



GENERAL BOOKLET

Individual Reciprocal Exchanges Canada/Europe



1 Month Summer Program
11 Week School Program

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OSEF - A CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC EXCHANGE

OSEF is an international program that thrives on the true meaning of “Exchange”. We carefully match Canadian students ages 13-17 with a European partner from either Belgium, France or Spain. Students on each side of the ocean take turns hosting each other for 1 month of the summer, or 11 weeks of the school year. This unique opportunity to attend school, and fully immerse in a new culture, has opened doors and broadened horizons for students, families and schools for over 20 years!

Here’s what OSEF students have to say...

The very day I stepped off the plane and became immersed in a new culture, I could already feel myself beginning to change. The life lessons and new habits I learned are endless. Being thrown into a new family/country/culture helped me gain a new perspective on life and I started to view things differently. I definitely believe that this exchange changed who I am for the better.

My French has improved so drastically from before I left. People in France were so understanding when you made a mistake that it just became easier to just, speak.

Sarah G. – Victoria – 2013

J’aime beaucoup le système canadien et J’apprécie de pouvoir choisir les matières que je veux étudier. Je trouve que cette expérience est très enrichissante.

THE OSEF STORY

An association with more than 20 years of experience!

Since 1990, the Ontario Ministry of Education began encouraging private organizations to offer international educational homestay programs to students.

In 1992 and 1994, Christine Lenfant's sons participated in a language exchange program to Canada. After having seen the benefits of this exchange program for her own children, Mme Lenfant jumped at the opportunity to volunteer for this organisation.

With the support of her family and friends, she founded a non-profit organization :

OSEF, (Organisme de Séjours Educatifs Francophones)

For her, it was the beginning of a profound life-long adventure that has grown from 35 students in its first year to now over 8000 students over the last 20 years.

OSEF, engages students, schools and families all across Canada who share the common belief that cultural exchanges provide a unique and important life experience for our youth.

The organization is now recognized by the Ministries of Education in Canada and in Europe. OSEF is endorsed by the Departments of Education in the provinces where it operates. The association is also recognized by numerous school boards in Europe, by the Ministry of Education of Belgium, and by countless students, parents and volunteers who have participated in the exchange.

OSEF is proud to have the support of school who help every year to promote the program. Each year more than 800 families apply for the OSEF exchange program in Canada and in Europe.

On behalf the entire OSEF family on both sides of the Atlantic, I want to thank all of the coordinators, teachers, families and parents who dedicate themselves to our mission. OSEF success lies in the passionate care this team offers to ensure family values remain at its' core. Listening, engaging and supporting each family on this cultural adventure is our top priority.

If an adventure of a life time speaks to you, either as a student wanting to participate in a cultural exchange or as a volunteer wanting to give to your community, we welcome you to join our family.

The possibilities are in your hands!

Warmly,

OSEF Team

MEET YOUR LOCAL OSEF COORDINATORS

Find the OSEF volunteer coordinators near you!
([see the back of this booklet for our contact info](#)).

Most of us are former principals, teachers, and parents of students who have participated in the program. We are all very passionate about the magic OSEF's exchange programs bring to our communities

Our ultimate goal is to help students and their families have the best learning experience possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have. We look forward to meeting you.

You can count on us to:

- Guide you through the application process
- Be a resource to answer any questions hosting your European match,
- Organize information and preparatory meetings in Canada,
- Act as a liaison with the European OSEF offices,
- Organize and assist at the departure locations and/or chaperone groups to Europe and Canada, and
- Provide support to Canadian and European students during their exchange.

Provincial Coordinators from Canada spend a few days in France at the beginning of the exchange to ensure that everything is running smoothly for the students

I love witnessing them see Paris for the first time. Text book pictures suddenly become the real thing. You can see in this moment their minds blow open. It's humbling to me.
Heather McCrae, OSEF Coordinator

OSEF coordinators & volunteers listen to the students and their families

One of our fondest memories each year is when the host families arrive at the Campanile hotel in Paris to pick up the Canadian student partners running into each other's arms for a full embrace.
Lise and Ron May, OSEF coordinators

HOW OSEF WORKS

1- **Personal Communication with Families:**

Information Meetings: Meetings are organized throughout Canada, France, Belgium and Spain from September to May, by the OSEF Coordinators. Students and families are invited to attend to find out more about OSEF and ask questions. Visit www.osef.ca for dates and times near you.

Preparatory Meetings: Once enrolled, families are required to attend two preparatory meetings: one in late spring, and one in January. The objective is to prepare students by openly discussing cultural differences, school abroad and what to expect from the exchange. Former OSEF students and parents come to tell their experience.

