

NOVA SCOTIA – QUEBEC STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDE

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE DIVISION
DRAFT UPDATED MAY 2024

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Note: Participating students and families are also responsible for fully understanding the expectations contained in the Nova Scotia-Quebec Student Exchange Program: Participant Guide

All involved in the exchange program should review the detailed list of roles and responsibilities found in Nova Scotia-Quebec Student Exchange Program: Roles and Responsibilities

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Nova Scotia-Quebec Four-Month Student Exchange Program is designed to further second-language skills development and cultural awareness through an exchange between French Second Language high school students from Nova Scotia and English Second Language high school students from Quebec.

From mid-September to mid-November, participating Quebec students live with Nova Scotia host families and attend the same school as their exchange partner.

From early February to early April, participating Nova Scotia students live with and attend the same school as their exchange partner in Quebec.

This Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development French Second Language Programs initiative is supported by the 2024-2028 [Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on French-language Services](#)

Participants in this exchange program can apply for an additional high school credit. An official application must be submitted by April 15th prior to the school year in which the exchange takes place. For more information, and the application form, please see: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/dpslf/en/cultural-experience-12-credit>

OBJECTIVES

The program's main objectives are to:

- support Nova Scotia students to improve their French language skills, and support Quebec students to improve their English language skills
- foster cultural awareness and understanding
- encourage bilingualism
- expose students to another educational system

DEFINITIONS

Provincial Coordinator: appointed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and oversees all aspects of the exchange program

French Second Language Coordinator: appointed by their Regional Centre for Education and coordinates French Second Language programs within their respective Regional Centre for Education.

School Principal: educational and administrative leader of their school as appointed by their RCE (this may also be a school vice principal)

Liaison Teacher: appointed by the school principal and oversees the program and participants at the school level, with support from the principal. *(While each school should designate only one*

official liaison teacher, a school counsellor or other school staff may assist with scheduling and programming as well as supporting both the NS and Quebec students)

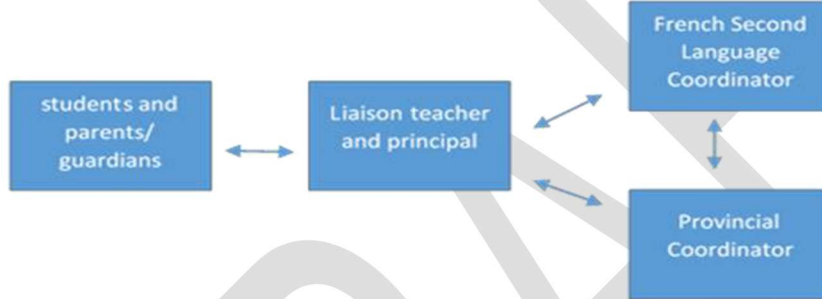
Participating students: Nova Scotia students, aged 15 to 17, enrolled in a French Second Language program, who have been accepted into the exchange program and successfully paired with a Quebec exchange partner

Parent(s)/guardian(s): legal guardians of Nova Scotia students

Host family: parent(s)/guardian(s) and sibling(s) of the exchange partner

COMMUNICATION

The line of communication between the various parties (for all non-emergency situations) is as follows:



EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

If a medical emergency arises with the exchange student, host families should contact the exchange student's family as well as the liaison teacher as soon as possible. The liaison teacher will then contact the Regional French Second Language Coordinator and the Provincial Coordinator.

In the event of a declared disaster or emergency, the host family has a responsibility to provide safety and security for the exchange student until the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development can make arrangements for their transportation home. The exchange student and their host family should attempt to contact the Provincial Coordinator to confirm their safety. The exchange student should also contact their family in Quebec as soon as possible. The Provincial Coordinator will make every effort to contact the exchange student and their host family as soon as possible.

