

School of European
Education Heraklion

THE EUROPEAN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Source: Welcome Guide for new Educational Staff Edition 2024.v1

2024 EDITION

Curriculum and Structure of Studies

When we refer to the European Schools' curriculum, we mean the overall set of subjects and learning experiences that compose the educational programme of our institution along 20 years of schooling.

These are some of the main features of our curriculum:

Comprehensive: It requires pupils to study a combination of subjects from different areas until the end of their schooling. (Mathematics, at least one science, humanities and languages)

Multilingual: Pupils learn content through their dominant language and other working languages (EN, FR, DE, or Host Country Language). Moreover, they must learn a third language from s1 to s5, which can also become the language of instruction for other subjects.

Competence-based: It aims at developing the 8 key competences for life-long learning. The level of pupils' attainment in the different subjects is measured through specific descriptors for each subject at each level.

Value-oriented: We also aim at developing a European dimension of values in our pupils.

Flexible: Since the principle of differentiation is central in our teaching and learning approach. Moreover, in the European Baccalaureate cycle, there are no fixed combinations of subjects or streams.

The European School studies are structured as follows:

- Two years of early education (nursery school cycle) starting at the age of four.
- Five years of primary education (primary school cycle) starting at the age of six.
- Seven years of secondary education (secondary school cycle).

The secondary school cycle is divided in three sub-cycles:

- Observation cycle: it comprises the first three years of the secondary.
- Pre-orientation cycle: it comprises the 4th and 5th year of the secondary.
- Orientation cycle or European Baccalaureate cycle, which comprises the last two years of the secondary, 6th and 7th year.



The European School's leaving certificate is called the European Baccalaureate Diploma. It is recognised as a qualification for university entrance in all the EU member states, as well as in several other European and overseas countries.

Cycle	Years	Age
Early Education (nursery school cycle)	n1-n2	4 and 5
Primary school cycle	p1-p5	6-10
Secondary school cycle		
• Observation cycle	s1-s3	11-13
• Pre-orientation cycle	s4-s5	14-15
• Orientation cycle	s6-s7	16-18

Organisation of Studies

Please note that in SEEH there are 2 sections only the Greek with L1EL and English Section with L1EN.

Early Education (Nursery Cycle)

Pupils are admitted to the nursery cycle at the beginning of the school year in September of the calendar year in which the child reaches four years of age. The children aged four and five are often taught in mixed groups.

Early Education is designed to:

- prepare children for a happy, healthy, responsible, and successful life.
- develop children's personality and abilities.
- support children's learning potential.
- build up respect for others and the environment.
- respect and appreciate children's own cultural and social identity, its values and those of others.
- promote a European spirit.

Early Education is a fundamental part of lifelong education and learning and its central role is to support children's growth into ethical and responsible members of society. Teaching and learning in the early years support and monitors children's physical and psychological wellbeing, including social, cognitive, and emotional development and helps to prevent any difficulties that arise by creating the best possible learning opportunities.

Teaching and learning in the early years are holistic and the different areas of development are not separated. It is important to strengthen children's healthy sense of self-esteem with the aid of positive learning experiences and to provide opportunities for diverse interaction with other people. Children's world of experiences shall be enriched, and they should be assisted as they seek to find new areas of interest.

Primary Cycle

Pupils shall be admitted to primary year p1 at the beginning of the school year in September of the calendar year in which the child reaches six years of age.

In the Primary cycle the focus is on the mother tongue or dominant language (L1), Mathematics and a second language (L2), but Art, Music, Physical Education, Discovery of the World and Religion/Ethics are important, as are the “European Hours”, where children from the different sections with mixed nationalities meet for a variety of activities.

