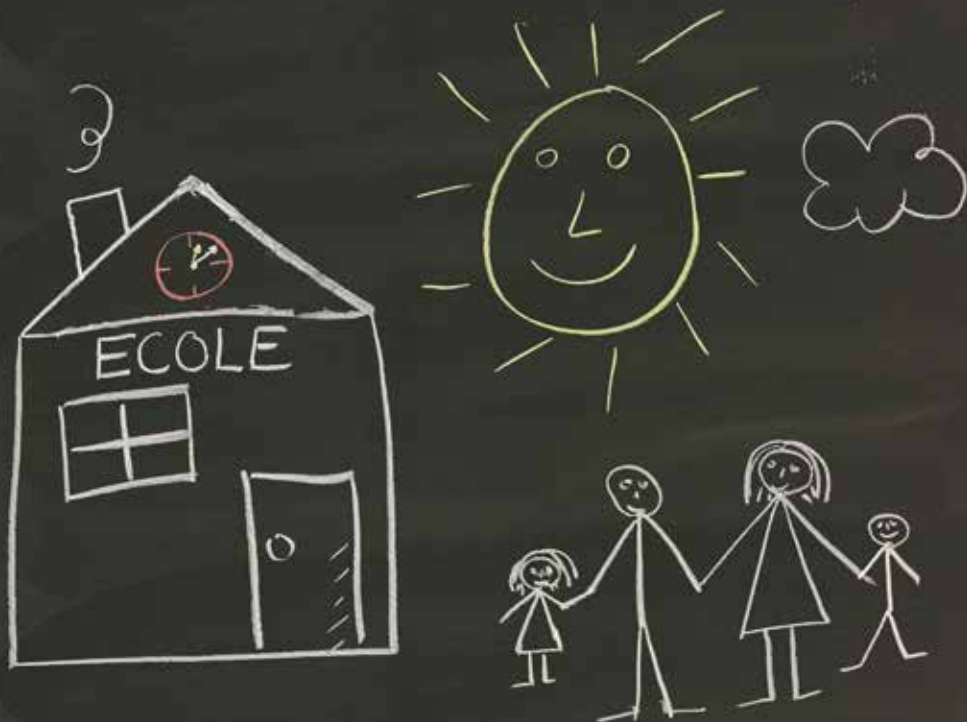


# Family – School Relationship



## Together for the well being of children

Families share the essential mission of a young person's instruction and education with school. The family-school partnership must, therefore, be based on fundamental principles that are known and respected by all. Educational establishments are initially governed by the school legislation of 1962 and the resulting legislative texts. They are regulated and supervised by cantons, but municipalities have a large autonomy and teachers have a certain amount of freedom in the way they put their teaching into practice.

In order to explain how a seemingly complex organisation works, and to make everyone's rights and responsibilities clear, The Swiss-French Federation of Parent-Teacher-Associations (FRAPEV), The Academic Society of Valais (SPval), The Lower Secondary Level Teachers Association of Valais (AVECO) and the Training and Safety Department (DFS) wish to outline the fundamental principles to ensure a harmonious relationship between the schools and their partners.

The provisions in this brochure do not replace the existing legislation. They refer to it, thus establishing a general framework for the relationship between families and the educational establishments. The educational authorities and teachers can provide parents with further information should it be requested. Furthermore, specific measures are outlined and available on the canton's official website (<https://www.vs.ch/web/se/ecole-famille>).

With help from the Civil and Foreigners' Registrar which is responsible for the integration of migrants, this latest edition has also been translated into the majority of foreign languages spoken in our canton.

A good knowledge of the language spoken in the host region is essential to enable migrant parents to fully understand how the institutions, particularly the schools, are run. Useful information for migrant families can be found in an annex to this brochure. They will consequently be able to support their child during their schooling, later with their career choices and for the duration of their vocational training.

We would also like to emphasise our country's values with regards to gender equality amongst boys and girls and that it is important for a child that both parents are actively involved to make the 'family – school relationship' run smoothly.

## School structure

Primary school consists of 8 years (levels), called 1st Harmos (1H) to 8th Harmos (8H), a term based on the abbreviation of the Swiss agreement that harmonises compulsory education. These primary levels are organised into two stages: stage 1 (1H to 4H) and stage 2 (5H to 8H).

