

MANITOBA - QUEBEC

SIX-MONTH STUDENT EXCHANGE

PROGRAM



PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

The Manitoba–Quebec Six-Month Student Exchange Program is a reciprocal program, which involves the pairing of students from each province to encourage language acquisition and cultural exchange.

The Student Exchange Program is offered to students enrolled in the French-Immersion program who will be in Grade 10 or 11 next September. Students with strong skills in the Basic French course may also apply. Manitoba students are paired with Québec students for a six-month period – three months in Manitoba and three months in Québec. Participation in the program during grade twelve is not encouraged but still accepted.

This exciting program allows Quebec students to stay with Manitoba families and attend school here from September to December. From February to April, the Quebec students and their families return the hospitality and the Manitoba students stay in their homes while attending school in Quebec.

While in their host province, students are expected to speak the official language of the majority in that province and to get involved in a variety of cultural activities.

The success of the program depends upon the *commitment* of the **student**, the student's **family** and the student's **school**.

This guide has been designed for those families participating in the program, as well as those who may be considering future participation.

While the guide does not attempt to be all-inclusive, it is hoped that the suggestions and guidelines, resulting from the cumulative experience of past participants, will be useful. Each exchange is unique in character; yet often the experience of others in similar situations can help maximize the positive aspects of the exchange and help find solutions should difficulties arise.

It is important to remember that all participants in this program become ambassadors for their home province and should attempt to display maturity, adaptability, hospitality and graciousness at all times throughout the exchange.

TIMELINE

THE SELECTION PROCESS	THE EXCHANGE
<p>November to January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on behalf of the school, the school divisions apply to the Department of Education to participate in the exchange Liaison Teacher is identified advertising of the program begins <p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> student application forms are available at the schools and on website <p>February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools begin the selection process schools conduct in-home interviews of potential candidates <p>March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maximum of 5 high quality applications per school are submitted to the Department <p>April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> processing and matching of student files pairing of eligible candidates done by provincial coordinators <p>May</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> selected participants and schools are notified students and Liaison Teachers receive Quebec student files <p>June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> correspondence/communication begins between Manitoba and Quebec families (by letter, audio/videocassette, telephone, etc) <p>July</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing communication between Manitoba and Quebec families <p>August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manitoba families and schools are advised of Quebec students' arrival times 	<p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> orientation session for Manitoba Families and Liaison Teachers before the arrival of Quebec students Quebec students arrive in Manitoba <p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mid-term evaluation interviews conducted by Quebec teachers (by phone) <p>November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quebec students' report cards are completed <p>December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quebec students return home Manitoba students prepare for their trip to Quebec <p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manitoba students ensure that they are caught up and/or are prepared to catch up on school work which will be missed while on exchange <p>February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manitoba students leave for Quebec settling in period for student student interview by Provincial Coordinator (in person) <p>March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluation interviews are conducted by Liaison Teachers (by phone) <p>April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluation interviews are conducted by Liaison Teachers (by phone) Manitoba students return home

TO EXCHANGE PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR FAMILY

The exchange participants include both you and your family. As students applying for this program, you must understand the commitment you are about to make and be sure that your family will back you up in this endeavour.

You must be willing to fulfill some of your academic requirements either before you leave on the exchange, or after you return, or a bit of both (and that could involve taking summer school). You may wish to start planning to meet your academic requirements as soon as application is made.

The first portion of this exchange involves having a new family member for three months. Will this cause any strain on your family emotionally or financially? Will it interfere with your daily activities? *You must be willing to make this new member of your family the most important thing in your life for the school year.* Your partner must be more important than your boyfriend or girlfriend, your circle of friends or your part-time job. (You may find that you have to quit your job during the exchange.) Will leaving home for three months be difficult for you and your family?

You are asking your Quebec partner to become part of your family, and you must make every effort to be welcoming and give recognition. Remember, you will be spending three months with your partner's family as well. Participants must be prepared to respect house rules in such matters a curfew, smoking limitations, household chores, etc.

The use of alcohol or drugs, or trouble with the law means immediate termination of the exchange. Return airfare home for these reasons, or for early termination of the program for reasons outside the spirit of the program, will be at **parental** expense.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

The program is designed to give the participating student an opportunity to:

1. Improve their knowledge of French as a second language.
2. Discover a new culture and share their culture.
3. Explore a different lifestyle.
4. Develop lasting friendships.

ELIGIBILITY

Before any Manitoba student is eligible to participate, the student's School Division must inform the Department of Education in writing, of its commitment to the program. The school administration should designate an appropriate member of staff as the Liaison Teacher.

To be eligible to apply for this exchange program, students must:

- be currently enrolled in the French Immersion Program or Basic French Courses of their high school;
- have good academic achievement and participate actively in the Manitoba school;
- be flexible and open to new experiences and a new culture;
- be well motivated to participate in this type of learning activity;
- have parental and school support in this endeavour;
- be recommended by the Liaison Teacher.

