



School guide

Primary/Secondary Education

2023-2024

Shaping your future by knowing your past



Institutional registration number for DENISE Primary Education: 31LK
Institutional registration number for DENISE Secondary Education: 17YS02

Version adopted by the Participation Council on 17 July 2023

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1. General information

1.1 Profile

DENISE is a school for primary education. The school consists of junior years of secondary education (three-year transition classes for lower general, higher general and pre-university secondary education) and the senior years, teaching the examination programmes for the theoretical curriculum of pre-vocational secondary education, higher general secondary education and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB-DP). DENISE is part of the Esprit Scholen school group (<http://www.espritscholen.nl/home>) and has been an IB-World School (www.ibo.org) since 2018.

1.2 Address and contact details

Piet Mondriaanstraat 140 | 1061 TT, AMSTERDAM | +31 (0)20 480 2700

info@denise.espritscholen.nl | denise.espritscholen.nl | admin@denise.espritscholen.nl

Institutional registration number for Primary Education: 31LK | Institutional registration number for Secondary Education: 17YS02

1.3 School management

Management Board

- Principal: Luc Sluijsmans l.sluijsmans@denise.espritscholen.nl
- Deputy Principal: Jenno van der Wal j.vanderwal@denise.espritscholen.nl

Department Leaders Primary

- Groups 1 to 4 Alexia Mavromatis m.mavromatis@denise.espritscholen.nl
- Groups 5 to 8 and TPO: Gabriella Brescia g.brescia@denise.espritscholen.nl

Department Leaders Secondary

- Language classes: Merel Kroese m.kroese@denise.espritscholen.nl
- IMYC International Middle Years Programme, groups 9, 10 and 11 [as of 1 November 2023; currently led by the Deputy Principal.]
- DP Diploma Programme, groups 12, 13 & 14: Paul Chung p.chung@denise.espritscholen.nl

Department Student Affairs and Educational Support

- Jeffrey Post j.post@denise.espritscholen.nl

1.4 Staff, positions and roles

See our website: <https://denise.espritscholen.nl/home/onze-school/ons-team>

1.5 Competent authority

Onderwijsstichting Esprit Scholen | Institutional Board: Ariëlle de Ruijter and Percy Henry |
Jan van Galenstraat 31 | 1051 KM, Amsterdam | www.espritscholen.nl | +31 (0)20 5854811

1.6 Participation Council

The Participation Council at DENISE comprises 10 persons: one parent of a child in primary school, two parents of children in secondary school, two students in secondary school, one staff member working in an educational support department, two primary school teachers, and two secondary school teachers. The teachers and the representative of the educational support staff form the staff delegation in the Participation Council (SPC). For more information about the Participation Council, please check out: <https://denise.espritscholen.nl/home/onze-school/medezeggenschap>

1.7 Student Council

DENISE has a student council of class representatives (as of group 7).

1.8 Partnership

DENISE is a member of the Amsterdam partnership for primary and secondary education for primary education, see: <https://www.swvamsterdamdiemen.nl/over-ons> For secondary education, see: <https://www.swvadam.nl/>

2. Our duty, mission, vision and motto

2.1 Social duty

In the Netherlands, common values about education are set out in the legislation for primary and secondary education, namely: *"education: (a) partly assumes that students grow up in a multiform society, (b) is partly focused on promoting active citizenship and social integration, and (c) is partly focused on ensuring that students have knowledge of and become acquainted with different backgrounds and cultures of peers"*. Our educational concept offers a context in which the student encounters a great diversity of students, teachers and support staff every day. That is an important part of our mission and vision and specified in our school plan for 2021-2025.

2.2 Mission, vision and motto

Our mission is to create flexible educational pathways and provide a diverse range of content through which students discover who they are, what they can do, what touches them, what they dare to do, what they learn from/through others, what motivates them and obtain a diploma that best suits their ambitions and abilities. Communication, safety and respect are at the core of our education.

Our outlook on education consists of six guiding principles:

1. **Core values:** At DENISE, we give shape to learning by focusing on responsibility, connectedness and open-mindedness.
2. **Learning in and from a super-diverse community:** We welcome students from all over the world and we learn from and with each other. We work together and try to understand the world from multiple perspectives.
3. **Perspective:** We work with continuous learning programmes for students aged 4 to 18. All DENISE staff ensure a smooth start for all students entering a new class. We think it is important to always create a perspective that motivates the student.
4. **Language acquisition is the point of departure:** Students learn in Dutch and English. They also use their mother tongues in preparation for an English-language or Dutch-language diploma programme.
5. **Differentiation by age and levels:** Pupils are in heterogeneous classes up to year 3. We use assessment tasks as a learning tool, and there is room/time for the student's (social-emotional) growth.
6. **Joint sustainable future:** We want to teach our students knowledge and awareness about sustainability of themselves, the school, the environment and the world.

Our mission and vision come together in our motto: *"Shape your future by knowing your past"*.

3. Shape your future by knowing your past

3.1 The origins of DENISE

DENISE started in 2014 with the mission to provide high quality international and Dutch education for students between the ages of 4 and 18. DENISE was based on the idea that every child should have equal opportunities for a good school career in the Netherlands, regardless of their origin, skin colour, language, gender, culture, or religion. Our vision, approach and structure enable us to offer opportunities to earn a diploma in a safe school climate and make a meaningful contribution to society. Our goal is to provide a good reception and support for newcomers to the Netherlands and to facilitate access to international education, to maximise their success in this country. Internationals in the broadest sense of the word attend our school: from foreign students to home students, whether or not they were born in the Netherlands. We are a school with students from more than 70 different countries.

Esprit Schools, the DENISE school executive board, has an international and innovative tradition that is set out in the Esprit Schools Education Manifesto (see [here](#)). The Manifesto explains in broad terms what Esprit Scholen wishes to achieve for our students in and around Amsterdam, for their parents and for our employees.

3.2 Facilitating language for proper learning

One of our success factors is our language policy: to give students the opportunity to express themselves in both Dutch and English. This allows the students a chance to obtain a Dutch diploma (lower or higher general secondary education) or an English diploma (International Baccalaureate, IB). This has also become a key feature of DENISE: the student works towards a goal, learning what they need to meet the core objectives to be ready for a diploma programme.

