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files on school  
education n°12

Current Issues

2005



# Already published as part of the «files on school education» collection

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*available in french and english*
- Primary and secondary education in France - volume 2, 2001  
*available in french and english*
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- Act against racism and antisemitism no. 13, 2005  
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# Foreword

The *Files on School Education* explain the priorities and key issues in process of the French Educational Policy and their pedagogical steering by the Schools Directorate.

This new file, *Current issues 2005*, deals with some of the topics that were highlighted in the news or that have recently been the object of innovations.

They give for each topic:

- information on the facts and the challenges in question, details of the philosophy and the objectives of the developments underway;
- the contacts with the competent staff on the given topic at the Schools Directorate;
- the documentation available.

Published by the Office for International Relations, the *Files on School Education* are essentially meant for the international partners in the field of Education, as well as for the wider public of the School stakeholders.

They exist in several languages and are distributed:

- in France, by the institutional network of National Education (rectorats, IUFM...) and by other agencies involved in these issues;
- abroad, by the network of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in French Schools abroad.

They are also available on-line on [eduscol.education.fr/dossiers](http://eduscol.education.fr/dossiers).

# 01. Pupils' Health

School participates in educating youth on health by means of the curriculum and of the school activities as a whole; but it also has a responsibility regarding their health and the harmonious development of their personality. Therefore, promoting health in favour of pupils and prevention cannot be dissociated from the comprehensive educational policy. A five-year programme defined in terms of priority objectives and action strategies now rules this policy.

## **THE FIVE-YEAR PROGRAMME FOR PREVENTION AND HEALTH EDUCATION (2003-2008)**

The five-year programme for prevention and health education is developed around four main axes:

- detecting and following the health problems of pupils;
- improving awareness, detecting and taking into account signs of psychic suffering in children and teenagers;
- maintaining throughout the schooling period a continuity in the actions for health education;
- fostering in pupils civic behaviours with a sense of solidarity.

So as to develop all of these actions, a **framework agreement defining the partnership with Public Health** was signed on July 17, 2003 between the Minister for Health, Family and the Disabled and the Minister delegated to School Teaching. The scope of this agreement, which will be renewed each year, includes all the dimensions of the Public Health policy that involves pupils: screening of health disorders namely in the field of nutrition, sexual education, prevention of mental disorders...

In each of these fields, the Ministers have decided to coordinate closely their actions. A steering committee has been set up under the joint chairmanship of the Ministers. For the 2004-2005 school year, **five priority objectives** have been defined:

- anti-smoking campaigns and prevention of addictive behaviours more closely connected to the Interministerial Mission for the Fight against Drugs and Drug Addiction (*Mission interministérielle de lutte contre la drogue et la toxicomanie/MILDT*);
- generalization of first-aid training;
- setting up of structures to help psychically suffering children and teenagers;
- reinforcing the collaboration between the Ministry of National Education and the National Institute for Prevention and Health Education (*Institut national de prévention et d'éducation pour la santé/INPES*), by designing common tools to foster nutritional education for pupils;
- developing sexual education in primary and secondary schools.

## THE MISSIONS OF THE HEALTH PERSONNEL

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### The National Education Physicians:

- They lead individual actions to screen difficulties that can be detrimental to pupils' schooling, including the screening of specific written or spoken language disorders by a compulsory health evaluation of pupils aged six. They are also in charge, for the purpose of vocational guidance, of the health evaluation of pupils in their last year (*troisième*) of lower secondary schools that will be receiving a vocational training. They are also in charge of medical examinations upon request and they organize the schooling of sick and disabled children.
- They lead collective actions by participating in actions for prevention and health education developed in the framework of the primary and secondary school projects and of the health and citizenship committee (*Comité d'éducation à la santé et à la citoyenneté*/CESC).

### The National Education Nurses:

- They welcome the pupils at the infirmary whatever the motive may be, including of a relational or psychological nature if and when it has an impact on their health or schooling.
- They follow the health condition of the pupils and help to detect eventual health problems or vulnerable pupils.
- The nurses play a role as advisors on matters of prevention and health education, hygiene and safety for the primary and secondary school head teachers.

Within the framework of the implementation of the law on guidance and curricula for the future of School, a nurse will be designated for each secondary school. The number of nurses will increase by more than 1,500 over a period of five years. They will participate, in collaboration with the relevant teachers, in educating pupils on health and nutritional matters.

