are an ELA. **Keep your profile private** so that it can only be seen by people you intend to see it. If you invite other teachers to be 'friends', remember to remain professional in what you say on your wall and be careful what you say about your employer.

You should **not** exchange personal contact details with students, invite them to be 'friends' or accept similar invitations from them. This is likely to be regarded as inappropriate behaviour. Check with teachers about the school's internet policy, particularly regarding any online communication involving students either in or outside school.

It is exceptionally important that you understand issues around child protection, both to protect the students and also to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.

You are welcome to connect with your fellow assistants via Facebook and set up groups to keep in touch and share information. However you must **not** use British Council's name in the group name. Any group creators using British Council's name will be contacted by us and you will be asked to change the name of the group. If you do not do this in a timely fashion, we will have to contact Facebook directly to intervene.

- **Rural Posts**

It should be noted that a lot of the posts in France are in rural areas. Past assistants to rural areas have had very positive experiences as they have been able to see "real France". Sometimes assistants posted to rural locations find it can be more challenging to adapt to, especially at the start, however it can be a very enriching experience on a personal

development level and a real immersion in French culture and language. Often assistants in rural postings comment that they receive much more support from their school which can help with setting into life in France.

"It's difficult at the start if you find yourself in a small town where life seems to be put on pause at 19h each night but you have to persist and look for any way you can to get out there and meet people." (ELA France 2016-17)

It is important that the British Council and France Education International send assistants to rural as well as more urban settings both in the UK and France as pupils in both settings must be given the opportunity to benefit from exposure to other cultures and language learning.

7.4. STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

The French Embassy in London provides UK universities with full information on how to make an application to attend a French university. If you are appointed in or near a university town and you wish to follow a course of study, you should contact your own Modern Languages Department in the first instance if you have any questions. When enrolling, you should take with you copies of your birth certificate, certificates of school exams and, if possible, a letter from your university/college in the UK confirming your current academic status. It is advisable also to take photocopies of all these documents and a number of passport photographs.

Holders of student cards from foreign universities are often eligible for a number of benefits including subsidised meals, accommodation services and reductions on theatre/cinema tickets.

If you are appointed in a town where there is little or no possibility of access to a university, you should not ignore study opportunities offered by local cultural centres, institutes, libraries and colleges of further education as well as CNED correspondence courses: contact the local tourist office (**syndicat d'initiative**) for details.

Much can also be gained from sitting in on school lessons.

7.5. BUYING A CAR IN FRANCE

Once a car is bought, the change of ownership must be registered immediately at the nearest **préfecture** or **sous-préfecture**. Here you will be given a list of the various documents required to complete the procedure. You can also consult the website for the **préfecture** of the **académie** to which you have been assigned to see what will be required.

Necessary documents include a **certificat de vente** (filled in and signed together with the previous owner of the car), a **demande de certificat d'immatriculation**, a **carte grise** and the equivalent of an MOT test certificate (only required for cars more than 5 years old). It is also necessary to present a photocopy of your identity card (passport), an **attestation de domicile**, a stamped addressed envelope and payment of approx. €150.

7.6. SETTLING INTO SCHOOL LIFE

Starting any new job can be a daunting experience, no matter how confident a person you are. It's completely normal to be unsure of where to go, what to do or who to talk to at the beginning.

You will have to make an effort to get to know your colleagues. Showing that you are enthusiastic and keen to get to know staff will go a long way. Start with a simple hello or ask how their weekend went. Learning some simple conversation starters in the target language is always useful. Remember however that you will be working in a school environment therefore staff may not have a lot of free time. Don't be put off if a teacher doesn't have time to talk to you in the first instance, they may be in-between or preparing for a class. It doesn't necessarily mean that they don't want to talk to you.

Whilst it's important to get to know the colleagues you will be directly working with, it's always useful to get to know other staff too. Try introducing yourself to staff you may not directly work with, for example teachers in other departments, lunch

time staff, receptionists, caretakers etc. If there are social occasions or team meetings try to make an effort to attend. It's a great way to get to know colleagues in a different environment.

“Be enthusiastic, punctual, and make a good impression. Maybe ask teachers for advice/tips etc. to establish trust and better relationships with them, it might be the start of a great friendship.” (ELA France 2016-17)

Language Assistants that are proactive and take the initiative often settle into school life much faster. Being a self-starter is a great way to make a strong first impression. Teachers are often very busy and will certainly appreciate your efforts to help and try to make an impact.

