

# School Plan 2025-2029

*ESH Primary*

## Table of Contents

1. Foreword .....	2
2. Introduction.....	2
2.1. Description of the school .....	2
2.1.1. Identity .....	2
2.1.2. Organisation .....	2
2.1.3. Participation of Stakeholders .....	4
2.1.4. Relation with the community .....	4
2.1.5. History and Future .....	5
2.1.6. Development of Pupil Numbers .....	5
2.2. Mission .....	6
2.3. Vision on Education .....	6
2.4. Core Values and 8 Key Competences .....	8
2.5 Curriculum .....	8
3. Analysis previous School Plan .....	10
4. Pupils' learning and well-being .....	11
4.1 Support offered at ESH Primary .....	13
5. Staff .....	14
6. Quality Assurance.....	16
7. Finance and Sponsor Policy .....	17
8. Safety .....	17
9. Our Ambitions .....	18
9.1. Good education, and more .....	18
9.2. Quality and innovation go hand in hand .....	19
9.3. Working at ESH is stimulating, meaningful and fosters growth.....	20
9.4. A safe and respectful school with modern facilities.....	21
10. Annual Planning per Ambition .....	23
10.1. 10.1 Good education and more .....	23
10.2. Quality and innovation go hand in hand .....	24
10.3. Working at ESH is stimulating, meaningful and fosters growth.....	24
10.4. A safe and respectful school with modern and inspiring facilities .....	25

## 1. Foreword

This strategic plan outlines ESH Primary School's focus on enhancing educational offerings, supporting staff development, and creating a safe and inclusive learning environment over the next four years. The plan is structured around four key ambitions of the Rijnlands Foundation, incorporating feedback from parents, staff and stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive approach to maintaining high educational standards, fostering innovation, and ensuring the well-being of pupils and staff. The plan follows the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle to ensure continuous improvement. Moreover, it is a source of inspiration, reminding us of the collective effort and shared vision that drive our school forward.

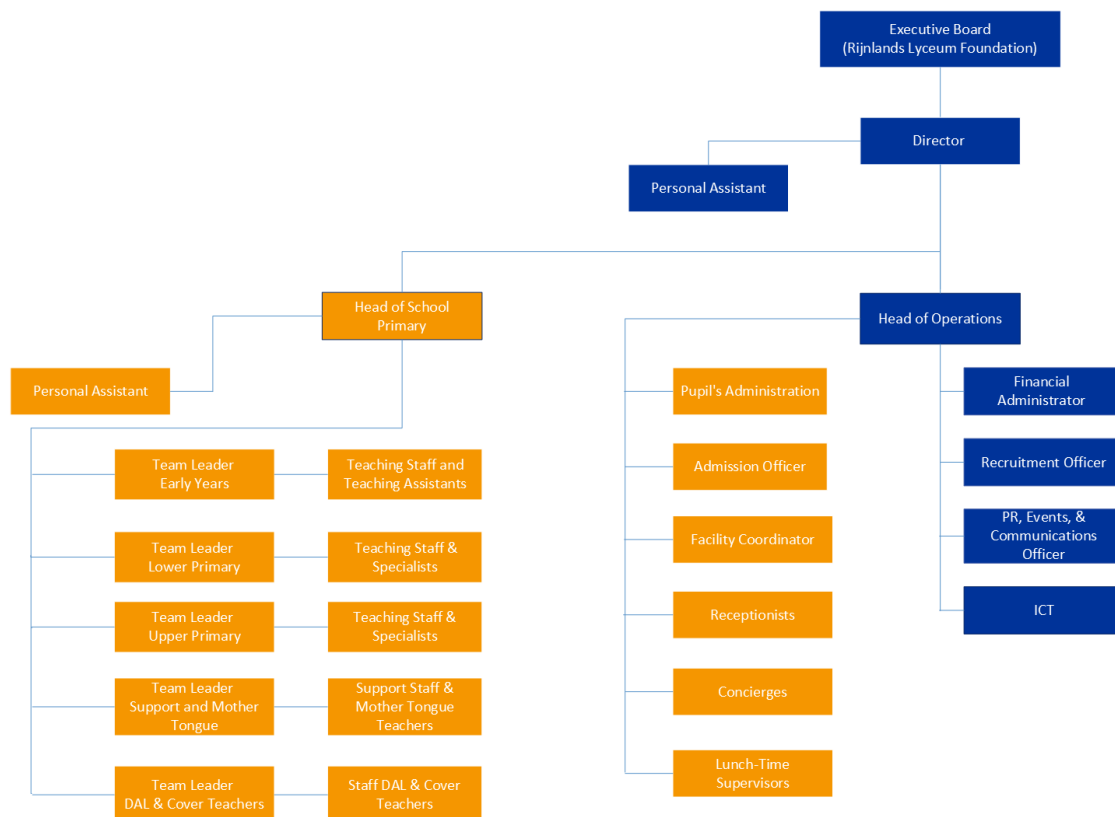
## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Description of the school

#### 2.1.1. Identity

We are educators with an ideologically neutral foundation. What sets us apart is that our school was not founded on religious beliefs, but on a mission to inspire children to think independently. We encourage our students to appreciate and respect diverse beliefs and backgrounds, fostering a more inclusive society in which care and concern for others are central values.

#### 2.1.2 Organisation



The school's legal status and its organizational and educational framework are described in a formal document, The Dossier of Conformity, on which the initial accreditation of the school is based. Accreditation is maintained based on the results of 3-yearly accreditation visits from European Schools inspectors.

The European Schools system includes two types of schools, both with a different funding structure. The European School The Hague is classified as a Type II school. Unlike Type I schools, which are fully funded by the European Union, Type II schools are integrated into the national education system. While the European Union covers the school fees for children of EU officials, the national government is responsible for financing the school itself.

As the European School The Hague is part of the Dutch education system, the Law on Primary Education (*Wet op het Primair Onderwijs*, WPO) generally applies. However, there are certain deviations from the WPO specific to this school. Consequently, the regular Dutch funding system is in place for the European School The Hague. The *Experimenteerbeschikking* (2022) of the Ministry of Education outlines the specific areas in which the school differs from the WPO.