## SUPPORTING DEVICES

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- **Conventions** have been signed between the Ministry of Education and its main partners, so as to promote health education. A convention has namely been signed with the Institute for Prevention and Health Education (INPES), so as to plan health education from nursery school to higher secondary school. This convention also provides for the development and distribution of methodological documents.
- The **Health and citizenship committees** (CESC), chaired by the school head teachers, organise actions for prevention inside the schools in relation with the immediate environment; they associate the members of the

teaching community, the pupils, the parents and the external partners to create a network to relate them more closely together.

Their actions are namely articulated around local educational contracts, local security contracts and the political authorities of the city.

## **TO KNOW MORE**

### **+ Contact at the DESCO**

Office for Pupils' health, Social care and Welfare

T 01 55 55 38 70

### **+ Documentary resources**

<http://eduscol.education.fr>

# 02. Literacy Strategies

For several years, one of the priorities in continued-learning strategies has been to detect and manage at an early stage the difficulties in mastering language and reading skills. The focus has been placed on detecting in nursery schools forerunning signs of difficulties, adapting pedagogical methods that take into account the diversity of pupils and improving the tutoring of pupils in poor areas and finally involving families in teaching support.

## **DETECTING LANGUAGE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

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Detecting difficulties begins at the stage of the child's oral language acquisition which is when weaknesses are revealed that might eventually lead to reading and writing difficulties.

- In nursery school, attention is paid to difficulties in understanding and to eventual spoken language disruptions that cause problems of intelligibility or that can severely alter the structuring. School evaluations have been introduced in the last year of nursery school (*grande section*), then in the first year of primary school (*cours préparatoire/CP*) and in the middle of the second year of primary school (*cours élémentaire 1<sup>re</sup> année/CE1*), so as to detect the existing difficulties.
- This pedagogical approach is accompanied by an early detection by the National Education physicians of sensory deficiencies (sight, hearing) or forerunning signs of specific language disorders (dysphasia, dyslexia). This allows putting in place action plans to limit the consequences of these problems and to prevent major under-achievement at school.
- Indeed, beginning in nursery school, difficulties can be taken in charge by the school psychologists, educational therapists and tutors, members of the specialised network for children with learning problems (*Réseaux d'aides spécialisées aux élèves en difficulté/RASED*) or by out-sourced professionals.

## **MEASURES TO BETTER ADAPT THE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES**

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Experiments have been undertaken to improve the quality of pedagogical practices by allowing a more qualitative and differentiated approach to teaching. They tend to increase the number of persons involved by giving a place to an additional teacher or an educational assistant in the teaching team, or by limiting the number of pupils in the first year of primary school (*cours préparatoire/CP*). About a hundred CP classes with a limited number of pupils were created in 2002; they were close to 400 in 2004. On the other hand, almost 5,000 CP classes benefit today from a reinforced teaching staff. This system is

meant to be more widely part of the overall objective to master the common basis of knowledge and skills, and it should be supported by the individualized programme of school achievement (*Programme personnalisé de réussite éducative/PPRE*) planned by the law on guidance and curricula for the future of School.

## **LOCAL FAMILY PROGRAMMES**

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These programmes involve parents of children who are learning to read and write and are meant for the more vulnerable families. The objective is to break the spiral of intergenerational under-achievement that goes from the difficult schooling the parents had to the learning difficulties of their children.

The actions are meant to help the parents:

- reinforce the place of reading in the family life, bind or recover a positive relation with the written language;
- entertain a more constructive relationship with School and follow if necessary a training programme to improve writing skills;
- benefit from family support actions so as to learn how to help their children in their basic learning.

Strong partnerships are built around these programmes, including the State agencies, the local authorities and all of the stakeholders in literacy strategies, in about fifteen departments on an experimental basis.

## **TOOLS FOR THE TEACHERS**

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Tools to assess and analyse the difficulties, as well as documents to support the programmes are made available for the teachers. They bring help to organize precisely basic learning methods that can be a source of prevention. They offer resources to understand the causes of difficulties and their remedies, more specifically focused on spoken language, reading and writing.

### **TO KNOW MORE**

#### **+ Contact at the DESCO**

Office for Primary Schools: T 01 55 55 36 86

#### **+ Documentary resources**

<http://eduscol.education.fr/cole>

[www.bienlire.education.fr](http://www.bienlire.education.fr)

# 03. The new *troisième* (10th Form): vocational discovery

The new class of *troisième* (last year of lower secondary school) is enforced at the fall of 2005. It replaces all the types of existing *troisième* in lower secondary school and in vocational schools. It is meant to give all the pupils a common culture while adapting itself to the diversity of their background and their profiles. Therefore, in addition to the single common curriculum that includes the current subjects with the same number of hours as before, optional subjects are available to better respond to the pupils' expectations. Another innovation in *troisième* is the implementation of vocational discovery in the form of an optional course of 3 hours or of a 6 hour unit.

