

# The annual school shop

How to apply for the Ars grant for parents of moderate means to equip children for the *rentrée des classes*

If you've lost your list of stationery and equipment to buy for the new school year, or you want to make certain your child isn't trying to get you to spend money on all sorts of unnecessary extras, you can find a list of all the essential items on the Ministry of Education website.

Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/2br524j>

To help with the expense, families declared with the family allowance people, the CAF, are entitled to the Allocation de rentrée scolaire (Ars) for each child aged between six and 18 for whom they are financially responsible, provided their income is below a certain threshold and the children fall into the following categories:

- They must have been born between September 16, 1992 and January 31, 2005 (included).
- They must be enrolled at an educational establishment (school, college, university) or be apprenticed.
- Their earnings must not exceed 55% of the minimum wage, ie, €823.54 (*brut*, ie, before employees' social security deductions) per month.
- If aged six by February 1, they must be enrolled at a primary school.

## Income thresholds

Income for the year 2008 applies:

- if you have one child: €22,946;
- two children: €28,241;
- three children: €33,536;
- more than three children, add an extra €5,295 per child.

If your means are only slightly over the threshold you will be entitled to a reduced allowance calculated on your income.



## How much is it?

The amount of the allowance depends on the child's age:

- six to 10: €280.76;
- 11 to 14: €296.22;
- 15 to 18: €306.51.

## How to get it

If you are already registered with the CAF and declared your earnings for 2008 to the Impôts or to the CAF, the allowance will be sent to you automatically.

If you aren't registered, you need to fill in an application form and return it to the CAF. You can pick this up from your local CAF (Caisse d'Allocations Familiales, in all *sous-préfecture* and *préfecture* towns) or download it from the CAF website at <http://www.caf.fr/pdf/pajebase3.pdf>

For children aged between six and 16 the Ars is sent out at the end of August. This year the CAF sent out the allowance on August 19 so some parents may already have received it.

For children aged 16 to 18, in further education or apprenticed, you will receive it once you have filled in and returned the form (the relevant part is on page 3 of the downloadable

## A dearer rentrée

The association Familles de France has just published its annual report on the cost of the *rentrée*, and judges 2010 to be slightly more expensive than last year, depending where parents shop. The association's volunteers monitor hypermarkets, supermarkets and specialist shops throughout the country, comparing prices of items on the Ministry of Education's list.

Overall, the report concludes, hypermarkets seem to be offering the lowest prices. Supermarkets, specialist stationers and sportswear shops are slightly more expensive but some parents prefer to spend more on longer-lasting clothes, for example.

Familles de France estimates the total average cost this year for a child entering *collège* (6ème) at €175.33, only 0.63% more than last year. However, 2009 and 2008 both showed a significant drop in price on preceding years and the association attributes the overall rise this year to the higher cost of sports clothing.

[www.familles-de-france.org](http://www.familles-de-france.org)

form mentioned above), along with the documents proving their enrolment or apprenticeship. As these are not issued by the establishment until the children have started the term, because so many don't show up, it takes a little longer to receive the allowance.

In certain regions, notably Aquitaine, an extra sum, called a *coup de pouce*, is awarded to pupils entering *lycée* for the first time. Find out from your *conseil régional* if this operates in your area. It may only be €100 but every cent helps when equipping children for school.

## Technically speaking

### Questions and Answers

with Marcus Williamson

This column has received a number of questions from English speakers just getting to grips with the French language who would like certain computer and telephone communications to be in English. Making use of these tips is no excuse for not learning French...

**Q. Each time I visit [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) I am automatically being redirected to [www.google.fr](http://www.google.fr). How can I have Google appear in English all the time?**

A. Use this web address: [www.google.com/ncr](http://www.google.com/ncr)  
You will then always see Google in English. You may wish to make this your 'home' page in your browser. The abbreviation 'ncr' just means 'No Country Redirect'.

**Q. I find dealing with France Télécom in French quite daunting and have heard they offer an English-speaking service. How do I contact them?**

A. The France Télécom English-speaking service is available from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm on: 09 69 36 39 00 (within France)  
0 33 9 69 36 39 00 (from Europe)  
011 33 9 69 36 39 00 (from USA).

France Télécom French-speaking customer service is available from any France Télécom landline by dialling 1014. To reach 1014 from abroad dial: 00 33 800 1014 followed by the two-digit number of the French *département*. So, for example to call 1014 in the Aude (*département* 11), call: 00 33 800 1014 11

**Q. I only have an English keyboard and would like to be able to enter French accents when using Microsoft Word. How can I do this?**

A. Microsoft Word has a facility to insert any character into a document, even if it does not exist on the keyboard. To do this, move to the position in the text where you wish to place the accented character, click the Insert menu item then click Symbol and choose the character you want to enter. Click Insert then click Close.

French Week invites you to email your technology questions to [cointechno@french-week.com](mailto:cointechno@french-week.com)

## Q&A

### Military headcount

We have lived in France for over 13 years now and have a small family business. My daughter is English and has an English passport etc but has received in the post her *convocation* for the *recensement militaire*. While I appreciate it may only be for one day or maybe a couple, is it obligatory for her to do this? I have been told she must take her details to her local *maire* by September 30, 2010 so I would really appreciate it if you could enlighten me a little more.

Even though we have lived and worked here for such a long time, there are always new things to find out and you cannot always know everything, because it is a very complex country. So I think for anyone else in this situation who has children living in France this may be of interest.

Melanie, by email

#### French Week replies:

Every child of French nationality must register for the military census within the three months following their 16th birthday, so normally your daughter shouldn't have been included in the census and therefore is not concerned by the summons to complete the *journée défense et citoyenneté* (JDC) – a day of defence and civic duty. If your daughter acquired French nationality between the ages of 16 and 25 she would have a month from the time of notification of French nationality to register for the census.

French children who intend to give up their French nationality in the future, and are entitled to because they were born in another country or have only one French parent, for example, must register for the census in the month after their 19th birthday.

You register at your *mairie*, supplying name, address, family situation, school or occupation, valid ID and the *livret de famille* (available from your *mairie* if you don't already have one). Registrants are given a receipt (*attestation de recensement*) which should be kept: *mairies* don't issue a duplicate and it may be required later, for state exams like the *baccalauréat* and for civil service entry exams, for example. If it is lost or stolen, you can obtain a document proving registration from the local *bureau du service national*.

The JDC consists of a morning of literacy and numeracy tests and an afternoon powerpoint lecture on the role of the defence forces and the duty of the young to defend their country.

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