These meetings help you plan **your departure**. You will receive your OSEF **backpack, passport holder, luggage tag**, cultural information, booklets with information, a booklet about welcoming the exchange partner, and flight schedules.

2- **Thoughtful, Extensive Partner Matching:**

We believe that OSEF's success is in the care we take to review and select family matches. The matching is based primarily on age, common interests, and gender. Your partner is not your clone, but a gateway to your experience. Our thoughtful approach to finding a match, offers you a good starting point to build on. In the rare case of any serious issues that may arise, family transfers may be arranged. There is always someone available to assist students (within 24 hours).

3- **Organized Transportation:**

All transportation and purchase of tickets on domestic and international flights is organized by OSEF in partnership with the Globetrotter Travel agency. Domestic travel is organized within Europe for Canadian students, along with all transfers to host families once in Canada for European students.

Chaperones accompany students on all international flights (to and from France and Canada), on Canadian domestic flights longer than 4 hours and for groups of 10 students minimum. Train travel in France is chaperoned either by an OSEF Coordinator or a parent.

4- **Extensive Insurance:**

Tokyo Marine Assistance provides coverage for hospitalization and repatriation as well as third party liability insurance for Canadian and European students. Tokyo Marine Assistance covers the cost of one plane ticket for a parent to be at the bedside of a student in case of an emergency.

IS OSEF FOR YOU?

OSEF is an important family commitment. When you enroll, you engage with another family with hopes and dreams just like yours. Take time to consider the following questions:

MOTIVATIONS	CHARACTERISTICS
<p>Why have you chosen to participate?</p> <p>What would you like to learn from this experience?</p> <p>What would you like to take home from participating in the exchange program?</p>	<p>How would you best describe yourself? (sociable, intellectual, energetic, athletic, musical, artistic, calm, reserved, and/or shy)</p> <p>Do you prefer to go out or stay home with your family or friends?</p> <p>What kinds of activities do you like to participate in?</p> <p>What is your favourite hobby?</p>
LANGUAGE & ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY	
<p>How is school going academically?</p> <p>Do you have positive relationships with your teachers and other students?</p> <p>How are your grades?</p> <p>Do you perform well in your language class?</p> <p>Are you mentally prepared and academically able to miss all subjects over a number of weeks?</p> <p>How will you organize yourself so that you don't miss any school? (we will provide tips)</p> <p>Do your teachers feel you are ready?</p>	<p>Are you ready to live new experiences, a new and unfamiliar culture, and participate in different activities within short notice?</p> <p>How do you react when meeting new people for the first time / who have a different personality from yours?</p> <p>How do you react in new and unexpected situations?</p> <p>How do you feel when you imagine leaving your family and friends for 1, 2, or 3 months?</p> <p>Are you and your family ready to host your exchange partner?</p> <p>Would you and your family be able to devote time to exchange partner?</p> <p>How would you feel about sharing your room if that is what would be required?</p>

HOW DO I APPLY?

Applications are accepted Sept. 1 – Mar. 30 for School and Summer Programs.

Apply early to ensure your spot & sufficient time to plan with your school!!

To apply, you will need the following forms which can be downloaded from our website www.osef.ca, or sent to you by your local coordinator:

- **Application Form**
- **Family File**
- **School Recommendation Form (School Program only)**
- **Medical Form**
- **Domestic Transfer Form**

STEP 1: SEND THE FOLLOWING FORMS WITHIN 15 DAYS OF RECEIPT:

By E-mail : Sarah Boyd (226) 338-0133 sarah.boyd@outlook.com

By Mail : Leena Silver 1-200 North Service Rd. #552 Oakville, Ontario L6M 2Y1

- Completed Application form (please write clearly in black ink)
- Completed Domestic Transfer Form
- School Recommendation form (completed and signed by your teacher and school principal – 11 week School Program only)
- Your \$400 deposit paid by cheque (OSEF) or by e-transfer

STEP 2. ASSEMBLE YOUR FAMILY FILE, AND SEND WITH WITHIN 1 MONTH:

Your complete family file consists of:

- “Family File” forms (take care to ensure legibility. Your matched family will see this!)
- Copy of your most recent report card (school program only)
- Authorization for Medical and Surgical Procedures to be signed by both parents and Health Certificate to be completed by your doctor.
- Copy of vaccination records
- Photocopy of passport (expiry date must be at least 6 months past your expected return)
- Criminal Record Checks for the Vulnerable Sector for each person 18 and older who will be living in your home at the time of the exchange.

