



# **Living in Grenoble: a handbook for newcomers**

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# Welcome to Grenoble

Capital of the French Alps, Grenoble owes its development and success to its unique geographical location at the junction of three valleys leading, respectively, to Switzerland, Italy and the Rhone valley. The city is surrounded by three mountain ranges - Belledonne, the Chartreuse and the Vercors - with summits reaching between 2000 and 3000 m, which is why the author Stendhal famously said of the city that there is a mountain at the end of every street.



## Grenoble, a city of many talents

- At the heart of the city, an historic centre which bears witness to a rich and prestigious past dating back more than 2000 years a city with a diverse cultural offering : museums, concert venues and theatres, jazz, music and theatre festivals



- Unique surroundings, which make Grenoble and its region a playground for all kinds of sports - from water sports and hiking to rock climbing and skiing - all year round



- A tradition of innovation which began in the 18th century with glove-making, intensified in the following century with the discovery of hydroelectricity (or white coal), and has continued since the 1950s with the development of scientific research activities and the establishment in Grenoble of leading-edge industries
- A considerable reputation as a university city thanks to the scope and quality of its higher education and research institutions, which attract many students from around the world.

## 1. Settling down in Grenoble

### 1.1 Volunteer and public organizations

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To help you settle down in Grenoble, several volunteer or public organizations were set up in the Grenoble area to welcome you and your family and help you adapt to the French way of life. They will be able to assist you with matters related to your daily life in Grenoble, give you practical information and advice about e.g. accommodation, healthcare, schools, social life, and other activities for spouses and children.

We suggest that you contact them as soon as you arrive, for you and your family to meet other newcomers as well as people who are already settled in the Grenoble area.

#### **AVF Accueil**

AVF stands for « Accueil des Villes Françaises ». They are non-profit organizations, run on a voluntary basis and respecting a national charter, to welcome newcomers (French or foreign) to French towns and cities. They aim at helping newcomers integrate into a new cultural environment.

AVF Meylan and AVF Grenoble are part of the same group (AVF) but they offer different types of activities and services. For further information, please go to their web site or contact them directly.

Grenoble AVF Accueil

9, rue de la Poste  
38000 GRENOBLE

Tel : 04 76 47 54 61

<http://reseau.avf.asso.fr/space/avfgrenoble>

Meylan AVF Accueil

Gymnase des Ayguinards  
Rue le Poulet  
38240 MEYLAN

Tel : 06 89 11 08 17

<http://reseau.avf.asso.fr/space/avfmeylan>

You can also visit the **website**: [www.avf.asso.fr](http://www.avf.asso.fr) (in French and English)

## The Alliance Française of Grenoble

The Alliance Française of Grenoble was created in 1967. Its principal mission is to welcome foreigners and help them settle in the Grenoble area, whether they have come to continue their studies or for professional reasons. This organisation welcomes you all year long and offers the following services:

- A personalised welcome
- A wide range of French classes: intensive, specialised (phonetics, business, scientific, tourism, literature...) as well as conversation classes in French
- Cultural activities
- Numerous outings and visits...

Alliance Française de Grenoble

7 rue Elisée Châtin

38100 Grenoble

Tél/Fax +33 (0)4 76 56 25 84

[contact@afgrenoble.org](mailto:contact@afgrenoble.org)

<http://www.alliancefr-grenoble.org/index.php>

## Open House

Open House was originally founded in 1987 to support the growing English-speaking population in Grenoble and the surrounding area.

The primary goal of Open House is to welcome English-speaking newcomers to the area and to support them as they transition to a French way of life.

Open House also aims to provide its membership with opportunities for social interactions amongst members and with the greater Grenoble community with fosters an exchange of ideas, information, and best practices for living in France.

To its members, Open House can be described in two simple words: fun and helpful.

At Open House the fun continues year-round with holiday parties, picnics, children's play groups and activities, social mixers, and sporting events. Members of Open House can learn and benefit from: helpful tips provided on its online message board, weekly news bulletins, forums for advertisements and announcements, and by attending networking events, classes, and lectures.

Most people find that the best feature of Open House is the diversity of its members. The membership of Open House includes families and single people; men and women; young and old. Members represent 27 different countries, so not all members speak English as a first language. However, the one common factor about Open House Members is that they all want to be engaged with the world and to make the most out of life while *living in this beautiful region of France whether they are here for a short time or a lifetime.*"

Open House

Centre de Loisirs Enfance et Famille (CLEF)

Villa Viallet, 53 boulevard Gambetta

38000 GRENOBLE

[www.openhousegrenoble.org](http://www.openhousegrenoble.org)

E-mail: [president@openhousegrenoble.org](mailto:president@openhousegrenoble.org)

## **La Maison de l'International de Grenoble (MIG)**

La Maison de l'International of Grenoble is an organization belonging to the City of Grenoble.

The MIG is a resource centre that fulfils the following missions:

- To welcome foreigners and guide newcomers through administrative formalities.
- To provide information about international associations settled in Grenoble, consulates, language classes, etc.
- To organize conferences and exhibitions of international interest in link with the partnerships of the City.