Stage 3 is the 'Cycle d'orientation' (CO – Lower secondary level consisting of three years (9CO to 11CO))

Stage 1				Stage 2				Stage 3		
1H	2H	3H	4H	5H	6H	7H	8H	9CO	10CO	11CO

## Primary school

Stage 1	1H - 2H	The first two years of school (previously referred to as kindergarten) are compulsory. Children who have reached the age of 4 by July 31st preceding the beginning of a new school year start their primary education. Enrolments are to be addressed according to your municipality's instructions. 1H and 2H pupils attend the same class (class with two levels). 1H pupils are schooled part-time (1H : 12 times 45 minutes, 2H : 24 times 45 minutes). The way that the classroom time is allocated throughout the week is the local authority's responsibility and can vary depending on regional specifications. Nevertheless, 4 half days are foreseen for 1H pupils and 8 for 2H pupils.
	3H - 4H	28 periods (28 times 45 minutes) of teaching time are in principal carried out over 8 half days. Depending on the number of pupils in a class, an alternating timetable may be set up in order to ensure that each pupil receives enough of the teacher's time. This means that all the pupils go to school for the same amount of time, but it is allocated in different ways throughout the week.

<b>Stage 2</b>	5H - 6H	A school week consists of 32 periods (32 times 45 minutes). In order to support multi-level classes, it is possible to study the 2nd language (German) in separate groups.
	7H - 8H	The last two levels also consist of 32 periods. In order to support multi-level classes or those with a significant number of pupils, it is possible to study the 2nd language (German) and the 3rd language (English) in separate groups.

With regards to certain logistical imperatives (transport, child care, etc.), municipalities can offer alternative ways of organising the school week or day.

Other principles:

- Each class has a designated classroom teacher who is the main contact person for pupils and parents in their class. In principle, (s)he will teach a class for two years.
- The timetables have been updated according to the curriculum.
- Children attend school in their place of residence.
- Guided studies (tutoring) for homework assistance are organized by the school management and are conducted by teachers. These study periods take place outside school hours and are offered to pupils attending stages 2 and 3.
- School mediators act as a resource that contributes to promoting an atmosphere of solidarity and respect within the establishment. They commit to respecting absolute discretion

## Lower secondary level

CO is a 3-year process, which orientates a young person towards their career preference. After CO, the young person either continues their studies or starts vocational education and training (VET). There is a career counsellor in each CO. At CO, the pupils are put into groups according to their exam results at the end of stage 2 (8H). From 9CO, French and Maths classes are taught at 2 levels of competence; the same goes for Science and German from 10CO. The pupils are all in the same class for the other subjects. Level 1 offers a more in-depth learning process. Students may be moved from one level to another depending on the evolution of their academic achievements.

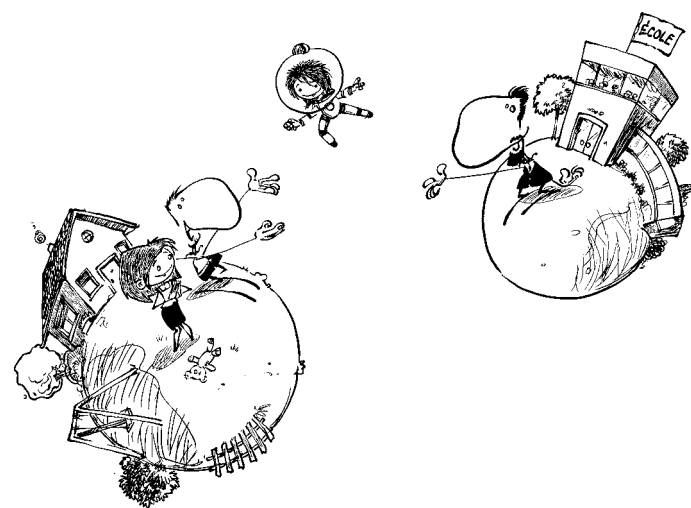
\* <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/16342.php>

## Further education

<b>Tertiary Level</b>	Federal PET Diploma Advanced Federal PET Diploma	PET College	University of Applied Science	University of Teacher Training	University and Institute of Technology
<b>Upper Secondary II</b>		Post-VET Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (FVB)		Specialised Baccalaureate Programme	
	Federal VET Certificate (2 yrs)	Federal VET Diploma (3 or 4 yrs)	VET Diploma including FVB (3 or 4 yrs)	Professional Education and Training (PET) (3 yrs)	Baccalaureate (5 yrs)
<b>Lower secondary Level</b>					

More detailed information can be found on [www.orientation.ch](http://www.orientation.ch) or [www.vs.ch/web/osp](http://www.vs.ch/web/osp)

The Academic and Carrers Guidance Office provides further information ([www.vs.ch/orientation](http://www.vs.ch/orientation)).





