

# Harbour International

## “Survival” Guide



Harbour International School

Graaf Florisstraat 56

3021CJ Rotterdam

Tel: +31 10 448 2266

[www.harbourinternational.nl](http://www.harbourinternational.nl)

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## Welcome to the Harbour International

Dear parents and guardians,

Welcome to the Netherlands and welcome to our school.

Life can be pretty tricky when you don't know what's what and a new school means a new system. This guide is therefore meant to help you to survive the first months as a new parent at Harbour International.

If anything is unclear or if you have a specific question, don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher (for classroom issues) and a relevant member of staff for any other matters.

We hope that you and your family will enjoy your experience with us and that you are excited to join our school community.

### The Harbour International Team

**Our full school brochure can be downloaded from our website:**

<https://www.harbourinternational.nl/comm/school-brochure/>



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## Contacting us

Head of school (Interim): Jesse Bywater - [jesseb@harbouribsr.nl](mailto:jesseb@harbouribsr.nl)

Administration:

- Veronique Zancarini [veroniquez@harbouribsr.nl](mailto:veroniquez@harbouribsr.nl)
- Katia Beren Taylan [katiat@harbouribsr.nl](mailto:katiat@harbouribsr.nl)

School telephone number: +31 (0) 10 448 22 66

Teachers: Our school uses a system called Seesaw. Upon entry into our school, you will receive an invitation via email to join this platform. Please ensure you log in to Seesaw regularly (or download the app on your mobile phone) as we share important news on this platform. All our teachers have their own email (available under the section “Team” on our website). However, we recommend that you use Seesaw to communicate with our teachers as it is our primary means of communication and guarantees faster response times.

## School hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 08:30 - 15:00

Wednesday: 08:30 - 12:30

Lessons start at 08:45 sharp. Doors open at 08:30.

Please ensure that your child arrives promptly every day. It is essential that your child begins the day with their classmates so they may start lessons together. If your child is continually late, a letter will be sent home requesting you to meet with the head of our school and the pastoral lead to discuss and solve the problem.



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Children should be collected punctually at 15:00 every day except on Wednesdays when pick-up time is 12:30. If you are going to be unavoidably late, please contact the school immediately and indicate what alternative arrangements you have made for the pick-up.

## Lunch at school

All children eat their lunch at school in their classroom. Please ensure your child brings his/her own lunch, a snack and a full water bottle on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Wednesdays are shorter days and only a snack and a drink are needed.

As a school, we promote healthy eating and children are not allowed to bring sugar/candy/sweets, crisps/chips, cake, chocolate or chewing gum during school hours. No glass bottles or fizzy drinks are allowed. Thank you for your cooperation.

Some examples of healthy snacks: fruits, plain bread, plain crackers, cheese sticks, yogurts (if not drinkable, bring a spoon), simple/digestive biscuits, croissants, buns (for example, with raisins), carrot sticks, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes.

Some examples of healthy lunches: sandwiches (with cheese, ham, chicken slices, turkey, butter), pasta, salad, soup, dumplings, rice with toppings, sushi, savory pancakes, wraps with vegetables or meat, vegetables with dips, fruit salad.

We do not have the facilities to heat food up.

Since one of our teachers and some of our students are allergic to nuts, we kindly ask you not to include nuts in your lunch boxes (any types of nuts, nut butters, and not only peanuts. Chocolate spreads also very often contain nuts).



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During the lunch break, professional supervisors or 'lunch teacher' (called overblijf or TSO teachers in Dutch) are paid to supervise the children.

## Celebrating birthdays

Birthdays are very special moments and the children are very welcome to celebrate their birthday in school. They may bring a small treat to share with their class at snack time, e.g. a small plain cupcake, a small box of raisins or some fruit. If you choose to bring cupcakes, please ensure the class teacher receives a full list of the ingredients (as allergies are not limited to nuts and we also have children who may not eat certain food item). Please do not bring large cakes that need to be cut in class or any food unless you are sure of the ingredients inside.

