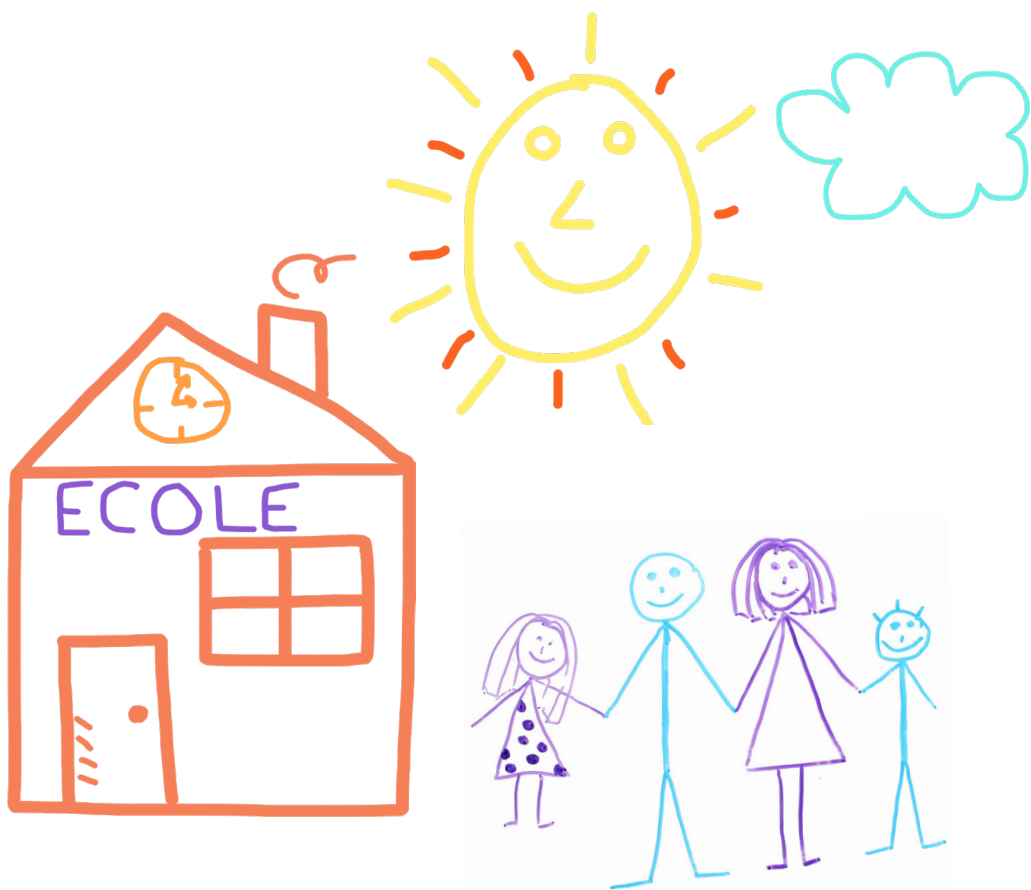


Family – School Relationship



Together for the well-being of children

Families share the indispensable mission of a young person's instruction and education with school. The family-school partnership must, from now on, 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, La Fédération Romande des Associations de Parents d'Elèves du Valais (FRAPEV - 'The Swiss-French Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations'), La Société Pédagogique Valaisanne (SPVal - 'The Academic Society of Valais'), l'Association Valaisanne des Enseignants des Cycles d'Orientation (AVECO - 'The Lower Secondary Level Teachers' Association of Valais') and Le Département de l'Economie et de la Formation (DEF - 'Training and Safety Department') wish to outline the fundamental principles to ensure a harmonious relationship between the schools and their partners.

The provisions in this leaflet 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 Service de la Population et des Migrations (Population and Migration Service) 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 and can be downloaded from the above-mentioned website.

A good knowledge of the language spoken in the host region is essential to enable all parents to fully understand how the institutions, particularly the schools, are run.

We would also like to emphasise our country's values with regards to free schooling, gender equality amongst boys and girls (see 'convention relative aux droit de l'enfant', convention on the rights of a child, <https://urlz.fr/9L3s>) and that it is important for a child that both parents are actively involved to make the 'family - school relationship' run smoothly.