“Make an effort to speak to the staff you're working with and get to know them in the staff room. Don't be put off if it sometimes (or often!) feels like they don't have time for you. In general they mean well, even if they are busy people and perhaps have their minds occupied by other things. They'll always appreciate you making an effort.” (ELA France, 2016-17)



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8. MONEY MATTERS

8.1. MONTHLY ALLOWANCE

The gross allowance payable to UK assistants in France is around **€976,49** per month, from which a compulsory deduction will be made to the **Sécurité Sociale** of approx. 17%. Most of this 17% deduction goes towards your health cover under the French state system. The state provides 70% cover – see [section 5.1](#). The net monthly pay therefore is approx. **€800**. The money deducted for social security is not reclaimable from the French or UK state. The language assistant allowance is usually updated every year in September so it may be liable to change.

Please note that you will not receive the full payment in October, and you must have submitted all of the relevant documentation and have opened a bank account by 10th October in order to receive 70-80% of your payment at the end of the month. The remaining 20-30% of October's payment will be added to your November payment. You should therefore ensure that you take around €1000 - €1500 (though some assistants can manage with less) and about €1700 - €2200 if appointed to Outre-Mer, Corsica or the Paris area.

You may wish to consider taking a credit card to cover initial costs. This amount may differ depending on your location and how much rent you are required to pay in advance. Be aware that you are often charged for using your British debit card to withdraw money abroad. You may wish to check what your bank will charge you to use this service. Your monthly allowance is adequate to survive on but you will need more if you intend to travel.

Given the higher cost of living and the longer journey involved, assistants appointed to one of the **départements d'outre-mer** are likely to receive a monthly allowance which will be approximately 40% higher than the rate for mainland France. Last year these were: €1351 (€1119 net) for Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guyane; and €1482 (€1223 net) for La Réunion. Once again this may change when the allowance is reviewed in September 2020. The 40% **remunération supplémentaire** is often delayed by

several months so please do not include this in your budgeting plan and expect only to receive around €800 for the first few months (keeping in mind the reduced October payment mentioned above).

8.2. ADDITIONAL INCOME

If you wish to supplement your income by giving private tuition in English, you are strongly advised **not** to advertise in local papers or public places. In general pupils are easily found through school or private connections, i.e. by word-of-mouth. However, it is essential to check that the other English teachers in your school(s) do not mind, so that you are not perceived to be 'stealing' their private pupils. The going rate for private one-to-one tuition seems to be **€10 - €25** per hour depending on how much preparation for the lesson you plan to do and how much your pupils can afford. Please ensure that any additional work does not conflict with your school timetable.

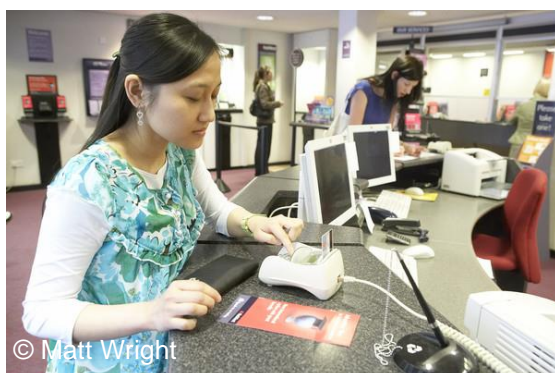
Should you wish to obtain paid work in any other educational institution e.g. teaching work in the public or private sector, you must clear this with the académie to which you are appointed beforehand. Each académie has slightly different rules on what type of extra work you are permitted to take on so it is imperative that you check with them before you accept any other work. If they do not allow it, you must abide by this ruling.

8.3. ERASMUS+ GRANTS

Language Assistants who are completing the assistantship as a **third year abroad** **may** be entitled to an Erasmus+ Traineeship grant. Individuals can benefit from an exchange abroad with Erasmus+ multiple times, either as a student or as a trainee, but the total time abroad (study abroad periods included) may not exceed 12 months within one cycle of study. An undergraduate degree is considered as one cycle. In some cases, students can go for an Erasmus+ traineeship abroad as a **recent graduate**. In this case, the traineeship must occur within one year of graduation and individuals must apply while still being enrolled

in their higher education institution. It is advised to discuss options with your university Erasmus+ / International coordinator as soon as possible to see if you would be eligible for additional Erasmus+ grant funding as a Language Assistant 2020/21.

