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MOST of the private schools in the lake of Geneva region have formed an association called AVDEP – standing for Association Vaudoise des Ecoles Privées – which offers a very comprehensive advisory service.

Its main purpose is to provide guidance to parents who are looking for a private school for their children, either for a holiday course or for a longer period.

This is an official service, operated under the supervision of the Lake of Geneva Tourist Office. The advice is entirely free, and does not commit parents or children in any way.

The general secretary, Miss Nicole Grandjean, who was in Britain recently to discuss what AVDEP had to offer, said: "We try to refer pupils and students to schools where their personalities can best be developed, under a study programme adapted to their needs, aspirations and interests in general."

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The scope of education available in the region is vast, ranging from nursery schools to establishments giving tuition leading to university entrance examinations.

But they also have an extra advantage – their location. The lake of Geneva region is renowned for its magnificent scenery – forests, mountains and lakes – and a very healthy climate. It is also at the cross-roads of Europe's major road and rail routes.

Sports are actively encouraged, and many schools have experienced instructors in skiing, swimming, riding, tennis, sailing, hockey and football. Students' development is also promoted by music, painting, handicrafts and excursions.

Specially popular are the holiday courses, where intensive

lessons in French – or English – are combined with excursions and sports. Lessons are usually for three to four hours in the morning, leaving the afternoon free for sports.

There are a large number of boarding schools, as well as day schools where accommodation is provided with a local family. Because of the international reputation of the Swiss educational systems pupils come from all parts of the world.

Examinations that can be studied for include the British GCE 'O' and 'A' levels, the American CEEB, the Swiss Maturity, the French Baccalauréat and the German Abitur.

There are also specialised schools that offer courses in commercial and secretarial subjects, crash courses in foreign languages, preparation

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For further information about schools in the region or recommendation about the most suitable school, write to AVDEP at 10 Avenue de la Gare, 1002 Lausanne, Switzerland.

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