

LUXEMBOURGISH SCHOOLS SUPPORT GROUP

INFORMATION PACK

**L'école fondamentale
(Pre-school and Primary school)**

January 2017

Cycle 1	3-5 years	Préscolaire: Précoce and Spillschoul (Nursery school and Pre-Primary)
Cycle 2	6-7 years	Primarschoul (Primary school)
Cycle 3	8-9 years	
Cycle 4	10-11 years	

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1. Introduction

The Group aims to provide information in English on the Luxembourgish education system, and practical help for parents of any nationality with children in the state schools. Our objective is not to change the Luxembourgish education system, but to explain it so that you can understand the differences between its schools and any you may have experienced. This will then enable you to do the best for your children so that they can obtain the maximum benefit from their schooling.

It is sometimes very important, however, to be able to chat to someone who understands the frustrations and problems that may occur. To this end we aim to provide a wider network of people beyond the committee and we would be grateful if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire so that we can continue this process.

We are not experts, but parents with some experience of the school system. We have taken care to verify the information given and to ensure it was correct when it was published. We endeavour to keep up to date with all new developments and so if you have any further queries, please contact any of the committee listed below. Some information may also be found in English on the Ministry of Education’s website scolarisation-eleves-etrangers and www.men.public.lu/fr/publications/. Of particular interest is the document called “Welcome to School in Luxembourg”, this can also be downloaded from our website www.lssg.lu.

In addition to producing this booklet, we arrange information evenings where you can meet and ask questions to the professionals, normally two teachers and a third person from within the education system. We will send you details of these evenings if you register with us using the questionnaire at the end of this pack or on our [website](http://www.lssg.lu).

An information pack on the *lycée* (secondary) system is also available. Our information packs are available on our website www.lssg.lu.

The committee members of the Luxembourgish Schools Support Group are available to help:

<u>Primary School enquiries</u>			Particular experience in:
Dominique	Sweetnam	487 882	Primary and Secondary
Annette	Salmon	2668 7962	Pre-school and Primary
 <u>Lycée enquiries</u>			Particular experience in:
Sue	Pidgley	2630 5457	Mamer
Lynn	Frank	621 217138	Passage, parent support group passage.parents@gmail.com

You can also e-mail us at info@lssg.lu. Please put an appropriate phrase in the subject line to help us distinguish your message from junk mail or spam.

2. Enrolment

If you choose to have your child educated in the Luxembourg system you will need to enrol them. The Pre-school and Primary school system is known as the *Ecole Fondamentale*. Any Luxembourg residents can enrol their child in their local pre-school or primary school by visiting the local education department or municipal offices of their commune. Your local school will be within your commune.

Under normal circumstances, you cannot choose for your child to attend a school from a different commune, unless there are extenuating circumstances and permission would need to be granted in advance by the education authorities and/or the commune/school.

Some of the reasons behind this policy are to ensure that the demographics of a given commune are adequately resourced (to ensure that all children within a commune will receive a primary education there) and that a “tiered” school system is not created (while all schools aim to meet or better the national average, school performance scores are not divulged).

Enrolment in *Education Précoce*: Cycle 1 (Pre-School Education) - Age 3+

All communes have to provide nursery education for children over the age of three; however, attendance is not compulsory at this stage. If Luxembourgish is not regularly spoken at home, we recommend that you take advantage of this opportunity. Your local commune will advise you of the admission procedure. Children join the *précoce* group (if numbers permit) following their 3rd birthday. The exact time of starting is subject to local variations, so it wise to check with your school or Commune.

The objective of *education précoce* is to stimulate the child’s social, linguistic and intellectual development through play. It provides a good opportunity for children to interact with others of the same age. It is also an excellent way for foreign children to learn Luxembourgish.

Classes have a maximum of 25 children and each class usually has both a nursery teacher and a teaching assistant. If numbers are high enough, a third person may be employed, perhaps with skills in the mother tongue of the majority of the children.

In general your child’s weekly attendance can range from a minimum of three specified half days to a maximum of eight half days. This varies from commune to commune and depends on availability of places. Children can usually arrive at any time between 08:00 and 09:00, finishing for lunch at 11:45, afternoon sessions are from 14:00 to 16:00.

Enrolment in *Spillschoul*: Cycle 1 (Pre-primary) – Age 4+

Spillschoul education consists of a two-year cycle, both years being compulsory. By law your child is obliged to start school in the September following their 4th birthday, and will therefore normally be 6 when entering primary school (see below).