3.3 Late selection

A heterogeneous bilingual primary and secondary education system has been developed over the past few years, based on the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and International Middle Years Curriculums (IMYC). Such a system does not allow for early selection; after group 8, students continue in groups 9, 10, and 11 as secondary school students unless we have reason to believe that this isn't the best choice for the student. This is decided when students are in groups 6 or 7, so that parents have ample time to choose another course of action. The junior years of secondary education are attended by students with the prospect of starting a diploma programme. In those classes, differentiation is required to ensure that students learn at their specific level with teachers having adequate time and attentiveness. In group 11 (or the derived groups 15, 16 and 17) these students take an entry examination for a specific diploma programme and can opt for a programme taught in Dutch or English according to their abilities and ambitions. We believe that this is the most open system of education for this special target group and that it contributes to reducing the inequality of opportunity.¹²

For more information, please refer to our Language Policy Plan on our website, [see documents](#).

¹ See: <https://fieldworkeducation.com/curriculum/middle-years>

² For a clarification of our group system, please see paragraph 3.1

3.4 Our core values

At DENISE, we learn what our core values, responsibility, connectedness and open-mindedness mean in society. We will continue our dialogue on these subjects with students, school staff and parents in the school year 2023-2024. Our ambition is to prepare our students for global citizenship, for a world where they can play an active role as global citizens. Creating a pleasant and safe school community with global citizens like DENISE is not easy. It requires effort and maintenance from all of us each and every day. We are jointly responsible for giving meaning to, and propagating, our core values. We debate societal topics and the many challenging issues in all classes, but in particular the International Primary Curriculum lessons (in primary education), and Drama, Individual & Society, Civics, IB Individuals & Societies and Theory of Knowledge (in secondary education). All students' life stories are impressive and provide an interesting picture of how values are meaningful in their lives.

In practical terms, this means that pupils, teachers and parents:

- learn about and open their minds to different views, cultures and traditions;
- are able to respect different viewpoints, cultures and traditions of others.
- are able to approach one another based on trust;
- acquire knowledge, understanding and learn the impact of their national culture;
- develop awareness and understanding of the interdependence between peoples and countries and the respect for everyone's autonomy;
- become aware of and understand the essential similarities between the world's peoples and countries.
- develop the ability to interact with people different from ourselves;
- complete the curriculum in full, including field trips, celebrations and school camp.

4. Safety and school rules

4.1 Safeguarding social and physical safety

Everyone at DENISE contributes to the social-emotional safety within the school. All the parents, students and staff have the duty to report issues if safety is compromised. We can intervene based on reports and other signals. To provide the highest quality, we are constantly conversing with pupils, teachers, parents, and partners in the school environment on the design of our education. Our ten rules of conduct (see below) form an important guideline in keeping our school environment safe for everyone. Violation of these rules leads to sanctions (see explanation).

We aim to firmly put a stop to bullying in particular and deal with it if it presents itself. The school believes it is important to tackle bullying preventatively. We do so by working on the children's social-emotional development and on creating a safe environment in the group, even when there are no signs of bullying. We also make agreements in class about how we want to interact with each other, we raise social-emotional topics in primary school and provide mentor lessons in secondary education. We address social-emotional subjects. We pay explicit attention to everyone's role as a participant in the globalising multicultural society. We also hire external parties for training and have youth workers at school. We have set out the agreements in our anti-bullying protocol. The aim is for all children to feel safe at school and develop to their full potential as global citizens with resilience, a sense of ethics, communication skills, thoughtfulness, cooperation and respect for each other and their environment - which fits in seamlessly with our core values of responsibility, connectedness and open-mindedness.

The Principal is the first point of contact when it comes to physical and social safety in and around the school. The confidential advisors for students and parents are Mr M. van Schie, Ms M. Keersmaekers and Ms P. Franke. The Principal collaborates with the anti-bullying coordinators and attention officers Mr J. Post and Ms G. Brescia. With regard to safety in terms of the layout of the building, a professional emergency response team and the physical safety in the vicinity of the school where our students are concerned, the agreement is that the Principal is the first point of contact. The Principal does so in collaboration with the prevention officer (Mr Van der Wal). The same goes for checking out rumours. The Principal and prevention officer have video footage at their disposal to check facts and are in close contact with the district police officer, the school police officer and other important officials in the neighbourhood. Contact with the media always runs by the Principal. If necessary, the Principal takes care of the (customised) communication about an incident towards employees and parents/students.

The law requires the world of education to have a Child Abuse and Domestic Violence Reporting Code. The purpose of this obligation is to intervene more quickly and adequately in the event of suspicions of domestic violence and child abuse. The Reporting Code includes a 5-question decision framework. The Reporting Code includes the participation of children.

For more information about the Reporting Code and the step-by-step plan in our anti-bullying protocol, please visit our website, [see documents](#).

4.2 Ten school rules

At DENISE, we treat each other - students, parents and all our guests - with respect. We treat each other as we would like to be treated. We do not judge but engage in conversation. We ask questions and listen. We approach and help each other. We are all responsible for the ambiance in school and upholding the DENISE's three core values. We also adhere to the following ten solid agreements.

These are the 10 agreements for secondary school (separate agreements apply for each class in primary school):

1. You arrive for the lessons on time and at the place where you are expected. See the class schedule on the website or Magister online system.
2. You eat and drink at places where this is appropriate (not in the classrooms) and you behave in the vicinity of the school. You do not hang out in porches.
3. You treat other students and staff with respect and use respectful language. Bullying is unacceptable. See our anti-bullying protocol at our website.
4. You follow instructions given by the school staff.
5. You leave the classroom clean and tidy, you do not make a mess of the classroom, furniture or materials. You also clean up after yourself after lunch. You do not touch the spindles on the windows.
6. You bring a well-functioning and charged Chromebook with you and only use it for learning during class. Mobile phones are prohibited in the classroom and are dropped at the "phone hotel" when you enter or stay in your bag (not on your body). Your mobile phone may be confiscated (preventively) by the teacher.
7. You don't wear a coat or jacket in class.
8. You have done your homework and you hand in assignments at the agreed times.
9. You do not take photos or videos unless you have a teacher's permission. Distributing photos or recordings of others is not permitted.
10. Physical/verbal violence, theft, dealing, weapons, drugs, smoking and consumption of alcohol are prohibited inside and outside the school. We operate a zero-tolerance policy. This means that we can immediately proceed to suspending a student (temporarily no classes in school) after hearing all parties about the incident.