Once you have completed gathering the documents for your complete family file, make two copies. Glue a passport sized photo (3 total) to the top right corner of each copy.

Mail to your local coordinator:

- The original complete Family File plus the two copies, and
- \$1000 payment plus post-dated cheques for the final two payments OR arrange with your local coordinator to pay by e-transfer.

*** (late applications may be accepted on a case by case bases until June 1st. Contact your local coordinator for details)

MORE ON THE MATCHING PROCESS

WHAT IS “MATCHING”?

Matching refers to the process of finding a Canadian Family, and a European family, each with a child close in age that share similar interests.

Please indicate your interests clearly and legibly (i.e: swimming, scouting, walking etc.) in order to find an appropriate partner.

Each candidate must fill out the application form themselves. Parents are asked to respond to the specific pages that are reserved for them once their child has completed their section.

Information that may be difficult to disclose is necessary as part of the application process such as any health issues, allergies, smoking, special diets and/ or other considerations.

We take into account the date in which the application was received and priority is given to those who register first.

When does the matching process take place?

Matching takes place in Europe during March and April for the Summer and School Programs. Matching for the Spring Break Program takes place in January.

YOUR MATCH!

- Once the applications are reviewed in detail and matched, each student will receive the Family File of their proposed match.
- **A concerted effort is made to find the best fit for each student:**
 - Exchange partners will share some common interests but matching is not a cloning process.
 - If however a serious problem arises with your exchange partner or host family, remember to always get in touch quickly with your local coordinator.
 - OSEF can organize an immediate host family change.
- OSEF will provide the tools needed to make the exchange successful.
- The goal of the program is to provide a positive experience and an opportunity for personal growth.
- The added bonus is to learn to express oneself with more ease in another language.

SCHOOL PROGRAM

(11 WEEK EXCHANGE)

MID-AUGUST – EARLY NOVEMBER : CANADA

In **mid-August**, your European partner will live with your family and go to your school. He/she will return to Europe in **mid-October or early November**.

FEBRUARY – MID APRIL : EUROPE

It's your turn! In **February you fly to Paris** and spend two days touring the city (details below). After the tour, you will live with your European family, and become a part of it. You will:

- Discover a new country (France, Belgium or Spain) and culture,
- Experience a European life in a European Family,
- Learn or improve your French or Spanish skills,
- Meet new people and make new friends, and
- **Attend a European school!**

At the end of April, you go home, full of a new experience and memories for life.

ALL OSEF STUDENTS BEGIN THEIR EUROPEAN ADVENTURE IN PARIS!

Day 1	Explore Paris – Notre-Dame – Bateaux Parisiens - return to your hotel for dinner and overnight stay at the hotel.
Day 2	Explore Paris – Evening orientation and overnight stay at the hotel.
Day 3	Departure to meet your family, either by train or connecting flights. Host families in driving distance of Paris will pick-up the students at the hotel.

COST AND PAYMENT

All Provinces (Except Ontario)	Ontario
\$3990 + \$300 Airport Tax**	\$3100 + \$300 Airport Tax**

** Airport taxes exceeding \$300 will be paid for by OSEF .

Please see pages 13 & 14 for more details and payment schedule.

SUMMER PROGRAM

(1 MONTH EXCHANGE)

JULY: EUROPE

Fly to Paris, and spend one-day touring the city (details below), then join your European family, for one month and:

- Discover a new country (France, Belgium or Spain),
- Discover a new culture and way of life,
- Learn and improve your French or Spanish, and
- Meet new people and make new friends!

AUGUST: CANADA

In the **last days of July**, you fly to Toronto with your partner, and you visit **Niagara Falls together**. Then, you go home together to continue your adventure. Your partner flies back to Europe in last days of August.

ALL OSEF STUDENTS BEGIN THEIR EUROPEAN ADVENTURE IN PARIS!

Day 1	Explore Paris – Notre-Dame – Bateaux Parisians - return to your hotel, dinner and overnight stay at the hotel.
Day 2	Departure to meet your family, either by train or connecting flights. Host families in driving distance of Paris will pick-up the students at the hotel.

COST AND PAYMENT

All Provinces (Except Ontario)	Ontario
\$3990 + \$300 Airport Tax**	\$3100 + \$300 Airport Tax**

** Airport taxes exceeding \$300 will be paid for by OSEF .

Please see pages 13 & 14 for more details and payment schedule.