Please also note that the British Council is not the employer or traineeship provider of English Language Assistants. This means that we are unable to complete any Erasmus+ related documents and you should not put the British Council as the traineeship provider. You should put the name of your host institution (school) once you receive these details. Our understanding is that there is a one month grace period following the start of your placement in which to submit any Erasmus+ documents, however individual universities and Erasmus+ coordinators will have their own internal deadlines. Please liaise with the Erasmus+ coordinator at your university should you have any questions.



8.4. CURRENCY AND BANKS

“There is so much paper work in France, far more than you would imagine. So bring a big empty folder and keep a photocopy of all important documents (passport, ID, birth certificate, etc.). As soon as you arrive in your establishment ask for a proof of work slip and a proof of residence slip. If you need to open a bank account, these are essential.” (ELA France, 2016-17)

You are advised to wait until you arrive in your town of appointment in France before opening a bank account. This will allow you to research all the local options, seek recommendations and choose what will be most convenient for the rest of the year.

It is essential that you open a bank account soon after arriving in France in order to receive your payments. Assistants are usually entitled to open a normal **compte courant** which provides a cheque book and cash card; some banks also offer a ‘student account’.

NB: Make sure that you do not end up opening a savings account as your school will not be able to pay your allowance into this.

You may find glossary of France banking terms useful: [French banking terminology](#) and the following website gives some advice on opening a bank account in France although it is not specific to language assistants: https://www.expatica.com/fr/finance/Banking-in-France-Opening-a-bank-account-in-France_101158.html

When opening a bank account you can ask for a cheque book and a **carte bancaire** (otherwise known as a **carte bleue**) but you will be charged a monthly fee for this. It may be worth enquiring about a **Carte Bleue Internationale** which allows you to withdraw cash from any branch of any bank in France (or abroad). However, banks do charge extra for this card.

The number of official documents required in order to open a bank account seems to vary

from one bank to another. You can check which banks have branches in your assigned town ahead of time and can check on their websites as to what they require when setting up an account. You are likely to be asked to show one or more of the following:

- Passport
- Certificate of appointment (**arrêté d'affectation** or **arrêté de nomination**)
- **Procès-verbal d'installation** – issued upon arrival at the school
- **Attestation de logement**, obtainable from school or landlord as appropriate
- **Another valid form of photographic ID**
- **Bank statements from your UK bank**
- **Birth Certificate**

It is advisable to take with you photocopies of the documents listed above (including the relevant pages of your passport) as these may well be requested.

You are advised to note that in France it is illegal to write a cheque without having sufficient funds in the bank. **You are also advised to keep your account open for a month or so after the contract with your school has ended to ensure that all outstanding payments have been received.** Please do check on the conditions for transactions relating to your account. For example, it might be that you can only close your account in the same branch in which you opened it.

8.5. LOST OR STOLEN CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS

If a credit or debit card is lost or stolen, immediately call your bank to cancel it. If stolen, the theft should be reported to the police.

8.6. INCOME TAX

A Double Taxation Agreement exists between the UK and France. Under this agreement UK assistants are normally exempt from French income tax for a period of up to 2 years. However, it is normally the case that 100% of the remuneration received abroad will be liable for UK tax. It is important to know that the agreement only covers teaching jobs. You might be taxed for any non-teaching jobs and should check how much you are allowed to earn per year without having to pay taxes.

You are reminded that the UK tax year extends from 6 April to 5 April and that income earned in the UK between April and the start of your assistantship may be taken into account when your own or your parents' tax liability is being assessed.

Enquiries regarding UK income tax should be addressed to a local Inspector of Taxes, **not** to the British Council. We cannot assist you in this area because we are not trained in tax, cannot give advice on how your personal circumstances will affect your tax, and for data protection reasons. Please check www.hmrc.gov.uk for information about who to contact.



9. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

9.1. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Please remember that you are a member of staff and must therefore adhere to the holiday dates set by the school. If you cannot work because of illness you should inform your school(s) and local education authority (if applicable) immediately and within 48 hours by telephone. Any sick leave must be justified by a medical certificate from your French doctor (**médecin traitant**). It should contain exact dates and cover the entire duration of the absence. This must be sent to the school or to the **Inspection académique** as soon as it is issued. You must also send your **arrêt de travail** to the **securité sociale**. Any prolonged absence on account of illness should be reported as soon as possible to France Education International and to the British Council.