Primary cycle harmonised timetable

Subject	Years p1 and p2	Years p3, p4, p5
Language 1 (L1) (SWALS L1)	8 hours (2 hours 30 minutes)	6 hours 45 minutes (3 hours 45 minutes)
Mathematics	4 hours	5 hours 15 minutes
Language 2 (L2)	2 hours 30 minutes	3 hours 45 minutes
Music		
Art	5 hours	3 hours
Physical Education		
Discovery of the World	1 hour 30 minutes	3 hours
European Hours	-	1 hour 30 minutes
Religion/Ethics	1 hour	1 hour 30 minutes
Recreation	3 hours 30 minutes	2 hours 30 minutes
Total	25 hours 30 minutes	27 hours 15 minutes
ONL - Irish/Maltese*	1 hour 30 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes
ONL - Finnish/ Swedish*	1 hour 30 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes

*ONL is taught during the school year day

Secondary Cycle

Secondary s1-s3 (Observation Cycle)

Pupils normally enter the Secondary cycle in the calendar year in which they turn 11, following the successful completion of the European School’s primary cycle or an equivalent course duly certified by an officially recognised school.

The seven years of secondary education are organised in the following way: for the first three years, pupils follow a common curriculum, in what is known as the observation cycle. Most subjects are taught in the mother tongue or dominant language (L1).

All pupils begin to study a first foreign language (L3) from secondary year s1 onwards. In secondary year s3, all pupils study Human Sciences and Religion or Ethics in their second or working language (L2). In secondary year s2, Latin is offered as an option. In secondary year s3, pupils who chose Latin in year s2 continue to study it. For the other pupils, ICT is offered as an option.

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 Overview of courses and periods: s1 to s3

	Number of periods per week (1 period = 45 minutes of teaching)		
	s1	s2	s3
Language 1	5	5	4
Mathematics	4	4	4
Language 2	5	4	4
Language 3	2	3	3
Physical Education	3	3	3
Religion / Ethics	2	2	2
Human Sciences	3	3	3
Integrated Science	4	4	4
Latin	-	2*	2*
Art	2	2	2
Music	2	2	2
ICT	1	1	2*
TOTAL	33	33 or 35	31 or 33
Ancient Greek for pupils with EL as L1	-	2**	2**
ONL - Other National Language	2**	2**	2**
TOTAL for pupils entitled to receive Ancient Greek or ONL**	35	35 or 37	33 or 35

*Optional courses

- s1: No optional courses
- s2: Optional LATIN
- s3: Optional ICT and LAT, pupils can choose only one of these two options.

**Options governed by specific rules (ONL and Ancient Greek)

The Ancient Greek course is organised for pupils who take the Language 1 Greek course, from the second to the fifth year of secondary education. Ancient Greek is also an optional four-period course from secondary year s4 to secondary year s7 taught through Greek, in another L1, L2 or the Host Country Language.



Secondary s4 and s5 (Pre-Orientation Cycle)

In years s4 and s5 sciences are taught separately through the following subjects: Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Pupils may also choose between an extended course in Mathematics (6 periods per week) or a basic course in Mathematics (4 periods per week). Other options include Economics, a second foreign language (L4) and Ancient Greek.

At the end of s3 pupils and parents will receive advice from the career's guidance teams in the school about subject choice. Subjects chosen for s4 must be kept for s5. Pupils cannot drop or change subjects between s4 and s5. The *only allowed* change between s4 and s5 is from Mathematics 6 periods to Mathematics 4 periods provided the pupil retains the minimum number of periods or from Mathematics 4 periods to Mathematics 6 periods with the agreement of the Class Council.

Overview of courses and periods: s4 to s5

Mandatory Core Subjects	Number of periods per week	
	s4	s5
Language 1	4	4
Mathematics	4 or 6	4 or 6
Language 2	3	3
Language 3	3	3
Physical Education	2	2
Religion / Ethics	1	1
History	2	2
Geography	2	2
Biology	2	2
Chemistry	2	2
Physics	2	2
TOTAL	27 or 29	27 or 29
Options	s4	s5
Latin	4	4
Ancient Greek	4	4
Language 4	4	4
Economy	4	4
Art	2	2
Music	2	2
ICT	2	2
TOTAL	31* to 35**	31* to 35**
Ancient Greek for pupils with EL as L1	2	2
ONL - Other National Language	4***	4***
TOTAL for pupils entitled to receive Ancient Greek or ONL	33 or 37	33 or 37

*The minimum number of courses taken by the pupil must amount to 31 or more periods per week.
 If a pupil takes Mathematics 6 periods, the minimum will be 33 periods.