Generally, application to participate should be made in grade nine or ten and participation will occur in grade ten or eleven respectively. Participation in the program during grade twelve is not encouraged but still accepted.

The selection committee must be assured that the Manitoba student meets the above criteria and that the home is one that will enthusiastically receive a Quebec student for three months. The committee must also ascertain that this would not cause an undue burden on the family.

COSTS

Participating families must pay part of the airfare as well as living expenses for their visiting student.

The government of Manitoba covers the remaining roundtrip travel costs from Winnipeg to the host city in Québec.

Tuition costs are covered by both provinces based on reciprocity.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Completed student applications and interview schedules must be received at the Department of Education by mid-March of each year. It is essential that the application form be accurate, complete and legible. Typewritten application forms are preferred. **Applications from individual students will not be considered without school, school division authorization.**

While **an application does not guarantee participation**, students should start planning their timetable for the next school year as soon as possible.

It is important to realize your commitment upon application so that you and your family can plan accordingly. Consider how this new family member would affect your daily activities.

Changes in family status such as illness, change of residence or family break-up, as well as concerns about such things as smoking, diet, or boy/girl relationships may happen. If anything of this nature occurs, and you feel that it could affect the exchange, advise your Liaison Teacher immediately.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Participation in this program requires **major and continuing commitment** on the part of the student. Students should not apply to this program if not certain of their interest or commitment.
2. Students participating in the program must be prepared to respect house rules in their host home in Quebec in regard to such matters as curfews, smoking limitations, house chores, etc.
3. Trouble with the law, **especially in regard of the use of alcohol or drugs**, will mean immediate termination of the exchange. **Return home travel will occur at parental expense.**
4. Student participants hosting a Quebec student must give high priority to their responsibilities as hosts. If they have part-time work, they must ensure it does not interfere with this responsibility.
5. Participating students will be away from their regular school for three months. This requires special planning of the school programs for the year (i.e. making arrangements with teachers/principal for exams, projects, etc).

NOTIFICATION OF STATUS

All applicants will be notified of their status by the middle of May.

HOSTING FAMILY REQUIREMENT

If a student is chosen to participate in the program, each family member residing in the household, over 18 years old, must undergo a criminal Record check and Child Abuse Registry check before the beginning of the exchange.

PRIOR TO THE EXCHANGE

CORRESPONDENCE WITH QUEBEC PARTNER/FAMILY

Successful candidates should prepare to correspond with their Quebec partner and family. Correspondence should begin after June 1 and may be initiated by either twin. This allows adequate time for administrative details in both provinces. Students should pay particular attention to their first letter or e-mail. Wondering about what to write? Suggestions include letting your partner know about:

- yourself: photos, typical daily activities, domestic chores, weekend activities;
- your family: typical evening and weekend activities, photos;
- your school: include a school handbook, outline courses available, co-curricular and extra-curricular programs available (sports, music, etc). A letter from your Liaison Teacher would be valuable;
- your community: discuss the clubs, recreation facilities, geographic location, population, economy of the area, cultural and sport activities – include photos, maps, newspapers.

Obviously, the collection of this information will keep you busy in May. The June package should include basics. Communicating throughout the summer can fill in the details. Communications between the families help develop important ties for the exchange. Exchanging music, photos, videos, etc, help with information sharing. When you receive a message or a letter, reply immediately. Regular correspondence is crucial to the success of the exchange.

NOTE: Be sure to obtain a summer address for your partner, and telephone your partner if you have not received a reply to your letter by July. (Inform your Liaison Teacher if this is the case). Be careful what information you put on Facebook concerning your partner. Ensure that you have their PERMISSION before putting any photos or names.

DROP OUT/WITHDRAWAL

If you are selected and circumstances require you to withdraw from the program, you must notify:

- 1) your Liaison Teacher immediately in person; and
- 2) your partner and his/her family, by phone and in writing, with reasons explaining the need for withdrawal.

A copy of this correspondence must be sent to the Department of Education through your Liaison Teacher.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Participation by a student in this program also requires a major and continuing commitment by his/her parents. It involves the hosting of a Francophone student for three months.
2. It is essential that every member of the family be receptive to the exchange student and be willing to contribute to the success of the exchange. Every family member must agree to participate in the exchange by supporting the presence of a new family member for three months and the absence of a family member for a three-month period.

(FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES continued)

3. There must be space in the home for another adolescent. A separate bedroom is not essential but may be desirable. **A separate bed is essential, as is the creation of "private space" where the exchange student may be alone if desired.**
4. Parents will be requested to meet incoming Quebec students at reception points throughout the province and to return them to these points for their return to Quebec.
5. It is hoped that Manitoba hosting families will provide suitable cultural and recreational experiences to Quebec exchange students. This might include some travel within the province. There are no minimum expectations here and individual families should plan to do only what they might wish to do. Such travel is at the expense of the host family.
6. Hosting parents assume responsibility for the visiting student. It is expected that guardianship of the visiting adolescent be assumed. Any travel involving an overnight stay is to be supervised by the host family; verbal or written permission from the student's family must also be obtained.
7. Each family member residing in the household, over 18 years of age, must undergo a Criminal Records check and a Child Abuse check.

PREPARATION FOR THE EXCHANGE

Once notified of a proposed match, parents must consider carefully the responsibilities outlined in the previous section and the way an exchange would affect the family before the proposed match is accepted. **When the Department of Education receives the signed acceptance document, it is with the understanding that the commitment has been made to this exchange program.**

Be sure that any changes in information given during the interview, or on the application form, are communicated immediately to your Liaison Teacher and to the Department of Education.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH QUEBEC HOST FAMILY

Parents are encouraged to write to each other giving more information about the home situation, i.e. household rules, chores, curfews, rules concerning alcohol, church, medical problems, any special attention required, diet, clothing to take, etc. Weather patterns and geographical location dictate proper clothing for family activities required by your son/daughter.

Families may use the guidelines outlined in the Student Responsibilities section with letter writing. Video recordings, e-mail and Facebook are alternate methods of communicating.

Be sure to inform counterparts of summer addresses and telephone numbers, so that communication is clear and may be continued throughout the months of July and August. Relationships can only be established by frequent communication of clear, complete information.

STUDENT TIMETABLE PLANNING/PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS

Your participation in the Manitoba/Quebec Student Exchange program is likely to be a very challenging, stimulating and rewarding experience. Since your next school year will be different from the usual, it is very important that you plan your school program with special care. As soon as possible, you should consult with your teachers, counsellors and, if necessary, with the school administrators to ensure that your school program is structured so that you receive a full year of credits and satisfactory marks.

Past experience has shown that the more work that is completed before going to Quebec, the easier it is for the Manitoba students to readjust to the Manitoba school system and way of living upon returning. It is certainly more difficult to do work upon returning to Manitoba that could have been done prior to departure. Working on Manitoba correspondence courses during your three-month stay in Quebec is not recommended. You will be very occupied with your Quebec school program and activities. Some participants may consider attending school during the summer preceding or following the exchange.

Do not expect schools in Quebec to be able to meet your exact needs regarding course selection, as this is not always possible. The main goal of the program is language learning in the cultural milieu. This will require your full attention. Work from Manitoba would greatly distract its achievement. Should you have timetable concerns, please discuss them with your Liaison Teacher and school administration.

HOSTING QUEBEC EXCHANGE STUDENT

This section attempts to give some suggestions, which may help you during the hosting period portion of the exchange.

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER

During this three-month period, the major responsibility of the Manitoba student and family is to welcome the Quebec student and make him/her feel comfortable in your home. It can be a stressful experience for a teenager to leave his/her "secure" environment to live with a new family for three months. This difficulty is usually compounded by language/communication difficulties. While some Quebec students may be able to express themselves quite well in English, it is important to note that nuances of meaning and the cultural understanding will require special attention and assistance.

ARRIVAL OF QUEBEC STUDENT

Manitoba students and families must be at the pickup point to welcome the Quebec student. Manitoba students should help their exchange partner settle into their home. A tour of the home and a review of the relevant household rules are recommended. This must be repeated several days later to ensure understanding. Make the arrival a special event, i.e. with flowers, a party, BBQ or dinner, etc. Be considerate of your partner. He/she may be tired, may not understand, and you may need to go over the relevant household rules slowly again, 2 to 3 days later.

AT SCHOOL

When you take your Quebec partner to school, the first person that he/she should meet is the Liaison Teacher, followed by the school administration. Inform your partner of the school rules, morning routines, timetable, cafeteria, gymnasium, bus pass, locker, and tour of school. He/she may follow you to your classes until a timetable is established.

Take your partner to all his/her classes and introduce him/her to the teachers. If a major problem is perceived, tell the Liaison Teacher. Remember that “little” things are good excuses to get upset when the real issues are major cultural and language differences. **So please be patient.**

Go for a swim, play racquetball, or any activities where there is little need to talk. Physical activity is a great stress reliever. Even if language competence is limited, everyone knows when one is talked about rather than talked to. Do not treat your partner as a third person when you are both conversing with friends. When you are learning a second language, you tire very quickly. Allow your partner lots of sleep, sports, non-conversational activities and private space.

FAMILY SITUATION

The first weeks of the exchange are the most important. It will require all of your attention to include your new family member in all activities. If there is one rule of thumb, it is to communicate directly and clearly with the exchange student regarding expectations and limitations.