Requests for leave of absence for any other reason should be made in advance to the head of the school(s) who is within his/her right to refuse it. You are reminded that if you are absent from school without prior authorisation, your allowance will be discontinued from the first day of your absence.

If it becomes necessary to resign from your post, you must give sufficient prior notice in writing of your intended departure to the school, France Education International and the British Council, setting out your reasons in full. If you are an undergraduate you must also inform your university/college in the UK.

9.2. SOLVING PROBLEMS & LINES OF REFERRAL

“When you have a personal problem - be that at work, your health, or problems in the UK - talk to someone as soon as possible, even if it's not your responsible, speak to any member of staff at the school.” (ELA France, 2016-17)

Conditions in schools in France differ from those in the UK. Any difficulties should be discussed with your mentor teacher and/or the teacher of the class concerned in the first instance. If the

problem cannot be solved then talk to the head teacher or get in touch with your contact at the local education authority (if applicable). Satisfactory solutions can usually be found through such consultations but if the problem remains unresolved, you may contact France Education International (contact details can be found in [section 1.2](#)). The British Council in the UK should only be contacted for advice when all other attempts to solve the issue have been made. **Problems are dealt with most quickly and effectively locally and British Council will instruct you to take the steps mentioned above.**

To avoid problems at school, it is a good idea to form a good working relationship with other members of staff. You should introduce yourself to all members of the English department. It is important to be patient and polite, and to be aware of the work pressures of others. Please remember that it is not good practice to correct the teacher in front of students. You should always be punctual, responsible and prepare adequately for your lessons. Furthermore, meeting regularly with your mentor gives the opportunity for them to feedback about your performance and for you to raise any concerns or issues.

Do tell people if you have problems or if you need information as otherwise they will assume everything is fine. The authorities will not be as sympathetic if you suffer in silence and then make a complaint months later. A lot of past assistants may tell you that their assistantship in France was the best year of their life. This can raise expectations and often leads to people feeling low, especially during the first few weeks until they settle in.



The assistantship year is a wonderful opportunity to absorb French language and culture and gain much in life experience and transferable skills. However it is perfectly understandable that when abroad in a completely different environment there may be times when you feel homesick, have trouble with pupils or colleagues, or with your living situation and so on.

In these instances it can be useful to know that you have access to an anonymous, non-judgemental English-language phone service. “[SOS Help](#)” is a telephone listening service for the English-speaking community in France, similar to the Samaritans. It is administratively attached to the French service “[SOS Amitiés](#)”. The telephone number is: **09 72 39 40 50**

Although it is based in Paris it serves the entire country. All calls are confidential and trained

listeners are available every day from 3pm to 11pm, 365 days a year. In addition to compassionate, non-directive listening they provide information on community services and resources available for English-speaking callers.

The British Council has a **zero-tolerance policy approach to discrimination of any kind**. If a serious incident occurs and the line of referral is not appropriate, please contact us.



10. IN COUNTRY ADVICE

10.1. PERSONAL SAFETY

It is very important to stick to the same health and safety rules as you would at home and always heed advice given by local people. Please see refer to the [FCO – Support for British Nationals Abroad](#) document which provides an emergency telephone number as well as essential guidelines on how to avoid potentially dangerous situations.

We strongly advise that you spend some time looking at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website and check it regularly as there is a lot of useful and up-to-date information provided. We also recommend that assistants read the 'Advice for Travellers' documentation which can be found here: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Ensure that you check regularly the France travel advice page: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/europe/france>.

