



European Schools

Office of the Secretary-General

Ref.: 2008-D-356-en-4

Orig.: EN

## **RELIGION COURSES IN THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CYCLES OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS**

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Approved by the Board of Governors on 20 and 21 January 2009

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In spring 2004 in the context of reviewing the Primary timetable in terms of its functionality and currency the topic of the organisation of Religion lessons came up.

The European Schools started with 4 languages and 2 Religion options, Catholic and Protestant. Over the years not only have there been an ever increasing number of languages given in the schools, but there is also a big increase in the number of Religions offered. Therefore the organisation of Religion lessons has become more and more complicated.

The working group was instructed to seek appropriate practical arrangements for organisation of the Religion courses, considering that the Religion courses form part of the time table on the same basis as the other subjects.

In their meeting of April 2007 the Board of Governors agreed with the proposal to enlarge the mandate of the working group to include the Secondary cycle.

As a variety of reactions were received from different bodies concerning the Religion courses, the Board of Governors asked the Secretary General to start a dialogue with the Religious Authorities. The working group met for the first time with the Brussels' Religious Authorities in October 2007 to exchange views on how to optimise the situation.

In the Board of Governors meeting January 2008 the document 'Organisation of Religion and Ethic courses in the Primary and Secondary cycles of the European schools' (2007-D-301-EN-4) was discussed.

The Board invited the Secretary General to return the document to the working group and to charge it with rewriting the text, taking into account the positions of the representatives of the Member States and the proposals of the Religious Authorities.

It was noted that contradictory positions were taken by the different parties. The Religious Authorities made remarks and proposals in a letter of January 16, 2008, these were discussed with the working group at a meeting in June 2008. The working group and the Authorities found common ground on the main issues.

The results of this discussion have been taken into account in the redrafting of this document as well as the remarks made in the Board of Governors.

## 2. EXISTING REGULATIONS CONCERNING RELIGION

The pupils in the European Schools can choose between Religion lessons and Ethics.

No reference to Religion is made in the *Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools (Official Journal L 212, 17/08/1994 P. 0003 – 0014)*.

Documents which do refer to the subject, the teachers and/or the teaching of Religion are the following:

- *Digest of Decisions of the Board of Governors of the European Schools* (doc. 2008-D-36-en-6). Religion and Ethics are mentioned as part of the time table in Primary and Secondary cycles. It is also pointed out that the subjects are to be disregarded for the calculation of the time credits in years 4-7 of the Secondary cycle. (Annex 1).
- *General Rules of the European Schools* (doc. 2007-D-4010-en-4). Reference is made that marks for Religion and Ethics are not to be taken into account for promotion purposes. (Annex 2).
- Two sets of statutes deal with the recruitment and salaries of the Religion teachers:  
*Conditions of Employment for part-time Teachers in Post prior to 1 September 1994* (Annex 3)  
and

*Conditions of Employment for part-time Teachers in the European Schools recruited after 31 August 1994 (Annex 4).*

Reference to Religion teachers is made with respect to their designation by the competent Religious Authorities and their recruitment by the schools. Furthermore progressive increase of their salary, contrary to that of other *chargés de cours*, is mentioned.

Except for time allocation, there are no arrangements found pertaining to the practical organisation of the Religion courses in the schools. The lack of specific regulations resulted in many different local practices in the course of the years.

There is need for clarity about the following points:

- Composition of Groups and Organisation
- Recruitment and Evaluation of Teachers
- Syllabus

### **3. PROPOSALS ON HOW TO OPTIMISE THE SITUATION**

To ensure that Religion teaching is carried out with the same quality and in the same efficient and harmonised way as is required in the teaching of other subjects the following should be observed:

- **Composition of Groups and Organisation**

The threshold for creating, grouping and splitting a Religion group must be in line with the regulations for other subjects and classes, see Annex 5. (*Digest of Decisions of the Board of Governors of the European Schools, Chapter XIX*).

In principle the Religion courses are offered in Language I. If the threshold (7 pupils) for creating a group, even after combining different classes vertically and horizontally, cannot be met and the consequence would be that courses of certain Religions cannot be offered, it is within the autonomy of the school to find alternative solutions to facilitate the organisation of these Religion courses.

Examples are (this list is not exhaustive):

- to organise Religion courses in L2, or the language of the host country
- to reduce the number of Religion lessons in the Secondary cycle
- to create mixed Religion groups (such as Protestant/Catholic), by way of exception.