COST

Registration Fee

Participating students and their families are required to pay a \$100 non-refundable registration fee. Payment in the form of a cheque made payable to “Minister of Finance” should reference the Nova Scotia-Quebec Student Exchange Program and the name of the participating student. Cheques will not be cashed until both the Nova Scotia and the Quebec families have agreed to the pairing arrangement. If a suitable pairing is not possible, the cheque will be returned to the family.

Travel Fees

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will cover travel related expenses between Nova Scotia and Quebec. It should be noted that if a participating student needs to return home before the end of the exchange period, for a reason deemed unacceptable to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (i.e. homesickness or inability to adapt) or is required to return home due to unacceptable behaviour, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student will be responsible for the return travel costs.

Cost of Living

Food and living expenses for the Quebec student are provided by the Nova Scotia host family. This is reciprocated for the Nova Scotia student by the Quebec host family. Students are responsible for their own spending money, and it is suggested they have approximately \$800 for personal expenses.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

APPLICATION

1. The liaison teacher directs interested students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) to complete the online application on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/dpslf/en/nova-scotia-quebec-student-exchange>
2. Once the application is complete, the liaison teacher informs the French Second Language Coordinator of potential participants.
3. Students submit the completed consent form and the \$100 non-refundable registration fee to the liaison teacher.

While an application does not guarantee participation in the program, students who apply should begin planning their timetable for the next school year to better accommodate the exchange period in Quebec.

SELECTION

1. Upon receiving the consent form from the student, the selection committee conducts an interview with the candidate and their parent(s)/guardian(s) at the residence where the student from Quebec will be staying.

2. Following the interview process, the selection committee (made up of the liaison teacher and/or the French Second Language Coordinator and/or the school principal) decides whether the candidate is eligible to participate in the program.

To be considered for the exchange, a student must:

- be attending public school in Nova Scotia
- be enrolled in a French Second Language program
- be between the ages of 15 and 17 during the exchange year (students who turn 18 during the exchange period are not eligible)
- have approval from the liaison teacher, the school, the regional centre for education, and their parent(s)/guardian(s)
- be willing to live in any part of Quebec
- provide the incoming exchange student with suitable accommodation, family life, and social setting
- be able to organise their timetable to accommodate the two-month period in Quebec
- be recommended by the selection committee (following the application/interview process)

The selection committee forwards their recommendation and the student's file to the French Second Language Coordinator and the Provincial Coordinator. Each student file consists of:

- completed consent form
- interview questionnaires
- \$100 non-refundable registration fee
- pictures of the student, their family and home (including the room in which the Quebec student will be staying)

The application, school recommendation, and complete student file must be submitted to the Provincial Coordinator by March 31st. Failure to respect this deadline will result in the student being unable to participate in the exchange.

Once the student has been recommended to participate in the program, families should request Criminal Record, Vulnerable Sector and Child Abuse Register checks. The Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector checks are available from the local RCMP, and the Child Abuse Register check is available from the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services. These checks are required for each member of the family who is 18 years of age or older and who will reside in the home, or any frequent visitors who will be spending a significant amount of time in the home during the exchange period (e.g. an adult partner who regularly stays at the home, an adult child returning for weekends, etc.). The fees associated with these checks are the responsibility of the participating families.

Please note that the liaison teacher must submit these checks to the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development by March 31st. *The processing time for these checks may take a few weeks so it is suggested that families request the checks prior to the beginning of March.*

Original documents are to be sent to:

Provincial Coordinator of Nova Scotia – Quebec Student Exchange Program

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

French Second Language Division

2021 Brunswick Street

PO Box 578

Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2S9

STUDENT PAIRING

The pairing of students from Nova Scotia and Quebec takes place in April by the Nova Scotia Provincial Coordinator and the program administrator for Quebec. The pairing is approved by the Director of Programs at the Regional Centre for Education. Once approved, the Provincial Coordinator notifies the family, the host school, and the French Second Language Coordinator, and forwards the student file to the Quebec program administrator.