## **THE OPTIONAL VOCATIONAL DISCOVERY COURSE**

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The optional vocational discovery course is available in lower secondary schools for all the pupils, in the same way as all the other optional courses, with 3 hours weekly. It is meant to make pupils discover the labour world: jobs, their economic and social environment, their history, their input in society, their international opening, etc.

As part of education for guidance and citizenship, the knowledge that is thus acquired allows the pupils when the time comes to choose with more awareness their training programme. In this perspective, the pupils are introduced to jobs at all the different levels of qualification.

This teaching innovation does not represent a subject per se and can be taught by the teachers of the different subjects in the curriculum. It is focused on discovering and exploring professional activities, organisations and training centres and courses. Due to this, optional vocational discovery relies on a partnership with firms, administrations, associations, the world of research, etc.

## **THE 6 HOUR VOCATIONAL DISCOVERY UNIT**

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The 6 hour vocational discovery unit is not meant for all the pupils. It is more particularly meant for pupils who volunteer and who usually need to be remobilized around a project to continue their training after the end of

*troisième*. By including this type of pupils, the vocational discovery unit is meant to limit the number of children who leave the school system without any qualification. The objective is to make pupils discover 2 or 3 jobs with the help of practical activities and projects, and to prepare in a positive way their guidance towards a vocational alternative.

This unit is also characterized by its intensive weekly schedule. It is part of guidance education, because it teaches pupils:

- to understand the reality of the vocational jobs and training courses and acquire the spirit of undertaking;
- to measure the importance of the choice they will have to make at the end of the last year of lower secondary school;
- to discover the possibilities and the gateways that are offered by the school system.

It mostly exists in the vocational schools where it gradually takes over the technological *troisième* and the vocational preparatory *troisième*.

This vocational discovery training is based on direct contact with the labour world and it takes into account the local training possibilities.

## **TO KNOW MORE**

### **+ Contact at the DESCO**

Office for Lower Secondary Schools: T 01 55 55 13 86

Office for Policy-Making and Designing the Curriculum: T 01 55 55 22 80

### **+ Documentary resources**

<http://eduscol.education.fr/college>

# 04. Information and Communication Technologies

Training to use Information and Communication Technologies (ITC) is a major stake for the school system so as to offer real equal opportunities in a society where it has become indispensable to master these tools to get a job. The common curriculum of knowledge and skills as it is defined by the law on guidance and curricula for the future of School, includes "the typical use of information and communication techniques".

## THE IT AND INTERNET CERTIFICATE

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In primary and secondary schools, the **IT and Internet Certificate (Brevet Informatique et Internet/B2i)** affirms the need to give all future citizens a training which will enable them over time to use reasonably well the Information and Communication Technologies, to understand the possibilities and the limits of computer processing, to have a critical approach to the results of this processing, and to identify the legal and social constraints that these uses are submitted to.

Since November, 2000, the B2i specifies the skills expected from pupils in Information and Communication Technology at the end of primary school (level 1) and at the end of lower secondary school (level 2).

- At the beginning of the 2002 school year, an experiment took place in the upper general and technological secondary schools and in the vocational schools so as to create a level 3 B2i. This level 3 is coherent with the upper tier IT and Internet certificate (*Certificat Informatique et Internet/C2i*), that was implemented at the beginning of the 2003 school year in upper education.
- Modalities of continuity between the different levels of the B2i are planned. Thus, the lower secondary schools are implementing training situations to allow pupils who do not have level 1 to obtain it. The same goes for the first form of upper secondary school for the level 2 B2i. Pupils who have obtained the B2i in lower secondary school are not required to take it in the first form of upper secondary school. On the opposite, those who have not obtained the certificate in lower secondary school have the possibility to get it in the first form of upper secondary school.
- In all the subjects and in different circumstances, the pupils use Information and Communication Technologies as tools for their activities. The B2i certificate validates the skills acquired during these activities.

- In June, 2004, **36 %** of the pupils obtained the level 1 certificate of the B2i at the end of primary school, and close to **70 %** of the lower secondary school took it in 2003-2004.
- The lower secondary school B2i will be integrated in the final lower secondary school certificate and the upper secondary school B2i in the *baccalauréat*. In lower secondary school, pupils have to learn to use ICT in an independent and reasoned way to obtain documents, to produce and search for information, to communicate. In upper secondary school, the pupils must be able to process information, to manage knowledge and to communicate.
- The training of future teachers will be reinforced: the C2i level 1 (B.A.) will be required for all students entering the University Institute for Teachers' Training (*Institut universitaire de formation des maîtres/IUFM*). The latter will allow future teachers to obtain level 2 of the C2i, i.e. the capacity to use ICT in their teaching practice.

