



# EXPAT GUIDE

## FOR PARENTS NEW TO NL

Waddenweg 87  
2134 XL Hoofddorp  
+31 (0)23 303 59 24

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[info@optimist-international-school.nl](mailto:info@optimist-international-school.nl)  
[www.optimist-international-school.nl](http://www.optimist-international-school.nl)

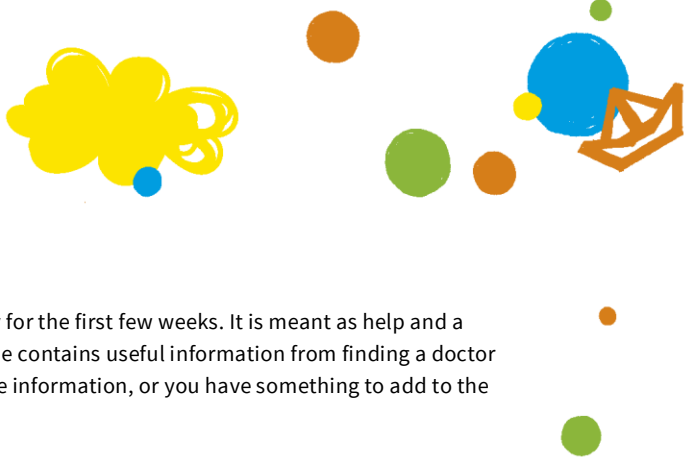
**OPTIMIST  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL**



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Dear expat parents,

Welcome to Hoofddorp! This guide is made for you to ease your stay for the first few weeks. It is meant as help and a reminder of all the arrangements that have to be made. This guide contains useful information from finding a doctor till insurances or a suitable home. If there is anything incorrect in the information, or you have something to add to the information, please do contact us. Then we can make adjustments.

## **BURGERSERVICENUMMER (BSN) OR THE CITIZEN SERVICE NUMBER**

The first issue an expat has to deal with is the BSN number (burgerservicenummer). This is a unique number for everyone who lives in the Netherlands. This number can facilitate all sorts of necessary things like contact with the Dutch authorities, open up a bank account, finding a job, taxes, the healthcare system and applying for benefits. Within five days after your arrival (especially when you are planning to stay for longer than four months) you have to register with the municipality (gemeente) where you are going to live. If you apply for a BSN number, you need to provide a valid proof of identity such as a passport and an address. For non-EU expats other documents such as a residence permit and employment contract have to be presented too. At some municipalities you can only register when you book an appointment in advance. Getting a BSN number can take a few weeks. It is good to make an appointment as soon as possible after your arrival.

If you are a EU-member you can get a BSN number while you are still living abroad. Keep in mind that after you arrive you still have to make an appointment with your municipality to register. You will receive a temporary BSN number which is valid for 4 months. If you are in urgent need of a BSN number, you can go the expat centre in Amsterdam. They will charge you a fee for this service. For further information about this topic you can take a look at the following websites:

[www.iamaexpat.nl](http://www.iamaexpat.nl)  
[www.rijksoverheid.nl](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl)

## **BANK ACCOUNT**

Another necessary thing on the list of an expat is a bank account. With a bank account you can receive money and pay for your rent or groceries. Without a BSN number it is very difficult to open up a bank account. Luckily there is also a solution for opening up a bank account soon after your arrival without BSN number. In Schiphol Airport there is a financial plaza from the ABN AMRO Bank. They are open 365 days a year from 07.00 am till 22.00 pm.

[www.abnamro.nl](http://www.abnamro.nl)

## **HOUSING**

A house is the most important thing in our life! It keeps us safe and warm. For expats it is very important to find a house quickly after their arrival. Moving to another country has an impact on expats and their families. To have a house where you feel comfortable helps you with adapting to your new country. Unfortunately the housing market in The Netherlands is very tight and it can take a while to find the right house. Fortunately a lot of new houses and residential areas are being built.

HB housing is specialised in housing expats. They have a couple of divisions and one of them you can find in Hoofddorp. If you are looking for a house you can visit their website:

HB Housing  
Daalmeerstraat 24  
2131 HC Hoofddorp  
Tel: 023-7112221  
[www.hbhousing.nl](http://www.hbhousing.nl)



Furthermore we collaborate with Koops Expats Services, who can help you with a rental house.