Pairing of students is considered official once the host schools and both families are in agreement. Communication between the families can begin once both families have agreed to the pairing but should not take place prior to authorization being given by the provincial coordinator.

In the event that a student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) decide to move to a different home or school, or if there is another significant change before September, the Provincial Coordinator will make arrangements to maintain or terminate the pairing.

The Nova Scotia Provincial Coordinator and Quebec program administrator will make every attempt to pair applicants but cannot guarantee that all applicants will be paired.

WITHDRAWALS

There should be few, if any, student withdrawals after the pairing process; however, should a Nova Scotia student withdraw from the program, they must notify the liaison teacher and the Provincial Coordinator without delay. If possible, the Quebec student will be paired with another Nova Scotia student with priority given to applicants who were not previously paired.

HOSTING PERIOD IN NOVA SCOTIA

COURSE SELECTION

When Quebec exchange students arrive in September, the liaison teacher and the school guidance counsellor should take time to meet with them and plan or review their course selection. While in Nova Scotia, the Quebec students are expected to follow a full schedule. The Quebec and Nova Scotia program coordinators will visit schools in September and will offer student(s) further assistance in selecting appropriate courses.

Within the limits of each school's timetable, the following suggestions may be helpful:

- the Quebec student will have a full, balanced schedule
- options such as drama, visual arts, and/or physical education will provide the Quebec student opportunities to meet and communicate with Nova Scotia students in a more relaxed atmosphere
- providing course options not offered in Quebec may make the exchange more interesting.
- intramural sports and clubs provide further opportunities to meet people

CHECK-INS

It is important that both the liaison teacher and the Quebec student feel that they can share issues, concerns, and successes with one another. It is suggested that the liaison teacher and the Quebec student meet regularly, or as deemed necessary by either the student or the liaison teacher.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTS

At the end of the exchange period in Nova Scotia, Quebec students should receive a progress report containing their enrollment and achievement information to provide to their school in Quebec. Nova Scotia schools may decide the format of this progress report (i.e.: PowerSchool report, transcript, midterm report card, etc.). The progress report will be provided to the student, and a copy should be sent to both the Provincial Coordinator and the liaison teacher.

EXCHANGE PERIOD IN QUEBEC

PREPARATION

Timetable Planning, Programming and Considerations

Planning the Nova Scotia student's academic program for the exchange year should begin shortly after the student and their family are notified of a successful pairing in May. The schedule for the following year should be completed by the end of June.

Course selection is the responsibility of the student, but should be carried out in consultation with parents, teachers, guidance counsellor, school administrators and the liaison teacher. The liaison teacher should review the student's course selection and ensure that the student's academic progress will not be negatively impacted and that they will be eligible to receive Nova Scotia credits for year-long and second semester courses. The student should have the understanding and support of the school staff.

When planning courses for the exchange year, an important consideration is the student's absence for two months. Nova Scotia students are required to take an English class at each high school grade level, so it is encouraged that schools ensure participating students' schedules have English in the first semester of the exchange year.

Students are expected to develop written plans with teachers for the completion of Nova Scotia course requirements. Students are expected to follow the agreed upon plans for meeting the requirements for Nova Scotia courses. While in Quebec, the student will have a full schedule in their host school and will not be able to fully devote themselves to Nova Scotia coursework. Therefore, it is recommended that Nova Scotia students complete most of their Nova Scotia course requirements before and after the Quebec exchange period.

While students may have some time to work on their Nova Scotia courses during their time in Quebec, it would be unreasonable to expect students to spend their exchange completing schoolwork. The purpose of the exchange is to offer the participating students a rich cultural experience designed to broaden their horizons and enhance their knowledge of the French language. Students should not be overwhelmed with schoolwork while in Quebec or on their return to Nova Scotia in April.