In addition, MIG offers a large selection of international press.

MIG is working in close cooperation with local, regional and state services and institutions as well as consular offices, universities and economic stakeholders.

Maison de l'International  
Hôtel de Lesdiguières  
Parvis des Droits de l'Homme  
1, rue Hector Berlioz  
38000 Grenoble

Tel. +33 (0)4 76 00 76 80

(Monday to Friday 9am - 6.00pm, closed between 12.30pm and 1.30pm)

<http://www.grenoble.fr/international>

## **Sweet Home Grenoble**

For new-comers who want to discover the Grenoble area in an enjoyable and friendly manner (or for the not so new who wish to know it better) while meeting French people as well as people from many other nationalities.

Sweet Home Grenoble takes newcomers by the hand as soon as they arrive in France to help them discover the French, their culture and habits, and the riches of the Dauphiné.

They help the non-French overcome the language barrier and make all kinds of friends (all their activities are in French and in English).

[www.sweethomegrenoble.com](http://www.sweethomegrenoble.com)

E-mail: [sweet.home.grenoble@laposte.net](mailto:sweet.home.grenoble@laposte.net)

Contacts: Marine: 06.73.90.39.90 or Sophie: 06.88.74.91.93

## 1.2 Professional networking

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[Working Women's Network of Grenoble](#) (WWNG) - networking association for English speaking professional women, living or working in the Grenoble area.

## 1.3 Coaching/counseling (English speaking)

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[Active Adaptation Counseling](#): Trudi Penkler - English language counseling services, especially for families in transition. International coach and trainer.

[SOS Help](#): listening service in English, from 3pm to 11pm daily.

Elizabeth Stone Matho: psychoanalyst, art therapy in English or French. Tel: 04.76.54.03.12. E-mail: eliz.stone1@gmail.com

## 1.4 Other useful links

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For your information, here is a list of specialist web sites in English for expatriates:

**Life in Grenoble/Isère:**

<http://www.grenoblelife.com/> - blog about life in Grenoble, great variety of topics and information classified ads

<http://www.frenchentree.com/france-rhone-alpes/> - guide to property and life in France

[Anglo-Info French Alps](#) - for practical information

[Wikipedia- Grenoble](#) – general information about Grenoble in English

# 2 Getting there and around

## 2.1 Buses, tramways and coaches

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### Buses and tramways

Grenoble has an extensive network of buses and trams reaching out into the suburban area. The bus lines 30 and 34 and tramline B allow you to reach most of GIANT's organizations (ESRF, EMBL, CEA, GEM, ILL).

Tickets must be used in buses and trams. They are valid for one hour from the start of your journey. You can change buses or trams, but you may not use the same ticket to make a round trip.

You must punch your ticket before getting onto the tram or once in the bus.





Punching machines are located at tram stops.

You can buy a single ticket or a batch of ten ('carnet') from:

- most tobacconists,
- vending machines at each tram stop,
- bus drivers, but only one ticket at a time.

The network is managed by Transports de l'Agglomération Grenobloise (TAG). For more information or enquiries, please have a look at: [www.semitag.com](http://www.semitag.com) or call **04 76 20 66 66**.

### Coaches



A network of intercity coaches serves the rest of Isère (called "Transisère"), connecting Grenoble to most of Isère's other cities (Crolles, Voiron, Villefontaine ...).

For more information go to [www.transisere.fr](http://www.transisere.fr) or contact **0820 08 38 38**

## 2.2 Trains

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The Grenoble area and the rest of the Isère are well served by railways. The TGV (high speed train) connects Grenoble to major cities in France.

Grenoble's train station is located in the town centre, a five minute drive from GIANT site or you can use the bus lines 30 and 34.

To reach other towns in the suburbs of Grenoble (St Egrève, Echirolles, Gières) or other cities such as Chambéry, Voiron, Lyon..., you can hop on the TER (Regional Express Train) which runs several times a day.



Various types of reduced fares are available, depending on when you travel, whether you are traveling with children, etc.

For more information:

Regional network: [www.ter-sncf.com](http://www.ter-sncf.com)

National and international network: [www.voyages-sncf.com](http://www.voyages-sncf.com)

## 2.3 Flights

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Three international airports are within easy access:

- [Grenoble St-Geoirs airport](#) is located approximately forty minutes away from Grenoble with a [shuttle service](#) from the train/coach station; the airport serves daily flights to various European cities (London, Dublin, Rome, Warsaw...)

- [Lyon-Saint-Exupéry](#) international airport is approximately one hour away with a [shuttle service](#) from Grenoble train/coach station
- [Genève-Cointrin international airport](#), in Switzerland, is a two-hour drive from Grenoble and can also be reached by train and [shuttle service](#).

## 2.4 The green option

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Grenoble town hall and its suburbs' committee (known as "LA METRO") wish to encourage other forms of transportation such as cycling. They have developed bicycle paths and rental services (with lock and helmet included).

