



European
Joint
Support Unit

Education

Lille





NURSERY

Having a place in nursery is very hard. You have to register at least one year before so as soon as you receive the assignment order you have to request it.

You can introduce a request to the public administrative establishment Lille Social Action Center (CCAS) in Lille:

CCAS DE LILLE
PLACE AUGUSTIN LAURENT
59000 LILLE
From 3 to 6 years old:

Ecole Henri Matisse
Director : Mme Hess
Allée des Charmes
59700 Wasquehal
+33 3 20 72 70 49
ce-0594704t@ac-lille.fr

From 6 to 12 years old:
Ecole Marcel Pagnol
Director : Mme Delottry
Allée des Charmes
59700 Wasquehal
+33 3 20 72 01 39
ce.0594705m@ac-lille.fr

EDUCATION

The French education system long enjoyed a reputation for having one of the best education systems in the world, with a nationally set curriculum, traditional methods of learning, high academic standards and strict discipline. However, in recent years some bemoan a perceived slip in French education, and according to the latest OECD/PISA world rankings (2012), France dropped three places for educational standards for 15-year olds. It is now placed 25 out of 65 countries, with 43 percent of students having difficulty in mathematics and with a widening equality gap within the school population.

The French educational philosophy emphasises:

- The authority of the teacher;
- Individual competition including an absolute grading system (no grading 'on the curve');
- Stress on analytical thought and rote learning as opposed to creativity; generally high academic expectations.



The French don't necessarily expect children to have 'fun' at school. Sports and creative activities are encouraged but generally organised by community or private associations, not by the schools.

French schooling is free and mandatory from ages six to 16, although most French children start earlier. Another two years of study are required if a student is to sit the baccalauréat exam, which they must pass to enter university. Class sizes tend to be large, with one teacher for some 30 or more students.

The school year starts at the beginning of September. French schools have long holidays – a two-month summer holiday starting in July two or three weeks at Christmas and Easter, as well as half term breaks. Dates vary according to where you live; France has been divided into three zones for school holidays and you can find your zone and check school term dates and school holidays in your area. You can also ask at your local mairie. Private schools set their own dates.

Compulsory education in France

Although French education is compulsory for children resident in France between the ages of six and 16, many children enter preschool at the age of three and more than 50 percent of 18–21-year olds in France are in full-time higher education. Around 64 per cent of students complete their secondary education by taking the baccalauréat (le bac) or the baccalauréat professionnel (le bac prof) examinations.

State education is free for French citizens and others who have proof of residence, although parents have to pay for stationery and school trips. Allocation de rentrée scolaire (ARS) is a means-tested grant available to help parents with the cost of schooling for children aged six to 18. To find out more or download an application form, contact Caisses D'Allocation Familiales (CAF).

Schools are mixed sex and secular. While the majority of schools are state-run (écoles publiques), there are also private schools under contract (sous contrat) to the French government, whereby the government pays the teachers' salaries, the school follows the national curriculum, and fees are reasonably low. There are also private schools (écoles privées) that are fully independent (hors contrat), some of which are international schools. Schools affiliated to a particular religion are also usually private and thus fee paying. There are public schools with bilingual programmes but in most cases bilingual education is only available in a private school. For more information about different types of school in France, see Expatica's guide on how to choose a school in France.

Most French schools follow a national curriculum set by the Ministry of Education but the French government published reforms in May 2015 that would allow schools to set 20 percent of the curriculum themselves.

There is no school uniform at most schools in France, and your child's grade is determined by the calendar year of birth (so all children born between 1 January and 31 December of a particular year will be in the same grade).



The school year in France

The school year starts at the beginning of September. French schools have long holidays – a two-month summer holiday starting in July, two or three weeks at Christmas and Easter, as well as half term breaks. Dates vary according to where you live; France has been divided into three zones for school holidays and you can find your zone and check school term dates and school holidays in your area. You can also ask at your local mairie. Private schools set their own dates.

The school week in France

Students go to school between 24 and 28 hours a week, spread over four, four and a half, or five days depending on the region. Students preparing the baccalauréat may have as many as 40 hours per week. Some schools close on Wednesday afternoons and older pupils may have lessons on a Saturday. Although Saturday classes were once a common practice in French primary schools, this has been phased out and replaced by a longer school year.