4.3 Consequences if a student does not comply with the rules

If a student (repeatedly) violates these rules, they may get a sanction and even be temporarily suspended from classes at DENISE. We use an escalation ladder to decide the course of action. We inform the parents/carers if a student does not keep an agreement. If necessary, there will be a meeting with the mentor. Serious and/or persistent incidents may result in a meeting with the departmental leader or the Deputy Principal or Principal. You can find more information about the students' rights and obligations on our website at [student statute](#). This statute also explains what happens when a student does something that is not allowed.

4.4 Absenteeism policy and attendance

It is important to properly report your child's absence to the school. You can do so by telephone 020-4802700 or by email to verzuim@denise.espritscholen.nl. For primary school students, the Parro app will also become available for absence reports over the course of the 2023-2024 school year. The teachers and/or absenteeism coordinator will register students' tardiness and attendance in the ParnasSys (primary school) or Magister (secondary education) tracking systems. The parents of primary school students that are absent without authorisation will be called by the caretaker/teaching assistant before 9:30 a.m. Parents of secondary school students can inspect their child's absence record in Magister.

The following agreements apply to **primary school**:

- If there have been 3 occasions of tardiness/unauthorised absence within one month, the teacher addresses their parents and makes a note of this in ParnasSys or Magister.
- If there have been 6 occasions of tardiness/unauthorised absence, the parents will receive a letter.
- If there have been 9 occasions of tardiness/unauthorised absence, the parents will receive a letter warning that the school will call in the intervention of the municipal school attendance officer if things do not change.
- If there have been 12 occasions of tardiness/unauthorised absence, the primary school department leader will send the parents a letter announcing that the school is going to report the student to the municipal school attendance officer, and does so.

The following agreements apply to **secondary school**:

- Students arriving late, report to the reception desk or teaching assistant and get a note there. They may not enter the classroom without this note. Their tardiness will be recorded in Magister. The student must report to the reception desk at 8.00 am the next morning and do schoolwork in Foyer B.
- If a student fails to report the following day, the student must report at 8.00 am for the next two days. If a student then still fails to report, the department head and mentor will be informed, and the student must report at 8.00 am for the next three days. The mentor will also contact the student's parents/carers. Students who want to enter the classroom when more than 20 minutes late may enter with a note but will be reported as absent without authorisation.
- Students make up for unauthorised absences by reporting to the secondary school teaching assistant in the Foyer C once per unauthorised absence on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday during the 8th or 9th class hour and spend that hour on schoolwork. Students will be informed of their obligation to report by email on Mondays.
- If the student fails to report, they must report for the next two days. If the student does not, the department head will be informed. The student will then be addressed by the department head and/or mentor and must report in Foyer C three days in a row. The mentor will also contact the student's parents/carers.

Frequent absenteeism will be reported to the municipal school attendance officer and may result in a (work) penalty or fine.

4.5 Complaints procedure

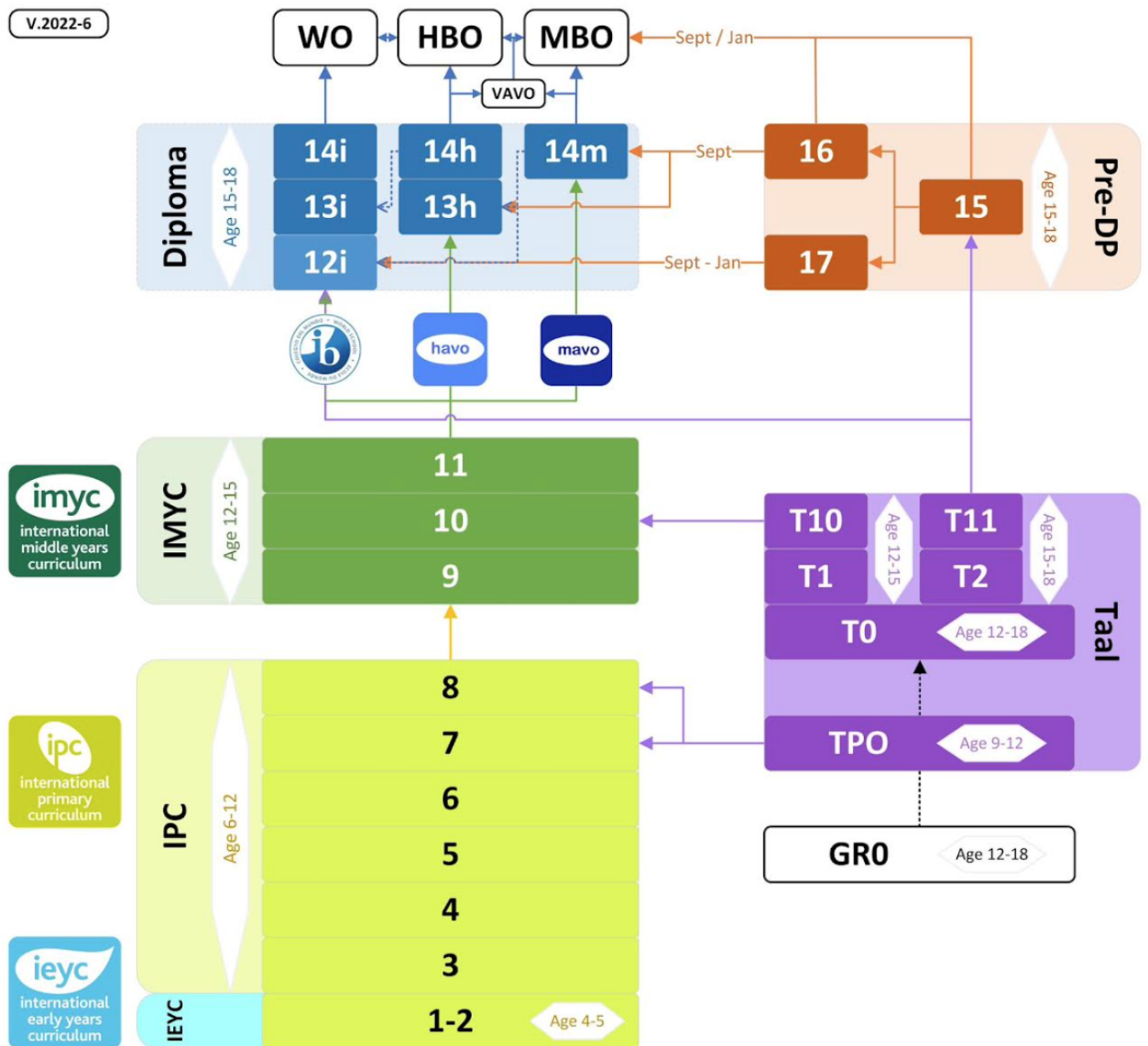
The school strives to provide high quality education, but it is always possible that a parent or student may have a complaint. They can then refer to the complaints procedure as adopted by the school executive board. DENISE and the other schools within the Esprit school group have a single complaints procedure that applies to the entire school group. The complaints procedure is described on our website, [see documents](#). In the event of a complaint, it is important to stay in touch with all parties. After all, the school-student-parent triangle is crucial in guiding a student through the learning process. If there is a complaint about the day-to-day running of the school, the mentors or the department heads will be informed and deal with it. In serious cases, the complaint will be reported to and dealt with by the school's management (Principal). It is possible for students and parents to consult the school's confidential advisers. Complaints or objections regarding exams must be submitted to the examination board using [this form](#).