The school follows the European Schools Curriculum but also follows Dutch Educational Law including adhering to the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch teachers, holiday schedules and other laws related to the school's organisation.

The European School of The Hague is part of the Rijnlands Lyceum Foundation which includes other international and Dutch schools.

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### *2.1.2. Participation of Stakeholders*

Stakeholder participation is actively supported through regular and structured engagement. The Advisory Board, comprising representatives from European Agencies including Europol, Eurojust, the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the European Patent Office (EPO), and the European Space Agency (ESA/ESTEC), meets regularly with the school's senior management. These meetings focus on strategic matters such as housing, finance, the school plan, and updates to the Dossier of Conformity.

The Participation Council holds several meetings with school management throughout the year, addressing recurring topics such as the school guide, planning, staffing, teaching hours, budget, and the annual report. Staff, parents, and students may submit questions in advance, which are added to the agenda. Meetings take place at the school and are open to parents as silent observers.

Extra meetings are scheduled when necessary, such as in response to management restructuring, with the Council offering recommendations where appropriate.

The Council maintains a constructive relationship with school management, providing advice or approval on all matters presented. Membership changes occur as needed, with new parent and staff representatives joining. Voluntary professional development opportunities for members of the participation council are offered.

The school is part of the network of Accredited European Schools, which currently includes 24 institutions across the EU Member States.

### *2.1.3. Relation with the community*

The European School maintains a strong and evolving relationship with the community, built through educational, cultural, and civic engagement. The school collaborates regularly with local partners like the International BSO's Zein and Villa Bloom. The local municipality district Segbroek and the direct neighbourhood, Bomenbuurt. Regular events for pupils, parents, and staff further strengthen community ties and promote shared values, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support.

ESH Primary actively engages with the wider European Schools (ES) system. Staff members regularly attend European School training sessions and collaborate with colleagues across the ES network via Microsoft Teams, fostering the sharing of best practice and alignment with ES standards. Deputy Directors and Directors also maintain strong connections with their counterparts through regular coordination meetings.

ESH Primary pupils participate in sports events for Dutch International Schools and staff is involved in several professional development initiatives of the European Schools. Additionally, we invite representatives from various EU embassies to attend the National Day celebrations organised by our mother tongue department. We have welcomed many ambassadors and other embassy officials.

### 2.1.4. History and Future

The European School The Hague (ESH) is a distinctive institution founded to educate the children of employees working in European Union institutions. It offers a multilingual and multicultural learning environment for students from Early Years through Primary and Secondary education, culminating in the European Baccalaureate. ESH is a relatively young school, with its Primary section opening in 2012 and the Secondary section following in 2014.

The ‘raison d’être’ of our school is the city of The Hague being the seat of many EU Agencies and EU organisations. With Europol, Eurojust, ESA-Estec, EPO and EMA, The Hague area has, next to Brussels, the most EU institutions compared to other European countries.

It is therefore that on request of the European Commission, the Dutch Ministry of Education investigated in 2010 the feasibility of setting up an Accredited European School in The Hague. The municipality and the Stichting Rijnlands Lyceum were soon involved in this project.

As an Accredited European School, classified as a Type II European School, ESH provides a European education that adheres to the pedagogical standards of the European Schools while operating within the Dutch national system. This dual framework means that ESH complies with both Dutch laws and regulations as well as European guidelines concerning the curriculum and organization of studies. While this structure can be seen as complex—essentially a system within a system—ESH embraces it as an opportunity to offer the best of both worlds.

### 2.1.5. Development of Pupil Numbers

We have pupils representing more than 56 nationalities in our Primary school. The pupils are divided into five language sections (Dutch, German, French, English and Spanish). From the academic year 2023-2024 the Spanish section has started to phase out. This process will finish at the beginning of the academic year 2028-2029.

Assuming a 3% growth rate based on historical data, the Primary is projected to reach 956 pupils by 2030. However, a scenario of disruptive growth should also be considered, given the ambitions of the European Commission and the municipality of The Hague. In such a case, pupil numbers could rise sharply to 1256 by 2030 or earlier. The building’s current capacity, including the temporary facility, is approximately 900 students.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>01/02/2022</b>	<b>01/02/2023</b>	<b>01/02/2024</b>	<b>01/02/2025</b>
Europol (C1EP)	236	234	258	264
Eurojust (C1EJ)	76	78	79	75
EPO (C1EPO)	234	220	211	195
ESA-Estec (C1ESA)	62	64	70	67
EMA (C1EMA)	68	65	57	51
European Commission (C1EC)	20	17	17	19
EUSPA (C1EUSPA)	3	3	2	6
Frontex(C1FRONTEX)	2	3	3	2
Other EU agencies	17	17	17	12
Category III (C3)	135	163	165	174
<b>Total</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>879</b>	<b>865</b>

## 2.2. Mission

The mission of Stichting Rijnlands Lyceum encapsulates the foundation's identity, centred around our shared beliefs and values, which we aim to instil in our students. This mission is expressed as follows: 'We educate students to become independent thinkers and actors. Our schools maintain a neutral stance and celebrate the diversity among individuals. We inspire students to contribute to a better, more sustainable world.'

Complementing this, the mission of the European School The Hague (ESH) is to cultivate a positive, open-minded community. We strive to nurture ambition through a wealth of cultural and academic opportunities, fostering a passion for lifelong learning.

## 2.3. Vision on Education

The ESH Vision and Mission are the core of our educational policy. They drive education in the school and are referred to, to ensure that our purpose is clear and consistent. The mission and vision reflect that of the European Schools' system but are specific to the ESH.

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

At the ESH our **mission** is to provide a positive, open-minded community that fosters ambition through rich cultural and academic opportunities, inspiring lifelong learning.

In addition to our mission and vision statements we have a statement about our community:

Our **community** is enriched by our multicultural and multilingual staff, students and parents as we connect, collaborate and celebrate a culture of learning.

At ESH Primary, we are committed to delivering high-quality education that meets the diverse needs of our international learning community. Our definition of quality encompasses consistent, purposeful, and engaging learning experiences that foster academic progress and nurture a lifelong love of learning in every child. Our approach to teaching and learning at ESH is aligned with the expectations of both the European Schools and Dutch inspection frameworks. It encourages professional reflection, innovation, and teacher autonomy, while supporting a shared vision of excellence.