The school day starts around 8.30am and ends at 4.30pm (later for older students), with two breaks (récré) and at least an hour and a half for lunch. Students can return home for lunch or stay and eat in the school canteen. School lunch usually consists of a starter, main meal, dessert and cheese; costs for this vary. After the school day ends students can go home – with their parents' permission – or go to études (study lessons).

Many schools have a fee-based childcare system, service de puériculture, available before and after school and during vacations. These services, as well as la cantine, must be signed up for separately and fees are often means-tested.

Students, even younger children, are expected to do homework most evenings – older pupils can have two or more hours every day.

How to register your child into a French school

If you are enrolling your child in a public school for the first time, contact the service des écoles at your local mairie or arrondissement. Children are generally expected to attend the school near their place of residence. In Paris, a child aged six or more who does not speak French may be sent by the local town hall to a school where French-language courses for beginners are available, if available.

To enrol in a collège or lycée, you can contact the establishment of your choice directly. If your child is arriving from outside France and is entering collège or lycée for the first time, you will need to contact the educational district's administrative head or education authority (inspection académique, service de la division des élèves, or rectorat) in your area. Your child may have to take a French-language test.



The structure of the French education system

After nursery school or kindergarten (école maternelle), which is optional, the French compulsory education system is divided into three stages or 'cycles':

- primary school (école)
- middle school (collège)
- high school (lycée)

Preschool/nursery (école maternelle)

Preschools or nursery schools – écoles maternelles – provide care for children from two and three years old until they are six. While children are not obliged to attend, state facilities are free and are an excellent way for young children of expat parents to learn French quickly and easily. The curriculum aims to prepare children for primary school, and includes reading, writing, numeracy and sometimes even a foreign language. For more information on maternelles and other preschool nurseries and daycare options, see Expatica's guide to preschool options in France, French daycare and childcare options in France.

Primary school (ecole primaire)

Children in France attend primary school from the age of six to 11 years old. Unless your child attended the maternelle, you should apply to the school through your local mairie. You'll need your child's birth certificate, proof of residence and an up-to-date vaccination certificate. For more information on applying to primary school, see Expatica's guide on how to choose a school in France.

There are five levels:

- Cours préparatoire (CP) or 11ème – age 6 to 7 years old
- Cours élémentaire (CE1) or 10ème – age 7 to 8 years old
- Cours élémentaire (CE2) or 9ème – age 8 to 9 years old
- Cours moyen 1 (CM1) or 8ème – 9 to 10 years old
- Cours moyen 2 (CM2) or 7ème – 10 to 11 years old

The school week is around 24 hours; primary schools often close for all or part of Wednesday. There are lessons on literacy, numeracy, geography/history and commonly a foreign language, often English. Your child must be enrolled by the June prior to the September start of the school year.

If a child needs to repeat a year, redoubler, it is most often suggested at the end of a cycle. This decision can be determined by a group of school directors and teachers, conseil de cycle, although parents may appeal their decisions. However, there isn't the same negative stigma attached to repeating as in English-speaking countries, and some 30 percent of students may repeat at least once in their schooling life.

The administrator, usually a member of the teaching staff, is known as the directeur or directrice; teachers are referred to as maître or maîtresse.



Middle school (collège)

Between the ages of 11 and 15, students in France attend a middle school or collège. All pupils are accepted; there is no entrance exam or requirements for state schools. You must enroll through your local mairie by the June before the September start of the school year. Read more about the application process in Expatica's guide on how to choose a school in France.

There are four levels:

- 6ème – 11 to 12 years old
- 5ème – 12 to 13 years old
- 4ème – 13 to 14 years old
- 3ème – 14 to 15 years old

The syllabus aims to give all pupils a general education and consists of French, mathematics, history/geography, civics, biology, physics, technology, art, music, and physical education. Over the four years in the college, the more academic students tend to choose to take more general classes while the less academic tend to take more vocational classes.

In collège, marks (notes) become an important aspect in a child's schooling, with tests (contrôles) becoming commonplace. During the year students are tested every week and at the end of the year have to pass with an average of 12 marks out of 20. Scoring under 10 may mean repeating the year, although no stigma is attached to this. Parents can appeal a decision for their child to repeat (redoubler), but rarely do.

At the end of the four years, at the age of 15, all students must sit the brevet, the Diplôme National du Brevet (or Brevet des Collèges). Students are tested on French, mathematics and history/geography (choosing which one they want to answer on the day) but they must also have passed their B2i (computer/internet skills) during the year and have reached a level A2 in a foreign language. There are proposed changes to the history element.

