



LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL PORTRAIT

DENISE

De Nieuwe Internationale School Esprit, Amsterdam





Overview

DENISE

- Location: Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Type of school: Primary and Secondary School, Public
- Number of students: 800
- Number of staff: 90
- Languages spoken in school community: over 30 languages
- Language Friendly certified since: 2019



Language Friendly School 2020



Motivation for becoming a Language Friendly School

THEIR STORY

An important part of the vision of the DENISE is to give children hope for the future. Language is part of every subject, which means that every teacher needs to consider the home languages and to delve in the backgrounds of their students. As a Language Friendly School, this is made concrete in policy and practice in the classroom.

Language Friendly School 2020



**IT IS IMPORTANT TO ‘FEEL WELCOME’
AND USE ALL LANGUAGES.**





Language Friendly Activities

TOP 3 FOR DENISE

OBSERVATION MANUAL

At DENISE there is a manual for teachers to observe each other in the classroom, including an examination to which extent the teacher uses the home language of the student and asks for examples in the different languages.

TEACHING A VARIETY OF LANGUAGES

Students in secondary can be enrolled in language subjects such as Turkish, Arabic, Spanish and French and finish this with final exams. Many students also speak these languages at home. The other exams are in Dutch or in English (in the case of IB).

ACCOMMODATE NEWCOMERS

The school has an innovative approach to accommodate newcomers and integrate them in regular education. Part of this is the option to smart scheduling in order for students to be enrolled in language subjects at their own level and graduate at their own level.

Benefits

BENEFITS OF BECOMING A LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL

At DENISE, using the mother tongues for learning has great effect on learning in their students. It leads to better understanding and better processing of subject matter. For many of their students, learning Dutch is a tough job, but they can feel successful again, for example by giving a presentation in their mother tongue.

On top of that, it is important to 'feel welcome' and use all languages in all age groups. The older students read books to the youngest pupils. The children love to see books in their own languages and being read to in those languages.

LANGUAGE FRIENDLY
SCHOOL





Plans for the Future

DENISE

ENGAGING PARENTS IN SECONDARY

In Primary, parents are naturally more involved. However, in secondary DENISE wants to put more emphasis on engaging parents in a language friendly way to promote involvement.

STUDENT OWNERSHIP

The teachers at DENISE initiate many activities and instances where the languages play an important role. They want to give the students more ownership of their Language Friendly School as well. The coming year, they want to stimulate students to take ownership of language friendliness at their school. The active School Council could play a role.

LANGUAGE FRIENDLY EXAMS

Changing education policy in order to facilitate assessment of understanding, instead of assessment of language in non-language subjects. Developing language friendly exams would be a desirable outcome.

Useful Links



[Website DENISE Amsterdam](#)

TIPS FOR SUCCESES

HOW DENISE DOES IT

Language Friendliness is strongly established in the policy plan. DENISE also has an observation guide for teachers. They regularly observe their colleagues in the classroom to learn from each other. In the guide, there is an explicit role for language friendly practices. At DENISE, every teacher is a language teacher, regardless of the subject they teach. They all need to give specific attention to language. In performance reviews and evaluations, the team leaders consider language friendliness as essential. This makes it easier to hold each other accountable.

TIPS FOR YOU

Make language friendliness clear in policy and make it concrete for everyone, in order to make it observable. Train new teachers in the vision and practices of the Language Friendly School.

LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL

Contact

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