

Esprit Schools

Education Manifesto 2018-2022



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Learning without boundaries in Amsterdam

Our Esprit Schools

- Amsterdam International Community School (AICS)
- Berlage Lyceum
- Cartesius Lyceum
- Cartesius 2
- De Nieuwe Internationale School Esprit (DENISE)
- Europaschool
- Het 4^e Gymnasium
- Marcanti College
- Montessorischool De Eilanden
- Montessorischool Landsmeer (MSL)
- Mundus College
- Spring High
- Watergraafsmeerse School Vereniging (WSV)
- Basisschool De Verwondering*

* From 01-08-2018

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Education Manifesto 2018-2022



Learning without boundaries in Amsterdam

Our motto – Learning without boundaries in Amsterdam – encapsulates how we are striving to provide the best education for our students, the most rewarding and valuable work for our staff members, and constructive cooperation with the local community. This Education Manifesto serves as our strategic agenda and a guide in our professional dialogues.

This Education Manifesto describes Esprit Schools' aims and principles, what we strive to do for our students in and around Amsterdam, for parents, and for members of staff. In short, it demonstrates our values and what makes us different.

In everything that we at Esprit Schools do and in every decision we make, we always ask ourselves what it means for our students. This manifesto provides direction and focus, and serves as a unifying link between all our schools. We see this Education Manifesto as a strategic agenda and a guideline, on the basis of which we can legitimise the choices and

‘Learning without boundaries in Amsterdam: education in an international context with couleur locale’

decisions that we make. In addition, we use the Education Manifesto as a guideline for dialogue, with each other at schools, and with our stakeholders. The manifesto means that we can be held to account regarding our goals and aspirations as an educational organisation, and how we seek to make those aspirations a reality.

Bringing people together and providing a common space

This Education Manifesto provides a clear and unified framework, and is designed to inspire all Esprit Schools. At the same time, it also speaks to the unique qualities and potential of the various schools and of the professionals who work at them. Couleur locale reflects the diversity of Esprit Schools, where every school has its own unique character and enriches the group as a whole.

Our motto - ‘learning without boundaries’

Learning without boundaries encapsulates:

- Our education and teaching, and the scope for development and personal growth that we create for our students.

- Our work and the scope for development and personal growth that we create for our teachers and co-workers.
- Our relationship with the local environment, the accessibility of our schools and how we work with the local community and the world that we are connected to.

The limits of learning without boundaries

For us, boundaries in education are only necessary when the behaviour of an individual or group is detrimental to the interests of others and limits their learning. Or when boundaries are transgressed in a way that is unacceptable.

Putting this Education Manifesto into practice

The school plans describe how the schools interpret this Education Manifesto. These plans describe how the schools are achieving our social and educational mission, and will continue to achieve it. The agreements that senior school staff makes with the Executive Board are consistent with these plans.



1. Education without

All students at Esprit Schools, aged 4 to 18+, can benefit from our passion for teaching and our professional commitment in order to enable their own learning process.

- We want to offer every student a good education, regardless of where they are from, their academic ability, religion, character or cultural background.
- We provide our students with a learning environment in which they, in all their diversity, experience equal opportunities for development.
- We challenge every student to get the best out of themselves and to surpass their own expectations.
- We base our approach on current knowledge and insights concerning education and teaching.
- We think it is important that the students are happy.



boundaries for all students

Qualifications

Qualifications are an important aspect of education. By qualifications, we mean equipping students with the necessary and formalised knowledge, skills and attitudes. One goal of our education and supervision, in addition to helping our students to develop as individuals, is to prepare them for further education or the world of work. Teachers at Esprit Schools have high expectations of their students and explicitly seek to support their personal growth and development. They teach them effective learning strategies and provide sound individualised feedback to help them develop and progress through the learning process.

Our teachers and supervisors provide personalised teaching and differentiate on the basis of the age group and the learning and development potential of their students. They use assessment not only to measure the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved, but also to reflect the individual learning needs of the pupils. This combination of formative assessment during learning, and summative assessment after learning has taken place, benefits the quality of education and learning at our schools.

Socialisation and personal development

In order to achieve their ambitions in the diverse, international community of Amsterdam and beyond, it is important that our students are self-aware, self-confident and socially skilled. Esprit Schools offer students a safe place in which to develop as individuals and as socially skilled peers, and to become part of our traditions and practices.

