



Early Years Handbook 2021-2022

Welcome to the Early Years Section

We cherish the early years at ESH, where children's days are filled with joy and play. These early years of school build the foundation of their learning journey, and have a profound impact on their future development, learning and wellbeing.

This booklet is designed to inform you about the Early Years section at the European School The Hague. More information can be found on our website, the school guide or from the class teacher.

The Early Years Classes and Languages

ESH is a multicultural and multilingual School. The Early Learning Section has the following language sections:

- Dutch – German – English
- Spanish – French

Mother Tongue (MT) classes are offered in Slovenian, Polish, Portuguese, Italian, Czech, Romanian, Greek or Finnish. Your child has a MT lesson each day for 30 minutes. Children will stay in the same language section throughout primary school.

SWALS – Students Without a Language Section

These children may join either the Dutch, German, French or English sections. All children stay in their Mother Tongue class

through the Early Years cycles and into the Primary cycle, where a second language is added – L2. All Early Years children receive lessons in Dutch from the DAL (Dutch as an Additional Language) teachers in your child's classroom, except for the children in the Early Years Dutch classes.

The Early Years Cycles

Children may begin at ESH at 4 years of age. Before your child begins, your child's teacher will contact you to arrange the introduction days. These introduction days are offered before your child begins so that your child has time to adjust to the environment, new teachers and other children. The introduction or settling-in period consists of three half days and two full days. Your child's teacher will arrange these days with you.



After 6 weeks your child's teacher will arrange a meeting to discuss with you your child's settling into the school with the new routines and also a time to refer to your child's entry profile information. The two cycles in Early Years means that children are in the Early Years Section for at least 2 to 2½ years. Early Years children transition to P1 in the calendar year that they turn 6 years of age, when the entry requirements are met. Parents of a child who has a autumn birthday will be in close consultation with the teacher regarding their child's development and school readiness.

From a pedagogical point of view we work with mixed groups of children between 4 and 6+ years. The curriculum is delivered through a balance of child-initiated play and teacher-led activities. Educational theorists such as Piaget, Vygotsky and Montessori recognize the value of play as a child's work and that play is essential for the development of each child in a social context. The Early Education Curriculum documents may be found on the official website of the European Schools.

www.eursc.eu

The European Schools Early Education Curriculum

Early Years children enter into multi-age classes. This provides a developmentally appropriate environment which recognises that children learn from each other. Children learn about themselves, each other and the world. The European Schools Early Education Curriculum document is used to guide and harmonise the planning across the Early Years language sections.

Through an enquiry based approach there is room for children's questions, allowing exploration, creativity and fantasy whilst catering for different learning styles and strategies. There is a strong emphasis on each child developing in a holistic sense, at his/her own pace. This includes developing his/her own cultural identity and being a European citizen in a multicultural, multilingual environment.

Early Education is a fundamental part of lifelong learning and its central role is to support children's growth into informed, ethical and responsible members of society.

Teaching and learning in the Early Years supports and monitors children's communication skills, physical, psychological, social, cognitive and emotional development by providing the best possible opportunities, experiences and learning environments. Children learn through play, so the planning and the environment encourage exploration, engagement and experimentation. The focus is on inquiry-based and active learning through child initiated play, which is most appropriate and meaningful to young children.

The Early Years Section is a large section of our school. It is a valued community in itself, where sharing play opportunities, resources and harmonized planning enable the children to have daily experiences in languages and cultural experiences through fun and play.

Transition programme from Early Years cycle 2 to Primary 1

The transition from Early Years to Primary1 is a major change for the Early Years children. The transition programme aims to support the Early Years children, families and the Primary teachers through clear transmission of information to all parties. The programme includes P1 teachers visiting the Early Years classes; teachers exchanging information about the EY and P1 curriculums, child development and expectations; children visiting P1 classes with class activities and time to share the children's learning progress. The children will share their portfolios with their P1 teacher. The transition programme will be evaluated on a yearly basis to ensure that the ESH is meeting the needs of the pupils.