A high-quality lesson at ESH is inclusive, well-structured, and responsive to pupils' individual learning needs. Lessons are underpinned by strong subject knowledge, clear learning intentions, and a positive classroom culture where all learners feel safe, respected, and motivated. Effective teaching builds prior knowledge, sparks curiosity, and encourages critical thinking and independence.

At ESH we believe that education is not only about academic achievement but also about preparing pupils to engage in a democratic society. Considering the current global geopolitical landscape, nurturing active and responsible citizenship is more crucial than ever, ensuring that pupils develop the critical thinking, empathy and resilience needed to navigate complex societal challenges and contribute to a more just and inclusive world. The aim of citizenship at ESH is to outline how we prepare students to become active, engaged and responsible citizens in Dutch, European and global contexts. Through a school-wide approach that integrates democratic values, social

responsibility, and intercultural understanding into both curriculum and daily life, ESH ensures that pupils develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to society. Additionally, ESH emphasises celebrating European culture and diversity, encouraging pupils to appreciate their own cultural identities while fostering mutual respect and cooperation in a multi-cultural environment.

To support continuous improvement in teaching and learning, we offer a structured induction program for new teachers. Every new teacher is paired with a buddy to support their integration and ongoing development.

All teaching staff engage in a regular appraisal cycle. Each year, teachers meet three times with their Team Leader to reflect on progress and professional goals. Every teacher sets three individual targets, which are reviewed at the end of the cycle to assess development and impact.

Inset Days are scheduled throughout the school year to support both internal and external professional learning opportunities. These days are designed to deepen pedagogical understanding, encourage collaboration, and drive forward the school's educational goals.

Regular subject team meetings are held to ensure alignment of teaching content, assessment practices, and learning resources. As the European Schools curriculum is unique and lacks a complete suite of published materials in all working languages, harmonisation is essential. Teachers collaborate to create shared teaching materials.

In the coming years, we investigate both horizontal harmonisation (within year groups and across language sections) and vertical harmonisation (across year groups within subjects). This whole-school focus is essential to ensure curriculum coherence, continuity of learning, and equitable standards across the school. While this harmonisation fosters unity and equal opportunity, we also recognise and celebrate the individual identities of each language section. Our system respects and preserves the cultural and linguistic heritage of our pupils, allowing them to grow in an environment where diversity is not only acknowledged, but deeply valued.

This balance between unity and diversity is what makes the European Schools truly exceptional: a shared educational journey, enriched by the unique perspectives of many cultures, preparing pupils to thrive as open-minded citizens in a multicultural Europe.

ESH Primary provides a minimum of 6520 hours of instruction over the course of seven years, in line with national guidelines and the *Experimenteerbeschikking*. The school operates for 189 instructional days each academic year, ensuring ample time for both structured learning and enrichment activities.

ESH follows a continuous schedule throughout the school day, which includes supervision during pupil breaks to maintain a safe and supportive environment. This approach supports student well-being and ensures consistent adult presence during non-instructional periods.

The determination of teaching time is subject to the right of consent of the Participation Council. This ensures that decisions regarding instructional hours are made transparently and with appropriate stakeholder involvement, in accordance with Dutch educational governance standards.

## 2.4. Core Values and 8 Key Competences

Our *Core Values* are ambition, positivity, and respect. We strive to reach our full potential. We accept challenges and have a passion for finding solutions. We focus on the positive aspects of situations. We build a constructive and positive environment from which everyone benefits. And we show respect for people, possessions, our planet, protocols and ourselves. We accept the differences, strengths, and weaknesses of others.

### **Eight Key Competences**

ESH students are future citizens of Europe and the world. As such, they need a range of competences to meet the challenges of our rapidly changing world. In 2006 the European Council and European Parliament adopted a European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. These competences are incorporated and embedded in the European Schools curriculum and monitored by the Primary Leadership Team. The eight key competences, which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment are what we aim for our students to achieve.

Key competences for lifelong learning

- Literacy
- Multilingualism
- Numerical, scientific and engineering skills
- Digital and technology-based competences
- Active citizenship
- Entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression
- Interpersonal skills, and the ability to adopt new competences

## 2.5 Curriculum

### 2.5.1 Early Education Curriculum

Early Education is the foundation of developing lifelong learners. Teaching and learning in the Early Years supports, and develops a pupil's communication skills as well as their physical, psychological, social, cognitive and emotional development by providing high quality opportunities, experiences and learning environments.

Children learn through play, so the planning and environment encourages exploration, engagement and experimentation. The focus is on practical, hands-on, active learning and is developed through child-initiated play which is often inquiry-led and is appropriate and meaningful to young children.

The [Early Education Curriculum](#) of the European Schools forms the basis of the planning for the Early Years children. Daily, the pupils are offered opportunities to be curious in their learning: they are encouraged to ask questions, to explore and to research their answers through a range of play activities and experiences.

The Early Years cycle will last a minimum of 2 years and, for some children, as long as 2,5 years depending on their birth date and starting date at school.

When children start their education at ESH, they are invited for a series of introduction days. These are shorter days that allow the children to settle in and familiarise themselves with their new teachers, classmates, classrooms and routines.

In the Early Years classes, the youngest (Early Years 1) and oldest pupils (Early Years 2) work together in a mixed group. This way, the pupils learn from and with each other. Early Years classes are supported in the morning by a classroom Teaching Assistant.

To start school, children must be fully toilet trained, meaning that they are able to use the toilet facilities independently.

### 2.2.2. Primary Curriculum

After Early Years, the children begin the 5-year Primary cycle of the European School. The European Schools curriculum is written specifically for the European Schools. For further information please visit the European Schools Website: [www.eursec.eu](http://www.eursec.eu)

	P1 - P2	P3	P4 - P5
Subjects	Hrs/week	Hrs/week	Hrs/week
Literacy	5,5	3	3
Mother Tongue	2,5	3,75	3,75
Mathematics	4	5,25	5,25
Langauge 2	2,5	3,75	3,75
DAL (Literacy for NL Section)	1,5	1,5	1,5
Discovery of the World	1,5	3	3
Art	2	0,75	0,375
Music	1,5	1,5	1,5
PE	1,5	1,5	1,5
European Hours		0	0,75
Various Subjects	2,25	0	0,375
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,75</b>	<b>24,75</b>	<b>24,75</b>

### 3. Analysis Previous School Plan

ESH Primary collects information and evidence in many forms. It is important to review, reflect on and use the information and evidence collected to formulate future ambitions. The analysis of the previous School Plan 2023-2027, results of satisfaction surveys, input from the school community and recommendations from the Accreditation Audit Report 2022 have resulted in this SWOT analysis.