For more information, click on [www.metrovelo.fr/metro-velo-uk.php](http://www.metrovelo.fr/metro-velo-uk.php) or call **0 820 22 38 38**.



## 2.5 Taxis

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There are plenty of taxis available for travelling in and around Grenoble. For all enquiries and bookings, click on [pages jaunes](#).

## 2.6 Car hire

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Vehicles are available for rental for various periods from a few hours to several weeks. You will find a full range of rental services in the [yellow pages](#), under "Location d'automobiles".

## 2.7 Driving in France

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All vehicle owners in France must be in possession of a valid driving license, the vehicle registration document (known as the 'carte grise') and a certificate of motor insurance.

### **Driving license ("permis de conduire")**

To know if your driving licence is valid in France, please contact the "[Préfecture](#)".

### **Vehicle registration ("carte grise")**

The "carte grise" is a document proving that your vehicle is registered. It is issued by the dealer if you buy a new car or by the Préfecture if you import your vehicle.

For more details, check: <http://www.isere.pref.gouv.fr>.

Please note that you should always have your valid driving licence, carte grise and insurance certificate with you when driving a car.

### **Car insurance**

If you own a vehicle, you must at least have third party insurance (“tiers collision”), which will cover you against any damage that you may cause to others.

You can, of course, choose to have comprehensive cover if you wish (“assurance tous risques”).

You should ask your former insurance company to provide you with an insurance certificate, which states how long you have been insured, the level of bonus obtained in your country of residence (if applicable) and when you last had an accident or made a claim. This may enable you to benefit from a price reduction on your motor insurance policy in France.

## **3 Practical information**

### **3.1 Coming to France**

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To come and live in France you must have a valid passport. In addition, all non-European nationals wishing to settle in France must obtain a long-stay visa (visa long séjour).

#### **Obtaining a visa**

Before travelling to France, you should obtain a visa from the nearest French Consulate in the country where you are currently living.

Citizens of EU member states, Switzerland, Andorra, Liechtenstein and Monaco only need a valid identity card or passport.

#### **Obtaining a resident permit (Carte de séjour)**

Once in France, you can apply for a resident permit within 3 months if you are non EU national or if you are Romanian or Bulgarian (this rule should change in 2011).

If you are staying less than 3 months, there is no need for a resident permit.

For information about documents and process, please contact your employer directly or look on the government local authority's website ([La Préfecture](#)).

Please note that there is a specific process for scientists called "convention d'accueil" - please contact your employer.

### **3.2 Opening a bank account**

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Banks are usually open 08.30 – 5.00pm, from Monday to Friday, but this can vary depending on the bank and even the specific branch; only a few banks are open on Saturday mornings. Some branches also closed for lunch.

To open an account, you need to provide the bank with:

- your passport or identity card,
- proof of residence or electricity bill,
- residence permit (if applicable)
- a proof of employment from your employer

You will then be given a Relevé d'Identité Bancaire (R.I.B.), which is a statement of your bank details. Please be aware that most banks charge you a small monthly fee for on-line account management.

### 3.3 Healthcare

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**This chapter contains general information about healthcare in France. We recommend that you contact the Human Resources Service of your employer for more specific information.**

#### Reference web sites:

**Ameli.fr** : French social security web site

**fnak.fr** : web site of the Kastler foundation, information about health insurance in French and English

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#### Doctors

##### Family doctor

You must choose your regular doctor ('médecin traitant') and notify the CPAM of your area of residence.

You will need to consult this physician first for any health-related problem; he will redirect you to a specialist if necessary. Should you omit to follow this procedure, the reimbursement of the consultation will be cut down. However it is not mandatory to see your 'médecin traitant' before consulting gynecologists, dentists, psychiatrists, ophthalmologists, and for children under 16.

##### Doctors' fees

In France, 85% of general practitioners and 63% of specialists are "conventionnés secteur 1". This means that they will charge you a regular standard price and are not allowed to exceed this official amount. The CPAM reimburses 70% of this rate, minus the franchise médicale, a one-euro contribution that is not reimbursed.

Doctors that are "conventionnés secteur 2" set their own fees, which must be displayed in their waiting-room.

Doctors who are 'non-conventionnés' also set their own fees but the social security (CPAM: Caisse Primaire d'Assurance Maladie) hardly reimburses anything.

#### **Pediatric services (PMI)**

The PMI ('service de Protection Maternelle et Infantile') is a pediatric service dedicated to pregnant women and babies/children aged under 6 years. Its mission is to promote children and parents'

health by providing medical assistance, information and regular checkups (including vaccinations for children).

Each service has a pediatrician and a nurse available for consultation. They can also provide assistance at home to women with newly born babies.

Most of the services are free.

For more information and the list of PMI in the Grenoble area: click [here](#).

### **Emergency treatment**

For emergency medical care, you may call SOS médecin at the following number: 08 20 33 24 24 or call the Hôtel de Police or local 'commissariat' for the list of doctors on duty ("médecins de garde"). The list is printed in the Saturday issue of the local newspapers and generally posted on the notice-boards outside the local town hall ("mairie").

