



# FAMILY- SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

2019-2020



OPTIMIST  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL

# INTRODUCTION

Parental engagement recognizes the important role that both parents and teachers play in developing positive attitudes towards learning and education for children, building their motivation and confidence as learners, and fostering their enjoyment of learning.

## OUR AIMS ARE:

- ★ To encourage parents to participate in their child's education and in the life of the school
- ★ To ensure that parents feel welcome in our school and are encouraged to work alongside us
- ★ To provide opportunities to enrich the learning experience of the child, bringing together the resources of home and school

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**dutchinternational  
schools**

# COMMUNICATING



- ★ Our **school guide**. The school guide provides important information about our education, the organization and policies of the school. The school guide is being updated regularly, at least once a year, and the most updated version can be found on our website.
- ★ Our **school information poster** combined with a year calendar in one handy fold out provides detailed and specific information regarding the actual school year, such as staffing information, holidays and other relevant dates. Since some activities are planned during the year, we will inform you separately when activities are added or changed. We will also update our online calendar on our website regularly.
- ★ Our **newsletters**. Newsletters are sent by email. This contains actual information on a range of subjects and the learning journeys demonstrate examples of learning in the different mileposts.
- ★ School/class **notice boards**. In the office area we have a notice board. This contains useful information for parents. Your child's classroom also has a noticeboard at the entrance of the class for specific information for your class or milepost.
- ★ The **website**. On the website you will find useful information about the school, our curriculum, our policies and our community.
- ★ **Parents app**. We are planning to implement a parents app during the school year 2019 – 2020. A parents app contributes to parent involvement and better communication between parent and teacher in a safe environment. Teachers, school management and parents can keep each other informed with photos and experiences by group-wide announcements and personal messages. A parents app also helps to organize activities and provides an agenda.
- ★ **Parents guide National Curriculum**. It would not be possible to set out in detail everything your child would learn during their years of primary education, but by providing an outline of typical content and some background information about how the curriculum works,

hopefully it will help parents understand what their children are learning. This guide covers our curriculum for language and mathematics.

- ★ **School-to-home and home-to-school communication about learning activities.**

To engage parents in the learning of their child, at the beginning of each IPC unit, parents will receive a start letter about the unit, which outlines what learning will be covered. Also the main objectives of language and mathematics during this unit are included in these letters. We invite parents to attend specific activities related to the IPC, for example when we reach the exit point.

During the year we plan Sharing Learning Celebrations, which are included in the year calendar. The pupils make their own learning visible by showing materials or doing activities they choose. In Group 1 we use a Communication Booklet, which is sent back and forth from school to home. Here, parents and teachers can share the child's interests, experiences, concerns or questions.

We encourage parents to bring the children in the classroom from 8 – 8.15 am, so their child can show what's going on in the class room, for example show learning that is on the walls. We invite parents to join the children while they are doing their 'starters' task during this first quarter. By asking questions to their child during this moment, they can get an insight in the learning that's happening in the classroom. It's our experience that during these moments parents will get more specific answers from their child then when they would ask what children are learning when they come home after a school day.

If parents have any questions or concerns regarding the development of their child, we ask them to make an appointment to discuss this with the teacher, so that we can take the time to do this properly and talk with you personally. When

parents bring or collect their child, teachers provide specific attention to the class or children. During these moments only small practical things can be shared between the parent(s) and the teacher.

The teacher is always the main and first contact for parents. Parents can make contact via email if they are unable to speak in person. We don't communicate about concerns or the development of a pupil through email. We do that personally to avoid misunderstandings. When needed an additional appointment can be made with the parents, the teacher and a member of the management.

We plan three regular individual parent-teacher meetings per year to discuss the progress of children, which are included in the year calendar. When advice or help from other specialists is desired, for example our school coach or local health specialist, the teacher can realize that. When children are new to our school we plan an evaluation meeting after the first four weeks.

General school related matters can be discussed with the management. Every morning one of our management members will be at the door to welcome all children and parents. Small things can be shared then. When needed an appointment can be made. Please visit our reception or contact us by phone or email.

In the beginning of the year (the third or fourth week) we organize a general parent evening where we explain our school programmes and the class teachers explain the programme in their year group. This evening is at the same time a welcome meeting with the class teacher. During the year we organize a parent meeting for all parents, generally with a specific topic. We also organize an information evening about secondary education and the Dutch education system after primary school.

# VOLUNTEERING AND ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

We support family and community members in their efforts to support the school and the children. Involvement of parents gives a positive signal to children and increases the sense of connection and belonging. It also enables us to organize activities which give the school that important extra something. Parental support is highly appreciated at many levels, such as reading activities, library activities, logistic assistance, special activities (such as excursions), parties/social events and specific expertise. Class representatives are parents who volunteer to assist their child's class teacher with class activities. Class representatives are a welcoming informal network of support and a source of assistance to the class teacher on all sorts of non-educational matters.

Parents can join The activity committee (AC). For example, the AC helps to organize the school celebrations of Sinterklaas and Christmas, the end of the year party, but also the school library, the sports days, the swimming lessons, the school trips and excursions. We are also happy with parents who like to help out every once and a while with specific events or celebrations.