SPRING BREAK PROGRAM

NEW PROGRAM

MARCH: 10 DAYS IN FRANCE

Fly to Paris, and spend two days touring the city. Visit Mont-Saint Michel, and then spend one week living with your partner and their family, and going to their school. You will:

- Discover a new country (France, Belgium or Spain), a new culture, and new way of life,
- Learn and improve your French or Spanish,
- Meet new people and make new friends, and
- Go to a French School for one week!

Day 1	Travel from Canada to Paris.
Days 2 & 3	Visits and orientation in Paris (the Eiffel Tower, a boat ride on the Seine River, Notre Dame and the Champs Elysées) and Hotel accommodation.
Day 4	Visit Mont-Saint Michel
Days 5-11	Live with your French family and attend school.
Day 12	Return flight to Canada

APRIL: CANADA

In **April**, you will continue your adventure with your partner as they come to Canada to live with you and your family for **one week**.

COST:

All Provinces (Except Ontario)	Ontario
If you are interested in the SPRING BREAK PROGRAM, please speak to your local coordinator.	\$3100 + \$300 Airport Tax**

** Airport taxes exceeding \$300 will be paid for by OSEF .

Please see pages 13 & 14 for more details and payment schedule.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE COST?

- Exchange partner matching
- Preparatory meetings before departure
- Return international air transportation between Canada and Europe
- Chaperones on international flights and during the Paris tour
- Connecting air travel or express train in France or Belgium as required
- Airport shuttle to Paris and train transfers
- Chaperones for students travelling by train in France or Belgium
- Orientation in Paris with visits to the Eiffel Tower, various monuments and a boat ride on the Seine
- Hotel accommodation and meals during Paris tour and orientation
- Visit to Mont-Saint Michel (Spring Break Program)
- One day in Toronto and a visit to Niagara Falls (Summer Program)
- Hotel accommodation and meals in Toronto
- OSEF Coordinators are available anytime during the program
- Hospitalization, repatriation and third party liability insurance
- OSEF backpack, passport holder, luggage tag and information booklets

DOES NOT INCLUDE:

Spending money, passport, and visa fees.
Doctor visits and prescriptions.

WITHDRAWAL AND REIMBURSEMENT

Until **March 1st** OSEF will reimburse the full amount after which we will refund the full amount minus the **non-refundable \$200** in case of a cancellation.

If a candidate cannot participate and must cancel his/her departure after having hosted his/her European partner, OSEF will reimburse the sum paid.

In the case where a plane ticket has been issued for the candidate, the travel agency reserves the right to keep and not reimburse \$300 of the plane ticket. If you have travel insurance, you will be reimbursed the total amount of the plane ticket. However, the reason of the cancellation will be taken into account to determine the reimbursement (i.e. death of a family member, loss of employment, severe illness or hospitalization).

RECIPROCAL PROGRAM - PAYMENT SCHEDULE

OSEF invites families to pay by **cheque** or **e-transfer** following the schedule below. If paying by cheque, please include the final two payments (post-dated) with your Family File. Other payment schedules can be arranged. Contact your OSEF coordinator for details.

SCHOOL PROGRAM	
All Provinces (except Ontario)	Ontario
\$3990 + \$300 Airport Tax**	\$3100 + \$300 Airport Tax **
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ 400 – Included with the program application \$1000 – Included with the Family File \$1295 – July 05 (post dated or by e-transfer) \$1595 – November 15 (post-dated or e-transfer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ 400 – Included with the program application \$1000 – Included with the Family File \$ 850 – July 05 (post dated or by cheque) \$1150 – November 15 (postdated or by cheque)

SUMMER PROGRAM	
All Provinces (except Ontario)	Ontario
\$3990 + \$300 Airport Tax**	\$3100 + \$300 Airport Tax **
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ 400 – Included with the program application \$1000 – Included with the Family File \$1295 – April 01 (post dated or by e-transfer) \$1595 – May 01 (post-dated or e-transfer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ 400 – Included with the program application \$1000 – Included with the Family File \$ 850 – April 01 (post dated or by cheque) \$1150 – May 01 (postdated or by cheque)

SPRING BREAK PROGRAM	
All Provinces (except Ontario)	Ontario
	\$2600 + \$300 Airport Tax **
<p>If you are interested in the SPRING BREAK PROGRAM, please speak to your local coordinator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$ 400 – Included with the program application \$1000 – Included with the Family File \$ 750 – December 15 (post dated or by cheque) \$ 750 – February 10 (postdated or by cheque)