KOOPS EXPAT SERVICES

<https://www.koops-expatservices.com/>

[info@koops-expatservices.com](mailto:info@koops-expatservices.com)

Phone: +31(0)85 0477797

You can also look for yourself for houses on the general housing website Funda:

<https://www.funda.nl/>

## MUNICIPALITY (GEMEENTE) AND THE DUTCH EDUCATION SYSTEM

Every country has its own educational system, so does The Netherlands. If you need information about everything that has to do with the educational system it can be very useful to visit the website of your Municipality the Haarlemmermeer on [www.haarlemmermeer.nl](http://www.haarlemmermeer.nl). Frankly a big part is only written in Dutch. So you probably need some help with the translation from this website. Another website that can be helpful if you are looking for some information is the website of the Rijksoverheid. This website is in English:

[www.government.nl](http://www.government.nl)

Other helpful websites for students or expats who would like to study in Holland can be DUO and I am expat. The last website is a very useful site for expats with lots of helpful information.

[www.duo.nl](http://www.duo.nl)

[www.iamexpat.nl](http://www.iamexpat.nl)

## INSURANCES

In Holland are a couple of insurances mandatory, like liability insurance (WA, Wettelijke Aansprakelijkheidsverzekering), a health insurance, car insurance and an insurance for the in-and outside of your house. In the Netherlands all these insurances are offered separate at one of the insurances companies. When you take an insurance, you can have a discount if you join all your insurances at the same insurance company. There are a couple of reliable insurance companies like:

\_OHRA [www.ohra.nl](http://www.ohra.nl)

-FBTO [www.FBTO.nl](http://www.FBTO.nl)

-Unive [www.unive.nl](http://www.unive.nl)

- CZ [www.CZ.nl](http://www.CZ.nl)

These are the big insurance companies in the Netherlands. You can also arrange insurances with the organisation or company you work for. Sometimes they have a package they can offer with all the necessary insurances. In case your company or organisation doesn't provide these packages you can call or visit the website from one of the insurance companies above. Banks often provide insurances as well, just like some big shops as the HEMA. Always make comparisons between the insurance companies it can save you a lot of money. For comparisons you can use the website:

[www.independer.nl](http://www.independer.nl)

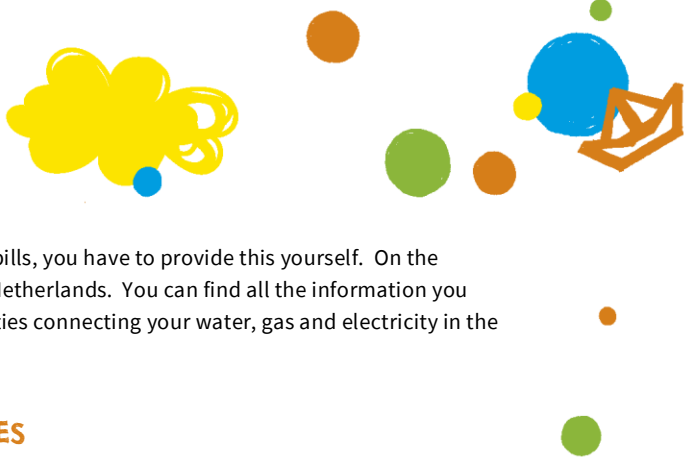
If you want to spare yourself the trouble of making phone calls there is also a possibility to contact an agent. This agent can arrange all your insurances. It is called; partner Pete. They also offer energy supplies (gas and electric) and water.

[www.partnerpete.com](http://www.partnerpete.com)

## GAS, WATER AND ELECTRICITY

When you have a house it is important to arrange connection to utilities such as water, electricity and gas. If you are renting a property, the lease agreement should indicate if additional charges, such as utility bills are included. It is common for monthly rent charges to include utility payments, in which case you landlord must issue you with an account (eindafrekening) showing utility payments and real costs at least once a year.





In case you buy a house, or there is no additional charge like utility bills, you have to provide this yourself. On the website [expatica](http://www.expatica.nl) is a lot of useful information about utilities in the Netherlands. You can find all the information you need on: [www.expatica.nl](http://www.expatica.nl) and the name of the page is: “Dutch utilities connecting your water, gas and electricity in the Netherlands”.

### DOCTORS, DENTIST AND OTHER HEALTH SERVICES

Another important arrangement you have to make is to find a doctor and a dentist in your municipality. For helpful information about doctors and dentists (and finding one) you can visit the website “going to the doctor in the Netherlands” at [www.expat.nl](http://www.expat.nl).

### AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

At most of after school activities the main language is Dutch. Because of the language barrier it is quite difficult for expats to find a suitable after school club. Optimist International School is running some (English) after school activities. For more information about this activity you can contact the school office. The Ballet Company that is situated nearby the school, offers bilingual dance classes. During the lessons the teachers talk in English and Dutch to their pupils. The Dance Company offers a variety of dance and yoga classes. You can visit their website on: [www.dans-nu.nl](http://www.dans-nu.nl)

Furthermore there are a lot of sports organizations in the neighbourhood, to be found here: <https://hlmrmeer.nl/nl/ontdekken/sport>

Pier K is the organization for cultural activities or lessons, such as music, musical, arts.: <https://www.pier-k.nl/>

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

If you are looking for time tables and ways to travels via public transport you can look it up at: [www.ov9292.nl](http://www.ov9292.nl). This website will probably be in Dutch, but you can easily switch it into English. When you go to this website you will see right on top the letters EN. This means English. If you press the letters EN the website will change in English.