# PARTICIPATION COUNCIL

The participation council (PC) operates as a critical friend of the management team. The PC is made up of parents and teachers. The PC discusses policy issues relating to the school, puts forward proposals to the management and represents the interests of all those involved in the school. In this way parents are given an opportunity to

influence daily school practice. It is bound by a legal framework and has its own constitution. The meetings of the PC are open to everyone. The PC consists of three parents and three teachers of Optimist International School.

## LEARNING AT HOME

We provide information for parents on required skills in the main subjects at each year level “The new national curriculum a guide for parents”. We initiate **school-to-home and home-to-school communication** about learning activities. For example we provide parents with a starting letter of IPC units, ask pupils to gather materials for an IPC-unit or have them take home evidence of learning they accomplished at school.

We do this to:

- ★ engage parents in their children’s learning
- ★ help inform parents about the learning happening in class
- ★ offer further stimulation and enthusiasm for school and learning

Besides this we acknowledge that some pupils have skills which could be improved by practicing these skills at home. We call this **home learning**.

- ★ Home learning encourages opportunities to rehearse specific key skills such as learning times tables
- ★ Home learning helps foster good organizational habits which is good preparation for the demands of secondary school (especially for groups 6 and 7)

- ★ Home learning can be any work or activity which pupils are asked to do at home (either on their own or with parents). This can be home learning to be done by the whole class which reflects former learning in school in order to practice material already presented in class. It can also be an individual activity based on the specific needs of a pupil.

Home learning should be enjoyable and manageable for all concerned whilst recognizing that children should have plenty of free time after school in which to enjoy their childhood. As the children progress up the school, home learning time increases and more is expected of the children.

If a child is absent due to illness, we will not send home learning home as we would assume that the child was too ill to learn. If a child is absent for a length of time (e.g. with a broken leg), the teacher and parent will agree what should be done, how it should be marked and what sort of support will need to be given. If parents have any problems or questions about the home learning, they should in the first instance contact the child’s class teacher.

# PROVISION

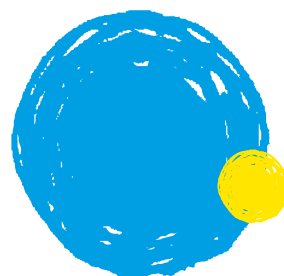
Below we describe our provision per phase group, provided by the teacher as is deemed necessary. We have also summarized tips for parents to support their child at home, for example questions to ask your child while reading or links to websites or television programmes for language, math's, social emotional development and Dutch.

## EARLY YEARS (GROUP 1)

- ★ Letter to inform parents about the IEYC unit and the objectives at the start of each unit, also the main objectives of mathematics and language are included
- ★ IEYC related project activities (e.g. show and tell)
- ★ Small booklets linked with activities that have been done in the classroom (e.g. phonics, numbers, shapes)
- ★ Fiction and Non-fiction story books linked with our curriculum

## MILEPOSTS 1, 2 AND 3 (GROUPS 2 – 7)

- ★ Letter to inform parents about the IPC unit and the objectives at the start of each unit, also the main objectives of mathematics and language are included
- ★ IPC related project activities (e.g. presentations)
- ★ (Online) books to practice reading skills and enjoy reading
- ★ Levelled reading books or digital reading books/ activities allocated by the teacher to practice reading and reading out loud at the pupils own level
- ★ Differentiated mathematics activities linked to the curriculum (e.g. sheets or online activities)



# GENERAL TIPS

Language acquisition plays an import role in the learning of our -often – non-native English speakers. This means that we as a school have a strong focus on both the content and the language of learning. The mother tongue is the corner stone for academic success. Learning can be reinforced when parents support the learning, for example by discussing the content, such as a specific theme shared through the starting letter of an IPC letter, in the mother tongue or dominant language. This makes it easier for a child to grab the language during the lessons, since they understand the concept. Furthermore it is important and also a predictor of success in literacy that children enjoy reading and are exposed to books and print. This can be in any language.

## READING

- ★ Listen to story CDs
- ★ A lot of our pupils have a non-English mother tongue and were already taught in that language. While it is important to encourage and support your child's efforts to learn English, research shows that children who are read to in their native language will have an easier time learning to read in their second language (such as English). So reading in your mother tongue can help your child. That could also be other printed material in your home such as books, greeting cards, magazines, and newspapers
- ★ When you read a new story, ask your child to predict the ending
- ★ Look at a picture book together and play a spotting game