In most communes, the *Administration Communale* (commune) will contact you, before the beginning of the school year, to let you know which school your child should attend and the date and time for the first day. In some areas your child’s name will appear on a list displayed at the school or on a commune notice board or local commune newsletter.

In most *Spillschouls*, first and second year children are mixed together in the same class. A few schools maintain separate first and second year classes.

In some communes children who are four between 1st September and 31st December are able to start school early. The application procedure is the same as for early starting in the primary school (see below) in some communes, and in other communes the ability to enter the school is automatic.

Enrolment in *Primarschoul* Cycles 2-4 (Primary) – Age 6+

If your child has attended Cycle 1 (*Spillschoul*), enrolment into primary school is automatic. Normally your child will attend the school nearest to your home. If for any reason you wish your child to attend a school outside the local commune (e.g. to be nearer your place of work if both parents work) you must make a request to the commune of your workplace and will have to pay a fee for this privilege. However, be aware that your request may be denied, much will depend on places available.

If your child’s birthday falls between 1st September and 31st December it may be possible to start primary school just before the 6th birthday. A written request must be made to the *Service de l’Enseignement* by 31st March of the preceding academic year. Your child will then be assessed by a group of experts including a doctor, a psychologist, a school inspector and a primary school teacher. The test with the psychologist is done without the parent being present.

Equally, it is possible for your child’s entry into primary school to be delayed because of immaturity or to allow time to improve language skills. An assessment takes place during the second or third term of the second year of *Spillschoul* and whilst parents have the right to refuse, it is advisable to think carefully before ignoring the teacher’s recommendations.

3. Year by year

Early childhood education, pre-school and primary education are divided into four cycles known as Education Fondamentale.

	Normal age of child at start of each cycle
Cycle 1	3 to 5 years
Cycle 2	6 to 7 years
Cycle 3	8 to 9 years
Cycle 4	10 to 11 years

Parents receive a school report at the end of the first and third term each year informing them of the progress and development of their child. At the end of a cycle, children move on to the next cycle provided they have acquired the necessary level of competence. In exceptional circumstances a child may repeat a year of a cycle or skip a year. In any event, even if a child has repeated years, they must leave the *Education Fondamentale* at the age of 14.

Cycle 1: *Précoce and Spillschoul* (Pre-primary)

Luxembourgish is the language used. Learning is through play, with activities designed to develop the child's concentration and fine motor skills. These may include simple logic puzzles, pre-writing exercises, drawing and cutting, handicrafts, games and singing. Various topics such as shapes, colours, the seasons, animals and teeth etc. are investigated. No formal teaching of reading, writing or mathematics is given but some schools will introduce simple sums or letter forming towards the end of the last year of Cycle 1. Some communes provide additional classes for non-Luxembourgers often referred to as *cours d'appui*. Ask at your school or local commune.

Cycles 2 – 4: *Primarschoul* (Primary)

Primary school education in Luxembourg follows a national curriculum. The Ministry of Education informs teachers throughout the country as to the work they are obliged to cover with their classes each term. Children at all schools will, therefore, have the same text books and cover the same material at a similar pace, to arrive at a common standard at the end of the academic year. Obviously this makes moving communes and, therefore, schools an easier undertaking and ensures that approximately the same level of teaching is maintained irrespective of area.

Teachers are qualified to teach in any class from the first to the sixth year primary. As a general rule, teachers will keep the same class for two years running (first and second, third and fourth, fifth and sixth). At the end of the school year teachers allocate classes amongst themselves for the following year.

Pedagogical team approach and Team-teaching:

An approach to teaching through a system of a pedagogical team is now in place. Teachers from classes in the same cycle work together as a team and meet weekly to plan and discuss progress.

Schools have access to a multi-professional team composed of specialists such as psychomotor therapists and psychologists who can assist children with difficulties.

Team teaching is considered the norm. Under this system a class will be taught by a group of up to 4 teachers. In some cases the team may be jointly responsible for two classes in the same year group or in the same cycle e.g. 3rd and 4th year. The children thus benefit from a more diversified style of teaching and from a range of different experiences and talents. Often the teachers are responsible for different subject areas but ultimately all decisions regarding the child are taken as a group. This concept also allows teachers to give extra help to smaller groups within classes where required.