If a complaint does not lead to a solution, you can appeal to the LKC National Education Complaints Committee, P.O. Box 85191, 3508 AD Utrecht, 030-2809590.

5. Educational programmes

5.1 Five educational programmes: our school structure

To remove language barriers experienced by newcomers, we have grouped our education around five programmes (see figure) for ages 4 to 18 (sometimes 19 or 20). It is necessary to learn Dutch to be able to earn the lower or higher general secondary school diploma and International Baccalaureate. It is, yet, not possible to take the final secondary school exams in English. We do have an International Baccalaureate (IB) as a substitute for a Dutch pre-university secondary school diploma. This is an international programme towards a diploma at the same level. DENISE provides the IB programme instead of pre-university secondary school. The IB diploma prepares students for enrolment in universities in the Netherlands and abroad.



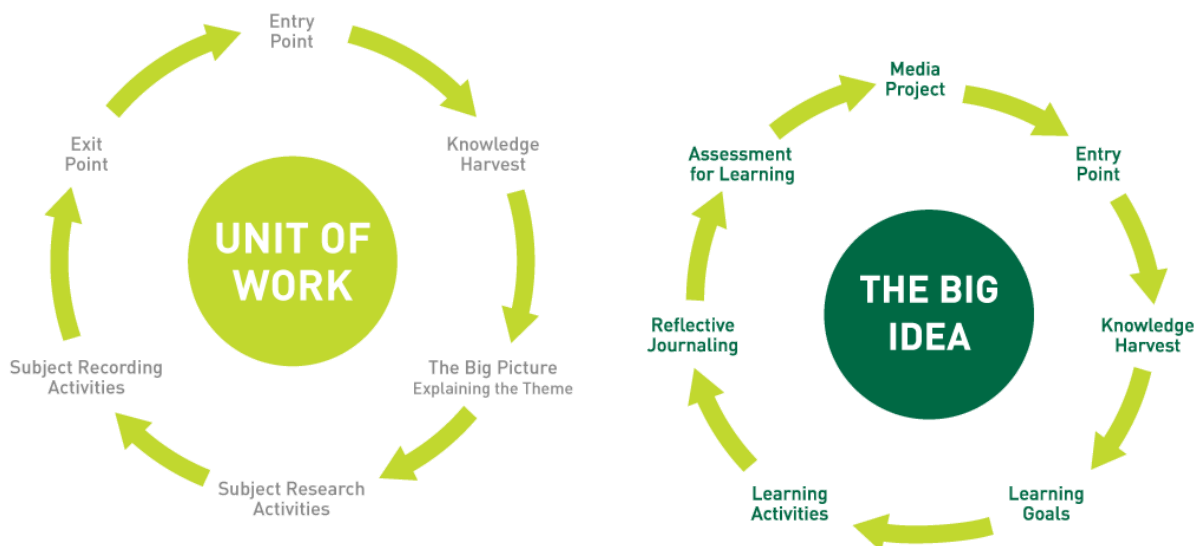
Grouping and transfer possibilities at DENISE (see explanation from page 10).

1. IPC primary - Group 1-8 (ages 4-12) + 2. IMYC secondary - Groups 9, 10, 11 (ages 12-14)

DENISE Primary is a bilingual (Dutch and English) primary school programme. The curriculum taught in groups 1 and 2 is based on the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC). From group 3 we work with the IPC developed around the core objectives for Dutch primary education. The junior years in secondary school (groups 9, 10 and 11) take a bilingual (Dutch and English) secondary school programme based on the IMYC focused on the core goals for the junior years of Dutch secondary education.

The IPC and the IMYC each provide a challenging, engaging, internationally oriented, concept-based curriculum designed specifically for the unique learning needs of primary and secondary school students. The IPC and IMYC help students to give meaning to their environment by linking subject-specific theory to a big issue or "Big Idea". A Big Idea helps students to better understand the world in context.

In both primary and secondary education, five Units of Big Ideas are central to each year; all subjects are taught around the big issue. Learning takes place based on 7 steps in the learning cycle. This includes the acquisition of basic subject knowledge and skills that pupils need to function in society (general development), progression to secondary education and eventually being ready to enter the diploma programme. Students build a solid knowledge base and develop skills necessary for research, presentations and usage of a range of media images to reflect their learning process. The programme also focuses on personal development. This happens throughout all classes and, in particular, during mentor classes (every day) and extra-curricular activities. Each unit is concluded by an 'Exit Point', when students are asked to demonstrate their understanding of the material learned and what the learning means to them personally and in a real world context. Planning and producing this activity provides students with opportunities to creatively share the learning outcome with their peers, parents and teachers and reflect on their own learning outcome. Learning with and from one another are important components at DENISE.



IPC and IMYC Learning Cycle For more information, see fieldworkeducation.com

3. Group 0 and the Language Programme - Language Classes T0 to T11; (ages 12-18)

In our collective Group 0, teachers from Mundus and DENISE work together and jointly determine the most appropriate level in terms of education. Students aged 12 and older, who speak little or no Dutch, start in this group. In group 0, we gather as much information on the students as possible through learning activities, discussions with students and parents, testing and observing the students' behaviour in class. After group 0, the students transfer to Mundus College (for a basic or advanced pre-vocational school programme or practical special needs education) or DENISE (for a theoretical pre-vocational school programme, higher general secondary education or pre-vocational education). A newcomer spends a maximum of 6 weeks in this starting group. The teaching team for this group includes teacher from both DENISE and Mundus.