School Hours

Monday	08:45 – 15:00
Tuesday	08:45 – 15:00
Wednesday	08:45 – 12:45
Thursday	08:45 – 15:00
Friday	08:45 – 15:00

Arrival at School

08:30	The school doors are open.
08:40	The class attendance register is taken.
08:45	Classes begin, doors close and latecomers need to report to Reception.

The Early Years entry to school is through the Early Years playground gate, to the right of the main school building.

Unfortunately, due to Coronavirus concerns, parents may not accompany their Early Years child to their classroom. This may change and will be communicated to parents

No dogs may enter the School property, except for personal assistance dogs for people with disabilities.

For security reasons, all new parents are given an identity badge with a green lanyard at the beginning of the school year. This should be worn every time you wish to enter the school property. These are checked by security and you may be denied access to school without it. Early Years children who arrive on the bus will be collected by the Teaching Assistants on duty who will accompany your children to their classes.

Absence – Reporting sick and Special Leave requests

Sickness

If your child is sick or is not able to come to school for other reasons, please report this to the reception before 9:00, either by email: prim-absences@eshthe Hague.nl or by telephone: + 31 (0)70 700 1600. If a child is absent without any notification, we will contact the parents. For appointments during the day for your child, please email details to Prim-Absences and your child's teacher.

Special Leave request

The ESH is bound by the Dutch Compulsory Education Act, which states that all children from the age of five must attend school every day that the school is open. If you plan to keep your child away from school, you will need to inform the school. Please refer to the absences section of the school guide. For special leave, parents need to complete the form on the school website, 15 working days in advance of your departure.

Leaving School at the end of the day

All Early Years children who are not taking part in after-school activities are supervised by their teacher until they are collected from the Early Years gate. Children need to say goodbye to their teachers before going with their parents. Primary children may not collect Early Years brothers and sisters from the classrooms without their parents in attendance.

If you will be late for pickup phone reception so that we can pass a message to your child and teacher. If you have made an arrangement for someone else to collect your child/ren, staff must be informed prior to collection by contacting: prim-absences@eshthe Hague.nl or by telephone: + 31 (0)70 700 1600. If your bus child is to go home with you and not on the bus, school and class teacher must be informed in the morning, or prior to collection by contacting: prim-absences@eshthe Hague.nl or by telephone: + 31 (0)70 700 1600.

Early Years children who go home by bus are collected from their classrooms by a delegated ESH staff member prior to the bell. Each child will be issued with a bus identity badge with an orange lanyard. These badges are to help ensure that each child leaves on the correct bus for the correct destination. If your child is taking the bus, it is your responsibility to ensure that your bus child wears his/her bus badge to school each day. The children will



wear their bus badges home. Please keep the badges safe and help your child become responsible for wearing the badge.

Children who attend After School Care or After School activities are collected by the Authorised Care providers or Activity Leaders from the Early Years playground. Late pick-ups will wait at the reception from 15:10 whilst parents are contacted.

Clothing and Belongings

All clothing and belongings must be labelled with your child's name so that lost items may be returned. In Early Years, children need to bring a change of clothes appropriate for the season, in a plastic bag to be kept at school. This change of clothes is in case children wet or soil their clothes during the day. Indoor shoes must be sport shoes with white or non-marking soles and Velcro fastenings so that the children can change their shoes independently. These shoes are worn in class and indoor areas such as the library and the PE hall.

Children's clothing

Please ensure that your child has appropriate clothing for the weather as the children go outdoors each day. For wet weather, plastic/rubber boots and warm waterproof clothing is preferable. For sunny days a sunhat is advisable and you may protect your child with sunscreen before coming to school, to prevent sunburn.

All Early Years children have a named clothes hook to hang bags and belongings. Each child will have a named blue bag to store their spare clothes, coats, hats, gloves, scarves in to keep the clothes and shoes safe from becoming lost.