It is through this method and the *école fondamentale* schooling system, that additional time can be devoted to children who are attaining significantly better results than their peers and may need to be considered to move to the year ahead but who may need to perform extra work to fill the "gap" in order to meet the demands of the older/higher class.

Similarly, for a child who is perhaps not achieving the same results in comparison to his/her peers, or who has been absent due to illness, or who is new to the system; the

team teaching and école fondamentale system allows teachers to devote more time to pupils who require additional assistance.

The table below shows an indication of the number of lessons normally allocated each week to each subject in each year:

Lessons	Year	2.1	2.2A	2.2B	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2
German		10	10	7	5	5	5	5
French		0	0	3	7	7	7	7
Mathematics		6	6	6	5	5	5	5
Sciences		3	3	3	2	2	1	1
History		0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Geography		0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Luxembourgish		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Religion/Moral studies		2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Art		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Crafts		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Music		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sport/Gym		3	3	3	3	3	2	2

A Before Carnival Holiday (February)

B After Carnival Holiday

Cycle 2.1 (1st year Primary)

Your child will learn to read and write in German and learn basic mathematics. This is an important year for establishing foundations for future more complicated work. Some teachers divide their class into three groups and on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays two groups finish early at 11:00. This enables the teacher to give more individual attention to the remaining group and sort out any particular problems or difficulties.

Cycle 2.2 (2nd year Primary)

German is consolidated and French is introduced in the second semester with an emphasis on oral rather than written work.

Cycle 3 (3rd and 4th year Primary)

The groundwork of the first two years is consolidated and extended. Written French becomes more important from the third year and more time is allocated to French than German in order to bring the two languages up to a similar standard.

Cycle 4.1 (5th year Primary)

History, Geography and Science are now taught as separate subjects.

Lycée Orientation

From the 2016-2017 school year, the topic of orientation in the secondary system will begin to be broached in Cycle 4.1, during meeting with the teacher at the end of the 3rd term. Information will be provided on the options in secondary school, the main branches and alternative language options.

Cycle 4.2 (6th year Primary)

The sixth year is of paramount importance because this is when the direction of the child's secondary education is decided. The child continues to take regular tests in all subjects as in the previous years. This will form part of a continuous assessment, which will also include noting the pupil's attitude and participation in class, oral work and projects. There are also national tests sat in German, French and Mathematics. Some teachers hold mock tests in November and the real tests are taken in March. These tests are for standardisation and you will be told how your child is progressing in relation to all the other sixth year children in Luxembourg. Books of past papers for the national tests "*Prufe dein Wissen*" are available in book.

Lycée Orientation

A psychologist conducts a series of tests and assesses the class. At present, however, this is not compulsory for your child. A meeting is held between teachers from each type of secondary school, the class teacher and the school inspector to decide an appropriate route for your child to follow. The opinion of the class teacher is important. The psychologist advises the committee but has no vote. On the basis of the results and expert advice and in consultation with the parents it is then decided whether your child's education should be continued at *lycée classique*, *lycée technique* or *régime préparatoire* (also known as *modulaire*).

Greater detail of the selection procedure is covered in our information pack on secondary schools.

4. Life & Social Studies (*formally Religious Education or Moral/ Social Studies*)

The 2016-2017 school year is the last year in which pupils are offered the choice of studying Religious Education or Moral and Social Studies in primary schools. Two hours per week are allocated on the timetable for these subjects.

Currently as the state religion in Luxembourg is Roman Catholicism (RC), this is the religion taught in schools. Children learn Bible stories and no attempt is made to convert the non-RC child.

In Moral and Social Studies pupils are encouraged to discover and discuss a wide range of topics. Pupils consider themes such as family, tolerance, racism, crime, conscience, citizenship, problems of minority groups.

From the 2017-2018 school year, these 2 offerings will be replaced with a common non-denominational "Life and Social Studies" class (*Vie et Société*).

The main objectives for the new "**Life and Social Studies**" programme will be:

1. Promoting tolerance based on understanding and knowledge – openness, respect and tolerance in our multicultural society.
2. Learning through reflection and critical thought
3. Exploring key issues in life and our society

5. School Hours

The table below shows the basic primary school hours. Cycle 1 hours tend to be slightly shorter – see a typical example below. There may be local variations.

