

Introductory Newsletter

Lille

Work Experience Abroad

A blue rectangular stamp with a red swoosh on the left and right sides, containing the text "BLUE STAMP TRAVEL" in white capital letters.

BLUE
STAMP
TRAVEL

In this newsletter, you will find information about the city you are going to, our emergency contact numbers, some general information on your work placement and host family and some useful advice about working abroad. Around two weeks prior to departure, we will send you our final newsletter including your specific work placement, host family details and further information that may prove useful for your trip.





LILLE

We have now received application forms from almost all the students (please send yours in if you have not already done so) and are therefore able to tell you that the city you will going to is **Lille**, the fourth largest city in France.

The capital of the northern Hauts-de-France region, Lille has a reputation as a hard-working industrial city, and has a fabulous historical centre. Until it was invaded by Louis XIV in 1667 Lille was actually Flemish, and this heritage is clear in the city's architecture.

Capitale du nord de la région des Hauts-de-France, Lille a la réputation d'être une ville industrielle laborieuse et son centre historique fabuleux. Jusqu'à ce qu'il soit envahi par Louis XIV en 1667, Lille était en réalité flamande, et cet héritage transparaît clairement dans l'architecture de la ville.



We are making arrangements for your host families at the moment, and will confirm which family has been allocated to you about 2 weeks before you travel. They will provide half board accommodation for you, which consists of breakfast and evening meal.

GROUP LEADERS

A Group Leader accompanies each trip to support all the students and ensure the week runs smoothly. Your Group Leader will meet you as you board the coach in England and will accompany you on your journeys on the coach and ferry to and from **Lille**. They will ensure that you are met by your Host Family and that you can locate your work placement ready for your first day. Your Group Leader and Host Family are your primary contacts during your stay and will be there to support you with any issues that may arise. A WhatsApp Group for all students on the trip will be set up by your Group Leader, this will enable you to stay in touch with everyone else on the trip, share experiences and stories and make arrangements for getting together.



YOUR WORK PLACEMENT

Once we receive your application we start the process of finding your work placement in **Lille**, and will give you more specific information near the time of the trip. All the employers we use are sent your profile and letter of application in advance. We make clear to the employers our expectations of the work experience placement and explain what you hope to gain from your week in **France**. When we have received the confirmation from your employers we will send you the details of the tasks you will be performing, your working hours, your supervisor's name, directions and travel arrangements. This will be about 2 weeks prior to departure.



Within the bounds of availability, we are trying to find you all a suitable work placement on the basis of the information we have about you from the booking form, application form and letter of application. You will be in a real work situation and as with any work environment there might be quiet times, hectic times and times when it's difficult for the employer to find a lot for you to do – don't be shy, try to help! Anticipate what needs doing, be pro-active. Quiet times give you the opportunity to speak to other employees. Remember too, that you will have the chance to practise most language skills not just speaking but listening, reading and in some cases writing as well.

Your working time will, to a certain extent, be dictated by the type of work you will be doing. It is important to realise that if a restaurant is one of your choices you will probably be working evenings.

All this should be seen as part of the experience of working abroad and experiencing the culture. Being prepared to adapt and accept these differences is essential to any student's success in our Work Experience Programme.





Working hours in Europe are frequently quite different from the UK. Shops are usually open until 7 or 7.30 pm in France and businesses frequently shut for two hours at midday in the afternoon. Evening meals in France are usually taken around 7.30 or 8 pm.

Please note that the times and number of hours students will be working will be different for each student depending on the type of work placement (we cannot arrange for friends to all be working the same hours). This may result in some students having their meal at their work placement instead of at the accommodation. We however inform employers that students are not allowed to work more than 8 hours per day or later than 8 pm.



Please bear in mind that the Group Leader does not accompany students to their work placement for the first visit. It is our deliberate policy that students find their own work placements in small groups and introduce themselves independently as we believe that the independence learned is a vital part of the experience. The Group Leader will however offer any assistance needed with finding the placements and the use of the public transport system.

Most work placements will be situated within a short distance from the town centre. In Lille, the host families are situated around the perimeter of the city and students will have to use public transport to and from their work placement. This will be indicated in the employers information that we send with the final newsletter together with an idea of costs. Please consider this when deciding how much spending money to take with you.



You will visit your work placement on the Sunday before you begin work. This gives you the opportunity to introduce yourself to the employers if the work placement is open on Sunday. Otherwise it is a good time to find out where your work placement is situated so that you will be able to find it easily on your first day of work.

HOST FAMILY ACCOMMODATION

Details of your host family accommodation will appear in your [MyAccount](#).

Living with a French host family is the best way to acquire a deeper understanding of French culture and traditions, as well as to help you become completely immersed in the French lifestyle. Our host families have been carefully chosen in order to ensure that the student's stay be as pleasant as possible. We will always try to accommodate our students within 20-30 minutes from their work placement by walking or public transportation. With Lille being a large city, some placements are further away than this on public transport however the transport systems are very good and we receive positive feedback from students in this regard.



Host family accommodation is for individuals or groups of 2 or 3, if you have a specific preference please make sure that you have noted this on your application or contacted the office. This cannot be guaranteed but we try to fulfil all requests. If you require a vegetarian, vegan, halal diet, are allergic to pets or have any other special requests, just let us know it in advance and we will do our best to satisfy your needs.

We hope you have a wonderful time and we will do all that we can to ensure you have a smooth trip. We understand this may be the first time you have travelled alone and **we will be here to support you and answer any questions you may have.**



CHECK LIST

Remember to show this letter to your parents who will need to know what arrangements are being made on your behalf.

Application forms: If you haven't submitted these, please do so as soon as you receive this letter.

Passport: It is your responsibility to ensure that you have a valid passport for travel.

Visa: If you require a Visa, (this only applies to people who do not hold European Union passports), then please make sure you apply for one well in advance.

First Aid Kit: Please take any normal first aid/medication that you might personally require. (Pain killers/inhalers etc.) Please inform us of any medical conditions and allergies before you travel.

EHIC: Available from Main Post Offices, via the internet (www.dh.gov.uk/travellers) or over the phone, you will need to get one of these well in advance, as they can take a while to come through. Keep the original safe with your passport. Do not leave this until the last minute.



Below you will find a number of addresses, telephone and fax numbers you can contact during the trip if you have any queries. Please use the emergency contacts only in case of a genuine emergency.

Blue Stamp office in UK:

9 Churchill Park
Colwick Business Estate
Nottingham NG4 2HF
Tel: 0044 (0) 115 9 404 500

Blue Stamp Emergency 24 hour number: +44 (0) 7799 671 922

The Group Leader's mobile phone number will also be issued to you with your information pack approximately 2 weeks before departure.