Compulsory education

Compulsory schooling consists of 11 years (HarmoS/H levels), divided into three stages: stage 1 (1H to 4H), stage 2 (5H to 8H) and stage 3 ('Cycle d'orientation', 9-10-11 CO).

Primary level - STAGE 1				Primary level - STAGE 2				Lower secondary level - 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 the municipality's instructions. 1H and 2H pupils attend the same class (class with two levels). 1H pupils are schooled part-time, for 12 periods of 45 minutes, 2H pupils attend 24 periods of 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. The allocation of the half days can vary according to the local organisation.
	3H - 4H	28 periods of 45 minutes' teaching time are carried out over 8 half days for pupils. The allocation of the half days can vary according to the local organisation.

Stage 2	5H - 6H	A school week consists of 32 periods of 45 minutes each. In order to support large classes, it is possible to study the 2 nd language (German) in separate groups.
	7H - 8H	The last two levels also consist of 32 periods. In order to support large classes, it is possible to study the 2 nd language (German) and the 3 rd language (English) in separate groups.

Daily timetable :

The organisation of the school day into time blocks is a matter of communal autonomy and consists of grouping teaching periods into time blocks. They group teaching periods into entire half days. In principle, the beginning and end of the half days are uniform for all levels. The number of half days may vary depending on the local conditions and needs. With regards to certain logistical requirements (transport, child care, etc.), municipalities can offer alternative ways of organising the school week or day.

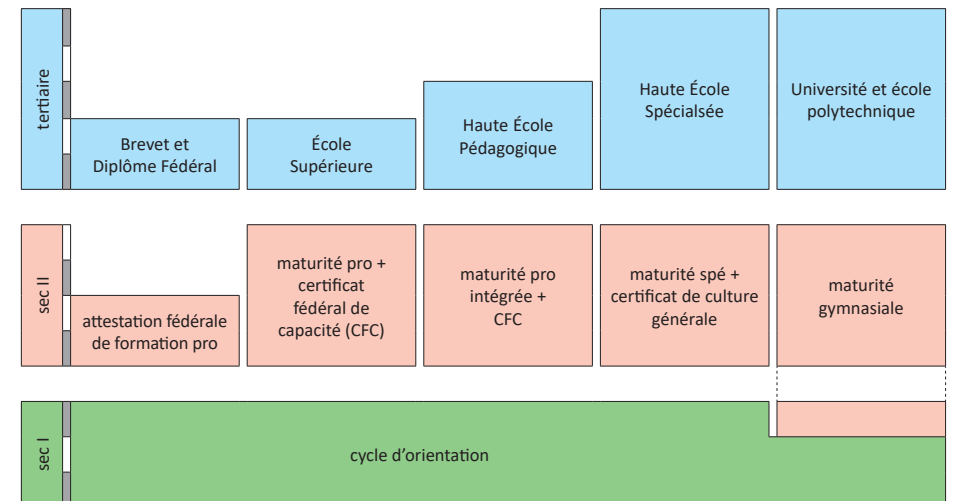
Lower secondary level ('Cycle d'orientation' - CO)

CO is a 3-year education programme which orientates a young person towards his/her 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 given at 2 levels of competence; the same goes for Science and German from 10CO. The pupils are together in all the other subject areas. 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.

Other principles :

- Each class has a designated classroom teacher who is the main contact person for pupils and parents in their class.
- The timetables are based on the study plan.
- Children attend school in their place of residence.
- Guided studies (tutoring) for homework assistance are organised 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 (see pp 7 and 11).
- 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.

Further education



L'Office de l'orientation scolaire et professionnelle (The Academic and Careers Guidance Office) provides further information (www.vs.ch/orientation).

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

Le plan d'études romand (PER – Swiss-French Curriculum) is a global training scheme 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:

Cross-disciplinary skills (Cooperation, Communication, Learning strategies, Creative thinking, Critical thinking).