In Floriande where Optimist International School is situated, you can take bus 341 towards Hoofddorp city centre and the station. This bus 341 also goes to Schiphol airport and Amsterdam station Zuid. If you like to go for a daytrip to Haarlem, from school you go to Spaarne hospital (also at walking distance from the school). At the bus stop for the Spaarne hospital you can take bus 300 that will bring you to the city centre of Haarlem or to Schiphol and Amsterdam Arena.

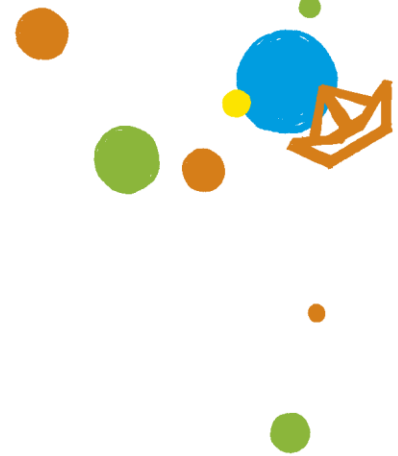
If you need a taxi, you can make reservations at Taxi Centrale Hoofddorp. This taxi will bring you to all the places in the Haarlemmermeer, including Schiphol. Unfortunately there is not a website in English, where you can make reservations online, but you can make reservations by phone on: 023-5553900. You can also use Uber.

### LIBRARY AND BOOKS

To become a member of the library has a lot of benefits. The library is organizing quite often all sorts of workshops and of course you can lend books. You have to pay a small fee as an adult, but children can have a free membership. In Hoofddorp with your membership you can go to the library (bibliotheek) Floriande at the Baron de Coubertinlaan 4, 2134 CG Hoofddorp or the central library (centrale bibliotheek) at the Raadhuisplein 7, 2132 TZ Hoofddorp. Be aware of the fact that both libraries have a small amount of children books in English. For a big variety of English books for children you can go to the library in Amsterdam. If you would like to borrow books from this library, do know that you also have to pay for the membership as well. Your membership from Hoofddorp library is not valid for Amsterdam. You can find more information on: [www.oba.nl](http://www.oba.nl). It is really worth it to pay a visit to this library anyway.

In case you would like to buy second hand English books, you can go to “The book exchange Amsterdam”. You can find this shop at Kloveniersburgwal 58, 1012 CX Amsterdam or visit the website: [www.bookexchange.nl](http://www.bookexchange.nl)





To buy new English books you can go to:

Waterstones, Klaverstraat 152, 1012 XE Amsterdam  
New English Book store, Kalverstraat 152, 1012 XC Amsterdam

There is also a possibility to buy children's books in English at [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com).

## DUTCH LANGUAGE COURSES

For children Optimist International Schools offers Dutch lessons as part of their programme. For people that are interested in learning Dutch, there is a possibility to go to a language school. A very well known language school for the Haarlemmermeer is Lexicon. Lexicon is situated in the city centre of Haarlem. Haarlem is from Hoofddorp accessible by public transport (bus and train) or by car. Lexicon offers a variety of levels in Dutch, from beginner's courses till the advanced courses. There is also the possibility to sit an exam for every level, you can compare the level of certificates you get when you pass the test with the certificates of Cambridge English in the United Kingdom. When there is a need to learn another language then Dutch there is also an opportunity to learn this other language at Lexicon. The courses organised by this language school have fees, for more information you can visit the website: [www.lexicon.nl](http://www.lexicon.nl)

There is also a possibility to do a free Dutch language course at the Nova College in Hoofddorp. The government finances these courses. For more information: [www.novacollege.nl](http://www.novacollege.nl)

When you receive Dutch letters that need translation, or when you like to have a chat with people to improve your Dutch you can go to the Taalhuis. The Taalhuis is situated in the Cultuurhuis, the main library at the Polderplein in Hoofddorp. The opening hours of the Taalhuis are: Monday between 10.00 am and 14.00 pm, Tuesday between 10.00 am and 14.00 pm and Wednesday between 15.00 pm and 19.00 pm.

You can take a look on the website [www.debibliotheekhaarlemmermeer.nl](http://www.debibliotheekhaarlemmermeer.nl) for more information.