Monday	08:00 - 12:10 (or 11:45) and 14:00 - 16:00
Tuesday	08:00 - 12:10 (or 12:35)
Wednesday	08:00 - 12:10 (or 11:45) and 14:00 - 16:00
Thursday	08:00 - 12:10 (or 12:35)
Friday	08:00 - 12:10 (or 11:45) and 14:00 - 16:00

In some *Spillschouls* teachers may allow some flexibility in arrival time in the mornings e.g. allowing children to arrive up to 09:00 but this depends on individual schools.

When collecting your child from either *Spillschoul* or primary it is essential that you be on time. Teachers are not obliged to remain in the playground with uncollected children, if parents are late.

Many schools remain closed between 12:10 and 14:00. Most communes now provide supervised canteens (see Section 6 – *Maison Relais* and *Foyer Scolaire*). These will usually provide hot meals which allow the children to stay at school over the lunch period.

Even where supervised canteen services are offered, children may also be required to bring snacks to school, particularly in Cycle 1. Depending on the school resources, the school may offer free fruit for the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoon snacks. Drinks are usually provided free of charge. Children are not permitted to bring sweets, chocolate, crisps or other sugary foods for their snacks

Free Tuesday and Thursday afternoons allow children to participate locally in sports, music and other out-of-school activities or to take part in the extra-curricular activities offered by *Maison Relais* or the *Foyer Scolaire*. Many of these activities may be subsidised by the *Cheques Service* Further details can be obtained from your Commune or on www.cheque-service.lu.

6. *Maison Relais* or *Foyer Scolaire* (Out of school-hours care and canteen)

Most communes are now served by a *Maison Relais* or *Foyer Scolaire*. These services offer pre- and post-school care and canteen service (although not all schools/communes currently offer these services to précoce pupils). Most will offer supervision of children from 7:30 to 19:00 but these will vary from commune to commune. These associations often provide help with homework as well as organising a range of extra-curricular activities.

For pupils who do not yet speak Luxembourgish, they are often encouraged to avail of the canteen service even if there is a stay-at-home parent as it offers an opportunity to mix with their peers and absorb the Luxembourg language in a more relaxed, less formal atmosphere than the classroom.

Due to the high demand for places, priority may be given in some communes to families where both parents work full-time. Enrolment to this service is usually done at the end

of each school year for the following year, by appointment. A fee is charged for this pre- and post-school service, which is means-related and linked to the government childcare subsidy referred to as *Cheque Service*, available to Luxembourg resident parents. In order to benefit from these you need to register for *Cheque Service* at your commune and will need to provide a certificate of child allowance, ID, proof of revenue. Further details can be obtained from your Commune or on www.cheque-service.lu, which also provides further contact details if you need more information.

7. Medical Examinations

Every child in the school system receives regular medical and dental check-up. Their height, weight, eyesight, hearing and urine will be monitored. Vaccination record cards will also be checked to ensure that they are up-to-date. *Spillschoul* children are also assessed to ensure that speech development is progressing correctly.

In second year *Spillschoul* and alternate years in primary school full medical examinations are carried out. In some communes examinations are annual.

If any problems are found at these various medical examinations the parents will be notified in writing and should arrange for further tests or treatments to be carried out by the family doctor or dentist.

8. Holidays

Most communes distribute a list of the school holiday dates to parents, along with school pick up times, before the start of the new school year in September. Details may appear in a commune newsletter. If you do not receive information then the dates are shown on the free calendar delivered by your postman each New Year or on most other free calendars distributed by banks and companies. The school holiday calendar is also shown on the website <http://www.men.public.lu/fr/.../vacances-scolaires>.

Depending on the commune, the first day of the school year may only be an hour long, irrespective of the day of the week – the rest of the day is free. Some holidays may not appear on the official calendars and are so well known locally that parents may not receive a note from the teacher about them. *Spillschouls* and primary schools throughout Luxembourg are normally shut on 6th December, after *Kleeschen* (Saint Nicholas) visits during the night, so that children can play with their new toys. During the period of the Octave pilgrimage in May each commune has a day off in turn to allow children to participate in the pilgrimage with their families or other groups from their commune.

If other days arise when the school will be shut then teachers will notify parents in advance by sending a note home via the child. Remember to check your child's class *journal* regularly.

On the days when the school is shut, it is normally possible to enrol your child all day at the *Maison Relais* or *Foyer Scolaire*. They will either inform you throughout the year or ask you to enrol at the start of the year. Please note that there will be no school bus on these days.

In the event of schools being shut due to exceptionally bad weather, such as floods or snowstorms, the names of the schools affected are broadcast on RTL radio (92.5 MHz FM) in Luxembourgish at breakfast time.