Please encourage your child to be independent with:

- ★ carrying back packs to school, unpacking and packing them.
- ★ opening containers and drink bottles, peeling bananas and opening packets.

Lunch and Breaks

In the Early Years Section, children need to bring a morning snack, a water bottle with fresh water and lunch if not having a hot lunch at the Canteen. Please be aware that some children have severe food allergies. Please inform your child's teacher if this is the case with your child.

The morning snack is eaten in the classroom or outdoors, as a picnic. The lunch break is 45 minutes. Children will eat first, then go out and play. Children who bring a packed lunch will also eat in the canteen, with their friends, in small groups, with a Lunchtime Supervisor.

Children are encouraged to:

- ★ sit and eat in a calm environment, to enjoy their food and to have a quiet social time.
- ★ dress themselves – shoes, jackets, buttons, zippers, sweaters, hats, gloves and scarves for outdoor play.

Unfortunately we are unable to store packed lunches in a refrigerator nor heat food. We support and encourage healthy eating habits at ESH for the best nutrition and dental hygiene for your child. Please leave sweets, chocolate, sweet cookies and cakes, fizzy and flavoured drinks for snacks at home. Thank you for your support and understanding.

You may collect your children for a lunch break at home, but you will need to give a written notification of your intention to do this to the reception staff at school and class teacher.

Specialist classes

PE

All Early Years children attend two PE lessons in the gym hall with a qualified PE teacher. PE includes dancing to music, simple gymnastics, using climbing equipment, hoops, ropes and balls, physical challenges and games such as tag with colours, numbers and other resources.

Children in Early Years wear their PE clothes to school on their PE day. They wear a t-shirt and track pants or shorts for PE lessons. Indoor/PE shoes are worn in the PE hall and changed for outdoors. Children are not permitted to wear jewellery, skirts or dresses. Long hair needs to be tied up.

Library

Early Years children will receive a yellow ESH library satchel. The children attend the library for borrowing books, once a week with their class teacher. The librarian and assistant are also in attendance to support the children. Library sessions provide valuable language opportunities. Any books that are more than 4 weeks overdue, lost or damaged, must be replaced by the family. Families will be informed by the Librarian when this occurs.



Music

Each class, in addition to daily music with the class teacher, will be able to enjoy frequent music lessons with a music specialist in the classroom. The program includes musical opportunities with games, singing, dancing/creative movement, listening activities and concepts such as loud and soft, fast and slow, high and low.

DAL

Dutch as an Additional Language – DAL. All Early Years children receive 90 minutes per week of Dutch as an Additional Language in the classroom. The DAL teacher plans alongside the class teacher so that the children participate in games, sing songs and play in Dutch to complement the investigations and activities that the children are interested in.

L1/Mother tongue classes

In Early years, the Mother Tongue classes aim to develop a child's mother tongue ability to express and interpret thoughts, feelings and ideas. Speaking and listening skills are

the focus. Reading and writing skills are fostered and further developed in P1. Cultural contexts are focussed on whilst following the Early Years Curriculum topics that all Early Years classes have planned. This gives the children opportunities to strengthen their understanding through their Mother Tongue and to make links to their section language.

ICT

Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard (SMART) which provide for whole class or small group activities. The children also enjoy frequent ICT activities, learning how to incorporate iPad, Beebot, recording pegs and sound buttons technology to develop and document their learning. Laptops and iPads are available for each class to build computer skills and are used in line with the Early Education Curriculum. Other ICT opportunities are used throughout learning activities as planned by the ICT and class teachers. Wifi is enabled around the school.