## THE EQUIPMENT

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Efforts to equip schools and pupils are being pursued, in partnership with local authorities (the towns for primary schools, and the general councils for secondary schools).

Strong incentives are being given by the Ministry of Education (subsidies, low rate loans). Different actions are led by the local authorities to equip the more deprived families as well (as in the *académie* (\*) of Besançon, the operation “one family, one computer”).

There are two different policies that co-exist to equip the schools: either they equip specific IT rooms, or they set up computers in the back of the classrooms. Experiments of computer-desks and e-schoolbags are underway.

## IT TEACHING TOOLS

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More and more software and CD-ROM publishers are designing products that comply with the school curricula. A label (RIP/*reconnu d'intérêt pédagogique*: approved as adapted to teaching) has been created to specify that a product is adapted to teaching.

### TO KNOW MORE

#### + Contact at the DESCO

Office for policy-making and Designing the Curriculum: T 01 55 55 22 80

Office for primary school: T 01 55 55 36 86

Office for lower secondary school: T 01 55 55 13 86

Office for upper secondary school: T 01 55 55 39 63

#### + Documentary resources

<http://eduscol.education.fr>

(\*) regional education authority

# 05. Environmental Education for Sustainable Development

Action for sustainable development has become today a political priority of the State. The Charter on the Environment, added to the French Constitution on February 28, 2005, places the right to live in a balanced and healthy environment at the same level as Human Rights and Social Rights. It also states the obligation for each and everyone to help preserve and improve the environment. In its article 6, it proclaims that environmental education and training are to help to exercise the rights and obligations defined in the Charter. This is why the school system is setting up plans to make our future citizens aware right from their earliest age of what sustainable development means and to prepare them to assume their future responsibilities.

## ELEMENTS OF DEFINITION

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The environment is made up of "*a set of elements which, in the complexity of their relations, constitute the setting, the environment, the conditions of men's lives*" (Pierre George, geographer). The study of the environment must position itself in the perspective of **sustainable development** defined as "*development that responds to the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (based on the terms of the Brundtland report in 1987, "Our common future").

## EDUCATION ANCHORED IN ALL THE DISCIPLINES

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Since the beginning of the 2004 school year, pupils have been taught sustainable development and environmental issues (EEDD) on a cross-curricular basis. The EDD does not represent a new subject: its gradual and coherent construction is given by all the subjects of the curriculum. It relies:

- **on the disciplinary subjects** that are defined regarding their objectives by the school curriculum; each subject helps to analyze situations according to its specific contents and methods; the flexibility introduced in some of the curriculum and the themes that the teachers can choose are to be fully used;

- on interdisciplinarity as recommended by the curriculum;
- on the pluridisciplinary work included in the schedule that allows to develop projects, including discovery itineraries in lower secondary school. The objective is to develop a concrete and direct experience and to make pupils more aware so as to develop responsible behaviours;
- on the time for debates organised in primary and secondary school, namely during the “living together” sessions or in education for citizenship.

## GENERALISATION OF THE EEDD

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An experience took place during the year 2003-2004 in primary and secondary schools (84 schools in 10 *académies* (\*)). It was generalized at the fall of 2004:

- each school, mostly the lower secondary schools, was encouraged to consider this topic as a priority and to develop it through the existing schemes. Priority was set to develop awareness, most of all pupils' awareness to themes such as power, preservation of the environment, meteorology, climatology, sustainable development and solidarity…
- partnerships with associations, local authorities, firms are encouraged.

## TO KNOW MORE

### + Contact at the DESCO

Office for Educational Development, Cultural and Sports Activities:

T 01 55 55 21 55

Office for Promoting Pedagogical Innovations: T 01 55 55 34 79

### + Documentary resources

<http://eduscol.education.fr/eedd>

(\*) regional education authorities

# 06. The European Strategy in the School System

In 2005, the opening of Europe is more than a mission for School: it is a reality underway that the School System carries and accompanies by means of a resolutely committed policy. Its objective is to help to build the European identity by broadening the cultural or linguistic references of young people so as to foster students and professional mobility in Europe. The history of the construction of Europe and its evolutions is part of the school curriculum. The plan in favour of foreign languages, presented in the framework of the law on guidance and curricula for the future of School, is meant to develop foreign language teaching at all the different levels of schooling and to include it in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

## **THE EUROPEAN AND EASTERN LANGUAGE SECTIONS**

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Created in 1992, the European and Eastern language sections are designed to offer an education opened to foreign countries by a reinforced teaching in a foreign language of a non linguistic subject and by an in-depth knowledge of the culture of the country of the section.