**Exceeding the maximum 35 periods.

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***Pupils choosing the Other National Language cannot choose Language 4.

As an exception, pupils are allowed, with the agreement of the Class Council and the approval of the directorate, to have more than 35 periods per week if they wish to attend other existing courses which can be combined with their personal timetable.

Secondary s6 and s7 (Orientation or European Bacculaureate Cycle)

Years s6 and s7 form a unity known as the European Bacculaureate cycle. No admissions can be accepted in year s7. Pupils must have completed without interruption not less than the final two years of secondary education in a European School or in a School Accredited by the Board of Governors to be eligible for obtaining the European Bacculaureate Diploma.

Although there is a core of compulsory subjects, including Language 1, Language 2, Mathematics, at least one scientific subject, Philosophy, Physical Education, History and Geography, pupils have a wide range of further options and may choose to study some subjects for two periods per week, four periods per week or add three periods per week advanced level courses in Language 1, Language 2 or Mathematics.

See also section on [The European Bacculaureate](https://www.eursc.eu/en) on <https://www.eursc.eu/en>



Secondary School – Careers’ Guidance

The Careers Guidance programme is part of the secondary school curriculum. It is part of the learning experiences of the secondary school pupils in the European Schools.

The main aim of career’s guidance is to inform and orient pupils about the different subject choices and options offered in the secondary school. In the European Bacculaureate cycle, career’s guidance focuses mostly on the transition to further education and the professional future. In many cases, careers’ guidance teachers process pupils’ applications for higher education institutions.

Every school has a career’s guidance team composed of teachers from the different sections that will spend several periods (lessons) with pupils and organize meetings with parents. Every European School can decide at local level how careers guidance lessons are organised. Schools are given a certain degree of autonomy so that they can address efficiently their specific needs and circumstances.

This table gives a general idea on the overall organisation and activities.

Year	Maximum number of periods per school year	Some activities
s2	2 periods	To inform, explain and advise about the choices to be made for s3
s3	6 periods	To inform, explain and advise about the choices to be made for s4
s5	16 periods	To prepare the choice of subjects and options, considering the consequences for future studies and careers. To organize an information meeting for parents/guardians of pupils
s6 and s7	16 for the two school years	To prepare for European Bacculaureate choice of examinations To give advice about further education To organize visits to education fairs or universities To assist pupils with University applications (paying a fee depending on the complexity and time spent)

Please, note that in this context, the term 'period' should be regarded as a 'single' period (a 45-minute lesson) and not as a weekly period throughout the year.

How much did you learn?



Scan or click to find out

The Eight Key Competences for life-long learning in the European Schools

The pupils of the European Schools are future citizens of Europe and the world. As such, they need a wide range of competences to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world. Therefore, the European Schools seek to develop the 8 Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, as adopted by the European Council and the European Parliament. These competences are at the centre of the European School curriculum, and they are crucial for active citizenship, social inclusion and future access to further education and employment.

In the introductory page of all syllabuses, we can read that the European Schools' syllabuses seek to develop all these key competences in the pupils.