** Airport taxes exceeding \$300 will be paid for by OSEF .

NOTE: Fuel surcharges are sometimes added by the airline. When this happens, OSEF must pass that extra cost on to you. Please note that students are responsible for any supplementary baggage charges.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

GENERAL TRAVEL DATES FOR OSEF PROGRAMS

TRAVEL DATES FOR EUROPEANS		TRAVEL DATES FOR CANADIANS	
School Program (11 weeks)	Arrival: Mid-August Departure: October or November (depending on the program)	School Program (11 weeks)	Arrival: Early February Departure: mid to late April (depending on the program)
Summer Program (1 month)	Arrival: Late July Departure: Late August	Summer Program (1 month)	Arrival: Early July Departure: Late July
Spring Break Program (12 Days)	Arrival & Departure: April	Spring Break Program (12 Days)	Arrival and Departure: March

OSEF TAKES CARE OF YOUR TRAVEL ITINERARY

OSEF arranges for all Canadian students (with the exception of students in Ontario) to travel by air to **Toronto Pearson International Airport**. The cost of this flight is included in your fee. Ontario residents are responsible for making their own way to Toronto Pearson International Airport. Everyone then travels together as a group under the responsibility of OSEF chaperones to Paris. Individual travel and arrangements are not permitted.

If there are less than 10 students on a flight, they will be accompanied to the departure gate of their destination. OSEF is responsible for issuing the air and train tickets in Europe and Canada.

INSURANCE

INSURANCE PROVIDED FOR ALL OSEF STUDENTS:

REPATRIATION INSURANCE, HOSPITAL INSURANCE AND THIRD PARTY LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR EUROPEAN & CANADIAN STUDENTS

Contract open number: [35.804.785](tel:35.804.785) Tokio Marine phone # : + 33 1 48 82 62 36 Email: assistance@mutuaide.fr

Tokio Marine will give you a file number when you call them

- 1) Students have to pay for a visit to the doctor or to the hospital as well as for prescriptions that they may need. The students **must send the original bills to their parents who will send the bills to their health provider for reimbursement** – you should keep a copy for yourself.
- 2) Tokio Marine will reimburse the amount not reimbursed by your health provider (please note : there is a 30€ deductible)
 - Scan your reimbursement forms to Tokio Marine: assistance@mutuaide.fr
 - Specify the name of the student, his/her phone number, his/her home country address, the nature of the problem, the place where the student was hospitalized.
- 3) **In case of hospitalization:**
 - a) You must inform Tokio Marine that the student needs hospitalization. Call the number above as soon as possible.
 - b) Specify that the student is from the « OSEF » organization, the Insurance contract number, the arrival date of the student in the host country, his/her first name and surname.
 - c) Then you will be given a file number. Tokio Marine will pay for all hospital expenses from the first night spent at the hospital. They will contact the hospital and the doctors.

Our broker: Valérie BERNA

Phone #: +33 4.76.87.63.45 - Email: valerie.berna.courtage@gmail.com

Tokio Marine Europe Insurance Ltd

Succursale en France

66 rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, 75441 Paris cedex 09

Important: there is always an English speaking agent available 24hours.

PICTURE YOUR LIFE IN EUROPE!

The Program Coordinators and members of the European team are available to provide support during your stay. You will be welcomed into your European home as a family member. Your exchange partner will be there to help you adapt and settle into life in a new country. Enjoy the differences and have fun learning from them.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE

- Put your whole focus into your new European life. Too much contact with friends from home will prevent you from fully experiencing this adventure. This is YOUR time.
- If you are spoken to in English, remind your host family that you are there to learn French or Spanish.
- Communication is the secret to a successful exchange. Let your family know if you are tired and need to rest or wish to spend some time alone, or if you don't understand. This honest discussion will prevent many misunderstandings and bring you closer.
- Consider your exchange partner as a brother or sister. You can establish friendships with others and do some things on your own. Discuss your plans with your partner and your host parents well ahead of time.
- Meal time is an important part of the day in Europe. Everyone gathers around the table for a late meal; they share their day, their joys and frustrations. Listen, participate and share with them.
- Remember to bring a little gift for your host family. A book about Canada or your province would be a great keep-sake. More ideas can be found under Gift Suggestions.

SPENDING MONEY

User fees are applied to debit cards every time money is withdrawn. Check with your bank before you leave to ensure that your card will be accepted in Europe. You need to inform your bank that you will be using your card in Europe.

Have some Euros on hand before you leave. Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere. Visa and MasterCard are commonly used. The American Express Card is not widely accepted.