They exist in general, technological and vocational schools. The European sections are available in: German, English, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Russian; there are Eastern language sections in: Arabic, Japanese, Chinese. At the beginning of the 2004 school year, more than 160,000 pupils were registered in more than 3,600 European or Eastern language sections throughout the public and private schools. These sections will be developed.

## **INTERNATIONAL SECTIONS**

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They welcome French and foreign pupils. The latter must represent 25 to 50 % of the pupils.

Their goal is to:

- make it easier for foreign pupils to integrate the French school system and eventually to return to their original schooling system;

- thus create a setting that allows the best possible learning by French pupils of a foreign language.

The teaching team includes French and foreign teachers. The foreign teachers are generally sent by their own country and they teach in their own language specific subjects on the history, geography and literature of the country that is involved, based on a curriculum that is designed with the educational authorities of their country.

International sections are available in: German, American, English, Arabic, Danish, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Swedish, Japanese.

## BILATERAL SYSTEMS WITH THE GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC

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- **The schools that prepare the Abibac:** created in 1987, these schools have bilingual sections with a Franco-German profile based on the twinning of French and German schools and on the mutual design of projects through regular contacts and exchanges. 25 French upper secondary schools and the same number of German schools are included in this system. They train pupils to prepare for the double degree including the Baccalauréat and the Abitur (AbiBac). A plan to boost German in France and French in Germany, adopted in October, 2004 at the Franco-German Council of Ministers, plans the extension of the AbiBac to all of the *académies* (\*) and to all the *Länder* by 2007.
- **The “Franco-German” upper secondary schools:** this system, created in 1972 is a first attempt to bring closer two educational systems that are quite different. It leads to the delivery of a “*baccalauréat de l’enseignement franco-allemand*” (Franco-German *Baccalauréat*) that is valid in both countries.

## ACTIONS IN FAVOUR OF AN INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

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Intensifying constructive bilateral relations with Germany and Great Britain is namely done through the implementation of exchanges or partnerships.

- **With Germany**, educational cooperation mainly includes the regular increase of the number of Voltaire scholarships (500 in 2005) that fund student exchanges in first year of upper secondary school for one year (6 months in each country) as well as the pursuit and development (1,500 in 2005) of the Sauzay scholarships that fund exchange programmes of pupils from 9th to 12th form for 4 to 6 months (2 to 3 months in each country).
- **With Britain**, the **Touquet agreements**, signed on February 4, 2003 by the two Ministers of Education, allowed to set up school exchanges and partnerships between schools that are located mainly in priority education areas or in rural areas.

(\*) regional education authorities

The European strategy is not left out: each year, grants are given in French upper secondary schools abroad to pupils in *première* and *terminale* (12th and 13th form) who obtain excellent results and who are from poorer families. These allow them to spend one year in a French *lycée* in London, Dublin, Munich, Vienna, Madrid or Barcelona.

The Socrates-Leonardo da Vinci agency, created in 2000, implements the Community programmes in France, including:

- comenius school partnerships meant to promote linguistic diversity, from nursery school to higher secondary school;
- Leonardo da Vinci positions to allow young people who are doing their initial vocational training to have an internship in a European company.

## TO KNOW MORE

### + Contact at the DESCO

Office for International Relations: T 01 55 55 08 98

### + Documentary resources

<http://eduscol.education.fr/europe>

<http://eduscol.education.fr/allemande>

<http://eduscol.education.fr/angleterre>

[www.education.fr](http://www.education.fr) – section Europe

# 07. Schooling of sick or disabled pupils

The right to education for all children whatever their deficiencies or diseases that disturb their development is fundamental. Sick or disabled children were for a long time taken in charge by specialized centres. Today, they are increasingly schooled in a normal environment. Each primary school, each lower or higher secondary school has as a vocation to welcome without discrimination children and teenagers who wish to be schooled in a normal environment. Measures have been adopted to facilitate their access to school and to learning and to arrange the school environment, to adapt the teaching procedures and offer appropriate tutoring so as to guarantee a continuity in the personalized schooling courses.