The list of chemists (pharmacies) open in the evening, at weekends and during bank holidays is available on the [Grenoble townhall web site](#).

In case of EMERGENCY, you can also contact:

The fire brigade	Dial 18
The SAMU	Dial 15
(Service d'Aide Médicale Urgente - emergency medical service)	
The Police	Dial 17

A comprehensive list of emergency numbers is [available here](#).

The emergency (casualty) department of Grenoble hospital is at:

L'Hôpital Nord - CHU  
Bd de la Chantourne  
38700 LA TRONCHE  
Tel: 04 76 76 75 75

## **3.4 Services and information provided by the "mairies"**

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Your town's mairie (city/town hall) represents the French government locally and can provide useful information on different topics. You can contact them for the following:

- Legal formalities (passport, ID card, marriage, birth and death certificate, driving licence, elections ...)
- Rules and regulations on town and country planning (if you wish to make an extension to your house for instance)
- Information on local activities and events (clubs, sport, culture, tourism, ...)
- Social amenities (village hall, gymnasium, waste reception centre, ...)
- Information about schools, childminders, etc.

### 3.5 The French Post Office (La Poste)

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You will find information in English about the services of La Poste on <http://www.laposte.com/en>

You can also open a bank account at La Poste as *La Banque Postale* now provides banking and insurance products and services for private individuals and companies in France.

### 3.6 Taxes in France

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#### Income Tax ('impôt sur le revenu')

Anybody considered to be resident in France is subject to the same obligations as French citizens. It is your responsibility as a resident to declare your annual revenue. You can get information about taxes on: [www.impots.gouv.fr](http://www.impots.gouv.fr).

#### Other taxes

##### Council and property taxes:

- the “taxe d'habitation” - council tax paid to the local authorities and charged on anyone living in an apartment or a house (renting or owning) on 1st January of the current year
- the “taxe foncière” - property tax paid by home owners.

The amount of tax due depends on the type and size of dwelling and its geographical position.

##### Television license:

Every owner of a television set must pay an annual TV licence fee, called “redevance”. You will receive this tax invoice at the same time as the council tax (“taxe d'habitation”).

Please note that when you leave France, you must have proof that all taxes due have been paid.

## 4 Accommodation

### 4.1 Temporary accommodation

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Always contact your employer first as he may have special agreements with various residences:

- [Tempologis](#) is hosting employees and visitors for short stays in Grenoble. It is advised to reserve for a minimum of one month.

Other residences offering similar services:

- [Hi-Park Residence](#) in Europole (special GIANT discount)
- [Residence les Citadines](#)
- [Privilodges](#)
- [CityZenBooking](#)

Hotels: to obtain a list of hotels in Grenoble, contact the [Office du Tourisme](#).

The ESRF guesthouse (EPN Campus) is dedicated to short-stay researchers (family members are not allowed).

## 4.2 Renting your accomodation

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### General principles

Accommodation costs depend on which area you are looking at, the age of the building etc... Unlike other countries, the area in square metres is often used to describe accommodation in France (e.g. 25 m<sup>2</sup> for a studio, 100 m<sup>2</sup> for a house).

Generally, the rent does not include service charges (which vary considerably depending on the service provided), the taxe d'habitation (council tax which approximately equals a month's rent), heating, electricity or water. You will be asked for an employer's certificate and your last 3 salary statements to justify your revenues. A rental agreement is generally signed for 3 years for an unfurnished lodging. Upon signature, you will have to pay a safety deposit equivalent to one month's rent plus another month's rent in advance.

Warning: you should not dedicate more than 30% of your salary to your rent (after deduction of income taxes).

Contact the Personnel Service of your Institute which may be able to give you offers of properties to rent and put you in touch with a relocation company which will help you with your search.

### Finding accommodation

- [Classified and web ads](#)

Look at the advertisements on the notice board at the various restaurants (ESRF, H2...) of the Polygone Scientifique.

You can also consult the web sites of local newspapers such as : [Paru vendu](#) , [le Dauphiné](#) , or specialized websites such as [Abonim Immobilier](#) , [Se Loger](#) , [Particulier à Particulier](#) , etc.

- [Estate agents offers: FNAIM 38](#)

If you use the services of an estate agent, you will need to go through the same procedure as with the lease (as stated above), but you will also have to pay the estate agent's fee which will be approximately one month's rent.

Many landlords and some estate agencies will ask you to pay a deposit so as to reserve the accommodation. You should insist on having a lease drawn up and signed before you make any payment.

Most Estate Agents will insist for a French person to act as your guarantor for payment. The Institutes can usually not act as guarantors.

- Flat-sharing

Flat sharing: look on the following websites: [paruvenu](http://paruvenu.com), [appartager.com](http://appartager.com), [e-coloaction](http://e-coloaction.com), [recherchecolocation.com](http://recherchecolocation.com), [annonceetudiant.com](http://annonceetudiant.com), etc.