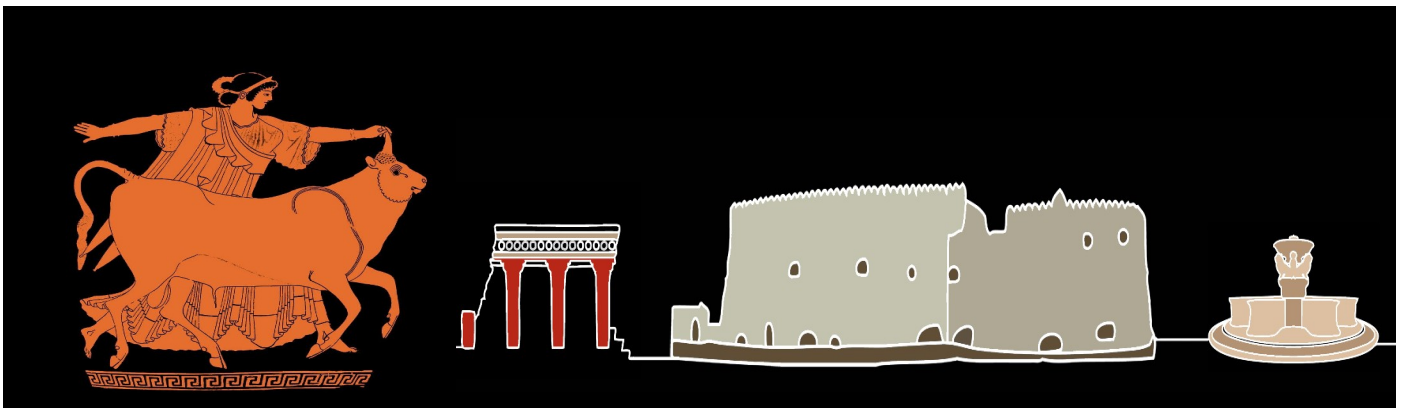
The 8 Key Competences. European Commission.

The 8 Key Competences are well-known by the teachers who join our system:

1. Literacy competence
2. Multilingual competence
3. Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering
4. Digital competence
5. Personal, social, and learning to learn competence
6. Citizenship competence
7. Entrepreneurship competence
8. Cultural awareness and expression competence

It will be important for teachers to take in consideration that a central aspect of their job will be to embed these 8 Key Competences in their every day's teaching and learning. We would like our pupils to be equipped with all the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make them successful and independent learners throughout their lives.

Pupils in our system acquire an academically strong curriculum, culminating in the reputed European Baccalaureate Diploma. However, there is still room for improvement in the field of embedding cross-curricular competences, such as citizenship, digital competence, entrepreneurship, or sustainability. The Pedagogical Development Unit at the Office of the Secretary General is committed to publishing background documents and good practices on its [Intranet](#) to support a better understanding of this concept. An [online notebook published by the Pedagogical Development Unit](#) provides more links and information in these areas. This resource will be gradually enriched.



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Syllabuses in the European Schools

The syllabuses of all the language sections are – except for L1 – identical and the same standards are required to be met. All the syllabuses followed in the different sections lead up to the same examination: the European Baccalaureate.

To guarantee recognition of the European Baccalaureate certificate, syllabuses must meet at least the minimum requirements of all the member states. Since these vary from country to country, syllabuses are designed and written after negotiations between national experts – more particularly the members of the Boards of Inspectors – based on detailed comparison of national curricula.

In this sense, the European Schools' syllabuses stand apart from national ones, as they are characterized by a refreshing lack of excessive detail and prescription. Emphasizing a broader perspective across various subjects, these syllabuses could be described as open-ended, granting teachers the invaluable chance to engage in meaningful discussions and collaborate with colleagues regarding their implementation in the classroom. This approach gives teachers a sense of freedom when it comes to selecting teaching methods and resources.

Inspectors are responsible for the quality assurance of the syllabuses. Syllabuses are often drafted by working groups in which teachers, the inspector responsible for the subject and external experts are involved. The syllabuses are subject to the scrutiny of the Quality Assurance Working Group and the Board of Inspectors and to the final approval of the Joint Teaching Committee of the European Schools, which is the pedagogical supervisory authority.

In general, syllabuses are reviewed and revised every seven to ten years. Minor changes may, however, be proposed at any time.

Want to find a syllabus?