## THE SCHOOLING AIDS

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From nursery school to upper secondary school, the responses will depend on the cases:

- an individual integration eventually accompanied by school life auxiliaries (*Auxiliaires de vie scolaire/AVS*);
- integration through a collective integration unit (school integration class (*Classe d'intégration scolaire/CLIS*) in primary schools and pedagogical unit for integration (*Unité pédagogique d'intégration/UPI*) in secondary schools;
- schooling in Sanitary or Educational and Medical Institutes when comprehensive management is required;
- distance learning.

These actions are all meant to conciliate the right of pupils to be schooled in conditions closest to the common law and the right to benefit from the adjustments and assistance needed to take into account the evolutive nature of the disability and the constraints that it involves at different times in their schooling. They must favour individualized courses to respond to the diversity of gifts, skills and aspirations of each, while taking into account more effectively their specific needs.

This is why the schooling chosen for each child and teenager can be adapted and revised in view of the pupil's **individualized project**. This project is designed by associating the parents and the child to a multidisciplinary team in charge of assessing his/her needs.

The individualized schooling project guarantees coherence in the teaching responses and coordination when needed of the psychological, educational, social, medical and paramedical actions.

## **RECENT MEASURES**

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Their goal is to:

- guarantee a continuity in their school education by improving quickly the possibility of schooling in secondary schools thanks to the development of collective units for pupils who cannot integrate on an individual basis: 200 new UPIs are planned each year, i.e. a total of 1,000 by the year 2010.
- train the teachers: up to now, only primary schoolteachers could receive a specialized training to work with disabled. New training modalities have been designed for the secondary school teachers.
- assist the pupils more efficiently by developing technical aids and human aids: the financing of technical aids has increased since 2001. In 2004, it was of 23 million euros.

Regarding human aids, since 1999, an experiment has been undertaken to employ school life auxiliaries so as to compensate the limited autonomy of some pupils. 5,000 educational assistant positions were reserved at the beginning of the 2003 school year to replace the youth employment system that is being suspended, 200 new jobs were created on January 1st, 2004 and 800 additional jobs are planned for September, 2005.

In January, 2004, close to 7,000 agents paid by National Education help the pupils either individually or collectively.

## **THE LAW ON EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES, PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

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The law adopted on February 11, 2005 affirms the complementarities of the actions that are indispensable throughout the life of pupils to answer their educational needs: teaching actions that pertain to the school as well as psychological, educational, medical or paramedical actions led namely by the medical and educational institutes and services.

- The existing Commissions are replaced by a single Departmental Commission: the Commission on the rights and the autonomy of people with disabilities has been created and is competent to make decisions on all of the rights of people (financial allowances and guidance). It gives its verdict after a multidisciplinary team assesses the needs of the individual.
- The children or the teenagers and their families are closely associated to the choice of their living and schooling project. However, if the parents and the Commission do not come to an agreement, procedures of conciliation can be

set up without prejudice to the right to appeal.

■ Teams in charge of the follow up of the integration are created in each department: they contribute to implement the individualized schooling project of the children or the teenagers and to propose any adaptation that could be desirable

## **TO KNOW MORE**

### **+ Contact at the DESCO**

Expert in Special Educational Needs and Integration: T 01 55 55 10 80

### **+ Documentary resources**

<http://www.education.gouv.fr/handiscol>

# 08. Secularity

Secularity is included in the French Constitution. To understand its foundation, it is necessary to grasp its historical dimension. The French Revolution recognizes in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the right to freedom of conscience and secularises the civil status and marriage. At the end of the 19th century, the Republicans want to remove society from the supervision of the Catholic Church. It is in this state of mind that the major laws on schooling of the IIIrd Republic were adopted followed in 1905 by the law on the separation of Church and State. This separation was designed to be respectful of all spiritual options: the State guarantees freedom of conscience and affirms its neutrality. Secularity is one of the foundations of the Republican pact because it rests on two indissociable values: freedom of conscience that guarantees the freedom to believe or not, the equality by law of the spiritual and religious options. The Republic recognizes all religions without advantaging any.

## **SECULARITY AT SCHOOL**

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School enables to anchor lastingly in French society the observance of secularity. The State cannot design education of which it has the responsibility based on a given ideology. Public School must be a school for all children, of any or no faith, from different origins, from different political and spiritual families. Secularity is an instrument for social cohesion and a factor of integration. However, Public School recognizes the freedom of conscience of the pupils and has always organized the school calendar to allow for religious holidays so as to enable to put this freedom into practice. Parallel to this, the principle of neutrality of the State requires that all civil servants respect their duty of reserve. Thus, teachers must imperatively avoid any distinctive mark of a philosophical, religious or political nature.