‘By qualifications, we mean equipping students with the necessary and formalised knowledge, skills and attitudes.’

Our teachers and support staff invest in the self-awareness and social skills of students and their connectedness with others. They focus on ensuring that our students can take pride in where they come from, their language and identity, all of which confirm the essence of 'being them'. They also teach their students to ask critical questions and to think and decide independently, for themselves. They teach them to take responsibility, take the initiative and make a positive contribution to society, always with empathy and respect for others.

Esprit Schools give you space ...

- To learn
- To meet
- To work together
- To value differences
- To grow
- To achieve
- To prepare for your future
(and that starts today)

'Current world events, an international focus and social cohesion all have a prominent place in daily life at our schools'

Internationalisation and global citizenship

Qualifications, socialisation and personal development – the three focus areas of our education and teaching – all have a significant international dimension. Our students live in an international context – a digitising world where national boundaries sometimes scarcely exist any more. A globalising society requires Esprit Schools to adopt a cross-border scope. Current world events, an international focus and social cohesion all have a prominent place in daily life at our schools. We want to equip our students with international and intercultural skills, both for today and in the future.

Amsterdam as a learning environment

Amsterdam is a city with a distinctively international character and it provides a unique backdrop for learning. This means that the education that Esprit Schools provide is an organic part of students' experiences in the city. Students will come into contact with other customs, cultures, religious backgrounds, and with the histories of individuals and entire peoples. And they will learn how to handle and appreciate this diversity.



2. Rewarding work for all staff members

Esprit Schools is ambitious when it comes to learning without boundaries, and our ambitions rely on skilled teachers who reflect our students and our local environment. Teachers who will prepare students to participate in and contribute to society. Both now and later in their lives.

Esprit Schools attaches great importance to attracting and retaining young, talented teachers in education. In cooperation with our Amsterdam education partners, we are working hard to achieve this. This is one way of staying one step ahead of the ageing population and the improving labour market. We seek to foster an appropriate sense of professional pride and to reinforce the positive image of the teaching profession by offering attractive work and being an excellent employer.

Vitality, mobility and job satisfaction

At Esprit Schools, we depend on our teachers and support staff – enthusiastic individuals who are prepared to give their all for their students, every day, and who are constantly developing as unique individuals. They deserve an inspiring employer that provides them with

valuable work, professional space and genuine appreciation. An employer who notices their commitment and the results that they achieve. A place of work where every staff member feels seen, heard and connected to the organisation. We invest in the job satisfaction, vitality and mobility of our staff members, and offer them a workplace that is based on the human dimension and excellent personnel care (HRM).

Leadership

Every day, teachers face the challenge of achieving just the right balance between ensuring that their students achieve qualifications and are well socialised, work on their personal development, and are able to shape their own learning process. Education is valuable work that requires energy and which, in the right organisational climate, is highly rewarding. Leadership plays a decisive role in the culture of any school. It creates the conditions for doing this valuable job and engaging in the moral dialogue that is central to education and learning. This process of moral dialogue provides insights into the characteristics of good education and the roles and expectations of all those involved, both inside and outside the school. It provides

dynamic benchmarks for the development and performance appraisal of and by teachers and support staff. Leadership also means supporting and facilitating teachers wherever possible in their work, and providing scope for their continued professional development.

Educate, investigate and never stop learning

Learning is not confined to students. It includes staff members too. Esprit Schools offers a workplace in which employees can continue to develop, and to refine and enhance their skills and talents. We work on the assumption that ongoing development among staff members is the norm. We recognise the value of learning and research in the workplace and training school teachers in Amsterdam and beyond.

Esprit Schools is a recognised teacher-training organisation where training and research are carried out in and with the schools. This involves a strong link between educating students, overseeing new teachers and ensuring continuing development among more experienced teachers. We offer our staff members the right opportunities for professional progress. Lifelong learning is one aspect of this – because for professionals, learning never stops.



‘Esprit Schools attaches great importance to attracting and retaining young, talented teachers in education’

3. Constructive

Learning without boundaries means that we do not see students' learning only as the responsibility of the school. A good education can only take place within a wider network. Esprit Schools encourages and supports learning through good partnerships and coordination between all those that play a role in the students' learning process and living environment.