#### Strengths

- Positive school culture with attention for the individual pupil.
- Sense of community amongst staff and parents
- European diversity used as an asset in pedagogical and extra-curricular activities
- Transition program from Early Years to Primary and from Primary to Secondary
- Multilingual pupil support department
- Implementation of the 8 key competencies of the European Schools in the lessons.
- Connection between staff and management:
  - Staff appraisal cycle, focusing on professional growth and support.
  - Weekly briefings for all staff
  - Focus on appreciative conversations

#### Weaknesses

- Quality assurance:
  - Awareness of the need for Quality assurance practices
  - No robust system for continuous improvement.
  - Outdated policies and processes for tasks, pupil behaviour, lateness and absences, diversity and inclusion.
- Communication: Many different communication platforms both internal and external.
- At ESH, the functional management of certain software systems is not clearly defined, posing risks to both data privacy and institutional knowledge retention
- Collective professional development: INSET days should be utilised more effectively in line with the school year plan.
- Assessment data collection and analysis:
  - Data collection and analysis in line with the European assessment policy and Dutch inspection expectations
  - Administration of the tracking of pupil development
- Complexity of the organisation is a continuous challenge: logistics, timetable
- Divided vision on educational approach
- Professional culture
  - Staff engagement in professional development based on personal goals set during the appraisal cycle
  - Collaborative learning amongst staff in Professional Learning Sessions
  - Peer observations and feedback as common practice
- Building not suitable for pupil population
- High frequency of and/or long-term absenteeism amongst staff

## Opportunities

- Connection between parents and management:
  - Content related information sessions for parents
  - Introduction of coffee mornings for parents and a social parent mixer event.
  - Introduction of management newsletters
- Sustainability and Outdoor learning:
  - Implementation and enhancement of sustainable initiatives to maintain the Green Flag.
  - Outdoor Learning curriculum to be rolled out for all year groups.
- Development of the Spanish Mother Tongue programme
- Optimise the processes that support Teaching and Learning

## Threats

- Teacher shortage in the Dutch and German sections
- Financial situation is not sustainable
- Complexity of multicultural community
- Lack awareness of the specific needs of the European School compared to Dutch Schools and Dutch International Schools regarding finance and capacity from the Ministries of Education, foreign affairs and the municipality
- Impossibility to predict student numbers and the impact on the offer of Mother Tongue Languages
- Influence on the immediate surroundings of the school (traffic, safety)
- Cyber threats

## 4. Pupils' learning and well-being

Pupil support begins within the classroom itself, led by class teachers and specialists. Our aim is to ensure that we can meet the diverse needs of our pupil population by expending teachers' knowledge and skills, providing a rich and differentiated learning environment and offering small group or individual support in school to support developmental learning needs.

We recognize that pupils may learn in different ways and might benefit or need our extra support in language acquisition, to learn about and regulate emotions, for specific learning needs. Our vision for an integrative and inclusive approach of Support at ESH in the coming 4 years is to focus on quality education in class including differentiation overall and effective individual interventions when needed.

All ESH staff are responsible for, and committed to, providing a safe and secure environment for our pupils to achieve personal excellence. We aim to connect the teachers, parents and our dedicated Support Team to continually review, reflect and report on the development of the pupils in a transparent and open dialogue.

If a pupil requires more support that can be offered in class, the class teacher can refer them to the Support Team. The Support Team offers a range of small group training and individual support. The team also guides and supports teachers in the implementation of support strategies in the

classroom. Support for pupils is determined on an individual basis and the school will always make the final decision as to what kind of support a pupil can and will receive.

While we strive to be inclusive, we may not be able to meet the needs of some pupils. In the interest of giving the best education and support, we carefully assess all pupils with learning diversity needs who apply to ESH Primary. Under the Duty of Care, when we are unable to support a pupil's learning diversity needs, we support families to find the best alternative schooling possibilities.

For more detailed information on the student support program at ESH and the limitations of the support we can offer, please read through the School Support Profile

### **The Support Team**

The support team within ESH Primary consists of the following functions:

- Team Leader Support Team
- Support coordinator per Language section, 2 for the English Section due to size
- Learning Support Specialists (LSS) who support students with specific remedial and learning needs
- Behavior specialist

### **The External network for Pupil Support**

As a school we are responsible for implementing the Wet op Passend Onderwijs, which places a duty of care on schools. To this end, regular and special schools work together in partnerships that form an external network for pupil support. The network in region The Hague is Stichting Passend Primair Onderwijs Haaglanden [www.sppoh.nl](http://www.sppoh.nl). Through this network, schools can consult experts at various Helpdesks (Steunpunten) A special Helpdesk is available for parents, for all their questions around Passend Onderwijs in The Netherlands.

An educational advisor from SPPOH is linked to the school with whom the support team regularly meets to discuss additional provisions for support that fall outside of the basic level of support that the school is required to provide.

The Center for Youth and Family (CJG) can be consulted for extra support in the family situation of a pupil at home. An external School Social worker from the Youth Care organisation Kracht is appointed to ESH Primary for 6 hours per week to be able to work with individual students and their families. In school, an Ambulant Youth Care worker from Kracht is working with small groups of children. Parents and teachers can contact this Kracht support through the Support team.

As we strongly feel that the best possible education can only be composed by getting a broad view on the strengths and developmental areas of the pupil, there is the possibility for the school to discuss the pupil in a multi-disciplinary way. Multi-disciplinary meetings (MDO) are scheduled every 6-8 weeks throughout the school year, to have the option to discuss a pupil's progress and needs.