- **Recruitment and Evaluation of Teachers**

Staff members who give Religion courses must have the necessary certificates for teaching and preferably be qualified Religion teachers. These teachers, if they are not native speakers, must master the language they use for their Religion lessons.

The recruitment procedures should be the same as for the other locally recruited teachers except for the fact that the candidates are normally proposed by the Religious Authorities. The local Religious Authorities are encouraged to present a list of suitable candidates. The final responsibility for recruitment of Religion teachers lies with the Directorate of the School. Directors and inspectors can observe Religion lessons and monitor the pedagogical aspects of these lessons. The Religious Authorities can also visit religion lessons in consultation with the directorate of the school. Religion teachers will be evaluated in the same way as other *chargés de cours*. Religious Authorities will be informed about the evaluation of Religion teachers and consulted if necessary.

## · **Syllabus**

Each subject area taught in the European School has a syllabus. To bring Religion teaching in line with other subject areas Religion lessons should be taught according to an adopted syllabus which leads to harmonisation within and across schools. Therefore the religion syllabi should be based on the general structure for syllabi, see Annex 6. (*Digest of Decisions of the Board of Governors of the European Schools, Chapter XV*). The content of these syllabi is proposed by the Religious Authorities.

The Religion teachers are expected to provide forward planning. In Secondary cycle they shall also keep a regularly updated record of material covered, see Annex 7 (General Rules of the European Schools art. 26).

The Religion Authorities expressed the wish to work alongside with representatives of the European schools to develop common Religion syllabi for all the European schools.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The working group tried to stay as close as possible to their original mandate taking into account the different positions of the Member States and the results of the meeting with Religious Authorities.

The working group tried to respect all opinions as much as possible, although very different and some times contradictory points of view were expressed.

The working group proposes that the Board of Governors:

1. approves the proposals to optimise the organisation of Religion courses as presented in chapter 2 concerning:
  - a) the compositions of groups
  - b) the recruitment and evaluation of religion teachers
  - c) the syllabus and planning.

After the approval of these proposals the Board of Governors is requested to give a mandate to a new working group to explore the possibility of the creation of working-groups for which representatives of the Religious Authorities will be invited, in order to develop common Religion syllabi for all the European schools.

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## Annex I

### DIGEST OF DECISIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS (Doc. 2008-D-36-en-6)

#### **Chapter X Administrative staff and ancillary staff,**

##### **B. Criteria for the creation of administrative and ancillary posts, 1. Secretarial and accountancy posts (p. 42)**

The number of Religion teachers must be taken into account to assess a request for the creation of a new secretarial or accountancy post.

#### **Chapter XIV Primary and secondary timetables,**

##### **2. Primary cycle (p. 59),**

##### **3.1 Secondary cycle, First three years (p. 60),**

##### **3.2 Secondary cycle, 4th and 5th years (p. 61),**

##### **3.3.2. Secondary cycle, 6th and 7th years (p. 62).**

Religion and Ethics are mentioned as part of the timetable.

#### **Chapter XIV Primary and secondary timetables,**

##### **5. Shorter leaving course, 4th and 5th years,**

##### **a. In general (p. 68),**

##### **b. On an experimental basis (p. 69).**

Religion and Ethics are mentioned as not being part of the timetable.

## **Annex 2**

### **GENERAL RULES OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS (Doc. 2007-D-4010-en-4)**

#### **Article 62**

##### **Promotion to the year above**

##### **B-Criteria taken into account (p. 40)**

3. Marks for religion/ethics, as well as marks for ICT in classes 1 and 2, shall not be taken into account for promotion purposes.

### Annex 3

## CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR PART-TIME TEACHERS IN POST PRIOR TO 1 SEPTEMBER 1994

### 2. Part-time teachers recruited by the Director

- (a) The Director may recruit teachers on a part-time basis or as substitutes where Governments are unable to arrange a secondment. The Director must inform the Administrative Board of conditions of employment. The contract shall not extend beyond the end of the school year for which the teacher's services are required. Part-time teachers recruited by the Director shall be paid **€ 2,935.14** per annum for one period a week in secondary classes, and **€ 1,913.27** per annum for one hour a week in primary and nursery classes.

It is hereby confirmed that the remuneration referred to above includes all forms of bonus, allowance; special payment or holiday pay and that secondary application of the legislation of the host country may not lead to the granting of an advantage other than those to which part-time teachers may lay claim pursuant to these Conditions of Employment.

- (b) Articles 10, 17, 18, 21, 25, 26, 36 (3), 43, 47, 55 (7), 63, 64, 65, 67 and **80** RMSSSES shall apply to part-time teachers recruited by the Director.