EXCHANGE IN QUEBEC

While the Nova Scotia student is in Quebec:

- the liaison teacher or the principal may have to remind staff of the reason for the student's absence - please note that Nova Scotia students are to be reported as present during their exchange period in Quebec. It is suggested that the Nova Scotia student is marked as ACT (school-based activity) or APP (school approved absence); both codes indicate that the student is not physically present in the building but do not count as an absence.
- the liaison teacher or the Provincial Coordinator will check in with the Nova Scotia student two weeks into the exchange

RETURNING TO NOVA SCOTIA

Students who have returned from the exchange will likely go through a readjustment period and may require support. To help the returning students at this time, the liaison teacher and guidance counsellor should:

- discuss any coursework that needs completion, and help to create a schedule (if necessary)
- invite them to discuss their Quebec experiences with other students
- coordinate a meeting with next year's applicants

The liaison teacher or the Provincial Coordinator will conduct a final assessment of the program once the student returns to Nova Scotia

RULES

GENERAL

The rules outlined below are part of the commitment that participating students and their families must make before participating in the Nova Scotia-Quebec Student Exchange Program.

It is essential that every member of the host family be supportive of the exchange program and committed to its success. It is important that each member of the family agree to participate in the exchange and actively support the new member of their family for the two-month period.

- Part of a cultural experience is learning about and respecting others' beliefs, even when they differ from one's own. All participants and families participating in the exchange must remain open-minded and respectful of cultural differences that may arise.
- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development reserves the right to dismiss any student who fails to uphold any of the rules contained within the [Provincial Code of Conduct policy](#). In the event that a student is dismissed from the program, the Nova Scotia parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for all additional expenses incurred, including return transportation costs.

FOR PARTICIPATING NOVA SCOTIA STUDENTS

While living in Quebec:

- students must comply with their host family's rules (meal times, curfews, etc.)
- use of drugs, cannabis and/or alcohol is strictly forbidden
- students are forbidden to drive a motor vehicle during the exchange period in the province of Quebec
- travel is only permitted if it is with adult members of the host family, the program coordinator, or is an outing supervised by a teacher from the host school - students must obtain written permission from the Nova Scotia Provincial Coordinator and their parent(s)/guardian(s) for any other travel
- international travel is not permitted during the exchange period
- employment is not permitted during the exchange period
- students must comply with the school rules, even if they differ from those of their home institution

INSURANCE

The parent(s)/guardian(s) of Nova Scotia students are responsible for obtaining any desired medical and liability insurance.

The Canada Health Act requires that the provinces and territories extend medically necessary hospital and physician coverage to their eligible residents during temporary absences from the province or territory (see: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/medi-assur/faq-eng.php#a8>). Sometimes there is a requirement for patients to pay 'up front' and seek reimbursement from their home provincial or territorial health insurance plan. The provision of additional benefits (e.g. prescription drugs, ground, and air ambulance services) that provinces and territories provide are generally **not** portable outside one's home province/territory.

Most private health insurance plans provide coverage for ambulance services, prescription drugs and other additional benefits provided outside the home province/territory. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development recommends that parent(s)/guardian(s) obtain supplemental medical insurance for their child for the duration of the exchange period in Quebec if they do not already have adequate coverage through a private plan.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should also notify their insurance company that an additional person will be living in their home for a period of two months.