This MDO team consists of all experts connected to our school network:

- School Support Coordinator and teacher(s)
- SPPOH Educational advisor
- Kracht Social worker
- Kracht Youth Care worker

From The Bazalt Group, ESH contracts hours for a certified Educational Psychologist who can carry out assessments, observations and provides educational advice upon request of school. This Educational Psychologist is also part of the MDO team.

Parents are an important partner before, during and after the MDO and will always be consulted. Through the MDO form, the information and central support question (*hulpvraag*) are communicated. ESH reserves the right to discuss a pupil without parents present in an MDO when in need of advice on how to continue the best possible learning experience for a pupil.

#### 4.1 Support offered at ESH Primary

##### **Academic support**

ESH supports all pupils and specifically those who have additional and diverse learning needs. Remedial support is available for core subjects such as mathematics or the section languages (Dutch, English, French, German and Spanish).

Some pupils are truly bilingual or multilingual upon entering the school. However, for others there is the expectation that they will work toward becoming fluent in at least two languages by the end of their Secondary education. This can be challenging for some learners and is unique to the European School system. Mother Tongue classes are offered for several European languages. There is no support available in the L1 languages that are considered part of the Mother Tongue Program

If the pupil's level is significantly lower than their peers, withdrawal from their classes may be necessary, to provide individual or small group intensive support in that subject. Other pupils may receive in-class support.

##### **Learning to learn and planning & organisation**

Executive functioning is one of the essential cognitive processes, with a great impact on behaviour. Poor executive functioning skills can have a negative impact on a pupil's general school achievement and well-being. When a pupil struggles to organise their classwork in an efficient way, we offer needs-based support, providing pupils with useful planning skills and strategies. The support is always intended as a bridge between learning and well-being, creating a more holistic approach to the needs and the resources of each pupil. Through the Ambulatory Youth Care of Kracht and our own Support Team we are able to provide small group focused interventions.

## **Social emotional wellbeing**

Social emotional well-being impacts children's general and academic development. A need for social emotional support might be indicated by issues such as social development, bullying, challenging life-events, behavioural changes, stress, anxiety or other mental health issues etc.

All staff members of the school have followed training in Child Protection and Safeguarding.

We have several facilities and policies in place to underpin this:

- An anti-bullying policy;
- A policy and procedure for Safeguarding and Child Protection;
- An internal Confidentiality Advisor for pupils, staff and parents;
- Trained Attention Officers (Aandachtsfunctionarissen) throughout the language sections.

In collaboration with parents and teachers, the support team aims to identify these factors and put a support plan in place. The external School Social Worker is available to support pupils and parents. The Support Team also has links with a range of private practices, professionals and organisations outside of school for specialist advice, information and support.

Well being is also facilitated through

- Rock and Water course provided in the curriculum for P1 and P3 and upon request as an intervention by certified Rock and Water trained staff
- Confidentiality Person and Anti-Bullying Coordinator;
- Learning about body awareness in PE.

## **Gifted and Talented program**

At ESH Primary, a central tenet of our pedagogical approach is rooted in pupil-centred learning. We strive to support the holistic growth of our pupils and enable their development at a pace that is consistent with their abilities. To help facilitate this, the ESH Gifted and Talented program adopts a highly inclusive approach, seeking to provide enriching opportunities to all and establishing a learning dialogue between staff, pupils and parents. This holistic approach to learning seeks to instil the creative and critical thinking skills needed to become productive citizens of our European society. We aim to facilitate an environment where being identified as gifted and talented is not the destination or the benchmark of success, but rather the starting point for nurturing and realising potential. The Challenge Program provides challenging and diverse materials within the classrooms while the Challenge Project withdraws pupils weekly to work on projects through the Pittige Plus Torens.

## **5. Staff**

The European School The Hague operates within the framework of the Rijnlands Lyceum Foundation, which serves as the official employer for all staff. While not an independent employer, the ESH holds a distinct position within the group due to its multilingual and international staffing needs. Our school must recruit subject teachers who are able to teach in Dutch, English, French,

and German, while also supporting an extensive Mother Tongue Program. ESH has grown rapidly in staff numbers, with a high proportion of our workforce recruited internationally.

To ensure our specific context is reflected in overarching staffing strategies, the ESH Senior Management Team actively contributes to the development of staffing policies within the Rijnlands Lyceum Foundation. These contributions help ensure that the unique characteristics and needs of the ESH are fully considered and addressed. All teachers, support staff, and school leaders at ESH fall under the Collective Labour Agreement for education staff in the Netherlands.

Staff policies at ESH are developed in alignment with the broader Rijnlands Lyceum Foundation framework and are formally approved by the ESH Primary Participation Council. These policies guide recruitment, appointment, appraisal, and development, and reflect our commitment to sustaining a high-quality, diverse, and professionally competent workforce.

Staff at the ESH typically demonstrate a strong alignment with the school's mission and the European Baccalaureate vision. They hold the required educational qualifications, are native or near-native speakers in their teaching language and bring with them experience in European or international education. Equally important is their ability to function effectively within a culturally diverse school environment.

Despite global and national teacher shortages that present challenges to all schools, ESH continues to attract a large pool of qualified and experienced candidates. This success is supported by secure, transparent recruitment procedures led by the school's leadership in collaboration with the Human Resources Advisor.

A structured induction process ensures that all new staff are well integrated into the ESH community. This three-year process begins with a two-day induction program at the start of the academic year and includes support from key stakeholders such as the Human Resources Advisor, staff coaches, subject coordinators, and school leaders. These early experiences are critical in supporting a positive start for all new colleagues.

Both ESH and the wider Rijnlands Lyceum Foundation place high value on continuous professional development. At ESH, professional development is embedded in school culture and is available to all staff, including support staff. Our program includes school-wide INSET days focusing on themes relevant to school improvement and staff development. Emergency response training is provided to ensure the continued strength of our on-site response teams. Language training is offered to staff interested in improving their Dutch proficiency, and IT training is provided based on individual competencies. We also prioritize staff wellbeing and mindfulness. Mindfulness courses and yoga sessions are available.

ESH supports and encourages participation in European Baccalaureate training, including international training days in Brussels, to maintain our staff's expertise in delivering our unique educational programs. Voluntary InterVision groups allow teachers to reflect on and improve their collaborative practices, while a wide range of individual and small-group professional development opportunities foster lifelong learning among staff.