### 3. Teachers of religious knowledge and ethics nominated by competent non-governmental authorities

- (a) Teachers of religious knowledge appointed by competent non-governmental authorities shall be paid on the scale € 2,935.14 to € 3,799.69 per annum for one period a week in the secondary school and on the scale € 1,913.27 and € 2,417.27 per annum for one hour a week in the primary school, as set out in the table below :

	<b>Start</b>	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Step 5</b>
secondary	€ 2,935.14	€ 3,108.05	€ 3,280.96	€ 3,453.87	€ 3,626.78	€ 3,799.69
primary	€ 1,913.27	€ 2,014.07	€ 2,114.87	€ 2,215.67	€ 2,316.47	€ 2,417.27

The scale comprises five increments of **€ 172.91** for teachers in the secondary section and **€ 100.80** for teachers in the primary section, to be paid at the end of each two-year period of service. When a teacher of religious knowledge enters employment at a European School he shall be paid the basic salary.

It is hereby confirmed that the remuneration referred to above includes all forms of bonus, allowance, special payment or holiday pay and that secondary application of the legislation of the host country may not lead to the granting of an advantage other than those to which part-time teachers may lay claim pursuant to these Conditions of Employment.

- (b) Teachers of ethics recruited by the Director shall be paid according to the provisions set out in Article 2 above.
- (c) Articles 10, 17, 18, 21, 25, 26, 36(3), 43, 47, 55(7), 63, 64, 65, 67 and 80 RMSSSES<sup>1</sup> shall apply to teachers of religious knowledge assigned by competent non-governmental authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> RMSSSES: Regulations for Members of the Seconded Staff of the European Schools

## **2a and 3a**

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 2 and 3 above, specialized part-time teachers and teachers of religious knowledge and ethics in the primary section may, like their colleagues in the secondary section, be paid on the basis of 50-minute periods where their timetable is broken up by free periods and where they are not permanently in charge of a class.

The Representative of the Board of Governors shall decide, case by case, whether this arrangement should apply to specialized part-time teachers and teachers of religious knowledge and ethics.

## **4. Coefficient**

All periods taught in secondary classes as set out in Article 2(a) and Article 3(a) and (b) of these Conditions of Employment shall have the coefficient 20/21 applied to them.



## Annex 4

### CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR PART-TIME TEACHERS IN THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS RECRUITED AFTER 31 AUGUST 1994

#### 1. Role of part-time teachers

- 1.2. In addition to these basic staff, the Schools need part-time teachers to deal with the following situations:
- a. Teaching of religion and ethics. Teachers of religion are nominated by the competent authorities. (1) (Footnote (1): Right from the time when the European Schools were first set up, religion classes were taught by part-time teachers appointed by the competent religious authorities and paid by the Schools.)

#### 2. Part-time teachers - temporary staff - teachers of religion

The Director may recruit:

- b. Teachers of religion nominated by the competent authorities.

- 2.2 Teachers of religion shall be paid **€ 253.22** to **€ 328.47** per month for one period a week in the secondary school and **€ 165.39** to **€ 208.94** per month for one hour a week in the primary and nursery schools, as set out in the table below.

The salary scale comprises five increments, to be paid at the end of each two-year period of service. When a teacher of religion enters employment at a European School, he shall be paid the basic salary.

Remuneration shall be payable in 12 monthly instalments and shall be adjustable, on the basis of the development of the weighting provided for in point 3.2.

**It is hereby confirmed that the remuneration referred to above includes all forms of bonus, allowance, special payment or holiday pay and that secondary application of the legislation of the host country by virtue of Article 3.4 of the Conditions of Employment may not lead to the granting of an advantage other than those to which part-time teachers may lay claim pursuant to these Conditions of Employment.**

The Director shall forward a list containing the names and duties of the teachers of religion to the Administrative Board and to the Chairmen of the Boards of Inspectors annually.

Cycles	Basic	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Secondary	€ 253.72	€ 268.67	€ 283.62	€ 298.57	€ 313.52	€ 328.47
Primary	€ 165.39	€ 174.10	€ 182.81	€ 191.52	€ 200.23	€ 208.94

### **3. Conditions of recruitment of temporary teaching staff**

- 3.2. The provisions of Articles 10 (2) 14, 15, 17, 18, 22(1), 23, 24, 25, 40 (1) (b) and (2), first indent, 43(1)(a), 47, 48, 63, 64, 65, 67(1), 73 and 80 RMSEES<sup>2</sup> shall apply to teachers recruited by the Director.<sup>3</sup>
- 3.4. Legislation of the country in which the School is situated

The conditions of appointment and of dismissal of part-time teachers, teachers of religion and temporary staff shall be governed by the legislation of the country in which the School is situated with respect to employment relationship, social security and taxation regulations, without prejudice to the provisions above.