## Time block timetables

Each municipality divides the school day into time blocks. It consists of grouping teaching periods into larger time blocks, i.e. half days. The number of half days can vary depending on the local conditions and needs. The beginning and end of the half days are usually unified. On a weekly basis, both whole-class and half-class teaching can take place.

## Day care facilities

Day-care facilities enable parents to reconcile work and family life. Children are welcomed in collective day-care facilities from birth until the end of their primary education. These facilities promote the child's healthy development and support them in their learning process. Children can also be looked after by a childminder, encouraging a more family-style approach. The different kinds of day-care facilities are:

- Nursery: from birth to 18 months, open all day with meals
- Crèche: from 18 months to 6 years old, open all day with meals
- Playgroup: from 18 months to 6 years old, open half days without meals
- Reception unit for school children (UAPE): from 4 years old to the end of primary education, open outside school hours with meals
- Preschool: from 3 to 6 years old, open half days without meals
- Drop-in day-care centre: from 2 to 8 years old, open half days, without reservation for a few hours without meals
- The day-care facilities set up by municipalities are subject to the canton's approval and supervision.

<https://web.vs.ch/web/scj/secteur-petite-enfance>

## Global Training Scheme for students following the Swiss-French Curriculum (PER)

Le plan d'études romand (PER – Swiss-French Curriculum) is a global training project for pupils. It outlines what pupils have to learn during their compulsory schooling and the levels they need to attain at the end of each stage (end of 4th, 8th and 11th year) (...).

The curriculum determines a combination of knowledge and skills that all pupils are expected to acquire during their compulsory education.

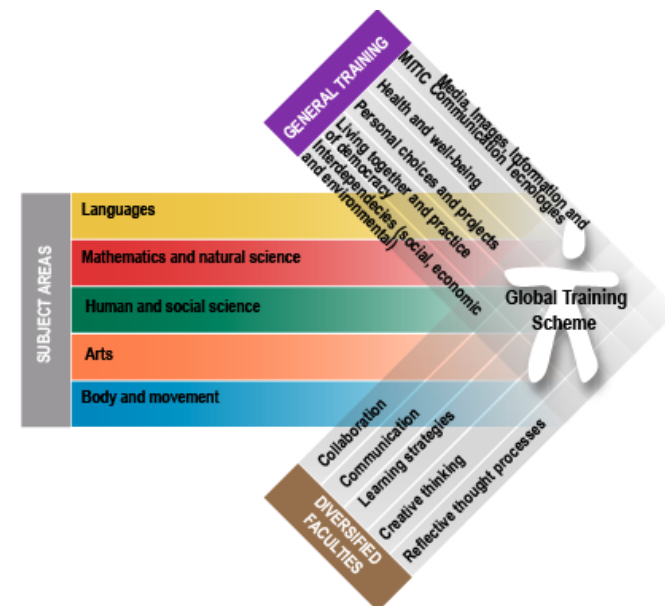
They are divided into three groups:

**Subject areas** (Languages, Mathematics & Natural Science, Human and Social Science, Arts, Body & Movement) ;

**General Training** (MITIC, health and well-being, personal choices and projects, living together and the practice of democracy, interdependencies) ;

**Diversified faculties** (Collaboration, Communication, Learning strategies, Creative thinking, Reflective approach). CIIP\*\* - The Intercantonal Conference of Public Education in French-speaking Switzerland and Tessin)

[www.plandetudes.ch/mitic](http://www.plandetudes.ch/mitic)





Help for children with specific educational needs initially comes from their family and teacher. Each pupil with these needs is attended to accordingly, using measures tailored to each case, notably:

#### ☒ Supervised studies

(5H to 11CO)

Municipalities can organize supervised study time, outside school hours, enabling a pupils to independently do all, or some, of their homework. Even if a municipality does not offer these studies at primary school level, they are systematically organized in the COs.