An increasing number of staff members are pursuing university-level study, supported by subsidies available through the Dutch government's initiatives for the education sector. This commitment to

continuous learning reflects the school's broader aim of sustaining excellence through personal and professional growth.

Finally, we aim to achieve a balanced representation of men and women within the organisation. In the recruitment of new staff for managerial positions, preference is given to male candidates when qualifications and suitability are equal, in support of this goal.

## 6. Quality Assurance

The quality assurance system at ESH is fully aligned with the framework set by the Foundation and complies with the standards of both the Dutch and European inspection authorities. We are committed to achieving our quality goals, fostering a strong quality culture, and ensuring the necessary conditions are in place. Where needed, we make timely adjustments along the way.

We foster a quality culture grounded in an appreciative approach and evidence-informed practices. We place trust in one another to make the right decisions and regularly reflect on our successes and areas for growth. This mindset forms the foundation for mutual learning and collaborative efforts toward educational quality.

Across all levels of our school, quality assurance receives focused attention. Conversations about educational quality are part of an ongoing, dynamic dialogue driven by a shared commitment to continuous learning and development. This intrinsic motivation is supported by clearly defined expectations, common goals, and the translation of desired behaviors into everyday practice.

We provide space and support for our staff to engage in learning and professional growth, and we place strong value on sharing good practices. Together—with each other and in dialogue with the wider world—we strive to maintain and enhance the quality of education.

Our quality culture is closely aligned with our Strategic HR Policy, which outlines our understanding of a professional culture. Key elements include a safe and trusting environment, room for development, clarity around roles and responsibilities, shared ownership, collaborative work, and the ability to provide constructive feedback while maintaining respectful relationships.

We meet the basic quality requirements set by the Dutch government and European regulations. In doing so, we consistently ask ourselves key questions: *Do pupils feel safe?* (Safety and school climate), *Are they receiving high-quality education?* (Education process), and *Are they achieving sufficient learning outcomes?* (Education results). We will monitor this by information from the satisfaction survey and the educational results.

Beyond these legal requirements, we pursue our own school-specific ambitions tailored to the needs of our student population. To realize our educational vision and ensure high quality, we follow a cyclical, planned approach guided by the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle.

We develop our plans in dialogue with the broader community. Our vision of educational quality takes the lead, while we remain attentive to the perspectives of students, parents, staff, executive board, and legal frameworks. To ensure visible progress, in the school year plan we define specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) goals. Each day, we follow through on our commitments to uphold the quality of education, aligned with our four ambitions.

We monitor quality using both quantitative and qualitative data. In addition to performance outcomes, we consider observable and experiential aspects—such as teaching practices and the sense of safety within classrooms and the school environment. We then compare this data with our set goals, analyse it thoroughly, and reflect critically on whether we are on track. Based on these insights, we adjust or improve our policies and actions accordingly. Observations, analyses, and improvement actions are documented in the educational report three times a year and reviewed in discussions with the executive board. These vital formal moments play a key role in monitoring, accountability, and making necessary adjustments to improve quality.

To guide our cyclical and dynamic quality work, we use a foundation-level quality calendar. This provides continuous oversight of the progress made on goals and ambitions outlined in our strategic plan. We do so through periodic evaluation meetings, reporting, assessments, and analyses, all structured within their own quality calendars. The calendar also specifies how and when schools report to the board through management agreements, annual educational reports, and informal feedback.

## 7. Finance and Sponsor Policy

As a Dutch international school we are subsidised by the Dutch government. ESH also receives financial contribution from the EU agencies (via the European Commission) and the EU organisations. ESH also has self-paying parents.

The school does not make use of sponsoring and has no plans to do so.

The school's financial outlook is cause for concern, with the multi-year budget indicating continued negative operating results and a gradual erosion of reserves. Salary expenses are increasing at a faster rate than the contribution allocated by Brussels, while housing costs remain above average.

The school is in cooperation with the European Agencies, and Organisations actively engaged in ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Municipality to address these financial challenges.

In recent years, significant reductions have already been made to both staffing (FTEs) and material expenditures. These measures are not yet sufficient to ensure a sustainable financial foundation. As a result, several scenarios will be developed and evaluated. However, any further cuts to personnel may jeopardize the educational quality required by the Dossier of Conformity.

## 8. Safety

Safety encompasses various dimensions, including student and staff wellbeing (chapter 4), and both physical and digital security. ESH adheres to the Rijnlands health and safety policy. In 2024–2025, the school initiated an update of the ESH Safety Plan and completed a new Risk Inventory and Evaluation (RI&E). A PDCA cycle has been established to ensure ongoing compliance and improvement in building safety.

This cycle includes maintaining up-to-date training for the prevention officer, participation in the municipal safety coordinator network.

Medical policies will also be reviewed and aligned across both ESH Secondary and Primary.

The PDCA cycle consists off

- Annual risk assessment (RI&E) and incident analysis;
- Anti-bullying policy, social behavior standards, and regular surveys;
- Education on safety, behaviour, and health;
- Physical measures such as CCTV surveillance, first aid (EHBO), and evacuation drills.
- Aftercare following incidents, emergency response plan, reporting code.

Ensuring digital safety remains a priority for ESH. ESH actively participates in the Rijnlands Lyceum Foundation's project group focused on internet safety and data protection. This collaborative approach allows schools within the foundation to share expertise, align best practices, and maintain a consistently high standard of digital compliance across all institutions, within the lead of the Rijnlands foundation. Over the coming years trainings related to privacy and internet security will be organised at ESH.

Other topics are related to the digital infrastructure, software systems in use and the need to be on top of innovations to create a safe and respectful learning environment.

Additionally, ESH ICT colleagues engage in regular meetings with ICT professionals from other Rijnlands schools under the guidance of the ICT Rijnlands. These meetings serve as platforms for knowledge exchange and strategic collaboration, where the necessity and feasibility of changes to shared ICT facilities are jointly assessed.