*Beware of possible scams, never send money in advance from abroad!*

### **Inventory ("état des lieux")**

An inventory ("état des lieux") will generally be carried out before you move into your new accommodation and before you leave. Be very cautious: write down any problem or malfunctioning on the ingoing inventory, or else the fixing expenses may be deducted from your returnable security deposit. You may draw the agency's attention to any malfunctions during the first two weeks after your arrival.

Remember that this procedure will be in French, so if your ability to speak and understand French is limited, ask somebody to help you.

Should you wish to leave before the end of the lease, you must give your landlord or estate agency a notice of departure. This notice must be sent by registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt ("lettre recommandée avec accusé de réception") at least three months before leaving the accommodation. The notice period can be reduced for special circumstances such as becoming unemployed or if your work location changes (a certificate is then required).

Before leaving the accommodation, a reading of the water, gas and electricity meters must be performed. You should collect your security deposit (usually refunded within 2 months) and give your new address and telephone number to your landlord (this is a legal obligation).

### **Service charges (charges locatives)**

They cover common expenses linked to the maintenance of the building and the gardens (if there are any around the building), the cleaning of the stairs, the garbage collection, the housekeeper (if there is one), etc.

They are to be paid every month with the rent. Heating and water are sometimes included in the service charges.



### **Home insurance policy (“assurance habitation”)**

As a tenant (locataire) you must take out a minimum amount of insurance to cover damage to the property (at least fire and water damage). You must show the certificate upon receipt of the keys.

It is also possible to cover your personal belongings up to a certain amount, which you should define with your insurer. It is advisable, in case of a claim, to have photographs of your valuables and goods, or at least receipts for them.

Your insurance should include civil liability (“responsabilité civile”), which covers you against any damage you or your family may cause to other people. The easiest way to be covered is to include it in your home insurance.

### **4.3 Buying your accomodation**

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When buying a house or apartment, you should consider additional expenses to the purchase price of the property: estate agent's fee (as 99% of properties are sold through estate agents), notary fees and taxes, which can easily amount to at least 10% of the purchase price.

The process of buying a house may not be the same in France as in your home country. Find out as much as you can beforehand so that you know what to expect. For example, a British buyer will be surprised that a structural survey is rarely, if ever, carried out. As a general rule, you should never assume that the process would be the same in France as in your country.

In general, buying property is done in 2 stages:

- pre-sale agreement (« compromis de vente »)
- sale agreement (« acte de vente »).

The appointment with a solicitor (“notaire”) in order to get some information is free of charge.

Property loans are available through banks and other credit organizations; the conditions will have to be examined and negotiated with them.

### **4.4 Public utilities / services**

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#### **Electricity / Gas**

You will need to have to provide the following information to the Electricity/Gas providers: name and address of the former tenant, number and floor of the flat.

You can choose your electricity / natural gas providers. You will find more information on this topic on the following website: [Energie-info.fr/](http://Energie-info.fr/).

Keep your electricity/gas bills; you will almost certainly need them to prove your place of residence. It is a good idea to have your partner named on the bill as well as proof of residence (when requesting a residence permit, for example).

## Water

The cold water service is billed annually and calculated according to the reading of your water meter.

There are several water companies providing water in the Grenoble area. You can ask the estate agent or your landlord or the town hall of your place of residence for the name of the water company that provides water for your area.

In Grenoble: société des eaux de Grenoble : <http://www.reg-grenoble.fr/>

## Telephone / Internet

The installation of your telephone will normally be done without too much delay. You can either purchase or rent your telephone appliance.

For an internet provider, you can go to their websites [Orange](#); [Free](#) ; [Neuf SFR](#)... Orange normally provides a better coverage and debit if you live outside a town.

[France Telecom](#) is the historical operator. You can call them by dialing 1014.

The main mobile phone providers are: Orange, SFR, [Bouygues](#), [Virgin Mobile](#),...

## Television

If you import your television set, you should be aware that in France we use the SECAM system, which is not compatible with the standard PAL used in other European countries. For more information, contact a retailer.

# 5 Education and childcare

## 5.1 General information on schooling in France

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In France, school is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16. However, most children start school when they reach the age of 2 or 3.

The school system in France is as follows:

From 3 to 6: [Pre-elementary school](#) (*maternelle*)

From 6 - 11: [Primary school](#) (*école primaire* – also called *école élémentaire*)

Age 6 – 7      *cours préparatoire* (CP)

Age 7 – 8      *cours élémentaire* - 1st year (CE1)

Age 8 – 9      *cours élémentaire* - 2nd year (CE2)

Age 9 – 10    *cours moyen* 1st year (CM1)  
Age 10 – 11    *cours moyen* 2nd year (CM2)

From 11 to 17 or 18:    secondary education (*collège*: 4 years + *lycée*: 3 years).

[Collège:](#)    Age 11 – 12    6<sup>ème</sup>  
                  Age 12 – 13    5<sup>ème</sup>  
                  Age 13 – 14    4<sup>ème</sup>  
                  Age 14 – 15    3<sup>ème</sup>

[Lycée:](#)    Age 15 – 16    Seconde  
                  Age 16 – 17    Première  
                  Age 17 – 18    Terminale

Although children may attend either a free, state school or a fee-paying private school (fees vary from one school to another), the curriculum is defined at national level and is the same in all schools.