9. School Material

Whilst state education itself is free in Luxembourg, parents are expected to provide their children with material required for school. A supplement is, however, added to the September family allowance to help with these costs.

The items required are very specific, such as the colour of folders or the number of lines per page in an exercise book, so you must wait for the list from your child's teacher. The list covers items such as files, folders, exercise books, paper, jotters, paints, paintbrushes, pencils, crayons, gym shoes, bag and overalls etc. Normally, fountain pens (not biros, BICs or ballpoints) are used but this depends on the teacher. Children will also need a schoolbag, to carry notebooks and textbooks for homework.

Practices vary from teacher to teacher, but you will probably find that the class teacher will:

- purchase the requirements for the entire class and then ask parents for reimbursement, or
- send out a list a few weeks before the start of term to allow you to make your purchases at leisure, or
- give your child a list on the first morning of school in September. You will then have to join the rush to buy everything in time for school the following morning.

It may be worth going to a local bookshop or stationer rather than the bigger supermarkets. Although it will cost you a few euros more, you can hand over your list to an assistant who will quickly collect together all the items and you can rest assured you have the exercise book with the correct number of lines and margins in the right format and colour!

You may be expected to cover and label all the textbooks, so remember to buy coverings and labels.

At primary level textbooks are usually free.

10. School Transport

In communes where one school serves several neighbouring villages or a large district, a free school bus service is provided. The bus will collect your child to allow him to arrive at least 5 minutes before the start of school and will bring him home at the end of lessons. There may not always be adult supervision on the buses. Normally Précoce pupils are not permitted to use the school bus.

Parents will normally receive information about the school bus regarding stops and times from their commune before the start of the school year in September.

11. Parent Teacher Contact

Before the start of the school year in September, you will be informed which class your child will attend and the teacher's name. This may be sent to you directly by the school principal (*Président*), be displayed on a list outside the school or public notice board or sent in a commune newsletter.

At the beginning of the academic year, normally during the first few weeks of term, the teacher will call a meeting with all parents to explain the curriculum for the year and the teacher's general approach to homework, corrections, notification of illnesses etc. This is normally conducted in Luxembourgish but there may be an alternative time offered when the language offered will be French. If this is not so, you may ask the teacher for an individual meeting. You can put this request, and any others, in your child's *journal*, which is the usual way of initiating communication between parents and teachers.

Your child's homework and other information are also normally recorded in the *journal* each day. This journal may need to be signed daily or weekly by a parent.

The teacher is obliged to allocate an hour each week for meeting with parents. If you wish to discuss your child's progress, share information with the teacher or raise any questions, then you should ask for an appointment.

In addition, regular meetings (usually once per term) take place where the child's progress and the attainment of the "competencies" can be discussed. Advance notice is given for these meetings, and often teachers will accommodate working parents by hosting these meetings over lunchtimes, in the evenings and/or on weekends. This is an opportunity for parents to discuss their child's progress, comment on the teacher's findings/remarks and to ask any questions.

Normally, you can deal with any problems in this manner but should you still be unhappy with a situation you can contact the *Président* and/ or School Inspector.

12. School Inspector

The inspector's role is to act as an intermediary between the teachers, parents, commune and the Ministry of Education.

Typical problems that the inspector will deal with are when a child:

- is not comfortable with a teacher
- has learning difficulties
- has relationship problems with classmates.

When presented with such a problem the inspector will help assess the child and advise as to what help should be given.

Any act of corporal punishment must be reported to the inspector immediately as it is illegal and the inspectorate has to act quickly.

The inspector also spot-checks work and teaching methods in the classroom without warning the teacher concerned.

The board of inspectors is responsible for:

- observing teachers
- controlling the quality of individual teacher's work
- formulating education policy with the Ministry of Education, implementing such policy and suggesting reforms
- devising school textbooks
- liaising with political parties
- monitoring public opinion via newspaper letters etc.

You can obtain the name of the inspector allocated to your school from the teacher, your commune or the inspector's office (*Inspection de l'enseignement fondamental*) by calling 247-65125.

13. School Commission

Schools are directed by a committee. The committee includes the school's *Président*, who is selected by the commune, representatives from the school personnel, selected by the school personnel and parents, selected by a parent election. The *Président* organises information evenings for parents and parents have the right to request information or address problems to the *Président*.

The School Commission is concerned with organisational issues such as classroom facilities, recommendations to the commune, liaison with the school inspectors and overseeing school attendance.