- ★ Rhyming books are great fun and your child can join in
- ★ Be a role model – it's important to let your child see you reading
- ★ Exposing your child to games, puzzles, and music in English
- ★ Some questions to ask your child whilst reading together:
  - Look at the front cover. What could the book be about?
  - Who is the author?
  - What is an illustrator? What do they do?
  - What does the word ... mean? Read the words around it to help you figure it out (context)
  - How can you read an unfamiliar word? Can you sound out and then blend?
  - Who are the main characters?
  - What do you think will happen next?
  - How do you think that character feels? Why? How would you feel in that situation?
  - Can you predict how the book will end?
  - Who is your favourite character? Why?
  - Is there a hidden message in the story? What is it?
  - Can you retell the story in your own words?
  - Do you like how the story ended? Can you think of another way the book could have ended?
  - Which words rhyme in the story?
  - Tell me about the (things, places or animals) in this story?
- ★ Some questions to ask your child on a more advanced level:
  - What was the problem in the story and how was it solved?
  - Does this story remind you of something you have done or read about?
  - Describe the characters, their traits and how they interact with each other in this story
  - What do you think the author's message was in writing this piece? Do you agree with it?
  - How would you describe this author's style?
  - What was the main idea of the piece? Which sentences support your view
  - Summarize what happened in the story

- ★ Talk out the story in a home language or mother tongue. By doing this a transformative cognition takes place for your child, an English-home language connection is made
- ★ Have your child write home language word related to the book
- ★ After reading name game 'Find a name in the story that rhymes with ... (e.g. 'pat')'. Ask your child to find a name that rhymes with this
- ★ While reading, you could use blending (for young learners) by saying the sounds of the word from left to right and blend the sounds to hear the whole word. Point under each letter or letter group as you say the sound. Then run your finger under the whole word as you say the whole word.

## MATHS

- ★ Practise counting – you can do this anywhere: count toys, books, how many buses you see when you go out
- ★ Play hide and seek – again, good practice for counting
- ★ Save your cereal boxes and cardboard tubes for making models. Your child will think they're making a castle; you'll know they're learning about shapes!
- ★ Do a jigsaw together – a fun way to develop spatial awareness and matching skills
- ★ Play card games – even a simple game of snap helps to develop number recognition
- ★ Have a teddy bears' picnic: count out toys, place settings, and share out the cakes
- ★ Put up a height chart and mark each member of the family's height
- ★ At bathtime, play with different-sized containers
- ★ Simple games, such as dominoes and Snakes & Ladders
- ★ Playing traditional games, such as battleships or even draughts and chess, is great for exploring coordinates and movements across the coordinate grid
- ★ Explore using money and clocks both in play at home and when out and about
- ★ Encourage your child to help with the purchasing of small items at the newsagent, or measuring themselves and others, is a great way to start exploring number relationships

- ★ Much of the knowledge in Year 5 relies on number facts being easily recalled. For example, to find common factors or to make simple conversions, knowledge of multiplication tables is essential. Any practice at home to keep these skills sharp

## LANGUAGE

- ★ Sing songs together
- ★ Play with letters: make them out of dough, bricks, or buy some magnetic letters and stick them on the fridge
- ★ Play I-spy when you go out – use the sound the letter makes, rather than its name
- ★ When children are writing (also outside of school) – why not discuss their choices of vocabulary? Some common words, such as ‘went’ and ‘said’ can often be replaced by more specific words that give a sense of the action, such as ‘raced’ or ‘yelled’
- ★ Take opportunities to look at words that pop up in books you read with your child, considering how the choice of word affects your understanding of a story.

## ONLINE

- ★ Reading games:  
[www.roythezebra.com/reading-games.html](http://www.roythezebra.com/reading-games.html)  
[www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/](http://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/)
- ★ ABC’s and reading games [www.more.starfall.com/?](http://www.more.starfall.com/?)
- ★ Stories (picture books), read by celebrities, authors etc. <https://www.storylineonline.net/>
- ★ Fun games to practice maths independently [www.e4education.co.uk/primary/games](http://www.e4education.co.uk/primary/games)
- ★ Math games <https://www.mathplayground.com/>
- ★ Games to learn English:  
[www.gamestolearnenglish.com](http://www.gamestolearnenglish.com)  
[www.eslgamesplus.com](http://www.eslgamesplus.com)
- ★ Practise phonics, [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) search criteria “alphablocks”
- ★ Games to practice phonics [www.phonicsbloom.com](http://www.phonicsbloom.com)
- ★ Kids news for Milepost 3 [www.dogonews.com](http://www.dogonews.com)
- ★ Social emotional skills, growth mindset [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) search criteria “class dojo big ideas”

- ★ Small movies with a mix of informative themes and sketches for children in Dutch [www.hetklokhuis.nl](http://www.hetklokhuis.nl)
- ★ Kids news in Dutch [www.jeugdjournaal.nl/](http://www.jeugdjournaal.nl/)
- ★ Sinterklaas news [www.sinterklaasjournaal.ntr.nl](http://www.sinterklaasjournaal.ntr.nl) (available from 12 November)
- ★ Television programme Sesamstraat in Dutch, daily at 6:55 pm on the channel of Zappelin, also on <https://www.schooltv.nl/programma/sesamstraat/>
- ★ Television programme Koekeloere in Dutch, on the channel of NTR, also on <https://www.zappelin.nl/programmas/koekeloere>
- ★ Small movies with a mix of themes in different age groups in Dutch [www.schooltv.nl](http://www.schooltv.nl)







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