Some areas of concern that have been mentioned by past participants of the program include:

- The presence of a new family member can cause jealousy on the part of younger family members or identical twins. Suddenly someone is receiving more attention. It is important to involve these young family members who can be excellent teachers: they repeat things many times, as they generally love to communicate. If the Quebec student is watching English television, the younger sibling should not change stations without asking. It is important that parents help younger children accept the new addition to the family.
- The Quebec student should also be encouraged to come out of his/her room, i.e. to watch television, write letters in the kitchen or family room, or to help with family chores.
- Respect your partner and communicate honestly with him/her as often as possible. However, it is not necessary to be with each other all the time.
- In the early stages of the exchange, continue to verify that your partner understands and that he/she is not just polite and saying “yes”.
- If you, as the host student and family, see that after the first few weeks the Quebec student is spending all his/her time in his/her room without indicating being tired, is crying a lot, and/or is writing a lot of letters in his/her room, host parents should sit down with the Quebec student and make sure that everything is alright. If necessary, involve the Liaison Teacher.
- The Quebec student must be encouraged to communicate with the Manitoba partner if there is the slightest concern at any time. The Quebec student must realize that you and your family care. In many cases, indication of affection: a hug, a kiss, or a pat on the back will break the barrier.

FAMILY RULES

Many Manitoba families have very few written rules but a short written list should be given to the Quebec student so that he/she knows when meal times are during the week and weekend, shower schedule, curfews for weeknights and weekends, family chores, how much television time, and family activities.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Local calls - Frequent calls to other Quebec exchange participants (more than once a day, more than five minutes) should be discouraged. Calls should be made in English, as the Quebec students are here to learn English, not to perfect their French.

Long distance calls - While it is natural for Quebec students to want to call their friends in the area, perhaps those in another city, and their family, it is necessary to have a clear understanding as to the payment of these long distance calls. We suggest that Quebec students pay for all long distance calls while in Manitoba and that Manitoba students pay for all long distance calls while in Quebec.

LANGUAGE

The Quebec student may use English to swear, completely unaware of the meaning of the newly learned expressions. You may find that your friends or other students relish the opportunity to teach your twin such expressions. If this should happen, the Quebec student must be told politely that this is inappropriate and why.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Students from Quebec may be used to fairly direct communication about any subject with parents, or teachers. They may be very frank and straightforward.

Based on past participants' comments, the homes in Quebec tend to be somewhat less rigid and regulated (Quebec students have readily noted the differences in Manitoba homes). In both Quebec and Manitoba, on average, rural families spent more time on family oriented activities than urban families.

Facebook and Twitter are a very popular way to stay in touch with home and friends. If a Quebec student spends a lot of free time in his/her room communicating with family or friends, it may cause some problems.

Direct communication with the Quebec student is best, if the Manitoba parents want the Quebec student to do something (i.e. clean up his/her room). Tell him/her directly what you want done.

FRIENDS

The Manitoba student should introduce his/her Quebec partner to his/her own circle of friends. During the exchange, the Quebec student will make his/her own circle of friends. This will allow both young people to spend some time apart, which is conducive to a healthy situation.

The host family/partner is not expected to provide instant friends. It is normal for friendships to require a certain amount of time to develop, and friendships should not be imposed on your twin. In a new environment and the added dimension of a new language, it is a challenge to make new friends, but well worthwhile.

The Quebec student may be the focus of a great deal of attention since he/she is the new person on the scene. Quebec students may happen to acquire a lot of friends rapidly: jealousy may creep into the relationship between the partners. The reverse situation may occur in Quebec.

One of the best ways of learning a second language is to go out with a girl/boy from the host province that only speaks your second language. If your partner decides to use this method, ask him/her to introduce the girl/boy to your home for parental approval.

During the fall term, the parents should make every attempt to attend the Parents' Night at school to determine the progress of their own son/daughter and the Quebec student's participation and progress, and to ensure that all of the teachers involved are aware that the Manitoba student will be attending school in Quebec for three months.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

When an exchange student becomes capable of expressing him/herself in a second language, it is a wonderfully satisfying accomplishment. However, a price is exacted. Generally, the frustration period may last for a period of four to six weeks. Single words will be replaced by groups of words and an entire sentence is a major victory. The strength of the motivation to learn the second language and the family environment will determine the rate of progress.

**Always make sure that if the Quebec student wants something, he/she will have to ask for it in English.
Help him/her in English, if necessary.**

Here are a few ideas to help the Quebec student:

- Show the Quebec student how to answer the phone and then have him/her do it all the time.
- Dictate the grocery lists to the Quebec student and take him/her to the supermarket.
- The student may help the family with other errands; this will help improve his/her English skills and provide opportunities to meet others.
- Have the Quebec student write a daily/weekly letter about anything (e.g. diary) and after dinner, sit down together to correct it.
- Expose the Quebec student to all types of social games, cards, scrabble, English television, video and music.