Party bags may be given out in class by your child at the end of the school day and taken home where the parents can monitor what is being eaten by their child. We encourage only healthy contents in the party bags but do not monitor the contents as they are not meant to be opened during school hours.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

## Absenteeism and special leave

**Short term (sickness, medical appointment, etc.):** If your child is sick, not feeling well or has an important appointment that cannot be missed (appointments for visa, medical, etc.), you need to inform your child's teacher before 8:30 am on the day of the absence. Use Seesaw to send a personal message to your teacher or call our school. If your child is sick for longer than 2 days, you are kindly required to update your child's teacher regularly.



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School children can easily pick up germs and bacteria from one another. If your child has a contagious disease such as chickenpox or conjunctivitis, please mention this when you are informing the school about your child being sick. We might need to inform other families (without giving out names, of course) as some diseases might be dangerous for pregnant women or individuals with a weaker immune system.

It is the responsibility of all parents to check their child's head weekly for lice and nits. If we detect any lice on your child's head, you will be contacted and other parents in the same group will receive a message asking them to be vigilant and check their child's head. Anybody can get lice. Our school sees it as an unpleasant but everyday problem and we have to deal with it in a sensible way.

**Long term absence:** When starting at our school, you will be provided with a document detailing the laws and conditions on applying for extra leave. Please note that Dutch laws are very strict on time off school and that we are required by law to follow and enforce these regulations. You may apply for extra leave by contacting our school administrator who will explain to you how to proceed and will provide you with the necessary form. It is also very important to give us enough notice if you need special leave.

## Parent Support Group (PSG)

The Parent Support Group organises activities within the school that range from the International Food Fair to themed Coffee Mornings with external experts, contributes to fundraising, etc. Details of PSG activities are regularly published in the school newsletter. If you would like to help, please consider joining the PSG. Everyone is welcome to do what they can, when they can. A few hours dedicated to supporting our school will go a long way!



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Each class has a WhatsApp chat group. If you wish to join the specific group for your child, please contact the PSG via email.

For more information, please email the PSG at [psg.harbourinternational@gmail.com](mailto:psg.harbourinternational@gmail.com)

## Student Council

Every year, our school holds elections for the Student Council. The children who get elected to represent the students in this council meet regularly to advocate for the wishes of the students and are heard by the management.

## MR

By law, every school in the Netherlands is required to have a Participation Council (called the Medezeggenschapsraad or MR in Dutch). The council is comprised of an equal number of parent and staff representatives. School management is required to consult and work with the MR while making certain decisions that impact the school. The MR has a right of advice or a right of consent regarding different topics. The activities of our MR can be followed via <https://www.harbourinternational.nl/our-school/mr-medezeggenschapsraad/>



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## After School Care (BSO)

We do not have onsite after school care service. You may contact the following after-schools for costs and availability. They are familiar with our school and can pick up your children from our premises:

<https://www.kinderdam.nl/binnenstebuiten>

<https://www.hunwereld.nl/>

<https://steigertje.nl/en/>

<https://www.roetsj.com/>

## After school clubs

Our school offers some after-school activities that take place on our premises. These include music, arts, technology and sports activities. For details, please check the bulletin board outside our building regularly for an updated list of activities offered. You will also receive regular updates via Seesaw about after school activities.

## Our school curriculum and the acronyms we use

To meet the educational needs of our pupils, Harbour International uses the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) combined with elements of the British curriculum to ensure and maintain a high standard of education.

### IPC: International Primary Curriculum

The International Primary Curriculum (IPC) is a curriculum for international primary schools and our teachers use this programme to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide variety of subjects.





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Personal development and international understanding are at the heart of the curriculum. IPC lays out a clear process of learning and specific goals for every subject. Every unit starts with an “Entry Point”. The entry point is an activity for children that begins each unit of work and provides an exciting introduction to the work that is to follow. At the end of every unit the children celebrate their learning in the “Exit Point”.

For more information, please check the following links:

<https://www.dutchinternationalschools.nl/primary-education/ipc/>

<https://www.harbourinternational.nl/our-school/curriculum/>

### **Maths No Problem, our math programme**

This programme ensures that there is a strong conceptual understanding of math as opposed to rote learning of facts.