The School Commission has no influence over the syllabus taught in school which is exclusively the responsibility of the Ministry of Education – see Section 3.

14. Absence from School

Absence from school is authorised only for legitimate reasons, such as illness, important family occasions such as bereavement or marriage, or moving house.

In the case of illness, a medical certificate from a doctor must be produced on the third day of absence. For periods of less than three days the child should return to school with a parental note explaining the absence.

A teacher has, in theory, the authority to grant one day's extra leave, although in practice it varies from teacher to teacher. It is always worth asking your child's teacher, but for longer or additional absences a written request must be made in advance to the School Commission at the local commune or from the School *Président*. They can grant between five and eight day's absence.

Vacation during term-time is not a legitimate reason to be absent from school. Teachers, the School Commission and the school inspector closely monitor school attendance. In the case of persistent absence the authorities will take further action.

15. Marking System

Initially the marking system may seem a little confusing. Children are assessed by a system of continual assessment by “competences”. In this system, children are evaluated based on a portfolio and their performance against a list of standardised benchmarks. This system focuses more on the requirements of the individual child.

Teachers can decide how many tests per subject they set each term and the form these take. In language subjects the tests usually include a dictation element. Some teachers give the children a lot of advanced warning before tests with revision sheets on the relevant work to be tested. Others prefer to give tests with no prior warning.

When a test has been marked the child will bring it home to correct mistakes and for it to be signed by a parent. The test is then returned to the teacher.

16. School Reports

Teacher-parent meetings take place every term and teachers provide a school report to parents at the end of the first and third terms. The language used for the subjects and other categories in the primary reports is French.

From the 2016-2017 school year, school reports have undergone a new reform. Children in Cycles 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1 will be given the new format of school report, whilst children in Cycles 2.2, 3.2 and 4.2 will receive their report from the 2015-2016 school year to finish the cycle. From the 2017-2018 school year all children will receive the new school reports.

English versions of the new school reports for Cycles 2, 3 and 4 can be downloaded from the Ministry of Education website bilans.men.lu or from the [Resources](#) page of our website. In addition, a short film in English explaining the new style reports can also be viewed on the Ministry of Education website: videos/2016/nouv-bilans-parents-en

A sample of the previous format of school report is enclosed in Section 20 of this pack.

The report book includes sections on behaviour, attitude and aptitude; they feature attainment targets in the main subjects for each year as well as an explanation of what the points and notes in the report mean. There is also space for the teacher to comment on your child’s progress. The report also contains the syllabus for each cycle, so you can see what should be covered by the teacher.

Teachers will request a meeting with the parents in order to go through the report book and discuss the child’s performance each term. The parent must sign and return the report quickly. As you only have the report in your possession for one evening or a limited period before it is returned to school it is worth keeping a photocopy of each term’s results. There is a separate report book for each cycle, which will be accompanied by a consolidated summary report book at the end of the cycle.

Reports for Cycle 1 (Preschool) are written by the teacher either in French or German. These include a segment for parents to write comments (but these also should be written in French or German).

16. Homework

There are guidelines about the quantity of homework children are given. However, it is still generally a matter for the teacher to decide how much is set. If you feel that there is too much homework speak to the teacher about it. The amount of homework set does not include any unfinished work from the day that may also have to be completed.

You can help your children with homework even though you may have no knowledge of French or German because you can read and use a dictionary. This is probably all you need to get you and your child through the first year and it will continue to be useful in the years to come. You can help your children with dictation or they can help themselves by reading and recording text onto a voice recorder/ phone and then using it for dictation. Older children can also help and if they are close in age they can dictate to each other.

If you find you need, or would like, more help for your children then look around in your local area. The facilities offered and the ease of obtaining information varies from commune to commune but here are some suggestions.

Other parents and neighbours

The first point of contact is with other parents and neighbours. You may meet them at school, the bus stop or through your children's activities. Many of them may be willing to help but it is probably best to rely on them only in times of emergency i.e. on an occasional basis so that no one feels put upon. Of course you may find that some are very willing to provide continuous help especially if they are working with their own child. If they have older children at *lycée* you may be able to offer reciprocal help.

Joining in with commune run holiday activities (for which there is usually a small fee) and local clubs helps generally to improve spoken Luxembourgish.