Personal belongings

Children in Early Years may bring a cuddly toy from home when they begin in their new class for the first month. Other items brought from home will be in agreement with the class teacher. Children have an opportunity to talk about their items during 'Show and Tell' or 'Treasure Time'. These talking times help children to:

- ★ gain confidence and independence to talk in front of their friends
- ★ to ask and answer questions
- ★ to use correct grammar and vocabulary
- ★ to engage others in their interests

Toilet routine

It is expected that your child will be able to go to the toilet independently. Boys are encouraged to sit to urinate, to maintain a clean shared area. During the day, the children are asked to visit the toilet and wash their hands, e.g. before and after eating and coming in after outdoor or messy activities, but they may use the toilet when they need to. Children then flush the toilet afterwards, wash hands with soap and water then dry their hands on the paper towel, placing used paper towel in the bin.

Recycling

The Early Years classrooms have recycling bins. The children are encouraged to learn about recycling through discussions and by making informed choices about dealing with rubbish. At school empty cans, plastic bottles and paper are collected separately in the appropriate recycle bins. Contact the Concierges if you have old batteries and used printer cartridges.

Recycling from home is welcomed as we need a constant supply of clean and safe:

- ★ plastic bottle tops
- ★ buttons, keys, metal bits and pieces and picture frames without glass
- ★ cooking equipment – plastic dishes, cooking utensils, pots and pans
- ★ old electrical/battery equipment – telephones, keyboards, cameras, tape/cd players
- ★ shells, acorns, pinecones, feathers, dried natural material
- ★ clothes, costumes, shoes, jewellery, hats for dress-ups and role play
- ★ cardboard rolls, boxes, containers, fabric pieces, lace
- ★ containers such as wooden boxes, baskets, plastic bowls



We are constantly asking for these materials as we are a large school with many children. Please ask your child's teacher if you have materials and you are unsure whether it/they would be used.

Health and Safety

When children become sick or injured at school, they are assessed and attended to by the First Aid trained staff. Staff will follow the advice contained in the Dutch Medical Service handbook (Geneeskundige Dienst).

Teachers are informed and will communicate a child's minor illness or injury to the parents within 24 hours. Parents are called if the illness or injury needs further attention. Please report infectious diseases and conditions to prim-absences@eshthe Hague.nl and to your child's teacher. This includes: covid symptoms, rubella, head lice, chickenpox, impetigo, conjunctivitis (eyes), diarrhoea and influenza. Keep your child home to reduce the risk of spreading infection and to give your child the opportunity to rest and recover.

Please inform us, as soon as possible, if your child has any contagious or infectious disease, so that the school can take steps and where necessary, inform all other parents. We expect

children to be symptom-free for 24 hours (without medication) before parents bring them back to school. Parents must inform school if their child suffers from any medical, behavioural or allergic conditions. With this information, we can adjust expectations and learning conditions to support your child. The Early Years Section works very closely with the Learning Support Section to plan for the best possible outcomes for each child.

Head Lice

Head lice is a common problem and requires prompt action. Head lice are transmitted mainly through head-to-head contact. Children are prone to catching lice because they tend to have close physical contact with each other. Like many Dutch schools, we have implemented lice checks with parent volunteers. At ESH, this happens after every holiday. If a child has lice, parents will be asked to pick up their child and immediately treat them to eliminate the lice and prevent spreading. A lice check coordinator will inform parents of the class and/or year group when a home check is required. If your child is found to have head lice at home, please inform the School and treat your child before he/she returns to school. A child may be excused from attendance for no longer than one school day.



If a child is absent for more than a day due to head lice, school has a statutory obligation to report to the Compulsory Education Officer about the absence. If you wish to volunteer as a Lice Check parent, please email prim-absences@eshth Hague.nl. Training will be provided.

Communication with parents

Your class teacher will contact you before your child begins school. You will receive a welcome email with information about your child's new class, as well as a timetable for specialist lessons (PE and Music).

Class News

Class news is sent to parents regularly through email or our Social Schools communication app. Information is sent in the language of the section, outlining current learning, events, future planning and activities.

Whilst your child's teacher is happy to speak with you briefly before and after school, please make an appointment with the teacher for longer private consultations. Parents may email their child's teacher but do not expect an immediate answer during the day, as teaching children is their first priority. Please direct all of your concerns and inquiries to your child's teacher rather than the teaching assistant.