TIMELINE

Year Prior to the Exchange	Year of the Exchange
<p>September to December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School principals contact the Provincial Coordinator at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (at cultural.exchange@novascotia.ca) and their French Second Language Coordinator with intent to participate in the exchange program. Liaison teacher is identified by the school principal, in coordination with the French Second Language Coordinator. Promotion of the program begins. 	<p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quebec students arrive in Nova Scotia (host parents are present at the Halifax Stanfield International Airport to greet the exchange student). A representative from the Quebec Department of Education arrives in Nova Scotia to check-in with Quebec students (a schedule of their visit is sent out to school principals, the French Second Language Coordinator, and the Regional Centre for Education Director of Programs). An information session is held prior to the arrival of Quebec students to inform participating Nova Scotia students about the exchange, and to answer any questions or concerns that families may have.
<p>November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application forms are available online 	<p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-term check-in/evaluations are conducted by Quebec teachers (by phone, virtually etc.)
<p>December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools begin the selection process and confirm that students meet all eligibility requirements. Liaison teachers conduct in-home interviews. 	<p>November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quebec students' progress reports are completed, and a copy is given to students, their liaison teacher and the Nova Scotia Provincial Coordinator Quebec students return home Nova Scotia students begin preparation for their departure for Quebec
<p>March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application, consent form and registration fee are submitted to the liaison teacher, who then forwards the complete file to the Provincial Coordinator by March 31st. 	<p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nova Scotia students ensure that they have a plan in place to complete outcomes for Nova Scotia courses

<p>Paper documents can be sent to:</p> <p>Provincial Coordinator of Nova Scotia – Quebec Student Exchange Program</p> <p>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development-French Second Language Division Brunswick Place 2021 Brunswick Street PO Box 578 Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2S9</p> <p>Electronic documents can be sent to: cultural.exchange@novascotia.ca</p>	
<p>April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processing and pairing of student files. 	<p>February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nova Scotia students leave for Quebec accompanied by the Nova Scotia Provincial Coordinator • Check-in/evaluations by Nova Scotia liaison teacher (by phone, virtually etc.) • Provincial Coordinator checks in with Nova Scotia students and their families/guardians in Nova Scotia (by phone)
<p>May</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected participants and schools are notified. • Students, parent(s)/guardian(s) and liaison teachers receive Quebec student files. 	<p>March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-term check-in/evaluations are conducted by Nova Scotia liaison teachers (by phone, virtually etc.).
<p>June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication begins between Nova Scotia and Quebec families once both have received confirmation of the successful pairing arrangement. 	<p>April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nova Scotia students return home accompanied by the Nova Scotia Provincial Coordinator

Student File Checklist for Nova Scotia Provincial Coordinator

Once Nova Scotia and Quebec students have been accepted for the Nova Scotia-Quebec Student Exchange Program, files will be shared with the Provincial Coordinator, liaison teacher, and family of their host province.

Each student file should contain:

- photos of student, family, and home
- a copy of the interview questionnaire, completed by the liaison teacher or designated selection committee member(s)

In addition, the Provincial Coordinators from Nova Scotia and Quebec both require and acknowledge that:

- a home visit has taken place
- participating students, their legal guardians and their school principal (Nova Scotia only) have signed a consent form
- each person living in the host household 18 years or older has a Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Check completed prior to the beginning of the exchange program

[There were ____ (#) Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Checks completed for host family of _____ (name)]

NOVA SCOTIA ONLY: each person living in the host household that is 18 years or older has had a Child Abuse Register check completed if the Quebec exchange student is under the age of 16
[There were ____ (#) Child Abuse Register checks completed for host family of

_____ (name)]

This file has been compiled and verified by the Provincial Coordinator for Nova Scotia _____

name

signature of the NS Provincial Coordinator

Student File Checklist for Quebec Provincial Coordinator

Once Nova Scotia and Quebec students have been accepted for the Nova Scotia-Quebec Student Exchange Program, files will be shared with the Provincial Coordinator, liaison teacher, and family of their host province.

Each student file should contain:

- photos of student, family and home
- a copy of the interview questionnaire, completed by the liaison teacher or designated selection committee member(s)

In addition, the Provincial Coordinators from Nova Scotia and Quebec both require and acknowledge that:

- a home visit has taken place
- participating students, their legal guardians and their school principal (Nova Scotia only) have signed a consent form
- each person living in the host household 18 years or older has a Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Check completed prior to the beginning of the exchange program

[There were ____ (#) Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Checks completed for host family of ____ (name)]

This file has been compiled and verified by the Provincial Coordinator for Quebec _____

name

signature of the Quebec Provincial Coordinator