If you wish to buy clothes, sportswear, jeans, etc., be aware that they cost more in Europe. \$500 is the minimum amount of spending money suggested.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

There are not many pay phones in Europe. You will need to purchase a telephone card in Europe to make local and long distance calls. Long distance calls are expensive. Try communicating with your family via Skype. It is free!

If you have a cell phone that is unlocked, you can purchase a SIM card for 15 Euros or less. You can then purchase pay as you go “ticket recharge” and communicate with your host family and new friends this way.

Some families may not have a wireless connection. Host families nor OSEF will pay for phone calls. Please use your phone card to avoid phone bill issues.

Pre-arrange phone calls with your parents at times that will be convenient for everyone. Please keep in mind, the time difference between home and Europe.

Keep in mind that time online is not time experiencing being in Europe. It is good to be more aware of time spent texting, and being online when other people are around or during social times since being in a new country is a precious opportunity. Engaging in conversations is enriching and the best way to connect with others and make the most of your experience.

You are now ready to pack your suitcase and face a new world and adventure!!!

GIFT SUGGESTIONS

Remember to bring a little gift for your host family. See below for some suggestions:

- Books about your province
- Typical Canadian product (hermetically sealed)
such as Maple syrup / *no alcohol permitted*
- Tablecloth with maple leaves
- Canada themed calendar
- T-shirt from Canada



THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The following table explains how the European grades and levels are organized compared to the Canadian system.

AGE	EUROPEAN GRADE or LEVEL	EUROPEAN SCHOOL	CANADIAN GRADE	CANADIAN SCHOOLS (Ex : 1)	CANADIAN SCHOOLS (Ex : 2)
5-6	GS	Maternelle	Kindergarden	Elementary School	Elementary School
6-7	CP	Elémentaire	1		
7-8	CE1		2		
8-9	CE2		3		
9-10	CM1		4		
10-11	CM2		5		
11-12	6e	Collège	6	Middle School	Junior High
12-13	5e		7		
13-14	4e		8		
14-15	3e		9		
15-16	2de	Lycée	10	Secondary School	Senior High
16-17	1e		11		
17-18	Terminal		12		

Depending on your age and your partner's age, you will either attend a **Collège** (Junior High School) or a **Lycée** (Senior High School).

COLLÈGE

- After primary school, children enter the “College”, where they will spend 4 years between the ages of 11 and 14.
- The program of studies during these 4 years include European studies, History, Geography, Technology, Sciences, Mathematics, English, another language, Music and Sports.

LYCÉE

- The first year is called “Seconde” (2nd). This is a general program.
- The following year, students have to choose a major with choices in: European studies; Mathematics; Sciences; Economics, etc.
- At the end of the “Première” (1st) students write two exams as the first part of their Baccalauréat”.
- The “Baccalauréat” is the equivalent of the High School Diploma.

Unlike Canada, European students do not choose what they wish to study. The class follows a course schedule given to them at the beginning of the school year.

A Typical School Day: A normal school day starts at 8:30am. Typically, students have 4 different classes with a short break at 10:15. After lunch you are back in school for the rest of the afternoon. [You will spend around 8 hours in school every day and your exchange partner will have homework.](#) Being present in class and attempting the assignments is expected.

European School Facts: You might be surprised by the classical and rigid European educational system. Students sit in class and listen to the teachers all day long. They are not allowed to speak unless requested to do so by the teacher. Students are never late for class. Being late is a sure way of getting extra homework or a detention.

Sports: During the “Collège” years students have 4 hours of sports per week. At the “Lycée” students have 3 hours of sports per week. Students practice sports as an extracurricular activity outside of school hours.

Transportation: If you live in the countryside, you might have to travel by school bus. If you live in town, you might take a bus or the metro with your exchange partner. Transportation fees are paid for by the host family.

If you experience a problem: please speak with your English or language teacher. You can even go to the “Secrétariat du Principal”, the principal’s secretary office and speak with him/her. They will inform the Principal of your problem and he/she will call you to the office.

It is very important NOT to address a teacher or anyone in a position of authority by using the familiar “tu” form of the language. Always use “vous” (French) or “usted” (Spanish). If you don’t, you will be considered as being impolite and showing poor manners.

CANADIAN SCHOOL AND YOUR PARTNER

European students will attend the same school as their exchange partner.

Please register the student with the school as soon as you receive their family form. The Principal will have already given his or her agreement to host the exchange student with the initial application of the Canadian student for the exchange.

Principals and school counsellors will help European students select their courses while they are in Canada. A report card will be issued to the student at the end of the exchange.

