

29 September 2026

FRENCH EXCHANGE – 2026

Visit to Argentan – Thursday 28 May to Wednesday 3 June 2026

Visit to Abingdon – Wednesday 3 June to Tuesday 9 June 2026

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

We are very pleased to announce that we will be running a French Exchange later this academic year and we are looking for 15 students from Fitzharrys to participate in this very worthwhile and enjoyable experience. We will be exchanging with Collège Jeanne d'Arc [Ensemble Scolaire Jeanne d'Arc - Etablissement scolaire privé Jeanne d'Arc à Argentan](#) in Argentan, Abingdon's twin town.

We will be meeting at school in time to catch the 08.15 ferry from Portsmouth to Ouistreham on Thursday 28 May. In the evening, English students will meet their French families and penfriends. Students will have had the opportunity to get to know their penfriends before the trip by email for example.

During the exchange, students will be staying with their French families and will experience the life of a French teenager. They will be immersed in the language and the culture and they will also be given the opportunity to attend classes in the French school in order for them to discover the French school system and to put into practice what has been learnt in their French lessons. We will also be visiting places of historical and cultural interest. Students will be back in Abingdon on Wednesday 1 April. (Timings to be confirmed)

For the second leg of the exchange, the French students will be coming to Abingdon and your child will be paired up with a student of the same gender and similar interests. They will live with you for the week and come into school to experience some lessons and day trips to places of historical and cultural interest. At the weekend students would stay with the family and do activities together with their partner and the family. You would provide them with meals and a packed lunch while they are in England. The same would happen for our students in France on the first leg.

There will be a pairing form to fill in once you are signed up to ensure that we can try to find a partner with similar interests and also find out about any dietary requirements etc. so we can pass this information on to the French family. There is no requirement to have a spare room in your house for the French student, it would be fine for them to share a room with your child. They are very happy to have the opportunity to spend time living amongst an English family.

The safety of our students is paramount and they will be staying with a family which will have gone through a check with the French school; they will be supervised by members of staff while at school and on organised visits and will be given the teachers' phone numbers in case of an emergency. Safeguarding guidelines at school require English host families to submit a form for a DBS check but this is free and can be completed easily online.

The cost of the trip will be between £350 and £380 depending on numbers, we require a deposit of £100 and payments will be required through ParentMail. This will include the students' ferry tickets, the transfer to and from Abingdon to Portsmouth and Ouistreham to Argentan by coach and all activities in France that students will be doing with their families and their teachers. Students will only need a small amount of pocket money for the week. If you would really like to be a part of the exchange but the cost is an issue there may be some financial help available. Please contact Mrs Philbin at Fitzharrys for more information.

If you would like your child to take part in the 2026 exchange please complete the online form, by Friday 17 December 2025. [French exchange trip consent form \(change of dates\)](#)

All travelling students need a valid passport (valid until at least until October 2026) and a European Health Card (EHIC), which is free from <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-ehic-european-health-insurance-card/>

Please do feel free to contact me should you have any questions or queries. Information meetings will also be organised before each leg of the trip.

Our email addresses are: mphilbin@fitzharrys.school or office.4127@fitzharrys.school

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Michaela Philbin

Head of MFL

