

GUIDE FOR FOREIGN PARENTS

ON

**HOW SCHOOLS
WORK IN ITALY**
Basic information
in greeting your sons and
daughters in school

WELCOME

TO _____

AND ITS SCHOOLS

This document is our chance to greet you and help you understand how schools in Italy work.

You can register your child immediately, even if the school year has already started.

All children have the right to attend school, even if they are not yet legal residents.

(UN, International Convention on the Rights of Children, Art. 28)

HOW LONG SCHOOL LASTS

Compulsory education lasts 10 years:

- Primary school from 6 to 11 years of age (5 years): registration is free of charge, as is the provision of textbooks.
- Lower secondary school from 11 to 14 years of age (3 years): registration is free of charge. Textbooks are at the family's expense.
- Two years of upper secondary school from 14 to 16 years of age (2 years): registration is free of charge, but scholastic institutions tend to request a contribution towards management costs. Textbooks are at the family's expense.

At a charge, you can also send your children to:

- Playschool from 0 to 3 years of age;
- Nursery school from 3 to 6 years of age (if state-run, you will only be charged for lunch);
- Three years of upper secondary school from 17 to 19 years of age.

WHEN TO REGISTER YOUR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Children turning 6 years of age by 31st December must be registered in the class first, and the school year starts in the same September. Parents can also choose to register their children in school at 5 and a half years of age, if they turn 6 by 30th April of the year subsequent to that of registration.

Children **have the right and obligation to go to school** if they are of age to do so and can be registered in the first year or subsequent years **at any time** during the school year.

Parents must contact the school's secretary's office and ask when they can register their children. Registration is carried out online for the first year of each school.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR SCHOOL REGISTRATION

- **National insurance number**
- **Birth certificate** (if you do not have this document, bring a passport and/or permit of stay);
- **Vaccination certificate;**
- **Documents of all schools frequented.**

Should any of this documentation not be available, the parent can self-certify and take responsibility for anything required.

Upon registration, you will be asked to complete the forms for the following:

- Choice of type of school
- Whether you want your child to follow Catholic religious education
- Registration to the school canteen

WHICH TIMETABLE

Many schools give parents the opportunity to choose between a variety of possibilities:

- 40 hours a week
- 27 or 30 hours a week

The lessons timetable may vary from school to school and depending on the grade (primary or secondary).

When your child stays at school in the afternoon as well, they will be able to eat in the school canteen.

At the end of lessons, children can leave the school premises only if their parents (or any other adult appointed by the parents) are there to collect them. In secondary schools, there is a delegation form allowing pupils to return home alone.

Punctuality is important!

*Find out now what the timetable
is in your child's year.*

HOW TO REGISTER YOUR CHILDREN IN THE CANTEEN

All primary schools include a lunch canteen service available for those days when children are at school also in the afternoon, or when the morning exit is postponed. **The canteen service is at a fee** and is managed by the Council of residence.

1. To activate the service, please contact the school office in your town hall.
2. The menu includes a wide range of healthy foods.
3. Should there be any foods that your child cannot eat for religious or health motives, there is an alternative available.
4. Should you require a special diet for health motives, please provide a certificate from your paediatrician.
5. Should you require a special diet for religious reasons, a declaration from the parents is sufficient.

WHEN PARENTS START WORK EARLY OR FINISH LATE

In order to help families with special work times, some schools – through the parents' committees or the council – offer a PRE-SCHOOL and AFTER SCHOOL service. This service may be provided for a fee.

TEACHING OF CATHOLIC RELIGION OR AN ALTERNATIVE CHOICE

Catholic religious education is optional in Italian schools. Therefore, upon registration the parents must make their choice, which will be valid for the entire year, between:

- Catholic religious education;
- Didactic and training group activities;
- Individual study and/or research activities assisted by a teacher;
- Early exit or late entry to school (when RE is the first or last lesson of the day).

THE SCHOLASTIC YEAR

School lasts 9 months.

It starts mid-September and ends mid-June.