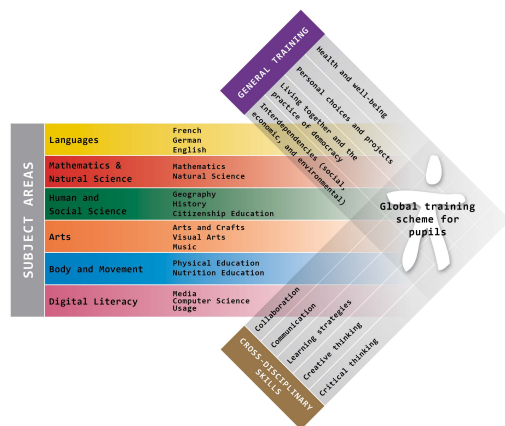
General training (MITIC*, health and well-being, personal choices and projects, living together and the practice of democracy, interdependencies)

MITIC* – Média, images et technologies de l'information et de la communication (Media, Images and Information and Communication Technology;

Subject areas (Languages, Mathematics & Natural Science, Human and Social Science, Arts, Body & Movement) <http://www.plandetudes.ch>

To make the 'PER' easier to understand, the 'FRAPEV' regularly distributes a brochure to the parents of pupils in compulsory education. Translations are also available on the following website:

<https://www.vs.ch/web/se/ecole-enfantine-primaire-et-co>.



Pupils suffering from various serious disorders or disabilities (dyslexia, dysorthographia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, high intellectual potential...) can benefit from special conditions (compensation for disadvantages) for their teaching and for taking tests, provided they have been diagnosed by a specialised body which is recognised by Le Département de la formation ('Education Département').

Support for pupils with specific needs is organised according to an arrangement which offers measures adapted to each case, notably:

► Supervised studies

(from 5H to 11CO)

Municipalities can organize supervised study time, outside school hours, enabling a pupil 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

(from 5H to 11CO)

Guided studies are offered to 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

(from 9CO to 11CO)

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

► Learning support for allophone pupils

(in principle from 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 the pupil's communication skills. This support 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.

The pupil can have their grades waived for subject areas in which their lack of French knowledge would be a disadvantage.



► Integrated educational support

(in principle from 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 specialised 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

(from 4H to 11CO)

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

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

► Repeating school years/levels

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.

It is possible to repeat 2H or 3H in exceptional cases.

► Other support facilities

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.

► Single window procedure for requesting assistance

Any request for assistance (special education, speech therapy, psychomotricity or psychological support) must be submitted to the school director through the teacher who will provide you with the necessary form and information. This request is then processed by the school and the specialists in a coordination meeting. The decision is then communicated to the parents.

The website <http://www.vs.ch/web/oes> provides additional information on student support.

Parents' responsibility

The parents :

- cooperate with the school, respect the teachers and their work as well as the school rules,
- contact the classroom teacher in the event of a dispute to discuss the situation or to organise a meeting. Depending on the situation or the nature of the problem, the school management, or even the school inspector will be informed,
- 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 sympathetically 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 (safety, behaviour, mobile phones, etc.),
- 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 school inspector may impose fines,
- are responsible for time off school that they apply for and take responsibility of ensuring that the curriculum is followed by collaborating with the teachers,
- may be called upon to contribute financially for optional outings,
- inform the school authorities as soon as possible of any change of address.
- organise a meeting with the teacher to solve problems with the school rather than using social networks.

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 are involved in the child's care.



Pupils' responsibility

With their parents' and teachers' 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, as well as their social skills learning process,
- 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, particularly with regards to social networks (minimum age being between 13 and 16 years old depending on the networks),
- are liable to being punished if they do not obey the rules.

Responsibility of the school and teachers

The school :

- commits to encouraging participation and involvement of student in the school environment and to giving them the right to express their opinions and be heard.

The teachers :

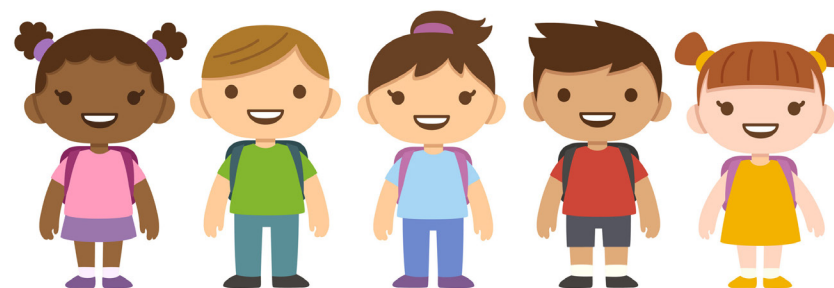
- commit to supporting parents in the education and instruction of a pupil, whilst respecting them and their child in a fair and impartial manner,
- contribute to developing the child's social skills by fully integrating them in the class,
- must inform parents of their child's progress at school, by explaining the learning objectives during collective and individual meetings. When necessary, the presence of a translator/ interpreter can be required,
- regularly communicate the pupil's results via the evaluation file, the grade report and the observation sheets and inform parents of cultural, sports, spiritual and prevention activities,
- 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, as well for other students in the school. 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, etc.).