Please also refer to the FCO website for information regarding sexual attacks: www.gov.uk/government/publications/rape-and-sexual-assault-abroad

10.2. TRAVELLING AROUND FRANCE

“The 12 hour week is fantastic as you have time to travel and experience the culture.” (ELA France 2016-17)

Working as a language assistant gives you a great opportunity to travel around France and you should make the most of your free time. Try to avoid coming home every holiday and experience as much of the surrounding area as possible. France.fr: France's official tourism portal. This is the government tourist information website and provides a lot of information about local traditions, celebrations, accommodation,

Other useful travel websites are:

- www.lonelyplanet.com
- www.roughguides.com
- www.about-france.com
- www.worldtravelguide.net
- www.tourisme.fr
- www.tripadvisor.fr

“Look into buying an SNCF railcard if you think you will be travelling a lot, or if not just the youth railcard 16-26.” (ELA France 2016-17)

10.3. BUSES AND METRO

Once in France you will find it cheaper for local travel to buy a **carnet** of 10 tickets for buses and the métro than to buy one ticket at a time. Those working in Paris and its suburbs will find that le passe Navigo (details available at any métro station or at <https://www.ratp.fr/titres-et-tarifs/forfait-navigo-annuel>) also offers a good discount on normal tariffs and past assistants recommend purchasing one straightaway.

NB: A previous assistant advised being careful and aware on the RER train which goes to the suburbs of Paris. Don't sit alone in a carriage especially late at night.

Please note that the public transport system in Outre-Mer is not as well developed. Previous assistants have recommended buying a car if possible, or a bike if you don't have a licence.

10.4. TRAINS

The main website for train travel in France is www.sncf.com.

See www.voyages-sncf.com for information on cheap train fares. You can also book Eurostar tickets on this website and if you are under 25 you will be able to get a discount on the price if you purchase a railcard. The term for peak-time is **période blanche** and for off-peak - **période bleue**. You can save money by travelling off-peak, but the time periods can change on holiday weekends, so be sure to check details online.

For long journeys in France various options exist including:

- The SNCF Discovery fares for 12-25 year olds (proof of age required, approx. 25% discount on tickets for off-peak travel, fares are subject to limited availability so it is advisable to book in advance)
- The **Carte de Réduction Jeune 12-27** (from 25-60% off fares). This card can also be bought in the UK (need passport photo): ring Rail Europe on 08448 484 064.

The Carte de Réduction Jeune 12-27 costs €50 for one year and has been described as 'well worth it' by former assistants. It can be bought on <http://www.sncf.com/fr/tarifs-reduits/carte-jeune>

10.5. CAR SHARE

In many areas of France where public transport is less frequent people get around by car share. This website formalises these arrangements and has been recommended by previous assistants: www.blablacar.fr

10.6. ISIC CARDS

International Student Identity Cards cost £12-£15 and are available online and from student travel agents such as STA and BUNAC. They can be used to obtain cheap entry into certain museums, theatres, cinemas and art galleries throughout Europe. They may also entitle you to certain travel concessions. Please see www.isic.org for further information. Please note that in order to obtain an ISIC card you need to be a full time student.

For non-students who are under 30 there is the **International Youth Travel Card** (£12-£15), which can be bought in the same way – see www.statravel.co.uk/youth-identity-card.htm for further information.

All assistants under the age of 30 (or 26 depending on the country or region), can also buy the **European Youth Card**. Holders of the card are eligible for discounts at a range of places and on a range of services. For more information on the discounts and where you can buy the card, go to <https://www.eyca.org/>

10.7. PHONING HOME, MOBILES AND INTERNET

The Country code for France is **+33**. Telephone numbers in France have 10 digits, the first 2 of which are the area code. (Paris/Ile de France is 01, the west/northwest 02, the east/northeast 03, the southeast and Corsica 04, the southwest 05.) When phoning within the local area, it is still necessary to use the area code.

To phone abroad from France the code is **00** followed by the country code. When phoning France from abroad the first 0 of the standard 10-digit number must be omitted (as when dialing an area code in the UK from abroad).

If you set up a phone line or internet connection, past assistants have warned to check phone subscription charges with France Telecom first. You may be charged for a full year's subscription even if you end your phone contract earlier than this. For this reason assistants often recommend getting a pay as you go mobile rather than one on contract – be wary of 24-month contracts, too. To avoid internet contracts you may want to explore other options of internet access such as dongles (**clé internet**). Many landlines in France now have free phone calls to French mobiles and to landlines in Europe.

Be aware that calls to the UK from a mobile can be expensive. Previous assistants have recommended using Skype, WhatsApp and Facebook messenger as alternatives.