Click [here](#) for the List of schools (nursery, primary, secondary) in the Grenoble district.

In pre-elementary and primary schools, pupils have 24 hours of class per week (Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri), usually from 8.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and from 1.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. All schools are closed on Wednesdays (all day).

In some schools a child-minding service (“garderie”) is available before and after official school hours and most schools serve meals for the children at lunchtime (“cantine”).

Registration for “cantine” and “garderie” is necessary at the beginning of the school year and should be done at the town hall (*Mairie*) of your place of residence. In some schools, the canteen is reserved for children whose parents both work.

### **French schools calendar**

In France, the school year runs from beginning of September until beginning of July. [Click here](#) for detailed information about schools holidays in France.

### **Vaccinations**

All schools in France require that children have received the compulsory vaccinations. For details, you can ask the Head teacher of the school or any doctor or paediatrician. You can also enquire by contacting your local PMI (“Service de Protection Maternelle et Infantile”) – See the Healthcare section in the “Practical Information” chapter of this handbook.

### **School insurance**

Children must also have school insurance.

This school insurance is usually included in your comprehensive household insurance policy. This insurance is necessary when children take part in activities organized by the school, such as trips, etc.

It will be requested at the beginning of the school year and you should ask your insurance company to provide you with a certificate of your child's coverage.

Schooling in Grenoble area

Click [here](#) for the List of schools (nursery, primary, secondary) in the Grenoble district.

## 5.2 Pre-elementary and primary schools

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### **Pre-elementary schools (école maternelle)**

For detailed information and to register your child, please contact your local town hall.

### **Primary schools (école élémentaire)**

There are primary schools in each district of Grenoble and in most villages. See your local town hall.

### **Primary schools with international sections**

In Grenoble, four primary schools have international sections ("Ecole primaire à section Internationale"):

- [Ecole Houille Blanche](#): has English and German sections for children aged from 6 to 11
- [Ecole Bizanet](#): has a Spanish section
- [Ecole Jean Jaurès](#): has an Italian section
- Ecole Joseph Vallier: has Portuguese and Arabic sections.

To register in either one of these schools, it is advisable to arrange a meeting with the Headmaster.

## 5.3 Secondary education

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Secondary education in France is divided into two cycles: the first four years at a collège and the last three years at a lycée. Collèges provide general education, which is identical for all pupils, except foreign languages.

There are different types of lycées: some lycées provide general and/or technical education, preparing pupils for the baccalauréat, which is necessary to carry on to higher education ; other lycées provide a shorter and professional/practical education, leading to CAP (certificat d'aptitude professionnelle) or BEP (brevet d'enseignement professionnel).

In order to find out the collège or lycée in which your child may be registered, contact the "[Inspection Académique](#)".

## Secondary schools with international sections: Cité Scolaire Internationale (CSI)

- The **Cité Scolaire Internationale Europole** is part of the new international school complex (Cité Scolaire Internationale or CSI) located in the Europole business district of Grenoble. The college and lycée are attended by pupils from the sixième class through to terminale, with classes divided into six International Sections: English, German, Italian, Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese. For more details, please see the [Cité Scolaire Internationale](#) web site.
- **The American School of Grenoble**

The CSI complex also holds the American School of Grenoble (college and lycée) which is designed for pupils who wish to receive an American education, such as American children who will return to the United States once their parents' contract in Grenoble is finished. For more information, please see the [American School of Grenoble](#) website.

## 5.4 Higher education in Grenoble

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There are multiple higher education institutions in Grenoble: universities, business or engineering schools...

For information concerning higher education, visit the Grenoble regional education authority web site, Académie de Grenoble, for information about universities. Alternatively, follow the link to the French Ministry of Education website to find out about "Grandes Ecoles".

## 5.5 Local education authority

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Whom to contact in the Isère:

Inspection Académique Division des Élèves  
Cité Administrative Rue Joseph Chanrion  
38000 GRENOBLE.

The local education authority has appointed somebody to be the contact for non-French parents who wish to have information regarding schooling in France: Mme BROUILLAC - Room 204 - 2nd floor -  
Tel: 04 76 74 79 48 (Monday to Friday from 8.30 am to 12.00 pm and from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm).

## 5.6 Child-minding

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Different options are possible depending on whether you need child-minding regularly or occasionally, part time or full time, and whether you prefer a "crèche" or a public facility or a nurse/child minder, at her home or at your home:

**Halte-Garderie (occasional and part time child-minding) - Crèche (regular child-minding)**

Children can be looked after in such institutions between the **age of 3 months and 3 years** and the cost per hour varies according to the parents' income.

Contrary to the "halte-garderie", both parents must work in order to have their child accepted in a *crèche*. For more information, contact the nearest town hall ("mairie").

Be aware that for many *crèches*, the waiting lists can be long so the sooner you register the better!