Courses at School:

It is recommended that European students attend the grade that corresponds with their schooling in Europe, although it is not mandatory. Their main goal is to listen and speak English throughout the day. It is recommended that they take English and a Social Studies course and are then free to choose other options such as Drama, Art, Dance, P.E, Shop or Home Economics. It is not mandatory that the European student be in all the same classes as their exchange partner.

Please note that Canadian students attend European schools without incurring any costs. We ask that all schools provide an “anecdotal” report card (no grades) or a signed letter for the European exchange students before returning home. The objective is to provide students with a commentary on their participation, attendance and effort. An original copy is also sent to the European OSEF office.

Arrival-Departure:

European students arrive mid-August and will begin school on the first day of class either at the end of August or the beginning of September depending on the location.

Start: end of August or first Tuesday in September after Labour Day

End: mid October or beginning of November.

OSEF RULES

1. School is mandatory. (School and Spring Break Programs)
2. Adapting to the lifestyle of the host family (schedules, meals, outings) is part learning experience.
3. It is forbidden to commit a misdemeanour or an offence that is punishable by Canadian and/or European law (stealing from your family, shoplifting).
4. Students may not drive any type of motorized vehicles including motorcycles.
5. It is forbidden to hitch-hike.
6. Cigarettes and alcohol are forbidden.
7. Possession and/or use of illegal drugs are cause for an immediate return home.
8. Engaging in physical violence or writing insults on social media is cause for an immediate return home.
9. The host family is the custodian of the exchange student. Travel to other countries alone is forbidden.
10. No refund will be given if students do not complete the exchange.
11. Families are bound to host an exchange student even if it is not the same person initially agreed upon.
12. All debts must be paid before returning back to Canada.

Remember... What you put into this exchange is what you will get out of it. Make the most of every opportunity!



TESTIMONIALS

Madame LENFANT,

Un petit message pour vous donner quelques nouvelles de notre fils Maxime GRANDAZZI.

L'échange se passe parfaitement bien. Maxime est ravi tant sur le plan humain que linguistique. Nous tenons à vous remercier pour l'excellent travail de matching que vous avez réalisé. Un grand merci à Kristin, John, Jacob et toutes les personnes (amis et famille) qui ont eu des relations avec Maxime et qui lui ont fait partager des moments inoubliables. Grâce à Kristin et John, les 9 semaines sont passées très rapidement et surtout sans aucun moment de stress pour nous comme parents. Nous sentions notre fils tellement heureux ! Nous essaierons d'être une aussi bonne famille d'accueil pour Jacob, nous y tenons ! Je voulais transmettre un message aux futurs parents qui envisageraient de faire partir leurs enfants au CANADA et qui comme nous sont totalement angoissés de le voir partir si loin seul : Faîtes confiance à l'OSEF et surtout à votre enfant. C'est une si belle experience!

Très cordialement,

Catherine G.

My advice to a future candidate would be to not be shy. You can't be shy when doing an exchange, because you'll want to make friends and get to know people. Being shy just give you an air of not wanting to be there, and then after a while people start to give up. Unfortunately that's what happened to me until about the 7th week when I realized that I needed to be more outgoing, or my trip wasn't going to get any better. Another piece of advice would be to watch the movie "Yes Man" right before you go, and then act like you've promised to say yes to everything. I did that for my trip, and I think I only said no to a few things. I literally tried every piece of food put in front of me, tried every new experience in general. You want to benefit from the amazing opportunity while you have the chance, so saying yes is a definite must.

Now I feel confident with my French, and I'm not as afraid about making mistakes with my language because I know that that's how you learn the most. People in France were so understanding when you made a mistake that it just became easier to just, speak.

Sarah G. – Victoria

I just really want to thank you for this amazing trip. I couldn't expect a better sister and a better family because it's really what I found: a second family. This month was perfect and was for sure the greatest things I've ever done. I've learned so much about the Canadian culture and also about the Canadian way of life. I'm so grateful for everything my family showed me. It's crazy how in only two months you can become so close to your sister. I will miss her so much!!!