AFTER HOSTING THE QUEBEC STUDENT

MANITOBA STUDENT PREPARATION PERIOD

You have said a temporary goodbye to your new friend. Besides the readjustment to your family dynamics, you will complete the final stage of your pre-departure schedule. Yes, this is a hectic, crazy time! You begin to realize that soon it will be your turn!

Some suggestions, which should help you during this busy period, include:

1. A weekly schedule of things to do.
2. A clothing list is a good start. Ask your partner what kind of clothes to bring for winter. If there is a lot of baggage, send some ahead (i.e. via bus express) and let your partner's family know it is coming.
3. Start watching/listening to films, radio, etc in French.
4. Prepare a Christmas list for your family: French dictionary, clothing, luggage, skis, and money.
5. Some teachers may suggest you give a presentation to the class upon your return from Quebec, telling other students about the area where you lived. The presentation might be done from an historical, geographical, or sociological viewpoint. Think about the photographs that you may take and any necessary research before you leave.
6. Hopefully your partner will have shown you the course list from his/her high school. You might consider giving your Quebec school a tentative list of courses you would like to take, keeping in mind the restrictions in your host school. It is best to plan the February to April period as an absence from the Manitoba school system.
7. Make an arrangement with your family as to how much writing and telephoning will take place. An agreement with your friends that you will write a common letter to them will allow you to spend more time with your Quebec partner and his/her family learning French. If you are taking a non-semester course in Manitoba, arrange with a reliable friend to collect notes and handouts in each of your classes during your absence.
8. Many students like to keep a journal recording their experiences. You might like to start this in September with the arrival of your Quebec partner. This should be reread when you arrive in Quebec to remind you of what your partner went through.
9. Make a family decision with respect to finances and a weekly/monthly budget. Will you use traveler's cheques, a weekly/monthly cheque from home, or a bank account?

PACKING

Just a few reminders...

- Have you checked on the climate for the region you are staying?
- Remember, you won't have a lot of room in suitcases for a huge wardrobe and there are washing facilities in Quebec, so take a limited wardrobe with maximum flexibility!
- Coordinates, layers of clothing, are the most practical way of wardrobe planning.

SUMMARY

- Send excess baggage ahead of time. Call your receiving family and tell them when and how the bags will be arriving.
- Have medical and dental checkups prior to departure.
- Obtain a Manitoba Health Card to carry to Quebec.
- Have coursework/assignments done prior to departure.

DURING THE EXCHANGE PERIOD IN QUEBEC

ARRIVING IN THE QUEBEC COMMUNITY - FEBRUARY TO APRIL

The first two weeks in Quebec will be a challenge. You will be surrounded with “new” people and situations.

When you arrive, you will be tired, disoriented and inundated with new information all in French. Don't hesitate to ask people to repeat information and names.

Do not tell people that you have understood a communication in French if this is not true.

Ask them to repeat the communication until you do understand.

When you arrive, you will be asked if you wish to rest, unpack, etc. in your new room. Do not hesitate to tell your partner and your host family if you are tired (due to travel, constant usage of French, etc).

In your own family, where the rules are understood, there is no need to ask or confirm.

In a new family, you must learn the rules.

Ask your partner about the following family rules:

- Meals – What time are family meals? Any eating restrictions (allergies, special diet) should be discussed.
- Housework – What chores are expected from me? How often? Where are the cleaning materials? Dishes? Washing? Laundry?
- Your room must be kept tidy! If you are sharing a room, determine who does what.
- Bathroom – One more family member will affect the schedule, particularly if all are sharing one facility. Find out the schedule and live by it!

HINTS FOR IMPROVED FAMILY RELATIONS

The very first thing you must ask yourself is what you can do. It is important that you realize it is your responsibility to adjust to your host family's way of doing things, and not the other way around.

What is your host family expecting? We cannot generalize, but you can be sure that they are hoping for a response from you, a sign that you care about their efforts! We would like to suggest four ways that you can be responsive.

1. Share yourself with your exchange family. They are concerned with how you feel and how you are doing. They want to learn all about you, your family, and your part of the country, your culture and customs. Spend time talking to them and offer to prepare a special meal (even if you can't cook, there must be a friend who can help you). Share unique celebrations with them, such as– birthday, breakfast, or whatever. Above all, avoid saying “no”. If the family invites you to go somewhere with them – a museum perhaps or apple picking, accept, even if you don't particularly care for museums and don't like apples. After all, these are all experiences to which you must be open – even if you are tired, push yourself a little more.
2. React and respond to whatever they say to you or do for you. If your host mother has prepared a special dish for you, don't hesitate to say “how delicious!” If you don't really like it very much, a comment about how nice it was of her to do that will suffice. **If people do things for you, show appreciation or they most likely won't try again.** Whatever they do, they expect a response from you and it is one way for you to repay them.
3. Volunteer to help. Most families assign some chore to each family member and they will expect you do your part, but may be reluctant to ask you to help. You are expected to understand that there are responsibilities for everyone involved in running a household, and you must do your share. Some students have found that less was expected of them from their Quebec family than from their family back home. Don't wait, volunteer and ask what you can do so that the family has no reason to be disappointed and complain that the exchange student thinks that housework should be done by others or magically takes care of itself! Above all, remember that you are expected to accept and adapt to the lifestyle of your Quebec family.