The brevet is also marked on continuous assessment (including general attitude and behaviour) during the last year of college (3ème) – so some students may have already passed the brevet before they even sit the exam. Students have to get 10 marks out of 20 to pass; 12 for a Mention Assez Bien, 14 for a Mention Bien and 16+ for a Mention Très Bien.

After the brevet, students may leave the education system altogether if they are 16 (though most do not) or continue their education in a lycée. Academic pupils will move onto a lycée général or lycée technique, while less academic may go to a lycée professionnel.



High school or lycée

The last three years of secondary education – from 15 to 18 years old – are spent at a lycée general, a lycée technique or a lycée professionnel. Students take the same core curriculum of some eight or nine subjects but are offered three electives and an artistic workshop. At the end of this year, the key decision is made as to which baccalaureat the student will pursue. Contact the individual school for enrolment requirements and procedures.

The levels are:

- Seconde (CAP, BEP) – 15 to 16 years old
- Première (CAP, BEP) – 16 to 17 years old
- Terminale (BAC) – 17 to 18 years old

Lycée general and lycée technique

Students start to specialise with the aim of sitting the Baccalauréat (le bac), which is the qualification to enter university at 18 years old. Students choose different 'series'. The general bac consists of the L series (literary studies), ES series (economic and social studies) or S series (sciences). The S bac is considered the toughest.

There are also some seven baccalauréat technologique, diplomas based on specific technical skills. The technology bac series include Science and Industrial (STI), Science and Laboratory (STL), Health and Social Sciences (STSS), Science and Management (STG), Music and Dance (TMD), Agronomy (STAV) and Hotel Management. If the lycée has an International or European section there may be tests taken in English that count towards the marks.

Students have to pass all subjects in the series (getting 10/20 in the exam) to pass; those getting 8/20 or under have to retake the year and sit again. Those who pass can get a place at one of France's universities.

Sitting for the tests can be a nail-biting experience and many students may add a series of practice tests to their regular studies during the final two years. However, many complain that the testing level has decreased and is one reason why many students fail their first year of university, although ministers and civil servants disagree.

Theoretically, the lycées offer the same standard of education for all; in practice, in league tables published in the main newspapers, certain lycées (mainly private) consistently top the rankings.



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For more information

Ministry of Education

Eduscol: information on French education for teachers and students.

CNOUS: national centre for French and foreign students.

ONISEP (Office National d'Information sur les Enseignements et les Professions):
collection of brochures and periodicals on education, professions and openings.

Les enfants d'abord: information about home education.

Service-Public: information about special needs education in France.

SESSAD: special needs education.

How to choose a school in France

French higher education: Universities in France

4, rue de Tourcoing 59290 Wasquehal

**0033 (0)3 20 24 56 58 [http://www.notredamewasquehal.fr/contact/
bonjour@notredame-wasquehal.fr](http://www.notredamewasquehal.fr/contact/bonjour@notredame-wasquehal.fr)**

A family school of eight classes from the small section to CM2, located in the Capreau district with great enthusiasm and dynamism! This is the program that we suggest you share on the pages of this site to show you life as it swarms "between our walls". We all, teachers and non-teachers alike, have as common goals the success and development of each child in our school. Our identity is expressed by our desire to be a school: Turned to the protection of our environment, the establishment of a welcoming and ecological living environment. Promoting the school / family link because "To grow a child, you need a whole village. - African proverb. Responding to the specific educational needs of students, Carrying out its missions of teaching and education, with authority and benevolence.

School Fees/Administration

The point of contact with regards school fees is the budget assistant at EJSU who can be contacted via email at: EJSU-J1-Audit-Clk@mod.uk

If the post is gapped and you do not receive a reply, the first point of contact is:
Naomi.Cresswell673@mod.gov.uk

The postal address is:

Audit Clerk
European Joint Support Unit
SHAPE
BFPO 26



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Education for Adults

Lil'langues – Language and cultural centre
20 rue du Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny
59000 Lille
0033 (0) 3 20 37 42 66
contact@lillangues.com

LiL'Langues is a French as a Foreign Language (FLE) quality accredited school, specialising in the teaching of the French language and culture in Lille (France). Located in the heart of one of Europe's largest metropolitan areas (Eurometropolis), our language centre offers a warm and friendly learning environment to follow a French course and/or participate in a cultural activity. Our dynamic and innovative teaching methods will allow you to progress quickly.