Baby-sitters and Teenage help

To help your child's language development it is always useful to get local babysitters. They can speak to your child in Luxembourgish, or German if you prefer, and can also help with reading practice. You can also arrange for this during the holidays. Frequent half-day sessions can be very beneficial. The teenagers themselves are under less pressure from their own work at this time. You can usually obtain a list of willing teenagers from the local *Mamman hellefe Mamman (MhM)* or the *Jeune Maman* affiliated to the *Fraen a Mammen* which is run by the church, or by contacting *Action Familiale et Populaire*. Communes usually hold a list of teenagers over the age of fifteen who have completed babysitting courses.

Teenagers

Teenagers in Luxembourgish schools or in the German (or French) section of the European School may like to earn some pocket money helping primary school children

with their languages. You may also find that their parents, who may be German (or French) native speakers, are also willing to give lessons.

Supervised homework

Many schools operate supervised homework clubs for one hour after school on certain days, to comply with the requirements under the *Ecole Fondamentale* system. This is organised by teachers. Teachers or volunteer helpers may supervise. In addition, to this the school may run an “extra help” session for those children who have difficulty in a particular subject. The teacher will tell you if he thinks your child should attend these special classes.

Many *Maisons Relais* and *Foyers Scolaires* offer homework assistance each afternoon usually for a maximum period of one hour per day. Even if assistance is provided, it is always worth checking each evening that the homework for the next day has been fully completed.

Tutors

Your school may be able to suggest a formal teacher – sometimes a student teacher.

Books and other reading matter

Encourage your child to read and watch television in German and later on in French. It helps enormously. Some schools have their own libraries. In smaller communes there is a *Bicherbus* (mobile library) which calls in the commune every few weeks. The teacher may be able to recommend some books but it is important to find something that interests the child. If you want to buy children’s paperback books it is often better to ask the assistant as these are not always found in the children’s section.

There is an enormous range of German dictionaries on the market and you can check with the teacher for preference. When using a dictionary ensure that it has the new spellings (*Neue Rechtschreibung*).

Duden publishes a wide range of books including *Schüler-Duden* a dictionary aimed at children and a range of *Schülerhilfen* books. These have a selection of exercises to do and passages for dictation. You can find other worksheets too but always ensure that there is someone who can correct these for your child otherwise there is a danger of compounding errors.

Other useful didactic information can be obtained from the website of the Fédération Générale des Instituteurs Luxembourgeois: www.fgil.lu and from the website www.oli.lu.

17. School and After-School Activities

Depending on the school facilities and age of your child, your child may have as part of their weekly/monthly schedule various regular activities. These include physical education (also known as “Turnen”), swimming classes, forest walks, AirTramp (a

large inflatable mattress that promotes fine motor skills development within the children), and others. Children are expected to dress appropriately for these activities – the dates are provided in advance by the teachers.

In addition some sports (e.g. LASEP) and music (e.g. UGDA) associations may offer activities that take place after school but that take place in or around the school complex. While these organizations are separate to the school network and these sports and music teachers do not “work” with the school teachers, they sometimes, work alongside the school hours and teachers and will sometimes arrange pick-up (from classrooms) and drop-off (e.g. to *Maison Relais*). This varies from one school and/or organization to the next.

18. Special Needs and Additional Educational Needs

If you suspect your child has problems, we recommend that you see your paediatrician who can refer you to the appropriate specialist. You can discuss with the teacher any special needs you suspect your child may have.

If your child has a suspected learning difficulty, you may be referred EDIFF (Service de l'Education différenciée). This organisation consists of multi-disciplinary teams working with children who have previously been diagnosed with special needs and who are already integrated in mainstream schooling. However, it also offers assessment, help and support to children, presenting with other educational or psychological problems, as well as to their parents and teachers.

Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle
Service de l'Education différenciée

29, rue Aldringen

L-2926 Luxembourg

Tel: +352/247-85178/-85181

Fax: +352/460 105, Email: direction@ediff.lu or admin@ediff.lu

If your child has difficulty concentrating, you can contact SCAP. Although originally set up to help children with Attention Deficit Disorder, with or without hyperactivity, SCAP now also provides services for other difficulties, such as dyslexia or dyscalculia. It is therefore worth contacting them for advice, at least. The service is very popular and you may have to wait a long time for an appointment.