**Any traveling that you do without your host family must be approved
by your natural and host families.**

In general, traveling alone or with other teenagers involving an overnight stay is not recommended.

VISITS FROM MANITOBA FRIENDS OR FAMILY

Visits during your three months stay in Quebec from Manitoba family and friends can disrupt the exchange. This is especially true of boyfriends and girlfriends; therefore they are not allowed. We recommend that your family not come at all, but if they do, they should do so **after** the initial exchange period. It is confusing to have two sets of parents with two different value systems, and difficulties can develop.

RELIGION

Your host family may have different views on religion than your family in Manitoba. If this is important to you, discuss this with the family immediately upon arrival and make the necessary arrangements.

**Should there be any difficulties, which need resolving, the Quebec Liaison Teacher is the key person.
Do not hesitate to discuss issues with him/her about which you feel uncomfortable.**

CAUTION!

Your Quebec partner is the "person you know" in this strange, new world. There will be a tendency to "cling" to this familiar person. Remember that this may become tiresome in the long run.

People in Quebec will want to practice their English with you. Make sure that you say NO ENGLISH, PLEASE! calmly, firmly and politely. This is YOUR opportunity to learn and to practice French, not to teach English.

FRIENDS

Your partner will introduce you to friends at school and people in the community. Avoid refusing to try a new activity or miss an occasion to meet new people. New friendships usually require time and commitment. This is more difficult when your French is not as fluent as you would like. Do not expect your partner's friends to become your friends automatically. Your needs will probably be quite different.

It will be up to you to make the effort to integrate into the school and community. This can be very taxing and frustrating, especially in the first weeks when your French is limited.

Do not hesitate to make your own friends. There is no need to "live in each other's pocket." In fact, depending on your partner too much for too long could cause resentment. Should this arise, discuss this with your partner.

Friendships with other Manitoba exchange students are natural – but – restrict your English. You are there to learn French.

SPECIAL FRIENDS

If your partner has a boyfriend/girlfriend, there may be occasions when you are invited to join them for an outing. If you feel like a "fifth wheel", discuss this uncomfortable feeling openly with your partner.

Should you develop a "special relationship", remember to abide by the family rules! If you find the Quebec parents "overprotective", ask yourself how you would act as a parent, hosting another teenager.

Be sure to invite your friend(s) to meet your Quebec family.

TELEPHONE CALLS

It is natural that you call home occasionally, especially upon arrival. However, more than one phone call home a week may be an indication of problems, and will cause your host family some concern. Should you be homesick, discuss this with your host family, ask for a hug, do something. Suggestions can be found further on in this section.

Phone calls to other Manitoba exchange students should be infrequent and in French as much as possible. Be sure to limit, and then eliminate English as your French improves. Remember you are there to learn more about Quebec, not about other Manitobans. Do not abuse the host family's telephone. Calls home and any other telephone charges (toll calls) should be paid for promptly.

Facebook/Skype/Twitter/E-MAIL

Like the telephone, these are a very popular way to maintain links with home. Remember, family and friends in Manitoba love you. Your absence does not diminish their caring – they will be there when you get home! So concentrate on your experience in Quebec!

If you find yourself spending hours in your room alone or writing more than two or three letters/e-mails per week, you may be experiencing some difficulty adapting. This type of activity is not helping you learn French and may be a sign of homesickness, culture shock, frustration, or difficulty with language learning.

Remember that letter/e-mail writing, telephone calls, and speaking English with other exchange students are not effective solutions. They are just temporary "band-aid" solutions.

THE SCHOOL

When you arrive at school the first morning, have your partner introduce you to your Liaison Teacher. This should be the first person that you meet. Then be sure to meet the administrative staff.

You may not receive a timetable immediately. You may visit classes or go to classes with your partner until a timetable is arranged.

Your school situation in Quebec may be very different from the one you know in Manitoba. Do not insist on a certain schedule or course. This may not be possible in your new school due to the timetable and class size restrictions.

Always remember that you are an ambassador for Manitoba. You must be diplomatic and considerate at all times. You may share your views but trying to impose them on others may create unnecessary conflict.

You will be a new face in the school. Sometimes you will feel stared at. A friendly smile and a warm "Salut!" should see you through this somewhat disconcerting situation.

(THE SCHOOL continued)

Do not be afraid to use your vocabulary and get to know people in your school/community. Often the negative feelings are about the unknown. Giving people a chance to know you, the Manitoban, will usually dispel most of the fears yours and theirs!