The application of the principle of secularity has been confronted these past few years to new difficulties in the public services and at School.

At School, a solution had to be found to the difficulty the schools had to enforce the case law of 1989, based on the opinion of the State Council. This decision allows the head teachers to freely assess the situations and to negotiate case by case with the pupils. Because they were varied and contrasted, the situations could have put in question the principle of equality for all before the Law.

In addition, the debate on some of the learning contents, co-education in certain classes, the principle of equality of genders and the tensions that occurred between pupils of different faiths incurred the risk of a predominance of dogmatic conceptions and an intensification of the sense of religious and community belonging of pupils.

## **THE LAW OF MARCH 15, 2004 ON THE RESPECT OF SECULARITY**

The law of March 15, 2004 wished to reaffirm the principle of secularity. In State schools, pupils may not be identified according to their community or religious belonging: it is primarily the place where shared values are transmitted in respect of equality.

The law includes three objectives:

- to preserve neutrality in terms of religion and ideology;
- to affirm the values of the Republican School;
- to reduce the tensions between pupils belonging to different cultural or religious communities that appeared through anti-Semitic and racist acts.

It is said in the preamble:

*"It is to enable teachers and head teachers to exercise serenely their mission by stating a clear rule that has been in our usages and in our practices for a long time. If pupils in public primary and secondary schools are perfectly free to live their faith, this can only be done by respecting the secularity of the School of the Republic. It is the neutrality of School that guarantees the respect of the freedom of conscience of the pupils, the equal respect of all convictions (...). Such is the meaning of this bill, that creates in the Law on education an article L.141-5-1 forbidding in public schools patent religious signs, including signs and garbs that immediately show a religious belonging. These signs – the Islamic head-scarf, whatever the name it may be given, the kippa or crosses of excessively big dimensions – do not have their place within public schools. However, discreet signs of religious affiliation will naturally remain possible."*

The law continues to protect freedom of conscience and does not target any religion in particular. Its purpose is not to forbid in a general way wearing religious signs in public spaces. It allows wearing discreet signs. The French word "ostensible" (patent) was selected because it represents the right balance between "ostentatoire" (ostentatious) and "visible" (visible). The law concerns all the primary and secondary State schools and not the private schools and the universities.

The second paragraph of the first article deals with the school regulation and the need to establish a dialogue with the pupil and the family so as to find practical solutions. This dialogue must allow the pupil to gain ownership of the meaning of the rule.

In the classroom, in civics, philosophy, history, French and Arts lessons, the religious references that can be found in documents are not ignored. During the

debate in Parliament on the law on guidance and curricula for the future of School, it was decided to organize while respecting the freedom of conscience and the principles of secularity and of neutrality, the transmission of knowledge and references on **religions** and their history.

## **TO KNOW MORE**

### **+ Contact at the DESCO**

Unit on prevention of community segregation: T 01 55 55 25 27

### **+ Documentary resources**

<http://eduscol.education.fr/valeurs-republicaines>

# 09. Prevention of Racism and Anti-Semitism

The recent multiplication of acts of racism and anti-Semitism, of discriminating or sexist attitudes against an individual or a group of individuals namely because of their cultural or religious background has made it necessary to recall the principles of secularity based on the Republican tradition of the rights of man. The Ministry of National Education has thus decided to act by reasserting the values of the Republican School. A regional and national scheme to prevent and fight racism and anti-Semitism has been set up. Regional agents coordinate the actions for prevention, they supervise the reporting of deeds and the support of victims in cooperation with the head teachers and teaching staff.

## TOOLS FOR PREVENTION

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Measures have been adopted to better account for acts of racism or anti-Semitism in the statistics of the Ministry:

- **An interministerial memorandum** (National Education, Home Affairs, Justice) was published in October, 2004, to prevent and report acts of racism and anti-Semitism in schools and to punish these acts. It specifies the objectives that are to be reached and the coordination schemes to be implemented so as to reinforce prevention, reporting and punishing of racist and anti-Semitic deeds. It improves the reactivity to these deeds in schools and their surroundings. Educational actions for prevention will be developed in primary and secondary schools.
- **Filtering softwares for Internet sites** have been introduced in the schools and an agent on Internet vigilance has been named in each of the different regional *académies* (\*). This scheme has a dual objective: to fight against racist and anti-Semitic contents and to protect children. Special care is also given to the messages contained in the textbooks. Although the latter are, by virtue of the freedom of publishing and press, published under the full responsibility of the publishers, the Ministry has agreed with the publishers to be particularly vigilant regarding the contents of the textbooks so as to avoid spreading stereotypes, namely for education on the religions.