To maximise opportunities for every student, we have developed a separate and intensive language programme (see the purple block). This language programme is for students aged 12 and over who do not have sufficient command of the Dutch language and is to be taught in one of the other school programmes. We distinguish three level groups:

- T0: students with no knowledge of Dutch (CEFR level 0-A1)
- T1,2,3: students with a rudimentary knowledge of Dutch (CEFR level: A1-A2)
- T10: students who are almost ready to enrol in group 9, 10 or 11 of one of the school programmes (CEFR level A2-B1).
- T11: students who are almost ready to enrol in group 12, 15, 16 or of one of the school programmes (CEFR level A2-B1).

The faster a student acquires the Dutch language, the faster they will progress to the next level group. In other words, there is a permanent through-flow of students at the school. This has its advantages, but also bring challenges. The benefit is that newcomers are always welcome in Amsterdam and there are plenty of opportunities to integrate well into the Dutch education system. However, the disadvantage is that progression engenders a feeling of unrest. This puts constant pressure on the lesson schedule, the finding of suitable teachers and the skills of colleagues in terms of the ability to differentiate. It can also put pressure on group formation, group cohesion and the social climate.

4. Career Programme - Groups 15, 16, 17 (ages 15-18)

Group 15, 16 or 17 prepares students of 15 years and older for the DENISE diploma programme. These are students who, for various reasons (usually due to a stay abroad) have had an interrupted school career. This programme is also taken by students for whom a diploma programme is not an option (due to age or insufficient language skills or education); it prepares for vocational or adult education.

5. Diploma programme - Groups 12, 13, 14; (ages 15-18)

The diploma programme distinguishes three different curricula to provide our students with a customised education after completing the IMYC or career programme. We have been providing a one-year lower general secondary school diploma programme since 2015. From 2019, we will also provide a two-year programme for the higher general secondary school diploma. This is aside from the English-taught IB diploma programme, that prepares students for enrolment in universities worldwide. DENISE's secondary school diploma programmes are uniquely designed. The lower general secondary school programme has a 1-year curriculum equivalent to the theoretical pre-vocational secondary school programme. For the higher general secondary school diploma, students in year 4 of that programme take early school and national exams in English, History and Mathematics A (general maths) or B (maths for science studies), as well as part of the exams in Dutch. In final year 5, the student takes the other school and national exams in Dutch and the subjects in their subject cluster. PE, Civics and Culture & Arts and the research paper are school exam subjects only which begin in year 4 and are concluded in year 5.

More information about our diploma programmes will be provided at information meetings. Please also check our admissions and progress policies on our website, [see documents](#).

5.2 Learning objectives, contents and assessment tasks

DENISE's five programmes meet the national attainment targets for groups 1 to 8 in primary school and the core objectives for lower secondary education for groups 9 to 11. The 58 core objectives for primary and secondary education in the Netherlands are not specified by level. This allows us to provide a mixed curriculum in accordance with the principles of the "Middle School" for the first three years. Learning objectives are formulated for each subject and monitored by our curriculum board. The students have an entire school year (September-July) to work towards these objectives. Teachers assess the students' progress in this regard based on their results at several time intervals, using various assessment tools such as question papers, presentations, essays, extensive practical work, projects, portfolios and oral work. The teacher determines the student's level in a report drawn up in November, March and June.

The learning objectives are recorded in Parnassys and Magister. All learning objectives are included in the Curriculum Book.

It is important to work towards and achieve learning objectives for three reasons:

- 1) it helps the learner to discover their interests;
- 2) it helps the student to better understand how society works and how to contribute;
- 3) it helps the student prepare for the diploma programme.

Students progress through the levels at their own pace and can move up to the next level at any time. However, there are certain stages at which a minimum of success is required to advance to the next school year. Such assessments are made at the end of the language classes, at the end of primary school (group 8), at the end of the junior years programme (group 11) and at the end of the Career Programme (groups 15-17). Group 12 is our pre-diploma programme group for future IB 1 (Group 13i) and subsequent IB 2 (Group 14i) diploma students.

An admission assessment is required before the start of any diploma programme.

For more information, please see the Admission Policy document on our website, [see documents](#).

5.3 Assessment policy

Our philosophy is that frequent, regular, and permanent assessment during our programmes is an important and essential part of the learning process. The assessment is seen as an aid that can be used to achieve a (personal) learning goal. Assessment is not a goal in and of itself where the learning stops, but part of the ongoing development of the student. During the five periods per course year teachers use formative testing to identify each student's learning requirements and as a part of the learning process itself. A formative test shows what the student has mastered so far and still needs to learn or practice. Teachers use summative assessment to determine the performance level of students at the end of each semester. Through a summative assessment, a teacher indicates to what extent the student has already mastered the material or not. If applicable, teachers use peer and self-assessment: students assess their own and each other's work. When relevant, students can also be actively involved in determining the criteria for work that must be assessed. Teachers at DENISE use the following guidelines when assessing their students.