Be prepared to talk about Manitoba. You will be asked to speak in your own classes and possibly in others, as well as, for groups in and out of school. Do not be surprised at the number and type of questions you will be asked! That "package of goodies" on Manitoba you brought along will be very useful now.

You are in Quebec as an exchange STUDENT, not on a continuous vacation or travel program. **This means that you are expected to attend school regularly**, work hard, earn acceptable grades, and demonstrate a positive attitude, even if you receive no academic credit at home for your schooling here. At some point, you might feel that this is a "lost" semester as far as progress with your academic education is concerned; but you have chosen to enrich your life with this exchange experience and the value of the non-academic experience is certain to outweigh the academic loss.

School will be very different from the one to which you are accustomed. You may have a different group of classmates every hour and you will find a variety of courses to choose from, besides the compulsory courses that you might have to take. Get your counsellor's advice. Don't shy away from other academic classes or advanced courses; you will find them a challenge. If your French is a bit shaky, stay away from courses with a long reading list. Above all, try to take classes that you cannot get at home.

The clubs and teams that you join can offer new friendships. Participate! As soon as you can, visit the clubs and teams at school (a drama group, a computer club, or the tennis, soccer or volleyball team). Whether the sports program in your host school is more or less competitive than your home school in Manitoba, if the team is not already full of players, you might be just the person they have been waiting for! Involvement is the key.

STUDENT FRUSTRATIONS

Yes, you are finally in Quebec! The dream has become reality and you have learned that dreams are limited by being only of one perspective – yours! But now you have new people in your life, and you are immersed in a new culture with which you are not familiar, and a language that seems to become more frustrating by the minute, because everyone speaks so fast, and a new school, and you feel at least somewhat overwhelmed!

ATTITUDE

Your attitude will, largely, determine the success or failure of your exchange. First, you must have a positive frame of mind. No matter what happens, or where you are, or with whom, be curious and open, look for the good things and for what you can learn from the experience. Above all, **remember the two "C's" – consideration and cooperation.**

(ATTITUDE continued)

A common characteristic of teenagers is certain self-centeredness, normal in one's growing years. However, in the situation that you have chosen, greater maturity is demanded of you, and you are obliged to cooperate with and to have consideration for others – to think about them and what they may want. The little, everyday things count most – say "Merci", come home when you are expected, eat the food that is placed in front of you, smile and say "Bonjour" when you walk in the door, offer to set the table, to take out the garbage or shovel the snow, keep your room clean, join the family in their activities, write thank-you notes to their friends who have shown you a special kindness, forego an evening with the "gang" to attend a family dinner.

It may seem like a burden to you, but you are not responsible only for yourself, you are a representative of Manitoba and an ambassador in Quebec. You and your behaviour may shape the attitude of people in Quebec towards all young people from Manitoba. The image that you leave in the minds of the people in your community will pave the way or block it for those who follow you. It can mean that there will be other homes for exchange students or that there will be none. Even if you have to "bend over backwards", do not be selfish, be mature and be a good ambassador!

CULTURE SHOCK

At some point during your three months in Quebec, you may ask yourself, "What am I doing here?" I could be with my friends and family, or at least in more familiar surroundings! You may have to deal with depression and homesickness. Most important for you to know is that you are not alone and this is a perfectly natural way to feel when you find yourself in a culture that is different from your own. When the rhythm of our daily existence is disrupted and all the familiar supports that we have lived with all our lives are suddenly pulled out from under us, we suffer "culture shock"! But remember that "culture shock" is a common and normal reaction when you are in a strange place.

What are some of the things that can happen to you? Most common are feelings of depression and anger. You become irritated about almost everything. You feel that everything in Quebec is stupid and everything "back home" is wonderful. You feel that no one understands you. You don't feel like going out, you are afraid to take risks; you are tired and sleep much more than usual, and you gain weight and blame it on the new food.

There are unacceptable methods of dealing with these problems such as consuming alcohol, taking drugs or returning home. However, there are alternative methods of confronting depression caused in part by culture shock, unfulfilled expectations and loneliness.

Keep busy doing things. When you are bored or lonely, make a decision to do something immediately! Engage in activities that you may have previously avoided or considered silly. Go watch a hockey game or call someone from the school and arrange to get together now. Go to a movie, a concert or just out for a hot chocolate or a soda.

(CULTURE SHOCK continued)

Concentrate on the here and now and put behind the memories of "the way things are done back home". Look at the life around you as being interesting and different – not better or worse. If you are critical and negative, you will quickly alienate people and become isolated from them.

Talk to your host family. Sometimes talking about how you feel makes the feeling itself less intense. And they will be happy that you have shared your feelings with them.

Eat sensibly and avoid junk food even when you are surrounded by it.

Do not spend all of your time with other exchange students. You will only feed on each other's dissatisfactions as you spend your time complaining and reminiscing about all the good things you left behind.