(\*) regional education authorities

## **TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIONS**

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### **■ Training of the teachers**

All the *académies* offer training programmes for the teachers to give pupils an education on citizenship that includes the theme of the fight against racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

### **■ Awareness days**

National awareness days are regularly organized in the schools with associations: distributed all through the school year, they are for pupils a privileged time to expand their horizon and to become aware of the notion of collective responsibility.

France has adopted the date of January 27, the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, for the Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the prevention of crimes against humanity. The Ministry, in partnership with the association "Civics and democracy" (CIDEM), organises meetings, debates, exhibitions, projections, and teaching tools are developed and distributed free of charge to associations, schools and local authorities.

### **■ Knowing the sites of memory**

Visits to the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp are organized for upper secondary schools with the Regional Councils. These visits are preceded by a preparatory work and they are followed by many activities: dialogues with witnesses, exhibitions, slide shows, collecting of texts.

### **■ A scenario contest**

The upper secondary school pupils of the "National Council of High School Life" (*Conseil national de la vie lycéenne/CNVL*), with all the Councils of delegates for High School Life (*Conseils de la vie lycéenne/CVL*) and all the upper secondary school pupils launched in 2005 a scenario contest "10 clips for a different outlook". The participants were invited to write the original scenario of a clip on the theme of the fight against racism and anti-Semitism.

## **PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHING TOOLS**

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### **■ "Guide républicain, l'idée républicaine aujourd'hui"**

A guide called "Guide républicain, l'idée républicaine aujourd'hui" (Republican guide, the Republican idea today) was published in September 2004 and distributed in all the secondary schools so as to give an impetus to the Republican idea and to reaffirm the principles of secularity by taking into account the contemporary requirements in terms of the cultural rights of minorities; the texts allow to deal with the question of values (equality, liberty, tolerance...). The collected elements are meant to enable teachers to have a different approach to the problems of racism, anti-Semitism, rights and freedoms, namely by giving them tools to foster a debate.

### **■ Distribution of the DVD of the movie made by Claude Lanzmann.**

To make pupils more receptive to the work on memory, the upper secondary

schools in France all received a DVD copy of the movie *Shoah* by Claude Lanzmann. This version, that includes three hours of excerpts, is given with a booklet called "Cinema, memory, history".

All of these measures are to recall the rules and the behaviours of life together and to reassert the need to be firm all together to make the fight against racism and anti-Semitism a permanent combat and a shared responsibility.

## **TO KNOW MORE**

### **+ Contact at the DESCO**

Unit on prevention of community segregation: T 01 55 55 25 27

### **+ Documentary resources**

<http://eduscol.education.fr/valeurs-republicaines>

<http://www.cidem.org>

# 10. Schools in figures

## PUPILS

| Year 2001-2002                            | Year 2003-2004                            |
|---|---|
| 12,135,000 pupils                         | 12,133,000 pupils                         |
| including 6,525,000 primary school pupils | including 6,552,000 primary school pupils |
| 3,335,000 lower secondary school pupils   | 3,323,000 lower secondary school pupils   |
| 1,505,000 upper secondary school pupils   | 1,511,000 upper secondary school pupils   |
| 740,500 pupils in the 2nd vocation cycle  | 746,500 pupils in the 2nd vocation cycle  |

## TEACHERS

| Year 2001-2002   | Year 2003-2004   |
|--|--|
| 888,000 teachers                                       | 894,000 teachers                                       |
| 746,000 teachers from public sector                    | 749,000 teachers from public sector                    |
| 142,000 in private schools                             | 145,000 in private schools                             |
| 316,138 teachers in public nursery and primary schools | 318,381 teachers in public nursery and primary schools |
| 393,867 teachers in public secondary schools           | 399,470 teachers in public secondary schools           |

## SCHOOLS

| Year 2001-2002  | Year 2003-2004  |
|---|---|
| 69,719 public primary and lower and upper secondary schools         | 68,590 public primary and lower and upper secondary schools         |
| including 60,560 from public sector                                 | including 60,081 from public sector                                 |
| 58,356 nursery or primary schools                                   | 57,187 nursery or primary schools                                   |
| 6,941 lower secondary schools                                       | 6,987 lower secondary schools                                       |
| 2,600 academic, technological or vocational upper secondary schools | 2,620 academic, technological or vocational upper secondary schools |

## TO KNOW MORE

*Landmarks, references and statistics on teaching, training and research*, Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research; division of evaluation and supervision, 2004 edition.

<http://www.education.gouv.fr/stateval>