1. The assessment supports the cognitive and personal learning goals.

2. All assessments at DENISE are criterium-related. Teachers use a rubric with criteria to determine the performance level. Figures indicate the level achieved.
3. The assessment results in the DENISE report have a high degree of reliability. They predict the prospects and opportunities of students in relation to a diploma programme (at or outside DENISE) or further studies.
4. The assessment tasks evaluate a learning goal or several learning goals in accordance with the curriculum book.
5. The assessment reflects the international orientation of the DENISE programmes. It avoids cultural prejudices and supports students in acquiring the Dutch and English language.
6. The assessment pays attention to higher cognitive skills and more fundamental skills.
7. Teachers are responsible for the creation of a variety of assessment tasks and tools to ensure that all learning goals for the subject are covered.
8. Teachers *benchmark* their method of assessing the students' work by gathering feedback from experienced senior examiners and statistical information (at or outside DENISE).
9. Teachers systematically, digitally record the progress of students. The information is available to other teachers, students and parents/carers and must be simple, clear and accurate.
10. Every teacher provides supportive feedback on the performance of students during each period. This feedback provides answers to: What were the student's learning goals? Has the student achieved these goals? What is the final goal? What steps must be taken for improvement?
11. Teachers write reports in November, March and June. (March and June for the primary school teachers, because they start each school year in September with interviews rather than a benchmark.) Reports are discussed in 10-minute meetings with the student's parents/carers. During these meetings, the student discusses what goals they have not achieved yet and why.
12. Teachers keep clear and accurate digital records of all assessment activities. Assessment tools are digital and can be shared with other teachers, curriculum coordinators and the school management.
13. If a teacher suspects that a student has committed plagiarism, the teacher will not assign an assessment but refer to the school's Academic Integrity Policy and inform the examination board.
14. The language policy is taken into consideration when the assessment tasks are designed.
15. Besides working on the students' subject-specific knowledge and skills, every teacher stimulates them to develop skills that help them develop proper learning attitudes. We call these approaches to learning (ATL). They include general skills, like collaboration, self-management, communication, and academic integrity. The progress made by students in acquiring these skills is an important indicator of which diploma programme is feasible. Every

teacher evaluates these ATLs using 3 designations: Excellent, On Track and Attention Needed.

DENISE teachers expect the following from students (to an increasing degree):

- Explore research questions with different media.
- Effective and respectful communication.
- Collaboration.
- The ability to cope with feedback.
- Demonstration of critical thinking and problem-solving capacity.
- To arrive in class prepared, to always use the lessons effectively and to complete homework.
- To create their own work and to know how to acknowledge sources.

DENISE students can expect the following from the teachers:

- To clearly state the requirements for every task in a rubric.
- To allow enough time for students to complete a certain assessment task.
- To provide adequate access to all materials required for the successful completion of an assessment task.
- To give feedback within 10 working days after the work has been submitted.

DENISE teachers expect the following from parents/carers:

- To provide constructive and positive support when their child completes schoolwork. However, this support may not be to such a degree that the authenticity of the student's work is brought into question.
- To ensure that the student has a quiet space and sufficient time to complete their schoolwork.
- To offer Internet access and membership of a library.
- To attend parents' meetings (start of the school year, November and March or on the invitation of the mentor).

For more information, please see the Admission Policy document on our website, [see documents](#).

5.4 Plagiarism policy

Learning to conduct research is an important element in all DENISE programmes. We encourage our students to be academically honest, formulate their own ideas and use multiple trustworthy sources to do so. As our student population includes different cultural and national backgrounds, we realise that not all students have learned the same academic standards. Because it is an important task of our school to assess the student's educational level (lower general, higher general or pre-university education), we want to be certain that we are assessing the student's own work. This is why our Academic Integrity Policy applies throughout secondary school, starting in the language classes. What we expect from students depends on the group they are in. We expect students in our diploma programmes to always use APA references, especially when writing their research paper (higher general education) or their extended essay (IB). It must be clear to teachers which ideas have come directly from the student and which have arisen elsewhere. The details of what we expect per class can be found in the Academic Integrity Protocol. The protocol is available to all teachers, mentees and mentors and is reviewed regularly. As students arrive at our school throughout the school year, mentors will instruct new students and give them access to the Academic Integrity Protocol. Subject teachers will explain what is expected of the students in the context of concrete assignments.

For more information, see the Academic Integrity Policy on our website, [see documents](#).

5.5 Working with a computer and telephone

At DENISE, most subject matter is provided digitally. Students in primary school work with Chromebooks from group 4/5 for the topics, and use paper for their exercises. We ask students in secondary education (and their parents/carers) to arrange for a device themselves. For optimal use, we recommend a device with a screen of at least 11 inches (approx. 28 cm). Please note that we mean a laptop, not a telephone! We recommend buying a Chromebook. Every student is responsible for their own device. Should purchasing not be possible, please contact Nelleke de Weerd: n.deweerd@denise.espritscholen.nl. If necessary, a student can borrow and collect a Chromebook at the school but only after the parents/carers have submitted a request and this request has been honoured. It is explicitly not the intention for students to come and borrow a Chromebook from the reception desk if they have one themselves or can arrange for one. In addition to a device, students should also always bring a pen, notebook, pencils, compass, ruler and triangular protactor with them. The learning aids used at DENISE enable students to make their own choices in the curriculum. At DENISE we use both digital and printed material. Teachers develop customised educational materials that are usually supplied to the students in digital format. The book fund comes into effect from the exam classes groups 12/13/14, with the students receiving a book package for a deposit of 75 Euros. Other groups also use books but they remain at the school. In line with the government's urgent advice to ban mobile phones from classrooms (January 2024), DENISE bans the use of mobile phones in the classroom by the 2023-2024 school year. See also 4.2 School Rules.

5.6 Educational Quality

The Esprit school group's ambition is to permanently improve education. Not only does each school review its quality, but we also review each other's to this end.

The quality of each school obviously meet the basic requirements set by the government. The school management, the executive board and ultimately the Netherlands Inspectorate of Education see to this. Quality assurance is evaluated in various ways within the Esprit school group.

- We question our students annually and parents biannually via digitally completed surveys on the quality of our education. All data relating to students' exam results, student through-flow and student and parent satisfaction are accessible to the public on the national website 'Scholen op de kaart' (schools on the map) (see [PO](#) and [VO](#).)
- We also ask the staff for their opinion and experiences as regards the school and the school board. The results of the surveys are discussed at the school, then reported by the school management and discussed with the executive board. Where necessary, we make agreements for improvement and, if need be, the executive board arranges for the required resources.
- Every two years, we prepare a self-evaluation of the most important aspects of the quality of the education provided, based on a standardised questionnaire. Standardised questions allow us to compare our results and discuss them with the other schools at the board meeting.
- Every three years, a group of Esprit colleagues (trained auditors) visit the school to investigate whether the self-evaluation we prepared is valid. This is what we call Peer Quality Audits. The results of these audits help us improve the quality of education within the school and give us the opportunity to learn from a positive angle, from and with each other, by learning of new innovations and changes.

6. Student Affairs

6.1 Admission

Admission to DENISE is possible for all students from 4 to 18 years of age. A child can go to primary school when they are 4 years old. Primary schools in Amsterdam have an equivalent admission policy. If you are registered with the municipality of Amsterdam you will receive an explanatory brochure and a registration form around your child's third birthday.