Do not sit in your room writing letters/e-mails home. This solitary activity is not good for you and your family and friends will not know how to interpret your feelings and may become upset. If you must write your feelings down, let the letter sit for 24 hours or more and reread it before mailing it. The world may look totally different by then.

Make friends. The only way to make new friends is to talk to strangers. Most of the students at your school are already part of a group, but they are interested in you – you may be a curiosity at first, but they will include you if you make the first move. Do not wait for them to call you and do not get discouraged.

Join clubs and sports teams. Participate in school and community activities. Join a church youth group or volunteer to teach some young people a skill that you know and they are trying to learn.

If you feel that your problem is different, that this advice does not help, and your host family does not understand, then you must contact your Quebec Liaison Teacher. He/she is dedicated to providing you with a rewarding exchange experience and will do all he/she can to see that goal achieved.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

If you are speaking a second language, your knowledge of that language is probably more than adequate, and you feel good. Everyone around you will be full of admiration for your linguistic ability. Sometimes, however, it will be necessary to investigate the real meaning of the word. Have a pocket dictionary handy and make use of it. You have probably brought a bilingual dictionary with you, but here you should also have a French dictionary. Buy one, if your host family does not have one.

Also, be sure that you are aware of the effect that certain words have on the listener. Ask if you do not understand something and be sensitive to the nuances of words. In talking about complex subjects you will still find yourself searching for the right way to express yourself, but do not let that deter you from getting into interesting discussions. When you are in a conversation, you want to present the best possible you there is. This is difficult when you cannot find the words. Frustration leads to lower self-esteem.

REMEMBER THAT

- People may perceive you as being quiet or shy, and that while this may not be the "true you", it is a phase you are going through as you learn French.
- When you relax and accept that you are a fine person, you learn more quickly.
- If you are not afraid to ask people to repeat, they will do their best to help you.

PATIENCE AND PERMISSION

Patience and permission are two key words. Be patient with yourself and ask for the information you need – they will help. You cannot become bilingual overnight and there are no magic potions currently on the market! Give yourself permission to make mistakes. This is how you learn and as you listen and practice more, you will acquire more vocabulary and learn more structures. It is natural when you do not know an item in French, to try English or a "literal translation" to communicate. As people give you the correct phrases and structure, you will be able to speak more fluently.

Research in linguistics (the study of languages and language learning) has determined that bilingual people have separate language centres. Translation to English merely strengthens your English centre. To learn French and develop competence, you must use French in your daily life, thinking and even dreaming! This can happen while in Quebec.

To take advantage of this opportunity, you must be ready to:

- stop translating into English;
- learn the French names for objects, etc (make lists);
- learn the structures that express ideas in French, ask for words you want to know from your partner, family and friends – then use them;
- be ready to experience headaches and frustration from the concentration – the reward is incredible! After eight weeks in Quebec, the results are almost magical, and you can be quite proud of your accomplishment!

MANITOBA FAMILY DURING MANITOBA STUDENT' S ABSENCE

During this time, the Manitoba family will need to support their son/daughter who is in an unfamiliar situation by:

- determining how often phone calls and e-mails from home should occur, and
- suggesting that the student become involved in the family and social life in Quebec.

Limiting communication with your son/daughter is suggested.

This "escape" from the homesickness and frustration of a new culture and language is only temporary.

Note: The advantage of a pre-determined communication schedule is that the Manitoba student learns independence and faces any difficulties he/she encounters.

(MANITOBA FAMILY DURING MANITOBA STUDENT'S ABSENCE continued)

Remind your child of his/her commitment when things are tough, and of his/her ability to solve this difficulty, and the pride, which will result from succeeding.

Encouragement from you will see your child through. The reward is personal growth, independence AND fluency in French – all well worth the effort!

AFTER THE EXCHANGE

RETURNING HOME FROM QUEBEC

As you struggle to “get those credits” or prepare for the summer, you may wish to consider options for maintaining and improving your French. It is essential, once you achieve your current level of fluency, to take the initiative to maintain and improve your skills.

While considering your options, some of the following suggestions may be helpful:

1. Investigating summer employment with local tourist offices, or the national parks, where French would be an asset.
2. Assisting in daycares, nursery schools, kindergarten or playgrounds where French is the language of communication.
3. Volunteering to help at summer language camps.
4. Acting as a Big Brother or Sister to someone who speaks only French (or whom you could tutor).

These ideas may be incorporated into your life in Manitoba. Further language study and summer work programs also exist, whereby it may be possible to work in a French-speaking milieu. Be sure to contact the nearest Canada Employment Centre for further details. Investigation of various options of post-secondary institutions will also disclose more opportunities to improve your French. This may be a worthwhile enquiry as you consider your choice of universities and programs. Be sure to discuss these possibilities with your Liaison Teacher.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

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