11. TEACHING TIPS AND RESOURCES

“Always show a willingness to help out the students and the staff when possible. Be patient with any last minute changes and always have something prepared for a plan B.” (ELA France 2016-17)

11.1. OBSERVATION PERIOD

When you first arrive at your school(s) you should ask for a period of observation of 1-2 weeks. It may not be offered to you automatically. Observation will allow you to familiarise yourself with the school environment, to experience classroom management techniques as well as to get to know the names, faces and personalities of your pupils and gauge their level of English.

Try to note the following:

- How the teacher starts and ends the lesson;
- How the teacher speaks to pupils;
- How the teacher involves all pupils, including shy ones, in the class activity;
- What the teacher’s attitude is to pupil errors and error correction; and
- How the teacher controls disruptive behavior, lateness and lack of effort.

11.2. TEACHING MATERIALS

One way of making language learning real for your pupils is bringing authentic materials from the UK into the classroom. Take the opportunity to collect a variety of resources while you are still at home.

Past assistants have found that the following materials worked well: Photos of family and friends and your home town, lots of postcards, examples of UK coins and notes, train tickets and timetables, stamps, posters and tea towels to decorate walls, Christmas cards and crackers, posters and games, UK TV programmes and listings, magazines and local newspapers, CDs, photos of school uniforms, a school timetable and school report, flashcards, word searches, maps, tourist brochures, UK food (marmite, jelly, chocolate, custard, mince pies, gravy granules, etc), adverts, menus, cartoons, comic books,

DVDs (e.g. Ready Steady Cook for catering students), simple recipes e.g. scones, recordings of the weather forecast, London tube map, tapes of friends’ accents and conversations, bingo, Taboo etc.

The more materials you can find the better. Think about what worked well for you as a language student and about which items you find interesting when you are in a foreign country. You can also ask your host school(s) whether there is something specific they would like you to bring and to find out about topics you are likely to be asked to cover during your assistantship.

11.3. BRITISH COUNCIL TEACHING RESOURCES

The British Council produces and co-produces a range of resources specifically for Language Assistants. Making use of these will help you greatly to deliver interesting and useful classroom activities and will support you in solving problems in the classroom. The British Council is also closely involved with the teaching of English abroad. Local branches develop useful resources and organise a range of cultural activities, which may be of interest to you and your school. For information on forthcoming events, go to www.britishcouncil.fr.

11.4. LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS MANUAL

‘Language Assistant’ by Clare Lavery is a resource book designed for language assistants and provides information on all aspects of the role. Please read this carefully as it is extremely useful in preparing you for your assistantship. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teaching/files/pub_whole_manual.pdf

11.5. SCHOOL LINKING

Please note that many foreign schools are anxious to establish links with UK counterparts in order to share information and arrange pupil exchanges. Assistants are encouraged to help in whatever way possible in establishing such links and there is information and guidance on

the British Council website:
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources>

You may also wish to find out if your school has any eTwinning projects or set up a project yourself. eTwinning can be accessed via www.etwinning.net. eTwinning is a free online community for schools in Europe which allows schools to find partner schools and collaborate on online projects within a secure network and platform. Through participating in eTwinning, your school will be able to:

- enrich learning and motivation of pupils (aged between 3 and 19) and staff;
- access high quality professional development and ready-made resources;
- raise standards across the whole school community;
- gain recognition for commitment through eTwinning awards; and
- search for an Erasmus+ partner to carry out projects with and apply for mobility funding.

1 1.6. BILINGUAL PROGRAMMES

Many schools in France are implementing bilingual programmes. You may find yourself supporting teachers who teach science or PE in English. In some instances students need to go through external exams in the school (PET from Cambridge University, GESE from Trinity College London, etc). It is one of the roles of the language assistants to improve students' oral fluency and conversation skills.

www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/preliminary-for-schools/

1 1.7. TEACHING ENGLISH WEBSITE

TeachingEnglish is an online resource centre produced jointly by the British Council and the BBC: www.teachingenglish.org.uk. On the site you will have access to:

- Teaching tips
- Essential UK: Seasonal lesson plans based around UK topics
- Primary tips: Help getting started with primary-level students

- Classroom games

1 1.8. TEACHING ENGLISH COURSE

This year, we have taken the decision to provide all outgoing English Language Assistants with access to a free teacher training course. Normally participants would be required to pay a fee for access to a different course, however the British Council will cover the costs of this new course. There will be 6 self-access modules which each take a recommended period of 1 week to complete. The modules are as follows:

1. Getting started
2. Child protection
3. Understanding Grammar
4. Understanding Special Educational Needs
5. Understanding grammar teaching – focus on form
6. Engaging with learning technologies – developing reading skills with digital tools

You will be emailed directly and prompted to register for the training course.