Cordialement

Marion Nouvellon (Calgary, Alberta avec Stéphanie Duarte-Pedrosa)

Thank you for all of your organization. It was truly the trip of a lifetime for our daughter. She was so warmly welcomed and embraced into the family in Marseille. We had pictures sent to us every day with details of what activities the kids were up to. Elizabeth was fortunate to have been on the Cote d'Azur where she swam, caved, scuba dove, cliff dove and had a lot of hikes around their property. However for me as her mom, the very best part was that the entire family (grandparents, aunts, uncles and all the cousins) lived within walking distance and they all embraced her into their family. She interacted with everyone and had many opportunities to get to know the whole family. One of the grandmothers bought her souvenirs and a little cousin cried on their last evening together before the trip home. Liz wrote down in a journal all of the new foods she sampled and every new word and expression she heard. She felt great when English words were becoming harder to retrieve! I received a note from the mom saying that the family is a little worried about their son as his English is not at all at the same level as our daughter's French. It's always nice to hear that the years spent in Immersion actually do pay off. Again, on behalf of myself, husband and our daughter Elizabeth, I want to thank you all for your awesome organization and having made this trip so easy because we understand that it would have been a huge endeavor to have made it look so flawless! Congratulations to all of you.

Very sincerely,

Cynthia C. – Calgary

La France, c'était une expérience vraiment incroyable! Pas seulement pour les raisons évident, comme pour améliorer mon français, faire des amis en France, explorée la France etc, mais aussi pour découvrir un peu plus sur moi même! Je trouve que je sais beaucoup plus maintenant de ce que j'aime et qui m'intéresse dans la vie.

C'est vrai que ce n'était pas tous toujours facile et super amusante, il y avait les différences culturels d'adaptée a et les différences de les différents style de vie, mais c'était pour ça que c'était si intéressante! J'étais vraiment dans mon élément avec la culture française; l'art, les vêtements, les gens, c'était vraiment tous que j'identifier avec, alors c'était vraiment géniale d'exploré! En Paris, j'ai pleurée en voir toutes les bâtiments parce qu'ils étaient tous si jolie- je pleurée de joie!

Je suis encore (et j'ai l'intention de continuer pour toujours!) en contact avec tous mes ami(e)s française, ils et elles étaient tous super gentille avec moi et j'ai beaucoup rigolé avec eux!

Je SAIS que je retournerai en France bientôt! Je suis si heureuse d'avoir faire l'échange et j'espère de faire quelque chose comme ceci dans le futur.

Thanks!

Claire N. – Victoria, BC

Voici les quatre phrases tentant de décrire mon échange. Encore merci pour le merveilleux travail que toute l'association réalise pour nous permettre de vivre une expérience inoubliable comme celle-ci!

"How to describe four weeks in only four sentences; especially when they have been so enriching!

Anyway, I've fit in an amazing family who took care of me as if I was the "third child". They were deeply involved in making my stay as pleasant as possible and in sharing their culture with me. They definitely took up the challenge very well and that's the reason why I really consider my exchange more as an incredible human experience than just as a simple linguistic exchange! 😊"

Garance Madinier , accueillie par Amy Bell à Calgary

The exchange I did in Canada was really awesome, my exchange partner and I have so much in common and her family was really nice. We went camping in Banff and Kelowna and we did a lot of sports and activities in the Rockies. It was the first time I went camping and I loved it. I was really sad to leave them, I didn't want to go back to France. I'm pretty sure I will see my exchange partner again. And the brownies are so much better there than in France and I haven't seen a bear yet so I have to come back ;) Clarisse Dufaux, Calgary (avec Amy Labelle)

Bonjour Madame Lenfant,

Je m'adresse à vous afin de vous informer à propos de la première semaine au Canada de ma fille Eleonora Geraci. Après un accueil parfait à l'aéroport CDG, un long voyage en avion, la connaissance de deux jolies copines, l'émotion des Chutes du Niagara même si sous la pluie et quelques difficultés d'adaptation au nouveau 'timing' canadien, elle a enfin atterri à Victoria, sa destination finale.

Vraiment fatiguée par le long voyage et le manque de sommeil, sa première impression de la famille d'accueil a été très forte mais après une bonne nuit de repos son aventure a commencé.

Elle est heureuse et enthousiaste de sa vie en famille, fascinée par l'autonomie et l'extravagance de sa correspondante Christina qui lui est exactement complémentaire en tout. Elles sont déjà devenues de bonnes amies et leur complicité est touchante.

La famille toute entière a montré vers Eleonora une affection sincère et attentive, qui lui a permis de moins souffrir de la distance qui nous sépare.

Je n'ai pas pu donc m'empêcher de vous envoyer dès maintenant un tout grand merci pour cette incroyable opportunité d'échange, si riche que ma fille ne l'oubliera plus jamais.....maintenant mon problème sera la faire rentrer en Belgique !!!!

Je vous envoie mes salutations les meilleures et mes souhaits d'une bonne permanence au Canada.

Bien à vous,

Valentina Geraci

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www.osef.ca

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