#### ☒ Guided studies

(5H to 11CO)

Guided studies are offered to a pupils who need particular help to carry out their homework, notably with regards to their organization or their learning strategies. This measure is provided outside school hours and for a limited period of time. In principle, it doesn't enable the pupil to do all of their homework.

#### ☒ Learning support outside school hours

(9CO to 11CO)

Pupils who encounter temporary difficulties in one or more main subjects, or who wish to move up to a higher level, can benefit from learning support outside school hours in order to overcome their academic shortfall.

#### ☒ Learning support for allophone pupils

(3H to 11CO)

Pupils who do not have a good command of the local language are entitled to learning support during school hours, in the form of lessons that aim to develop their communication skills. This enables them to follow classes taught in the local language as quickly as possible.

This support measure does not, as a rule, exceed 2 years.

Pupils can have their grades waived for subjects in which their lack of French knowledge would be a disadvantage.

#### ☒ Integrated educational support

(3H to 11CO with the exception of COs organised as observation classes)

Integrated educational support is a measure of specialised teaching for a limited period of time to help children with special needs. A support teacher helps pupils with difficulties, either in class or other relevant location, during school hours. (S)he works closely with the classroom teacher, the parents and the external collaborators. The achieved progress is evaluated in regular assessments which are adapted to the pupil's needs.

#### ☒ Adapted programs

(4H to 11CO)

Adapted programs are for pupils who, without special adjustments, are unable to keep up in one or more subjects and therefore struggle to meet the required objectives. An adapted program can be set up upon the parents' approval and has to be authorised by the inspector.

In some COs, pupils following an adapted program are grouped together in observation classes.

#### ☒ Repeating school years/levels

(4H to 11CO)

Pupils may have to repeat a school year if they fail to meet academic requirements (the average grade for the 1st group or the general average grade being marked lower than 4). This means that the pupil will have to repeat the program of the previously attended year for stages 2 and 3.

#### ☒ Other support facilities

Parents can send other specific requests for support to the head teacher via teachers. L'Office de l'Enseignement Spécialisé (OES - The Office of Special Needs Education) is entitled to advise families about the available support facilities for children with special needs or disabilities: special classes, reinforced educational support, pre-apprenticeship classes, specialized institutions, schooling in hospitals.

## Parents' responsibility

### The parents :

- cooperate with the school, respect the teachers and their work as well as the school rules,
- make sure that their child attends school in good disposition for learning (good personal hygiene, decently dressed, having had enough sleep),
- must show an interest in their child's behaviour in class and school work and be involved in it at home,
- must attend meetings to which the teachers/head teacher invites them, the presence of an interpreter may be recommended,
- take note of any information provided by the school and acknowledge having seen it, if necessary by signing it. They ask questions if necessary,
- are responsible for their child on their way to and from school and in the school playground outside school hours,
- inform the teachers about their child's possible health problems, which could have an impact on the way the child is looked after,
- insure their child against health and accident risks. Pupils are not covered by the school's insurance. In the event of an accident, parents have to contact their insurance company directly,
- are obliged to notify and justify all absences,
- are requested to abide strictly by the school calendar. In the event of fraud, the inspector may impose fines,
- are responsible for absences that they apply for and take responsibility of ensuring that the curriculum is followed by collaborating with the teachers,
- can be asked to contribute financially to the cost of school material, outings, and other specific activities,
- inform the school authorities as soon as possible of any change of address.

The parent who does not have custody of the child will be informed of any special events occurring in the child's school life and will be heard before any important decisions are made with regards to the child's development. (S)he can obtain information concerning the child's development from third parties who have the child in their care.

## Pupils' responsibility

### With their parents' help, the pupils:

- respect school rules, teachers, school staff and their schoolmates as well as everything that is put at their disposal (premises, furniture, equipment),
- are dressed appropriately and decently as specified in the school regulations.
- are diligent and engaged in their role as pupils, in their learning process as well as social skills,
- are banned from using electronic devices for private use on the school premises. They are to use them appropriately outside the school premises, whilst respecting their schoolmates and school staff,
- are liable to being punished if they do not obey the rules.