There are two holiday periods:

- two weeks at Christmas (usually from 23rd December to 6th January);
- a week for Easter (in March or April).

Other holidays are:

- 1st November
- 8th December
- 25th April
- 1st May
- 2nd June

Each Comprehensive Institute sets further holidays distributed throughout the year. Any other holidays taken to return to your country of origin must be communicated in writing to the school secretary.

The school will inform you in writing on your child's diary.

Always check your child's diary!

THE STAFF

The following people work in our schools:

1) The school director – responsible for the general functioning of the entire scholastic institute and for coordinating all members of staff.

2) The teachers - **a)** Each year has several teachers teaching different subjects. **b)** One of these, is the reference teacher for families. **c)** You can go to any of these for assistance.

There may also be a teacher for the educational assistance of students with disabilities (*remedial teacher*).

3) The secretaries – manage the administration side of the school.

They deal with:

- registering children in school and its services;
- all scholastic documentation necessary for the pupil.

4) The caretakers – deal with:

- opening and closing the school and managing the porter's service;
- welcoming the parents;
- helping to control children outside of the classrooms;
- answering the telephone;
- tidying and cleaning the rooms.

WHAT CHILDREN LEARN IN SCHOOL

(the subjects taught)

- Italian language
- Foreign languages (*from the first year of primary school: English; in secondary school another language is added*)
- Mathematics
- Sciences
- Technology
- History
- Geography
- Design / Art (*image education, artistic education*)
- Gymnastics (*motor education, physical education*)
- Music
- Religion (if chosen at registration)

Schools also organise other educational and training activities such as theatre, cinema, photography and road safety.

EDUCATIONAL OUTINGS AND SCHOOL TRIPS

Throughout the year, the school organises *school outings* in the city and surrounding area (for example, library, museums, exhibitions, parks, etc.).

They also often organise a *school trip* to another town or city or places of cultural interest.

The school will always notify the family of the outing or trip and ask the parents to sign a consent form for the child to take part.

All fees are to be paid by the family.

ABSENCES

Any time a child is absent from school, the parent must give appropriate justification, writing the reason for the absence in the child's diary and signing it.

INTEGRATING YOUR CHILD

To ensure integration, your child will be accompanied if necessary by a linguistic/intercultural mediator who (almost always) speaks your native language.

The mediator, together with the teachers, will meet the family to gather information.

Teachers will organise personalised activities to teach oral and written Italian.

Some schools also have specialist teachers responsible for teaching Italian to the foreign pupils.

PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS

The teachers and parents will meet regularly to discuss:

- the scholastic programme;
- the children and their progress;
- any difficulties and how to overcome them.

These meetings are very important as children's education and integration in school depends greatly on the collaboration between school and family.

Meetings:

- **INTERVIEWS** - The teacher will inform parents about which day to meet and discuss their child. Parents can also request a meeting with the teachers.
- **ASSEMBLIES** – At the beginning of the academic year, the school organises a class assembly with the parents. On this occasion, the teachers will talk through the scholastic activities with the parents. Other meetings may be called throughout the year.

HOW SCHOLASTIC RESULTS ARE EVALUATED

Each school year is divided into two parts (2 terms: September-January and February-June).

In January and June, the teachers evaluate the child's scholastic results and prepare an "evaluation form" which will be given to the family. Some comprehensive institutions are equipped with electronic register. Each family can access this register and check up on their child's education.

REMEMBER:

If you have any doubts or difficulty, please contact:

- The school secretary;
- The year tutor;
- Your reference teacher;
- The scholastic director.

References

Comprehensive Institute:

Street Address

Tel.

Fax

Email:

www.

**For the
School Coordination
Ambit I. 328/00**

(Comprehensive Institutes "C. Battisti" and "A. Moro" of Seriate – Comprehensive Institute of Bagnatica, Brusaporto and Costa Mezzate – Comprehensive Institute Scanzorosciate and Pedrengo – Comprehensive Institute of Albano S.A. and Torre De' Roveri – Schools of Grassobbio – Schools of Montello – Schools of Cavernago)

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