Service de Consultation et d'Aide pour troubles de l'Attention, de la Perception et du développement Psychomoteur

Bâtiment Institut pour IMC

Val St. André

L-1128 Luxembourg

Tel: 26 44 481

Fax: 26 44 48 48

E-mail: scap@scap.lu

Website: www.scap.lu

Other support and information for children with learning difficulties and their families can be obtained from the Kanner Helpdesk, www.kannerhelpdesk.lu, 57 Rte de Trèves, L-2633 Senningerberg. Tel: 2694 5850, Fax: 2694 5852.

Passage

Passage is a support group and social network of parents, professionals and experts related to the field of education and child's social development in Luxembourg. They aim to provide a forum for discussing and addressing the modern day challenges of parenting for the English-speaking community who may not have access to support in their chosen language.

They hold regular meetings which are open to any parent or professional who would like information, advice or a forum to share ideas and experiences.

If you would like to know more about Passage, contact: passage.parents@gmail.com or visit their website www.passage.lu.

19. Other Useful Addresses:

The Luxembourg Ministry of Education provides a service for newly arrived pupils in Luxembourg known as the CASNA (Cellule d'accueil scolaire pour élèves nouveaux arrivants).

CASNA help to assess the most suitable school for children who speak a foreign language, and provide information in a number of languages (including English) for parents.

CASNA – Cellule d'accueil scolaire pour élèves nouveaux arrivants:

Reception desk for newly arrived pupils
Service de la scolarisation des enfants étrangers
Ministère de l'Éducation nationale
Maison de l'Orientation
58, boulevard Grande-Duchesse Charlotte
L-1330 Luxembourg
Tel: 247-85277 / 247-75277
Intercultural mediators contact:
Tel: 24 78 51 36 Fax: 24 78 51 40 mediateurs@men.lu

Or:

Information on schooling of foreign pupils
Service de la scolarisation des enfants étrangers
29, rue Aldringen
L-1118 Luxembourg
Tel: 24 78 52 07 Fax: 24 78 51 40

20. Example and Explanation of a Primary School Report (2016-2017)

Please note this is a sample report for children in Cycles 2.2, 3.2 and 4.2 for the 2016-2017 school year only. New format reports are being rolled out to pupils in 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1 (see Section 15).

Dear parents,

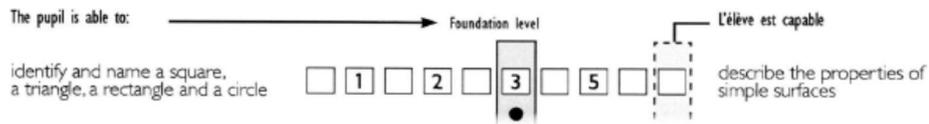
This intermediate assessment report allows you to follow the development of your child's competencies throughout the 6 terms of one learning cycle.

At the end of each term, you are invited to attend an individual meeting with your child's teacher. For each subject, the teacher will give you feed-back on how your child's performance rates are, in relation to the standards that have to be reached by the end of the learning cycle, and with regard to the expectations in an advanced level of German language and mathematics. Beforehand, the report will have been examined and discussed with your child.

The numbers shown in the grid correspond to the different school terms. For example, number 2 indicates where your child's performance lies at the end of the second term of the cycle. The grid is gradually completed at the end of each term, thus enabling you to follow your child's progress over time, always in relation to the standards defined for the end of the cycle.

A circle below a box means that your child has not progressed since the previous term.

Example: The grid shown below could correspond to following statements:



At the end of the first term, the pupil is able to identify and name the circle and the triangle, but often confuses square and rectangle.

At the end of the second term, the pupil is able to identify simple surfaces correctly, but only in situations previously practiced.

At the end of the third term, the pupil demonstrates that he/she meets the defined expectancies of the end of the learning cycle, i.e. is able to identify and name simple surfaces regularly without help in situations that are familiar but have not been practised.

During the fourth term, the pupil has not progressed in this competency.

At the end of the fifth term, the pupil is able to distinguish a square from a rectangle in most exercises, by correctly describing the properties of the respective figures.

The assessment report also provides information about your child's attitudes and behaviour, not in relation to a specific subject, but concerning personal developments throughout his/her schooling. These are cross-disciplinary competencies. They are assessed by the use of the letters A, B, C and D.

A = in need of improvement **B** = satisfactory **C** = good **D** = excellent



Example:

The pupil:
cooperates and collaborates with other pupils

Term.1	Term. 2	Term. 3	Term. 4	Term. 5	Term. 6
A	B	C	C	D	C

* NB: These grades have been reversed with A = excellent and D = in need of improvement