## School and teachers' responsibility

### The teachers :

- commit to supporting parents in the education and instruction of a pupil, whilst fully respecting them,
- contribute to developing the child's social skills by fully integrating them in the class,
- keep parents informed of the child's progress at school, explain the learning objectives during collective and individual meetings. Furthermore, they regularly communicate the pupil's results via the evaluation file, the grade report book and the assessment records,
- listen to parents, strive to maintain dialogue and, by appointment, respond to parents' requests,
- are responsible for maintaining discipline in class and intervene, when necessary, within the school perimeter. If need be, they impose disciplinary punishments according to the regulations,
- are responsible for activities and journeys during school hours. The parents are responsible when the child travels on their own (specific cases, medical check-ups...).

## Homework

Homework aims to develop a pupil's independence by reinforcing knowledge acquired at school, whilst maintaining contact and collaboration with their family. The tasks are selected according to the pupil's age and must be carried out independently. The families are responsible for creating an appropriate environment to enable the pupil to do their homework, show interest in what the child is doing and check finished work without necessarily correcting it. Parents should inform the teachers if they notice any significant difficulties (duration, quantity, difficulty,...). If the pupil's teacher or head teacher consider it necessary, guided studies can be organised.

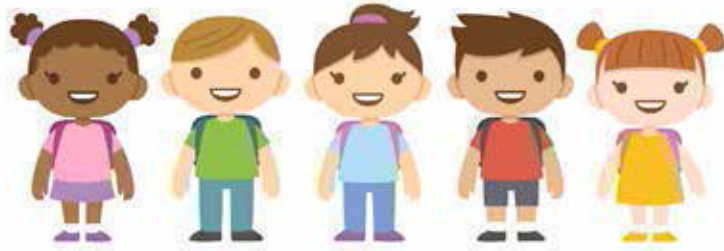
## Travelling to and from school

It is preferable to walk to and from school. Health, safety and mobility must be respected at all times.

The walking bus (le pédibus) is a very interesting alternative form of transport for groups of children accompanied by an adult. Each 'pédibus' runs when it is needed (return trips, only outgoing trips, a few days a week...).

Please contact the canton of Valais' coordinator if you wish to set up a walking bus route: [valais@pedibus.ch](mailto:valais@pedibus.ch) or 076 690 51 68.

Children must be of compulsory school age if they wish to travel to school by bicycle. The bicycle must be the correct size and appropriately equipped.

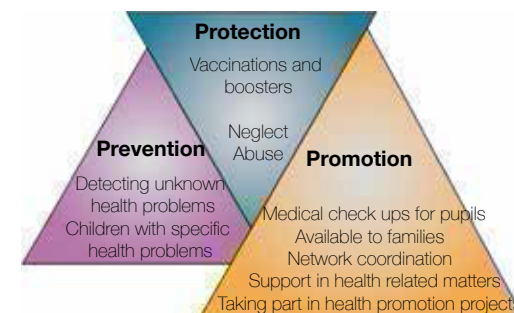


Teachers or parents can transport pupils for certain specific activities, provided the passengers have accident insurance and that traffic rules are respected: the child is to be attached by a suitable restraint system, the number of passengers must not exceed the number stated on the circulation permit,...

Please check with your local authorities in case they enforce more restrictive guidelines.

## School health service

The school nurse maintains the link between the school and the parents in the event of a child or adolescent suffering from health issues.



Parents can ask for advice and information.

Do you wish to contact a nurse? [www.santescolaire-vs.ch](http://www.santescolaire-vs.ch)

## Procedure in the event of a disagreement

- Dialogue must have priority in all cases.
- The classroom teacher is the parents' first person of contact. The head teacher followed by the inspector may successively be requested to intervene.
- Any school related conflicts that occur between the pupils, the parents, the guardians or third parties and the teaching staff are solved by the head teacher, subject to appeal to the school inspector.

Training and Safety Department (DFS)  
Service de l'Enseignement, Planta 1, 1951 Sion  
☎ 027 606 41 00 - [www.vs.ch/web/se](http://www.vs.ch/web/se)

Swiss French Federation of Parents Teachers Associations Valais  
Romand (FRAPEV)  
[www.frapev.ch](http://www.frapev.ch)

Academic Society of Valais (SPVal)  
[www.spval.ch](http://www.spval.ch)

Lower Secondary Level Teachers' Association of Valais  
(AVECO)  
[www.aveco.ch](http://www.aveco.ch)

School : .....

School board/Head teacher : .....

Phone no : .....

Teacher : ..... Tel : .....

Teacher : ..... Tel : .....

Teacher : ..... Tel : .....