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<sup>2</sup> RMSEES: Regulations for Members of the Seconded Staff of the European Schools

<sup>3</sup> Article 22 (1) of the\_RMSEES states that a member of staff in post in the Schools shall be under the authority of the Director with respect to all internal operating procedures and of that of his national Inspector with respect to pedagogical assessment and shall be responsible to the above-mentioned authorities for performance of the duties assigned to him.

## Annex 5

### DIGEST OF DECISIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS (Doc. 2008-D-36-en-6)

#### Chapter XIX<sup>4</sup>

#### CLASS SIZES

#### GROUPING – DIVISION OF CLASSES

#### REGROUPING DIVIDED CLASSES

The school plan determines the amount of teaching time allocated to the school. The plan is established annually in the context of the overall pedagogic framework fixed by the Board of Governors and shall:

- show the total teaching time required to meet the needs of the school within the normal rules, i.e. a numerical estimate based on the forecast of the number of classes and teaching groups;
- show the cases where a departure from the normal rules was proposed, taking account of the specific character of each school. For example the number of SEN pupils in a class might justify reduction of the size of the class. In order to assure the quality of teaching, the proportion of SWALS in a class should be kept limited and, if necessary, class size might be reduced.

This would not only provide authority for cases where extra provision is proposed but would also legitimise the measures currently adopted by some schools on an ad hoc basis to provide cost-effective solutions for small groups ;

- enable each school to put forward specific local projects and initiatives.

The school plan is approved annually by the Administrative Board.

#### PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK RULES

##### **I. CLASS SIZES**

Classes shall have a maximum of 30 pupils. However, the situation will be kept under review so as to reach the objective of a maximum class size of 28 as soon as feasible but in any event by 1 September 2011.

Without prejudice to the rules regarding grouping of classes (see II below), the minimum number of pupils to create a class or a group is 7.

##### **Exceptions:**

It is possible to create groups with fewer than 7 pupils for the following subjects:

- a) mother tongue groups (SWALS)
- b) Irish, Maltese, Finnish/Swedish and Dutch
- c) Learning Support, SEN, Language Support
- d) the courses included in the school plan approved by the Administrative Board of the school.

The option courses for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> secondary and 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> secondary are included in the school plan. In principle, an option course shall be opened if 5 pupils request it.

##### **II. GROUPING OF CLASSES**

###### **A. Nursery**

Year 1 and Year 2 shall be grouped up to 30 pupils<sup>(a)</sup>.

###### **B. Primary**

Two consecutive classes, with a total of 25 pupils or fewer, shall be grouped.

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<sup>4</sup> Decisions of the Board of Governors, 17-18 April 2007, pages 15-17

Three consecutive classes, with a total of 20 pupils or fewer, shall be grouped.

C. Secondary

If the minimum number of 7 pupils is not reached, or 5 pupils for the option courses for the 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> secondary, pupils from consecutive classes in a language section, or parallel classes in different language sections, shall be grouped.

**III. DIVISION OF CLASSES**

B. Primary

Primary classes with more than 30 pupils shall be divided<sup>(a)</sup>.

**Exceptions:**

- a) For 'European Hours', classes with more than 25 pupils may be divided.
- b) In Language 2, classes with more than 25 pupils may be divided

C. Secondary

Classes with more than 30 pupils shall be divided<sup>(a)</sup>.

Language 2, 3 and 4 groups with more than 28 pupils shall be divided.

In the case of teaching of subjects through vehicular languages, groups with more than 25 pupils shall be divided.

**Exceptions:**

- a) Sciences classes and/or groups including laboratory work with more than 25 pupils may be divided
- b) ICT classes/groups in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year with more than 16 pupils may be divided.

**IV. REGROUPING DIVIDED CLASSES**

A divided class shall be regrouped at the beginning of the next school year if the combined number of pupils is below the number which justified dividing the class.

These rules cancel and replace the existing rules.

- <sup>(a)</sup> 28 pupils as soon as feasible but in any event by 1 September 2011.