The scheme has the concrete-pictorial-abstract (CPA) method at its heart which encourages children to use and discover through the use of equipment (concrete – such as cubes or tens and ones blocks), then they progress to representing this in picture form (pictorial) and finally moving on to the concrete stage which uses equations and mathematical symbols (abstract).

The videos in the link below explain in more details the curriculum approach:

<https://mathsnoproblem.com/en/parent-videos/>

### **English, reading and language literacy**

As a school we aim to engage children in a love of reading and inspire them as writers, through the exploration of high-quality texts within lessons. Teachers carefully plan and deliver lessons using teaching methods that



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ensure all children make good progress in their writing, vocabulary building and comprehension, embedding their learning over time.

The children are taught reading through small guided reading sessions using Oxford Reading Tree levelled reading books. Spelling and grammar are taught weekly and these components are then applied during writing sessions. The curriculum takes into account each individual child and their level of learning, with teachers differentiating to ensure that all children are assigned work that is suited to them.

The children also have access to our library at least once a week where they can take home two books that interest them.

At the beginning of this school year, we have introduced two programmes designed to enhance the development of reading and writing for young learners. These will be piloted and monitored for the next two years with the aim to further support our students and help them reach their full potential in literacy.

The first pilot programme is called "Talk for Writing" (for groups 2-8). This method focuses on enhancing our current writing curriculum. It allows young children to imitate the language needed for a particular topic orally, before reading and analysing it, and eventually writing their own version. This approach uses a structured framework to enhance children's writing skills through three key stages: Imitation, Innovation and Application.

The process begins with the Imitation phase, where students become familiar with a model text by reading, discussing, and internalising its structure and language. This stage encourages students to understand the rhythm, vocabulary, and grammatical patterns of quality writing, fostering their ability to recognize and use effective language features.

In the Innovation phase, students then adapt the model text, making it their own by changing elements such as characters, settings, or events. This part of the process is highly engaging for students and builds their confidence as



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they experiment with their ideas, while still having the structure and language of the model to guide them.

Finally, the Application phase allows students to apply the skills they have learned by creating their own original texts. This is where they put everything into practice, drawing from the skills and techniques they have gained throughout the earlier stages.

A new phonics programme called "Sounds Write" has also been introduced (groups 1 to 3) and will be piloted for the next two years. It is a programme which teaches children to read and spell.

### **EAL: English as Another Language**

Our EAL teachers support the language learning of children who have a home language other than English and who require support in accessing the class curriculum. The children are supported by the EAL teachers in small groups. If your child receives EAL, you will be informed via the EAL department. Not all groups receive EAL; younger children acquire language through play and appropriate early years curriculum learning in the classroom situation. The EAL teachers also collaborate with class teachers to support them with EAL in the classroom.

For more information, please refer to our website:

<https://www.harbourinternational.nl/learning-harbour/eal-english-additional-language/>

### **All about the Netherlands**

The subject previously known as "Dutch" is now called "All about the Netherlands." In this subject, students are immersed in Dutch culture, customs, celebrations and traditions. This approach aligns with the transient nature of our school community, where most families stay with us for an average of three years. By focusing on cultural understanding, we ensure



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that all students, regardless of their background, can fully participate in and appreciate the richness of Dutch life during their time here.

What you should expect as a parent:

- All students from group 0 to 8 attend a weekly “All about the Netherlands” lesson, which is taught in English.
- Students who do not participate in EAL lessons will attend an additional lesson once every week focusing more on conversational Dutch.
- Teachers will inform parents when their child stops receiving EAL support and starts receiving the additional Dutch lesson.

Our program aims at helping the students gain insight into everyday life and the customs of the Netherlands as a host country. Due to limited teaching time, we cannot aim at helping students to reach bilingual proficiency.

## Technology

Technology covers a wide range of learning for the children.

In groups 0 and 1, technology is taught within the classroom with the support of the class teacher. The children are introduced to many different kinds of technology (for example, timers and walkie-talkies). Starting from group 2, children start simple coding and sequencing, and learn about spreadsheets and databases. They are also introduced to the safe use of the internet to find information and pictures, as well as ways to collaborate on projects.