Although completion of the course is not mandatory, it is highly recommended, and completing the child protection module is mandatory for all allocated English Language Assistants.

You can find out further information on the Language Assistants Teaching English course on our [website](#), under the preparing to teach heading.

1 1.9. USEFUL TEACHING WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids
learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org
www.cartoonstock.com
www.tes.co.uk
www.puzzlemaker.com
www.bbc.co.uk
www.slideshare.net
www.prezi.com
www.macmillanenglish.com
www.eslcafe.com
www.eslpartyland.com
www.eslgold.com

www.esl-lab.com
www.eslflow.com
www.eslflashcards.com
www.onestopenglish.com
www.bogglesworldesl.com
www.royal.gov.uk
www.projectbritain.com
www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc
www.developingteachers.com
www.lyrics.com

www.busyteacher.org
www.letssingit.com
www.visitbritain.com
www.visitscotland.com
www.discovernorthernireland.com
www.eslprintables.com
www.cambridgeesol.org/teach
www.enchantedlearning.com

11.10. BOOK LIST

You are not obliged to purchase any materials, however some assistants have commented that some of the books below are useful for English Language Assistants; particularly those who may wish to engage in private tutoring or pursue a career in language teaching in the future. Also look out for the series of handbooks and source books for language teachers published by CUP, Longman, Macmillan and OUP.

Dictionaries

- BBC English Dictionary (BBC English/Harper Collins)
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Longman)
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Oxford University Press)
- Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (Longman)

Grammar Reference Books

- A Practical English Grammar (A.J. Thomson & A.V. Martinet, Oxford University Press)
- Current English Grammar (S. Chalker, Phoenix)
- Basic English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
- Practical English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
- Discover English (R. Bolitho & B. Tomlinson, Macmillan Heinemann)
- English Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
- Advanced Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
- How English Works (Michael Swan and Catherine Walter, Oxford University Press)
- Learner English (Michael Swan & Bernard Smith (eds.) Cambridge University Press)

Basic Methodology Books

- The Practice of English Language Teaching J. Harmer Longman
- How to Teach English J. Harmer Longman
- How to Teach Grammar S. Thornbury Longman
- How to Use the Internet in ELT D. Teeler & P. Gray Longman
- One to One Peter Wilberg Language Teaching Publications

12. SPOTLIGHT ON FRANCE

The French population is now around 67 million, with an average population density of 103 people per km². 96% of the population lives in metropolitan France with the remaining 4% residing in the overseas territories (DOM-TOM). It is the third most populous country in Europe, second most populous in the EU, and 20th most populous country in the world. The Euro is the official currency.

France is a highly urbanized country, the biggest cities being Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Lille and Nice.

French is the official language of France but also has many regional languages including Breton, Occitan, Corsican, the Langues d'Oïl, Basque and Catalan. Several creoles are spoken in the outre-mer departments.

12.1. REGIONS

France is divided into 18 administrative regions: 13 regions in metropolitan France (including Corsica) and 5 overseas departments. Each of the 12 metropolitan regions in mainland France are further subdivided into departments. This new administrative structure was introduced in 2016.

The educational authorities in France (académies) are named after the main town located within the académie, and the académies closely resemble the regional map of France from 2011 – 2015 before the restructure.

12.2. NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

France has many official public holidays every year, some observed nationwide, some local. When a holiday falls close to a weekend, many French take a **pont** (bridge), meaning that the day in between is taken as a holiday too. In all cases you should check public holidays with your school. The following holidays will be observed in 2020/21:

- 1 Jan: New Year's Day
- 10 Apr: Good Friday* (Alsace-Moselle only)
- 13 Apr: Easter Monday

- 1 May: Labour Day
- 8 May: Victory in Europe Day
- 21 May: Feast of the Ascension
- 01 Jun: Whit Monday
- 14 Jul: Bastille Day
- 15 Aug: Feast of the Assumption
- 1 Nov: All Saints' Day
- 11 Nov: Remembrance Day
- 25 Dec: Christmas Day
- 26 Dec: St Stephen's Day* (Alsace-Moselle only)

12.3. EMERGENCY SERVICES IN FRANCE

In any emergency: call 112

Medical assistance (SAMU): call 15
Fire Brigade (pompiers): call 18
Police (gendarmerie): call 17

General enquiries to the British Embassy:

Tel: +33 1 44 51 31 00
Fax: +33 1 44 51 31 09

British Consular Emergency Service for any emergency queries at any time of any day. Leave a message and someone will normally get back to you within one hour of your call.