There are two different types of *crèches*:

- **The *crèches collectives***: this is a *crèche* that provides regular day care to children whose parents work.
- **The *crèches parentales***: this is a *crèche* run by a group of parents who take part in the provision of child care at the *crèche*, with the assistance of qualified staff.

You may ask for further information at the [Caisse d'Allocations Familiales](#) and for a list of *crèches* near you at your local town-hall.

### **Assistantes maternelles**

An [Assistante Maternelle](#) is a certified child minder who looks after one or more children in her own home and is employed directly by the parents.

Assistantes Maternelles can look after children from 2,5 months old

Some assistantes maternelles can also look after your children in your own home. In that case, the cost per hour is normally higher. However this solution can be worth considering if you have several very young children to be looked after.

For more information (list of Assistantes Maternelles in your area, cost, contract, financial help, etc.), contact your local town hall or the [Relais Assistantes Maternelles](#) near you.

### **Baby-sitting**

If you need a baby sitter, you can consult the ads in the local newspapers/newsletters or in the shops near you or contact the CROUS (offers jobs for students):

[CROUS](#) (*Centre Régional des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires*):  
5, rue d'Arsonval  
38000 GRENOBLE  
Tél : 0810 064 069

## **5.7 Family allowances**

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In France, family allowances are managed by an institution called the CAF ("Caisse d'Allocations Familiales").

You may be entitled to family allowance depending on your family situation (usually the number of children in the family) and, for most allowances, also on your taxable income.

Remember that payment of allowances is related to your overall financial situation. Applications will therefore require a certain number of documents proving eligibility.

For further information, please contact the CAF de Grenoble or your employer.

[CAF](#) de Grenoble

3, rue des Alliés

38051 GRENOBLE Cedex 9

Tél: 0 820 25 38 10

## 6 Leisure and cultural activities

### 6.1 Museums

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The city offers many opportunities for visits and discoveries. Many museums can be visited, such as:

- Le Musée de Grenoble
- Le CNAC, Centre National d'Art Contemporain
- Le Musée Dauphinois
- Le Musée de l'ancien Evêché
- Le Musée Hébert
- Le Muséum d'histoire Naturelle.



For more information: [Musées de Grenoble - Grenoble Tourisme & Congrès](#)

### 6.2 Concert Halls

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Le [palais des Sports](#) de Grenoble, built in 1967 for the Winter Olympics of 1968, welcomes many events and performances such as rock/pop concerts, Festival international du Cirque, Supercross, les 6 jours de Grenoble (cycling event).

Le [Summum/Alexpo](#) for concerts, comedians, exhibitions, fairs, etc.

[MC2](#) "Maison de la culture" has many facilities: a large concert hall, an auditorium, a workshop, a rehearsal theater, two dans studios...It is the home of the National Choreographic Center of Contemporary Dance, the National Drama Center



of the Alps and the musicians of the Louvre-Grenoble.

### 6.3 Libraries and bookshops

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[Bibliothèque Municipale Internationale](#) – a multilingual public library (English, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic).

Web site: [Bibliothèques municipales de Grenoble : le réseau](#)



[Bibliothèque Anglophone de Meylan](#) - English language library with bookworm Café, second-hand books in English, coffee/tea shop, book clubs, storytelling for kids in English, musical events, etc.

[English Library at Babel](#) - English language library housed in a local non-profit association.

[The Connexion](#): French news in English.

### 6.4 Cinemas

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Movies shown in their original version are indicated by the logo "V.O" or "VOST" ("Version Originale Sous Titrée"). Movies with subtitles can be seen in the following cinemas:

- La NEF
- Le Club
- Le Méliès
- Le Centre culturel Cinématographique. The centre also organizes discussions about the movies shown.

More occasionally, movies with subtitles will also be shown:

- In some cinemas located in the outskirts of Grenoble such as [la Vence Scène](#) in Saint Egrève, [Arts et Plaisirs](#) in Voreppe, [Mon Ciné](#) in Saint Martin d'Hères and [Espace Aragon](#) in Villard Bonnot
- At the Nef Chavant

For more information: [Cinémas, Clubs et Casinos de Grenoble - Grenoble Tourisme & Congrès](#)



## 7 Practicing sports

For detailed information about all leisure outdoor activities in the Grenoble area, check out the following web site: [Grenoble Tourisme](#).

### 7.1 Practicing sports in Grenoble

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There are very popular places in the heart of the city that offer sport amateurs a wide range of activities:



The Parc Paul Mistral is Grenoble's largest city park (21 hectares). It is a very popular place for joggers, where you can also find l'Anneau de Vitesse, which was built during the Winter Olympics of 1968, to accommodate speed skating competitions. Today, it is open all year long to people wishing to practice roller-skating and street hockey outdoor and hosts numerous sporting activities (climbing, mountain biking ...). For more information:

[Grenoble roller](#).



The [Bastille](#) is not just a very worthwhile cultural place to visit in Grenoble, it is also a place well known for sports. Several trails are possible, allowing joggers to experience different levels of difficulty, surrounded by a natural environment. The Bastille also has its very own via Ferrata' that will delight rock-climbing lovers.