Parent Information Evening

At the beginning of the school year, parents will be invited to a parent information evening at school. Your child's teacher will discuss the Early Years curriculum and the organisation of your child's class. We will call on volunteers to assist the teacher with outings or events or to be a Class Representative.

Sharing of information

In Early Years, observations of the children during their play and activities are the best means of assessing development and learning. These observations are documented

with samples of work, language scripts and photographs and are recorded in each child's Portfolio. Observations are also recorded on the Early Years observation profile throughout the year. Parent teacher consultations are held twice per year and these conversations are a two way exchange about your child's development.

The purpose of observations and assessments is to assist the teachers, to gain a better understanding of your child's development and to plan opportunities for each child to reach his/her full potential. For children born during the autumn months August to the end of December, information sharing between parents and teachers will enable collaborative decisions regarding school readiness.

In line with the European Schools Education Curriculum, each Early Years child will help to create their own online portfolio. Your child's teacher will inform you further during the Parent Information Evening at the beginning of the new school year about how the portfolio will document your child's development and learning in the Early Years. Once you have been invited to join the online platform and you accept, you will begin to receive ongoing documentation which may be presented in photographs, video, sound recordings and artwork. You will receive regular 'reporting' of your child's development and learning.

The children will create their portfolios by selecting special items with their teacher. Parents may also contribute family celebrations and events with your child. These portfolios are presented in the language of your child's section.

Together with your child's teacher observations, the portfolios are used as a reporting tool during the parent/teacher conversations and may be shared by your child during the last informal meeting before moving to P1.

What do you (parents) need to provide the school with before your child begins?

- ★ Family contact details and emergency contact person
- ★ School Entry profile
- ★ Health/Medical information: allergies, medical conditions, specialist reports
- ★ Canteen lunch registration
- ★ Bus registration
- ★ Permission to take child home for lunch
- ★ After school care provider or after school activities

What does your child need to bring when starting school

- ★ Snack, water bottle and home lunch – if not a canteen lunch – in clearly named containers
- ★ Indoor/sport white-soled shoes for PE with velcro fastenings (named)
- ★ A change of spare clothes and footwear (named)
- ★ A happy smile and a cuddly toy for the first month of settling in.

Celebrations and Birthdays

On special occasions such as birthdays, individually wrapped treats for the class may be brought to school for sharing. We strive to promote a healthy lifestyle and ask for your cooperation in this respect. As we may have children in school with severe allergies, please avoid using nuts or nut products in food for sharing. If your child has a severe food allergy or intolerance, please let your child's teacher know along with the indications or symptoms and treatment.

Please hand out birthday invitations before, after, or outside school hours.

From time to time, your child's class will celebrate national days and school celebration days. You will be informed in advance and may like to help. Please keep dress-ups for designated dress-up days such as Book Week and cultural days. As these days have a theme, you will be able to help your child prepare well in advance.

Helping your child's class

Parent helpers for classes are always welcome. Activities such as art, cooking, class outings and others as specified by your child's teacher, are times when parents are invited to assist and participate. There may also be opportunities for you or your family members to read a story to the class in your Mother tongue; to be a special 'helper' for the morning; or to assist on outings. Please ask your child's teacher, as each class has specific needs.

We also encourage you to support your class representative and the PTA initiatives.

For more Early Years information

Please ask your child's teacher or consult the Primary School Guide on the school website for further details.

Early Years Section Leader:
Lynne Byatt
(l.byatt@eshth Hague.nl).

For change of address / email ★ For absences ★ For Special Leave ★ For late arrivals / early departures ★ For sickness / lice / contagious or infectious disease ★ For the Health Support Officer ★ In an emergency ★ When in doubt...

Contact: prim-absences@eshth Hague.nl / Call: 070 700-1600



★ Ambition

★ Positivity

★ Respect

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Our vision is to inspire students to be responsible, future focused and proactive citizens of Europe and the world.