Working with parents

Parents and family members occupy an important position at Esprit Schools. Close cooperation and mutual commitment are crucial to a good education. Parents are our educational partners. Working together, teachers and the student's own family – each with their own role and perspective – provide the best possible opportunities for learning and growth for our students and children. We encourage parents to play an active role in supporting their children's learning and in the education provided by Esprit Schools.



partnerships in and with the local community

Cooperation between colleagues

We make the most of our wealth of different schools and diverse staff members through good inter-collegial cooperation. Employees use their knowledge and experiences to benefit all students and share this knowledge widely within our schools. Through the meetings and conversations that take place between colleagues, the informal learning that we value so highly also takes place. This enables our colleagues to adopt a mobile and flexible attitude towards their place of work and the students whose education they are contributing to. That cooperation means that pupils from our schools are always welcome at another Esprit school in situations where that is the best way to promote learning.

Cooperation between schools

A coherent path through school is crucial for students. The development of our students does not start and end at Esprit Schools. After leaving our schools, most students will continue their education at an institute of higher education. In addition, some pupils switch between schools for a time. After moving house, for

example, or to participate in the most suitable learning environment. For this reason, we work together with other primary schools and schools for (special) secondary education in Amsterdam and beyond, in order to ensure that every student receives the best education for them.

Cooperation with the local community

Esprit Schools strives for the maximum degree of involvement with the local community in order to achieve its ambitions. We invest considerable energy in providing learning experiences, internships and study assignments outside school, in the 'real world' of business and societal institutions. We take an enterprising approach and we work actively with external organisations to find new learning opportunities for our students.

'A good education can only take place within a wider network'

The 7 ambitions of Esprit Schools

1 **To provide the best place of learning for students**

Esprit Schools includes a whole host of different schools and educational concepts. We are a unique organisation where students aged between 4 to 18+ can find the best place of learning for them. Within one educational organisation, we provide primary education, vocational education (vmbo), higher secondary education (havo), pre-university education (vwo), and grammar school (gymnasium), international education and education for refugees and other newcomers.

2 **Flexible learning paths**

Esprit Schools strives to ensure a smooth, uninterrupted path through school for all our students. We provide both primary and secondary education. Cooperation and

knowledge-sharing for the benefit of students are therefore indispensable. That cooperation, including between schools, is aimed at ensuring their unimpeded growth and development, promoting equal opportunities for success and smooth transitions within and between schools.

3 **Continuous innovation**

Esprit Schools is an enterprising and innovative organisation. We work with the school and teaching concepts that bring out the best in our students, drawing on the latest educational knowledge and insights.

We are continually expanding our boundaries, incorporating the possibilities of IT into our education and expanding our didactic repertoire to make learning as effective as possible.

4 **Educating world citizens**

For Esprit Schools, every Amsterdam student is a citizen of the world. Internationalisation is a part of all Esprit schools. Our aim is to contribute to equal opportunities and social cohesion in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and the world.

The international dimension can clearly be seen in the values that guide our day-to-day work. We prepare students who can participate in and contribute to a pluralistic society.

We develop global citizenship by ensuring equal opportunities and making full use of the opportunities that our education offers, such as the acquisition of wide-ranging and extensive knowledge, communication skills, multilingualism and an open, respectful attitude.

5 Life-long learning

Esprit Schools invests in good employment practices. Our teacher-training activities contribute to the training, research and professionalisation of the teachers of today and of tomorrow. We recognise the power of learning and research in the workplace for all our employees, and the need to motivate future colleagues to work in teaching and at our schools.

6 Being sustainable

Esprit Schools wholeheartedly recognises the importance of sustainability and this is reflected in its education, organisation and school buildings. Sustainability is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In our education, we

focus specifically on sustainability, so that our students come to understand its importance, take responsibility and help to build a sustainable future. We are careful to set a good example by using our (energy) resources and buildings responsibly and by minimising waste effectively.

7 At the heart of the community, and with the community's interests at heart

Esprit Schools is closely involved in Amsterdam's highly diverse community and seeks to play a proactive role in this. Students at Esprit Schools reflect the global and local diversity of the local population. We want to contribute not only to the development of our students, but also to the community in which they are growing up and in which we work.





Learning and working at Esprit Schools:
providing and receiving education,
pushing the limits of what is possible.
This is learning without boundaries
in Amsterdam.

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