Homework

- Tasks to be done at home, which may include homework and lessons, aim to develop a pupil's independence by reinforcing the knowledge acquired at school, and by maintaining contact and collaboration with his or her family.
- A suitable volume of tasks is 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, etc.)
- If the pupil's teacher or head teacher consider it necessary, guided studies can be organised.

Procedure in the event of a disagreement

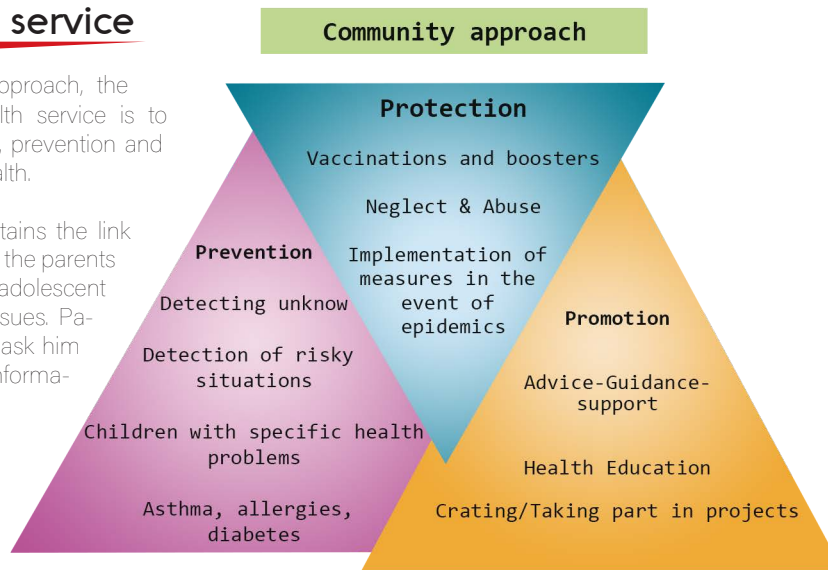
- Dialogue must have priority in all cases.
- The parents' first person of contact is the teacher concerned or the classroom teacher. The head teacher followed by the inspector may successively be requested to intervene.
- Any school related conflicts that occur between the pupils, the parents, the guardians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



School health service

Using a community approach, the mission of school health service is to ensure the promotion, prevention and protection of pupils' health.

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 and teachers can ask him or her for advice and information.



For further information : <https://www.promotionsantevalais.ch/fr/sante-scolaire-460.html>.

Travelling to and from school

Parents are responsible for their children on their journey to and from school. It is preferable to walk to and from school. Health, safety and mobility must be respected at all times.

Pédibus ('the walking bus') is a very interesting alternative form of transport for groups of children accompanied by an adult. Depending on availability and resources, each 'pédibus' runs when it is needed (return trips, only outgoing trips, a few days a week, etc.).

For further information : valais@pedibus.ch or 076 690 51 68.

The bicycle or scooter must be the correct size for the child and be appropriately equipped. They must be used in compliance with the traffic and police regulations (it is recommended to wear a helmet).

Teachers or parents can transport in a private vehicle pupils for certain specific activities, provided the passengers have accident insurance and that the 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, etc.

Local authorities may enforce more restrictive guidelines which are to be respected.

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 in a more family-style setting.

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.

For further information : <https://www.vs.ch/web/scj/secteur-d-accueil-a-la-journee>.

EDUCATION IS ABOUT ...

... lots of love



... conflict management



... active listening



... setting limits



... promoting independence



... expressing feelings



... taking the time



... encouragement



www.vs.ch/web/scj/edf



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