Students aged between 12 and 18 years old who speak little or no Dutch or have come from abroad and whose educational level is not clear, are first placed in our intake class, group 0. In group 0, we try to gather as much information on the students as possible through discussions with students and parents, testing and observing the students' behaviour in class.

Admission to group 9 and above requires at least a level comparable to lower general secondary education. Students who are already attending an Amsterdam primary school are placed at our school via the lottery-based matching system.

For all other primary and secondary school students, we have an intake procedure and use information from previous schools. Based on that information and the intake interview, an assessment is made as to whether DENISE is appropriate for the student. All information obtained is added to our online student tracking system.

For more information, please see the Admission Policy, Student Learning Support Policy and Assessment Policy documents on our website, [see documents](#).

6.2 Support Policy

Our school support protocol, also known as our support policy, describes our views on support within DENISE and the support structure. It also explains the types of questions you can submit to the support team. Our school support protocol describes what we do for students with special educational needs, such as socio-emotional problems, medical conditions (hearing, speech, sight), physical problems, autism and related conditions, dyscalculia and dyslexia and other (language-related) problems. The language policy describes what we do for students with a native language other than Dutch.

At DENISE, we work with internal employees of the student learning support team and external partners to realise professional support (such as parent-child counselling, compulsory education, youth work at the school, school doctor and nurse, speech therapist, etc.). The school support protocol also describes all forms of consultation at the school, such as group and student staff meetings, internal support team meetings and consultations with external partners, students and parents/carers. It also describes all our support possibilities and the quality assurance support.

Our Student Learning Support Policy (support plan or care plan) contains a lot of information about the way we have arranged our support. For more information, please visit our website, [see documents](#).

6.3 Parental contribution and sponsorship policy

The target amount for the voluntary parental contribution has been set at €225 per child. The school spends the contribution on extra curricular activities and services as approved by the participation council. You will receive a payment request at the beginning of the school year via our financial administration department. Failure to pay the voluntary parental contribution does not result in excluding students from participating in activities. DENISE has no sponsorship policy. It is possible to pay a higher parental contribution but parents, businesses or other institutions cannot sponsor the school financially or materially.

6.4 Communication

Unambiguous agreements between the school and parents are necessary to make school affairs as transparent as possible.

Parents and carers can expect the following from the school:

- All parents/carers will regularly receive a parents' information letter with the latest news on school issues and the school programme.
- The group teacher or mentor will contact parents about general issues relating to the student (results, attendance and behaviour).
- For parents of secondary school students: we keep you abreast of any absence and your child's progression in Magister.
- The school management communicates with parents on parent-teacher meetings, school trips, excursions, etc.
- There is a school website and this school guide with specific information on developments at school, schedules, curriculum, year calendar, etc.
- There are regular coffee mornings and topical meetings for parents.
- The school management organises two sounding board evenings per school year to evaluate the programme and the organisation of the school and discuss new ideas.
- We organise parent-teacher meetings specifically to discuss the students' report cards.

The school expect the following from the parents/carers:

- Parents/carers are involved in all affairs concerning their children at school.
- Parents/carers read parents' letters and emails from school and, for parents of secondary school students, consult Magister (absence and progress).
- Parents/carers devote attention to the school's year calendar, especially the dates of the school holidays. The school does not grant extra leave around the official holidays.
- If leave is required during the school year due to exceptional circumstances, leave forms are available at the school reception desk or on the website. Applications must be submitted at least two weeks in advance. Leave may not exceed 10 days. When in doubt, we always consult the Municipal School Attendance Officer.
- Parents/carers with concerns about their child or an event at school contact the group teacher/mentor.

- Parents/carers know that secondary school classes are scheduled between 8.30 am and 4.40 pm. The secondary school class schedule may change by week or day (new schedule for the period or day, see website). Students will be informed about this via the daily schedule on the DENISE website. All class schedules are published on the DENISE website and the students' calendar in Magister.
- Parents/carers inform the group teacher/mentor about family issues that may affect performance or behaviour at school.
- In the case of illness/absence, parents/carers are requested to inform the school between 7.30 and 8.30 am by telephone: 020-4802700.
- In emergencies, parents can always contact the school at: 020-480 2700.
- It is always possible to make an appointment with the student's mentor, group teacher or the school management by sending an e-mail to info@denise.espritscholen.nl.
- Changes in the organisation or policy are communicated to all parents/carers by the school management in a parents' information letter.
- We do not employ parents/carers or other family members of students.
- Students' participation in the school camp is compulsory; it is part of the curriculum.
- Private information on staff, students or parents/carers is not provided to third parties.
- Personal, stressful or emotional discussions are not conducted by telephone. We make an appointment for a personal meeting at the school.

7. Class hours and holiday schedule

7.1 Class schedule

Primary school: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 8.30 am (doors open); start: 8.45 am to 3 pm.

Primary school: Wednesday: 8.30 am (doors open) start: 8.45 am to 12.30 pm.

Secondary education

8.30 am	1st hour / 1st lesson
9.20 am	2nd hour / 2nd lesson
10.10 am	Mini break
10.30 am	3rd hour / 3rd lesson
11.20 am	4th hour / 4th lesson
12.10 pm	<i>Mentor hour</i>
12.40 pm	Break
1.10 pm	6th hour / 6th lesson
2 pm	7th hour / 7th lesson
2.50 pm	Mini break
3.00 pm	8th hour / 8th lesson
3.50 pm	9th hour / 9th lesson
4.40 pm	Closing

Schedules may change

Please note: secondary school students must always be available between 8.30 am and 4.40 pm. Class or daily schedule can change (per period) over the course of the school year.

More information:

The abbreviations of the subjects in secondary education can be found [here](#).

Students in secondary school are informed about any changes to their daily schedule, [see here](#).

For more information about the lesson table, subjects en schedule at DENISE, see [here](#).