Group 3 and 4 students learn about wikis, stop-motion animation, searching for information and presentation software. They expand their knowledge of coding, as well as learn what to do if they encounter cyberbullying. Students in groups 5 and 6 continue to learn about different types of technology and its applications, create digital music, artwork, interactive games using coding and 3D design. In groups 7 and 8, students learn a variety of computer languages as well as applications for these, such as apps, games and animations. They also explore blockchain and AI. To support this learning, we



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use different gadgets such as Dash robots, raspberry pi units, and Beebots as well as Chromebooks and iPads. Various software is used for the different activities including Blockly, Scratch, code.org, SketchUp, CoSpaces, Book Creator, as well as the education suite from Google.

## **PE**

Twice a week, our students from group 2 to 8 take part in Physical Education (PE) lessons delivered by a qualified teacher. P.E. lessons for groups 0 and 1 take place only once a week but the children are given plenty of opportunity during the school day to develop their gross motor skills.

Groups 0-3 attend PE classes in the indoor gym located in one of our buildings. Groups 4-8 walk to the nearby Oostervant gym.

Students in groups 0 to 3 work on their basic motor skills, getting to know their bodies and how to control them. By playing games, they learn how to run, climb, jump, throw, catch, etc. Students in groups 4 to 8 enjoy a more sport-oriented approach. They learn a broad variety of both team and individual sports during the year, from basketball, badminton, or volleyball to BMX, kin-Ball, or roller-skating, among others. Additionally, children in group 4 will attend weekly swimming lessons at the local pool.

## **Music**

Music lessons are offered by a music specialist once per week starting in group 2. In groups 0-1, music is integrated within the everyday learning experience by the classroom teacher and the Dutch teacher. In groups 2-8, each music session is planned to provide children with a wide range of learning experiences that nurture and stimulate their development as young performers and creators. Listening and responding to music is also at the core of their musical experience in the classroom. Our aim is to support our



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students' growth with the cognitive, psychomotor and affective components that music as a subject in schools provides.

At lower primary level, musical encounters in the classroom focus on singing, music and movement activities, and exploring pitched and unpitched instruments. A sound-based approach to traditional and other forms of notation is also included as part of the program. Towards upper primary, the focus is on improving their performing skills through singing and playing a variety of instruments, learning about in-depth analysis of music, broadening their music repertoire, and exploring a diverse number of creative tasks that enrich their artistic experience as young learners.

## Library

Children may borrow books from the school library. Each child will receive their own library bag to keep their library books in. Each week, the children go to the library together with their class and teacher to choose their books. Books may be borrowed for one week. After a week, children must return the book to the library so they may take out another book or they may renew their present book for another week.

The library is run by parent volunteers, so if you have any spare time, please contact your teacher and volunteer!



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## Homework

Depending on the group, homework can be optional or mandatory. Each teacher decides if, when and how to give optional homework. Homework might be given in order to support, extend and reinforce work in the classroom, to promote independent learning, and to develop good study habits. Children are encouraged to take their reading and library books home so that reading becomes an important activity in their daily routine. Older pupils may be required to carry out work for projects at home using reference books in their home language. Children may also be required to complete online assignments such as Reading Eggs, Mathletics, Times Tables Rock Stars or the like. Progressively more mandatory homework is assigned to groups 6, 7 and 8 as to prepare the children for the transition to secondary school.

## Trips, outings, activities and celebrations

Our school enriches the students' learning, development and global citizenship with numerous trips and outings such as farm trips, theater visits and camps (for Group 6 and 7/8 students). From time to time, we also organize workshops and presentations by external experts. Every year we hold activities around Safer Internet Day, and organize a Sports Day and a Charity Day. Dutch celebrations around Sinterklaas and King's Day are also a part of our school year. All trips and activities are communicated to the parents via Seesaw. Parents' help during the organization and execution of these activities is always highly appreciated.

In addition to outings, we also regularly hold fun and educational activities for the students that are outside of their standard curriculum. These activities may be related to arts and crafts, technology, science or literature. For example, during Choosing Hour, students are able to participate in an



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engaging activity of their choice together with students from other groups. During Home Language Reading, parents volunteer to read to the students books in their own language. During Genre Reading, students get the chance to listen to literature of different genres.