## 9. Our Ambitions

### 9.1. Good education, and more

The ambition "*Good Education, and More*" aims to enhance educational quality through evidence-based teaching, benchmarking to close learning gaps, and personalised support for students, while fostering a strong sense of community, staff well-being, and clear academic expectations. It prioritises increased parental engagement and international collaboration, alongside strengthening formative assessments, cultural engagement, and student resilience. Continuous refinement of teaching strategies ensures long-term excellence, with a broader vision that includes preparing students for an interconnected world. This includes promoting global and European citizenship, mutual cultural understanding, and sustainability, while addressing democratic and environmental challenges. Inclusion is central to the vision, ensuring all students find their place in school and are equipped to contribute meaningfully to a just and sustainable society.

#### **Goal 1: Learning Outcomes**

ESH pupils receive quality education that meets the expectations/requirements of both the European Schools system and the Dutch Inspection Framework. The 'core skills' of literacy, numeracy, citizenship and digital literacy are embedded in the curriculum to ensure all learners are able to successfully transition into Secondary School.

## **Goal 2: European education and Global citizenship**

European education / citizenship is incorporated in the European school curriculum and is celebrated during National day celebrations and school assemblies. ESH pupils develop as active European and global citizens through an enhanced curriculum that integrates European perspectives, fosters international-mindedness, and promotes sustainability, civic responsibility, and core values of global citizenship

## **Goal 3: More inclusive education**

In line with our vision, it is our aim is to ensure that we can meet the diverse needs of our pupil population by tailoring our teaching around individual student needs.

Besides, to be able to reach the Dutch legal requirements that schools must offer inclusive education by 2035, it is our aim that all teachers recognise themselves as inclusive educators, that teaching strategies will be reviewed to ensure they foster an inclusive educational environment and that classrooms reflect the school's commitment to inclusive education.

Despite the fact that there is a large support department to support teachers as well as individual pupils with specific learning needs, there is still a group of pupils that are not receiving the education that fits their needs. For this group of pupils, we aim to set up of an inclusion class for Non Dutch speaking children. For pupils with the ability to understand and speak Dutch but not able to access the ESH curriculum, we support them with transitioning into the Dutch system if a SEN school is necessary.

### 9.2. Quality and innovation go hand in hand

The ambition "*Quality and Innovation Go Hand in Hand*" is centred on enhancing educational quality through the integration of innovative teaching practices within a strong quality assurance framework. Professional development, trialling digital tools, and setting clear goals for teaching quality are included in this. There is a shared focus on strengthening project-based learning, fostering cross-curricular collaboration, and providing staff with opportunities for innovative training. Over time, the ambition envisions expanding digital learning initiatives, standardising assessment methods, and introducing technology-enhanced learning, where beneficial. While embracing digitisation and AI, the approach remains critically reflective, ensuring technology supports pedagogical goals and pupil well-being. The ambition also promotes equal opportunities, critical and creative thinking, and improved work-life balance for staff. Future developments include the use of AI-driven learning analytics and cross-European exchanges, with continuous evaluation to ensure that innovations remain sustainable and adaptable.

## **Goal 1: Quality requirements**

- In 2029 Quality assurance is a 'living' feature of our school and all staff consider themselves as responsible for quality.
- Over the next four years, we will establish, refine, and embed a school-wide quality assurance framework, continuously improving it based on feedback to ensure consistent educational excellence, effective well-being and support structures and effective professional development.

- Establish a multi-dimensional view of quality which includes lesson observations, pupil feedback, results and pupil progress.
- In the years ahead, we will explore both the feasibility and the importance of horizontal harmonisation (within year groups and across language sections) as well as vertical harmonisation (across year groups within individual subjects).

## **Goal 2: Innovation**

- In 2029, Outdoor learning (and/or learning outdoors) will be embedded in our primary curriculum.
- The pupils will be actively involved in their learning using innovative teaching approaches.
- There is a vision on the use of digital learning tools in the classrooms.
- The use of digital technology in the classrooms is implemented.
- We keep ourselves updated with the latest developments on AI in Teaching and Learning

### 9.3. Working at ESH is stimulating, meaningful and fosters growth

The ambition "Working at Het Rijnlands is Stimulating, Meaningful, and Fosters Growth" aims to create a supportive and enriching work environment that promotes professional development and satisfaction.

We promote a positive culture in which everyone feels responsible for an optimal working and learning environment based on their own role. We believe that openness, cooperation and ownership are important values that belong to a professional culture.

The focus will be on further improving the staff appraisal process, launching structured mentoring, and increasing leadership visibility through regular engagement. A structured induction programme with a buddy system will be introduced, along with clear guidelines on policies and expectations, and a staff handbook outlining professional development opportunities.

Transparency in leadership and enhanced communication with parents will be prioritised. Over time, leadership training programmes will be implemented, cross-departmental collaboration fostered, and access to professional development opportunities expanded. Initiatives to improve work-life balance and maintain motivation will be introduced, along with a leadership succession plan and competitive salary strategies. Staff well-being support, including housing and transportation assistance, will be strengthened with the goal to reduce the high percentage of absenteeism. Long-term retention strategies will be evaluated to ensure a meaningful and rewarding work environment. This ambition seeks to cultivate a stimulating professional culture that supports growth and satisfaction among staff. During this strategic plan period we will implement the strategic personnel policy.

## **Goal 1: Attractive employer**

- There will be an effective onboarding support for new colleagues by launching structured mentoring.
- A structured induction programme with a buddy system will be introduced, along with clear guidelines on policies and expectations.

- We will enhance staff appraisal processes, implement need and interest driven professional development and create succession plans to foster a supportive and engaging work environment that attracts and retains staff.
- We will offer well-being initiatives to support and motivate staff.

### **Goal 2: Sufficient and well-equipped staff**

- In the coming years our focus will be on maintaining motivation. We aim to achieve a better balance in managing working conditions through clear feedback mechanisms, structured coaching, and targeted career development programmes.
- Staff well-being support will be strengthened, and long-term retention strategies will be evaluated to ensure a meaningful and rewarding work environment.
- We will ensure time is provided for collaboration and curriculum development.

### **Goal 3: Professional culture**

There is a shared vision of professional culture at ESH and we will aim to foster open and transparent communication where feedback is encouraged and valued. Central to this culture will be a shared sense of responsibility and ownership, where colleagues actively contribute to and take initiative in fostering effective cooperation across teams and disciplines.