<https://www.eursc.eu/en/European-Schools/studies/syllabuses>

The screenshot shows the website interface for finding syllabuses. At the top, there is a search bar and a 'Scroll down' button. Below this is a section titled 'Syllabuses and Attainment descriptors' with a 'Filter' button on the left. The filter sidebar contains the following categories and counts:

- Filter by: 2021-01-0-19-en-6
Secondary - Scientific Subjects
Physics - Formula Booklet
S7
e5
- Cycle: Nursery (33)
Primary (87)
Secondary (327)
- Year level: 2021-01-0-56-en-2
Secondary - Scientific Subjects
Physics
S6
e5
- L1: M2 (37)
- P1 (73)
- P2 (72)
- P3 (74)
- P4 (74)
- show more
- Group of subjects: 2016-07-0-12-en-4
L4 Languages - Language 4
S4, S5, S6, S7
e5
- Scientific Subjects (141)
- Languages (137)
- General education (136)
- 2017-09-0-25-en-2
Secondary Languages
L5 Languages - Language 5 - Complementary course
S5, S7
e5
- Subject: 2019-05-0-8-en-7
Mathematics (49)

On the right side of the filter sidebar, there is a 'Find your syllabus' button.

How much did you learn?



Scan or click to find out.

Harmonised Pedagogical Planning and Record of Material Covered

Harmonised Pedagogical Planning is a collaborative exercise in the European Schools and the teachers teaching the same subject have to agree on common planning. Each planning document needs to show in a visible and explicit manner the embedding of the 8 Key Competences.

We recommend you look at the following competence frameworks developed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) or the Council of Europe. They can be used as a source of inspiration for the embedding of the 8 Key Competences:

- [LifeComp](#)
- [LifeComp into Action](#)
- [EntreComp](#)
- [DigComp 2.2](#)
- [GreenComp](#)
- [Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture](#)



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These frameworks should not be considered as standards but only as a guide which could help teachers in the development of their work in this area.

We would like to insist that this process of Harmonised Pedagogical Planning is not expected to be perfect as from the first year or to cover all possible 8 Key Competences. Each school can have a different implementation pace and focus on one or other aspect every year. It is also to be made clear that teachers are not expected to demonstrate the inclusion of all 8 Key Competences in each lesson they teach. It is more important that the reflection starts and that gained experience by the teachers in the classrooms serves to improve the Harmonised Pedagogical Planning from year to year.

A Common Forward Planning will contribute to a common reflection among the teachers of the same subject across the sections in what regards to the organisation of teaching activities and to the embedding the 8 Key Competences. We need to insist that this task is part of a continuous cycle of improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.

Teachers will need to agree about “what” to teach, and they will share their ideas about “how” to teach and “what with” to teach. Once the Forward Planning would be agreed upon by the group of teachers concerned under the leadership of the Subject Referent or the Subject Coordinator, individual teachers may still introduce their own personal remarks, depending on their own teaching styles or particular circumstances they may foresee in their classrooms, only if they so wish, since this is not compulsory.

The regulations (article 26 of the General Rules of the European Schools) foresee that teachers should also have a Record of Material Covered (logbook) where teachers would document their experience of the implementation of the Harmonised Pedagogical Planning. The experiences documented by teachers will then be used by the group of teachers teaching the same subject to modify and improve the pedagogical planning year after year. This would become a cyclical process to adjust and improve the Harmonised Pedagogical Planning continuously.



How much did you learn?



Scan or click to find out

The Key Competences and the Forward Planning

Language Policy of the European Schools

Pupils in the European Schools can learn up to five languages. Firstly, their mother tongue or dominant language (Language 1) is taught from Nursery to the end of Secondary and used as a medium to teach various subjects, especially the scientific subjects in the Secondary School. Secondly, their second or working language (Language 2) is taught from p1 up to the end of Secondary and it is also used as a medium to teach various subjects, especially humanities in Secondary School. The study of a first foreign language (Language 3) is compulsory from s1 until s5 and it can be further studied as an option in years s6 and s7. Language 4 is an optional subject from s4 up to s7 and Language 5 is a complementary course in years s6 and s7.