## English and Dutch lessons for parents

English and Dutch lessons are offered to parents and take place once a week in school during school hours. The details and timings of these lessons will be published in the school newsletter and on the bulletin board outside our building at the beginning of each school year. If in doubt, please contact our school administrator.

## Dentist visits

Should you wish to, your child can be seen by the dentist that is located close to the school and collects the children directly from school twice a year, during school hours. Twice a year the practice staff come to school and take the children to their dental practice for a check-up. Forms to sign up can be received from our school administrator's office. Once filled, they need to be submitted directly to the dental practice by the parents. The name of the practice is JTV Mondzorg Voor Kids <https://mondzorgvoorkids.nl/>

## Traveling to and from school

Please be diligent about correct and safe parking when bringing your children to school by car. Double parking is never allowed even for a few moments as it creates a very unsafe and dangerous road situation. On-street parking outside the school is available. You will need to pay for parking from





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9 am onwards. Tariffs are stated on all ticket machines. It is not possible to use coins in Rotterdam parking meters. Payment can only be made with bank card / debit card and credit card (Visa/Mastercard). Parking wardens come by regularly and parking fines can be hefty (over €80).

In addition to double parking, please also be diligent about not riding your bicycles on the footpaths around school as this, too, causes dangerous situations. It is not allowed to ride bicycles once on the premises of the school. Once inside the gates, children can walk their bikes to the outside bicycle park that is located close to the main entrance. The bikes can be walked back out at the end of the day.

We are located close to the city center and the central station. We are easily reachable by public transportation, e.g. the tram.

## Extra care and support

Our school has a Special Educational Needs coordinator, a Pastoral Care lead, a Safeguarding lead, and a Social Worker/Counselor. The Learning Support team provides help with learning difficulties in different waves. Depending on the need, this can happen in class, in small groups out of class or individually. Pastoral Care can be provided if deemed necessary. Bullying and attendance issues also fall under the scope of Pastoral Care. Our school also works closely with the wijkteam ('neighbourhood team'), which are agents designated by the city council that help in situations of social nature.



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## Useful websites:

[www.rotterdam.nl](http://www.rotterdam.nl)

Gives a lot of info about all aspects of the city of Rotterdam (taxes, Attendance law for school, etc.) Click on EN in the top right-hand corner for the English version.

[www.skvr.nl](http://www.skvr.nl)

The SKVR provided a very wide variety of courses for adults and children. Courses range from music lessons, dance lessons, acting, writing, art, photography etc. With 9 different locations throughout Rotterdam there is one bound to be near you.

[www.ovchip.nl](http://www.ovchip.nl)

The OV chipcard is now the only legal way to travel around Rotterdam with public transport. This link will provide you with all the necessary information to order and use the OV chipcard.

Children up to 12 years old can travel freely on public transport. For more information: <https://www.rotterdam.nl/gratis-ov-voor-kinderen-aanvragen>

[www.dutchnews.nl](http://www.dutchnews.nl) and <https://nltimes.nl/>

News in English about the Netherlands



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<https://access-nl.org/>

Have a question, as an international navigating new circumstances, while living in the Netherlands? Access will have the answer. Their service is free and they also have a helpdesk if you prefer to call instead of navigating their very rich website.

<https://www.iamexpat.nl/> and <https://www.expatica.com/nl/>

Websites for expatriates that provide information on living in the Netherlands, news in English, English speaking services.

<https://ihcr.nl/>

International Health Centre Rotterdam (iHCR) is an easily accessible primary healthcare provider for expats and international patients in Rotterdam.

The Centre welcomes all patients with medical complaints and health issues. It also provides an extensive range of general practitioner care. If needed, they can refer you to all medical specialists in any hospital in Rotterdam and beyond.

<https://rotterdamexpatcentre.nl/>

How can the Rotterdam International Centre help you? Education, career, health care, housing, taxes... setting up a business or working for a company abroad comes with many challenges on a variety of issues. Trying to find the answers and solutions can take a lot of time, effort and stamina. Rotterdam International Centre is the specialized one stop-shop for international businesses and expats who are looking for services and information about working and living in Rotterdam.