- Fostering open and transparent communication
- Normalised 2-way feedback
- Foster shared sense of responsibility and ownership,
- Strengthen cross team and cross discipline organisation
- Track and celebrate progress visibly

#### [9.4. A safe and respectful school with modern facilities](#)

*‘We want to be a school where pupils feel safe and recognised and where they learn in a modern and inspiring environment’*

Creating a socially safe environment centred on respect and trust ensures everyone feels accepted and respected. We foster open communication, collaboration, and mutual support to maintain social safety and connection. Additionally, we invest in modern, safe, and sustainable facilities, including energy-efficient equipment, circular materials, and green outdoor spaces for learning. In line with the Eco-School certification, questions arise regarding our range of active and inclusive teaching methods in nature that stimulate learning, health, well-being and environmental awareness. Our European curriculum is academic, and the children's timetable is full. Subjects and teachers alternate in different groups throughout the day. This is not suitable for all children, and the cognitive learning style is therefore overrepresented. This does not fully address the colourful spectrum of young children's learning development. This can be a breeding ground for learning and behavioural problems. When we integrate Outdoor Learning into our curriculum, we hope to see a decrease in behavioural problems. With Outdoor Learning, we align ourselves with the development of young children and offer a different learning development.

### **Goal 1 – Well-being**

Over the next four years, we will implement and refine positive behaviour policies, enhance the physical environment, strengthen mental health support, and conduct ongoing assessments to ensure a safe, inclusive, equitable, respectful, and supportive school environment that promotes the well-being of both pupils and staff.

### **Goal 2 – School facilities**

We are continuously working to create an environment where students and staff feel welcome, valued, and at home. This includes maintaining a well-kept building, having a clear vision for interior design, ensuring that specialised rooms (music, art, ICT, PE and science) are well equipped, and providing inviting outdoor spaces. Sustainability in our facilities is also a part of this vision. At ESH, a new safety plan will be developed from the 2024–2025 school year, this will be embedded in the Rijnlands health and Safety plan. The BHV (Emergency Response) team at ESH continues to participate in annual training sessions and a larger first aid team is being developed.

### **Goal 3 – Digital infrastructure**

In an era defined by digital transformation, the modernisation and reinforcement of IT tools and platforms is essential for ensuring operational efficiency. As part of the Rijnlands foundation we will work on harmonising, strengthening and securing the digital infrastructure, to be able to work in a more cost-efficient way and to make better use of the systems.

### **Goal 4 – Communication, processes and alignment**

Strengthen alignment and efficiency across ESH Primary and Secondary by streamlining administrative processes, improving shared understanding of procedures, and enhancing both internal and external communication. This includes identifying opportunities for process harmonisation between the two schools and establishing clear, consistent communication channels.

## 10. Annual Planning per Ambition

The 4-year action plan provides a broad framework for progress, marked by three key phases. The **yellow phase** focuses on **investigation and exploration**, allowing time to gather information, consider options, and identify priorities. The **orange phase** centres on **implementation**, where selected actions are trialled and embedded into practice. The **green phase** is dedicated to **monitoring and reflection**, evaluating outcomes, learning from experience, and refining approaches. These phases, alongside feedback from satisfaction surveys, will inform the development of more detailed annual plans with SMART goals and actions.

Key:

Investigation and Exploration (plan)
Implementation (do)
Monitoring and reflection (check)

### 10.1. 10.1 Good education and more

Goal	Actions	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
Learning outcomes	Digital lesson observations				
	Reflections and analysis of lesson observations.				
	Benchmarking, assessment and data-driven teaching				
	Harmonised curriculum, lesson planning and embed core skills (literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, citizenship)				
European Education and Global Citizenship	Review European Hours				
	European values and celebrations through school assemblies				
	Sustainability and global citizenship in curriculum				
More Inclusive Education	Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)				
	Inclusive teaching strategies and environment				
	Supporting pupils transitioning into Dutch section / SEN setting				
	Set up Inclusion class				

### 10.2. Quality and innovation go hand in hand

Goal	Actions	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
Quality Requirements	School wide Quality Assurance Framework				
	Quality assurance is a living feature of our school				
	Multi-Dimensional View of Quality				
Innovation	Digital Learning Tools and Technology Integration in the classroom				
	Innovation teaching approach				
	Outdoor learning is embedded in the curriculum				

### 10.3. Working at ESH is stimulating, meaningful and fosters growth

Goal	Actions	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
Attractive Employer	Enhance staff appraisal processes with clear feedback				
	Implement need, interest driven professional development				
	Effective onboarding and structured mentoring for new staff				
	Establish succession plan for sustainable staffing				
	Well-being support for all staff				
Sufficient and Well-Equipped Staff	Managing working conditions through clear feedback mechanisms and structured reflection and coaching,				
	Ensure opportunities for collaboration and curriculum development.				
	Enhance career growth pathways for staff with targeted development programmes				
Professional Culture	Cultivate open and transparent communication across teams				
	Foster a culture of responsibility and ownership among staff				
	Encourage staff engagement and initiative across teams and disciplines				

#### 10.4. A safe and respectful school with modern and inspiring facilities

Goal	Actions	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
Well-Being	Implement positive behaviour and well-being policies				
	Enhance the physical environment				
	Strengthen preventative mental health programmes				
	Ongoing assessments to ensure a safe, inclusive, equitable, respectful, and supportive environment				
	Professional development for staff on well-being and inclusive, equitable practices				
School Facilities	MJOP / Investments – policy oriented				
	Safety in the building (RI&E, company emergency plan, BHV, first aid)				
	Upgrade interior (safe space, comfortable place, less sterile)				
	Accessibility				
	Sustainability				
	Canteen				
	Outdoor Space				
	Capacity constraints				
Digital Infrastructure	Information and application architecture				
	Information Security and privacy				
	Training on ict and privacy				
	Modern infrastructure				
Communication, processes and alignment	Communication (internal, external)				
	Website / Design				
	Documents / archive				
	Admissions whole ESH				
	Start of the school year				
	Learning materials				
	Trips and activities (financial coding etc)				
	Recruitment				