7.2 Holiday Arrangements

First day of school	Wednesday, 6 September 2023 <i>Please note: 4+5 September are study days for staff and days off for students</i>
Autumn Break	Monday, 23 October 2023 to Friday, 27 October 2023
Winter Break	Monday, 18 December 2023 to Friday, 5 January 2024 <i>Please note: 8 January is a study day for staff. Students have the day off.</i>
Spring Break	Monday, 19 February 2024 to Friday, 23 February 2024 <i>Please note: 26 February is a study day for staff. Students have the day off.</i>
Easter	Monday, 1 April 2024
May Break	Wednesday, 1 May 2024 to Wednesday, 8 May 2024 <i>Please note: 29+30 April are study days for staff. Students have the days off. Furthermore 9+10 May, see below. In total: 2 weeks' May Break.</i>
Ascension Day + next day off	Thursday, 9 May 2024 and Friday, 10 May 2024
Whit Monday	Monday, 20 May 2024
Summer Break	Monday, 22 July 2024 to Friday, 30 August 2024 <i>Please note: 18+19 July are days off for both staff and students</i>
<i>Start of the 2024-2025 school year</i>	The 2024-2025 school year will start on Wednesday, 4 September 2024

DENISE staff: 2023-2024 study days (students off)

Monday and Tuesday, 4 and 5 September 2023	Primary and secondary school (see also Table 1)
Wednesday, 1 November 2023	Primary and secondary school
Wednesday, 6 December 2023	Primary school only
Monday, 8 January 2024	Primary and secondary school (see also Table 1)
Monday, 26 February 2024	Primary and secondary school (see also Table 1)
Monday and Tuesday, 29 and 30 April 2024	Primary and secondary school (see also Table 1)
Tuesday, 18 June 2024	Primary and secondary school
Thursday and Friday, 18 and 19 July 2024	Primary and secondary school (see also Table 1)

You will receive a completed annual schedule with camps, parent meetings, celebrations, etc. at the start of the school year.

Appendix: 2023-2024 Lesson tables

Number of groups and students

We will start the 2023-2024 school year with 51 groups. That includes the extra classes at Van Hallstraat (temporary secondary location due to teaching newcomers). The number of secondary school groups at DENISE expands over the course of the school year.

Specification (at the start of the 2023-2024 school year)

- 16 primary school groups (including 1 language support class, bilingual primary school)
- Five groups 0 on Van Hallstraat in collaboration with Mundus and 10 language classes
- Two career classes and 8 IMYC classes
- Three pre-IB diploma classes (group 12) and six IB diploma classes
- Five higher secondary school diploma classes

Group sizes

With a view to realising differentiation and (language) support, the group size is 24 students at maximum. In both primary and secondary school (including language classes), groups are divided by means of parallel scheduling. We are currently examining the feasibility and affordability of working with class groups up to 12 students in SSL.

Lesson tables

The following pages show the lesson table per class per week. The numbers are derived from the agreements about hours as specified in the 2021-2025 school plan. The additional hours are due to expansion (more classes) and additional financial resources have been incorporated. The tables below are guidelines. No rights can be derived from the data provided. The school management may decide to deviate from the number (fewer or more hours) as a result of personnel, educational and/or organisational developments.

Specification: Primary school - groups 1 to 8*

Subjects	1/2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TPO
Dutch	8	8	7	6	6	6	6	6
English as an Additional Language/Dutch as a Second Language	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
English	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Numeracy skills	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
IPC/Man & Society	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
IPC/Man & Nature	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Fine Art and Design**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Music**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drama**	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education**	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Social Emotional Learning	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

* In primary school, 3 days are taught in Dutch and 2 days in English.

** These classes are (partly) taught by subject teachers.

Specification: Group 0 and language classes

Subjects	T0	T1	T2	T10	T11
Dutch	x	x	x	3	3
Dutch as a Second Language	14	14	14	11	8
English	4	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	3	3	3	3	3
Science	x	x	x	3	3
Man & Society	4	4	4	3	4
Music	1	1	1	1	1
Drama	1	1	1	1	1
Fine Art and Design	2	2	2	x	2
Physical Education	2	2	2	2	2
Swimming	1	1	1	1	1
Mentor hours	1	1	1	1	1

Specification: IMYC - groups 9 to 11

Subjects	9	10	11
Dutch	4	4	4
Dutch as a Second Language	1	1	1
English	4	4	4
English as an Additional Language	2	1	1
Spanish	x	3	3
Mathematics	4	4	4
Numeracy skills/Mathematics+	1	1	1
Science	3	4	4
Man & Society	5	5	4
Fine Art and Design	2	2	1
Music	1	1	1
Drama	2	2	1
Physical Education	4	2	2
Study Career Counselling	x	x	1
Mentor hours	1	1	1

Italicised subjects are customised in small groups (the teacher deciding who joins).

Specification: IB diploma programme - groups 12, 13i and 14i

Subjects	12i	13i	14i
Dutch A	4	5	5
Dutch B	x	5	5
English	4	5	5
MAAS (Maths)	x	5	5
MAIS/MAAH (Maths)	4	5	5
Chemistry	3	5	5
Biology	3	5	5
Physics	x	5	5
ESS	1	3	3
Geography	3	5	5
History	3	5	5
Theory of Knowledge	1	2	2
Visual arts	2	5	5
Physical education	2	x	x
CAS/EE	1	1	1
Mentor hours	1	1	1

Specification: Lower general secondary school diploma programme 14m

Subjects	14m
Dutch	4
Dutch as a Second Language	2
English	4
Modern Foreign Language (AR/SP/FR)	with higher general secondary school students
Mathematics	4
Physics/Chemistry 1	4
Biology	4
Social Sciences	4
Civics	1
Economics	6
History	4
Physical Education	2
Study Career Counselling/Research Paper	2
Mentor hours	1

Specification: Higher general secondary school diploma programme - groups 13h and 14h

Subjects	13h	14h
Dutch	4	4
English	8	x
Modern Foreign Language (AR/SP/FR)	1	x
Mathematics A	8	x
Mathematics B	8	x
Chemistry	x	8
Biology	x	8
Physics	x	8
Civics	2	x
Geography	x	8
Economics	x	8
(Art) History	x	4
Drawing	x	4
Physical Education	2	2
Culture and Arts	2	2
Study Career Counselling/Research Paper	2	3
Mentor hours	1	1

Specification: Career programme - group 15

Subjects	15
Dutch	5
Dutch as a Second Language	5
English	4
Mathematics	3
Numeracy skills Mathematics+	1
Science	3
Individual and Society	3
Music	1
Drama	2
Physical Education	2
Study Career Counselling	1
Mentor hours	1

End of the 2023-2024 school guide.