## Annex 6

# DIGEST OF DECISIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS (Doc. 2008-D-36-en-6)

## Chapter XV SYLLABUSES

### 1.0 Introduction

The structure of syllabuses is modelled on the following standard pattern which may be differentiated and extended depending on the subject:

- 1.0 Objectives
  - 1.1 General objectives (identical for all subjects)
  - 1.2 Subject-specific objectives
- 2.0 Content (**knowledge, skills, abilities**)
- 3.0 Methodology (**proposals for ways of teaching and use of materials and media**)
- 4.0 Assessment of learning outcomes
  - 4.1 Functions and principles of assessment of learning outcomes (identical for all subjects)
  - 4.2 Participation in class
  - 4.3 Written work/tests
  - 4.4 The Baccalaureate
    - 4.4.1 Baccalaureate written examination
    - 4.4.2 Baccalaureate oral examination

**Chapter 1** describes and explains the relevant objectives for each subject:

- In the **first section (see 1.1)** the **general objectives**, compulsory for all subjects, are set out. (The text of this section is therefore included in the syllabuses for all subjects.)
- In the **second section (see 1.2)** the **subject-specific objectives** are set out, supplementing the ones mentioned in section 1.

In **Chapter 2** the **content** which should be covered in each subject is set out. This is normally done at three different description levels: **broad areas, themes and topics**.

The presentation of teaching content is related to the three curriculum units (Years 1-3, Years 4-5 and Years 6-7).

**Chapter 3** deals with methods of **teaching** in each subject.

**Chapter 4** deals with **assessment of learning outcomes** in each subject.

- Section 4.1. contains the general functions and principles of assessment of learning outcomes applicable to all subjects.
- In Section 4.2. rules and advice on assessment of learning outcomes in the “participation in class” area are set out.
- Section 4.3. comprises rules and advice on assessment of learning outcomes in the “**written work/tests**” area.

## **1.0 Objectives**

### **1.1 General objectives**

The secondary section of the European Schools needs to perform the dual task of providing formal, subject-based education and of encouraging pupils' personal development in a wider social and cultural context. Formal education involves the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, concepts and skills within each subject area. Pupils should learn to describe, interpret, judge and apply their knowledge. Personal development of pupils is done in a range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural contexts. It involves for pupils an awareness of appropriate behaviour, and understanding of the environment in which they work and live and a development of individual identity. In practice these two tasks are inseparable within the school.

These two major objectives are developed in the context of a highlighted awareness of European reality, the characteristic feature of which is the richness of European cultures. This awareness and the experience acquired as a result of shared European life should lead to the development in pupils of behaviour showing clear respect for the traditions of each individual country in Europe, while at the same time preserving their own identities.

## **4.0 Assessment of learning outcomes**

### **4.1 Functions and principles**

Assessment is both a formative and a summative process. Formative assessment of learning outcomes is an ongoing process. Its purpose is to provide information about pupils' learning. It should also be a basis for pupils' further achievement and plays an important role for pupils, parents or guardians and School in the provision of educational guidance for pupils. Assessment of learning outcomes need not involve the award of a mark reflecting performance in every case and it should not be punitive, but it should evaluate performance. For teachers, the assessment of learning outcomes provides an opportunity to review the objectives, methods and results of their teaching.

Summative assessment provides a clear statement of the knowledge and skills possessed by a pupil at a particular point in time.

The following general principles of assessment of learning outcomes should be observed:

- Performance against all the objectives as defined in the syllabus should be assessed. This will be done through the knowledge and skills set out in the syllabus.
- Assessment must relate to work which has been covered in the course.
- All types of work done by the pupil on the course should be a part of the assessment process - e.g. oral and written contributions, class tests, practical work.
- Pupils should be aware of the work to be done and the standards to be achieved in order to attain each level in the assessment scale.
- Pupils should know how their performance compares with other pupils, in the same or other sections. This requires co-ordination between the teachers of the same and different sections to ensure comparability.

## Annex 7

### GENERAL RULES OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS (Doc. 2007-D-4010-en-4)

#### Article 26

##### Class work

1. Every nursery and primary cycle teacher must be able to account for the written planning of the work done in his/her class. Annual and periodic plans must be given to the Deputy Director.
2. Secondary teachers shall have a clear and transferable record of forward planning for each term or semester (depending on the School's organisation). They shall also keep a regularly updated record of material covered. In this record, the connection between planning and realisation shall be made clear.  
These documents shall be available at all times to the Director and the Inspectors.  
The record of material covered shall be placed in the school archives at the end of the school year and kept for three years.
3. These documents shall be available at all times to the Director and the Inspectors.