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12.4. BRITISH EMBASSY AND CONSULATE

For up-to-date British Embassy and consulate contact details in France please refer to: www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/find-an-embassy. Please take note of the address of the British Embassy in France below in case of emergency or loss of your passport. Assistants who do not hold British citizenship should check with their own Consulates/Embassies in France.

The British Embassy

35, rue du Faubourg St Honore
75383 Paris - Cedex 08

Tel: +33 1 44 51 31 00
Fax: +33 1 44 51 31 09

Office hours are between 9.30am and 6.00pm, Monday-Friday but will close for lunch between 1.00pm and 2.30pm each day.

British Counsulates-General are also provided in:

- **Paris**

18 bis, rue d'Anjou
75008 Paris

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 51 31 00

Opening Hours
Monday - Friday
09h30 - 12h30

- **Bordeaux**

353, boulevard du President Wilson
33073 Bordeaux Cedex

Tel: +33 (0)5 57 22 21 10

Opening Hours:
Monday/Wednesday/Friday
9h00-12h30

- **Lille**

11 square Dutilleul
59800 Lille

Tel: +33 (0)3 20 12 82 72

Opening Hours
Monday to Friday
9h30-12h30 and 14h00-17h00

- **Lyon**

24, rue Childebert
69002 Lyon

Tel: +33 (0)4 72 77 81 70

Opening Hours
Monday to Friday
9h00-12h30 and 14h00-17h00

- **Marseille**

10, Place de la Joliette
13002 Marseille

Tel: +33 (0)1 44 51 31 00

Opening Hours
Monday/Wednesday/Friday
9h00-12h30

13. OTHER INFORMATION

13.1. SECULARISM IN SCHOOLS

Assistants who are allocated a placement must be aware of the laws around secularism in the French education system which they must adhere to. Please refer to the [French Education Ministry's website to view the *La charte de laïcité*](#), which all assistants should read carefully. Please note that all assistants are expected by the académies to respect *La charte de laïcité*. The British Council cannot be held responsible for issues surrounding *La charte de laïcité*.

13.2. DRUGS

Co-operating partners abroad have requested that the attention of British visitors be drawn to the severe penalties imposed for drug offences which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences. You are therefore strongly advised not to become involved in these activities.

13.3. POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

Co-operating partners abroad have requested that the attention of British visitors be drawn to the severe penalties imposed for taking part in unlawful political demonstrations which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences. You are therefore strongly advised not to become involved in these activities.

13.4. SPOUSES / PARTNERS / DEPENDANTS

Assistants should note that the allowance is intended to provide for one person only. However, if an assistant's spouse remains in the UK and is unemployed, he/she may be barred from income support or be required to refund whatever was received as such since the start of the assistantship. Enquiries should be made well in advance in order to prevent financial difficulties from arising during a period of appointment.

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13.5. REFERENCES

Please note the British Council is not the employer of UK assistants abroad and should not be given as a referee in future job applications. In general the head of the school would be the most appropriate referee.

13.6. SOCIAL MEDIA

You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites while you are an ELA. Keep your profile private so that it can only be seen by people you intend to see it. If you invite other teachers to be 'friends', remember to remain professional in what you say on your wall and be careful what you say about your employer.

You should not exchange personal contact details with students, invite them to be 'friends' or accept similar invitations from them. This is likely to be regarded as inappropriate behavior. Check with teachers about the school's internet policy, particularly regarding any online communication involving students either in or outside school. It is exceptionally important that you understand issues around child protection, both to protect the students and also to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.

13.7. USEFUL WEBSITES/INFORMATION

You can read case studies written by former assistants on our website here:
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine>

Other useful websites include:

- www.globalgraduates.com
- www.gov.uk/government/world/france
- www.britishcouncil.fr/
- www.google.fr
- www.lemonde.fr
- www.lefigaro.fr