The Language Policy of the European Schools sets the key principles regarding the teaching and the use of languages. These principles are the following:

1. The primary importance of the mother tongue or dominant language (Language 1). In the European School system, the term 'dominant language' is used to refer to the language in which a pupil, at the moment of enrolment in the system is the most proficient, especially in education-related domains of language use, and/or in which the child is most likely to perform well academically, linguistically and emotionally in the course of his/her education in the European School system. The dominant language will serve as the main language of learning for most pupils and will be fostered throughout the pupil's education as the basis for other learning.
2. The recognition of and commitment to support the national languages of each Member State of the European Union.
3. The offer of a multilingual educational system that promotes plurilingualism.
4. Enrolment of pupils into language sections.
5. The promotion of plurilingualism by supporting the effective acquisition of the Language 1 and of two other European languages (Language 2 and Language 3).
6. The promotion of the development of linguistic competence through Content Integrated Language Learning (CLIL), offering education through languages other than Language 1.

Language teaching

The principles of language teaching and learning and the role of languages in the European Schools curriculum can be found in the [Language Policy of the European Schools](#) (2019-01-D-35).

In the European School in Heraklion we have two language sections the Greek Section and the English Section. In the English Section the dominant language is English EN and in the Greek Section the dominant language is the greek language EL.

See more on the European Schools website: <https://www.eurisc.eu/en>

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Pupils start studying a first foreign language (L2) in primary year p1. That language may be English, French, German or the Host Country Language in the schools where this has been approved. When the Host Country Language is offered as a L2 in a school, the subjects taught through L2 may be taught through English, French, German or the Host Country Language.

- Pupils start studying a second foreign language (L3) in secondary year s1.
- Pupils may start studying a third foreign language (L4) in secondary year s4.
- A fourth foreign language (L5) is a complementary course in secondary years s6 and s7.
- Latin is taught from year s2 and Ancient Greek is taught from year s4.
- L3, L4, L5 can, in principle, be any of the official EU languages provided there is a minimum number of requests.

Minimum proficiency level in all modern languages according to the 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages'

	Nursery	Primary	S3	S5	S7
L2		A2	B1	B2	C1
L3			A1+	A2+	B1+
L4				A1	A2+
L5					A1
ONL	A1.1 oral	A1.2	A2	B1	B2

Use of languages

1. In p3-p5, the subject 'European Hours' is taught to mixed language groups, generally in the pupil's L2 or in the language of the host country.
2. In s1-s5, Art, Music, Physical Education and, to an extent ICT, are taught in mixed language groups, i.e. groups formed with pupils from different language sections. The language of tuition will normally be the pupils' L2 but it can also be any other language in the pupils' curriculum. In s6-s7, Art, Music and Physical Education are taught in a language the pupil has the adequate level of competence.
3. In s3, Human Sciences courses and the Religion and Ethics courses are taught in L2 (DE, EN or FR). From s4, History, Geography, Religion and Ethics courses and Economics courses are organised in L2 (DE, EN and FR).
4. In s6-s7, if the 4-period option course in History and Geography cannot be organised in the pupil's second or working language (DE, EN, FR or HCL), the pupil may follow it in another second or working language provided that this is not the pupil's L1, with a favourable opinion of the Class Council and the approval of the directorate.

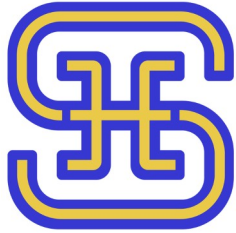
Want to know more?

<https://www.eursc.eu/en/European-Schools/studies/language-sections>
[Language Policy of the European Schools](https://www.eursc.eu/en/European-Schools/enrolments/enrolment-procedure)
<https://www.eursc.eu/en/European-Schools/enrolments/enrolment-procedure>

How much did you learn?



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