Other sports infrastructures are available in Grenoble where you can practice many different sports. For more information: [Ville de Grenoble](#).

### 7.2 Sports arenas

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The main sports arenas in Grenoble are:

The "[Stade des Alpes](#)", with a capacity of 20 000 seats, is considered one of the most modern stadiums in France. It now hosts the GF 38, the professional football team of the city.



The "[Stade Lesdiguières](#)", a capacity of 12 000 seats, which hosts the FCG team (rugby).

The municipal skating rink, called [PôleSud](#), hosts the local ice hockey team, called "les Brûleurs de Loup". Many sports clubs use it to practice sports such as short track, ice skating, ice hockey or karting on ice.



The Bachelard stadium offers a football and rugby field, a basketball playground, a fitness trail and a running track. The running track is mainly reserved to the Athletic Club of Grenoble; however it is possible to use it outside training hours.

### 7.3 Mountain activities

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Grenoble's natural heritage makes it a great place for all leisure and sporting activities: in less than an hour drive, you can experience the joys of [alpine skiing](#), cross country skiing, snowboarding, paragliding, kite surfing, climbing...

In addition, you will find on the tourist board [Ski France](#) website a great deal of information on ski resorts nearby to help you prepare your ski trips.



The city of Grenoble has created a specialized website dedicated to mountain activities: [Grenoble montagne](#). This very practical web site includes a section called "idées de sorties" ("outing ideas") which gives you different ideas for excursions depending on the season. All the mountain sites suggested are accessible by public transport.

If you liking hiking and short walks, you will also appreciate the following website [Sipavag](#) which offers a multitude of hiking trails around the Grenoble area, all accessible directly from the town, on foot or by public transport.



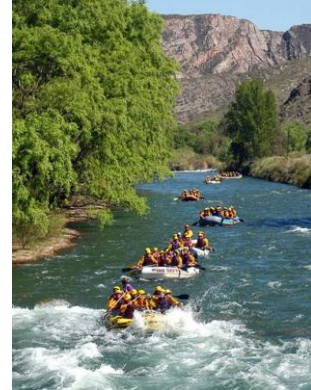
Finally, people looking for sensations also have the opportunity to paraglide near Grenoble, in particular at Saint Hilaire du Touvet, a mythical place for free flight. Saint Hilaire du Touvet hosts the annual "Coupe Icare", a worldwide event dedicated to free flight. Many clubs dedicated to free flight are located in St. Hilaire. For more information you can go directly to the tourist board website [Chartreuse](#).

## 7.4 Water activities

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It is possible to find in Grenoble and its surroundings a multitude of swimming pools open all year long. For more information: [Grenoble Tourisme](#).

A few kilometres from Grenoble, you can find natural lakes where you will be able to enjoy the natural environment while practicing your favourite activities: swimming, kite surfing, windsurfing, etc.



## 7.5 Sports clubs and associations

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Grenoble offers a large panel of sports clubs and associations where you can practice the sport of your choice. For more information: [OMS Grenoble](#).

See also the [sports association dedicated to GIANT staff](#).

# 8 Student life

Several organisations dedicated to the student life in Grenoble can be consulted for all types of services.

### [INTEGRE](#)

IntEGre(International Etudiants de Grenoble) is a student association that welcomes international students at Grenoble Universities.

They help you to enjoy your time in France through various activities: socializing with other students, linguistic exchanges, tutorship, wine and cheese testing, dinners and outings, cultural visits, and much more!

### [EVE - Espace Vie Etudiant](#)

Association located in the university campus where they organize events and offer services to students such as: concerts, theatre, dance, exhibitions, integration of foreign students (API - Pôle d'intégration des étudiants étrangers).

### [API - Pôle d'intégration des étudiants étrangers](#)

This association offers practical information : About student life To help you to deal with administrative procedures You can find a guidebook in French, English, Chinese, Spanish (on IntEGre website).

#### [IZI PASS](#)

Discount card reserved for students aged under 30 that offers discounts in: pubs, restaurants and snack, shopping centers, sporting activities and shops beauty centers driving school, photo shops, computing, caterers.

#### [CROUS](#)

A government agency with a regional authority offering student services: accommodation, meals on the campus, culture, etc. Accommodation for [foreign students](#).

#### [ESPACE LOGEMENT ETUDIANT](#)

Offers all kinds of services connected to student accommodation. You can get advice for settling down in Grenoble, including financial help, meet other students who will share good tips about Grenoble and its student life, consult ads to find student accomodation and flat mates, get internet access to look for information, find documentation, maps, practical guides, etc.

#### [GRENOBLE UNIVERSITES](#)

Living in Grenoble: transport, accommodation, health, cultural life, practical information (cost of your stay, etc.).

#### [ACCUEIL CHERCHEURS GRENOBLE UNIVERSITE](#)

The Kastler Foundation has two primary goals: to facilitate the visits of foreign scientists to France, and to maintain contact with them after they return home.

**GIANT website**

[\*\*http://www.giant-grenoble.org/\*\*](http://www.giant-grenoble.org/)