

1. What does a typical school day look like? What time do you start and end?

Hard to say. It depends on the day, honestly. Some days we start at 8.30, others later in the day. For primary school students, school is often from 8.15 until 3 pm. High school is a bit different, with each class having its own schedule. The higher levels of education are even more irregular.

2. How long is a school year? Do you have holiday breaks, summer break, spring break?

Our school year starts around the end of August/start of September and usually ends around June. We have multiple breaks. These include winter break, spring break, May holidays (we always have a week off around Easter) and quite a few more.

3. At what age do you start school?

It used to be 4 years old and technically still is, but recently we have had a lot of children starting around 3,5 years old. These children are called gifted children, but are often just regular children that simply start early.

4. What qualifications do you need to be a teacher?

You need at least a bachelor degree to teach the lower levels, and a masters to teach higher levels. Our system works a bit differently compared to America. At the end of primary school (12 years of age), students take what is called a CITO test. This test determines which level of high school they will be placed in. The higher the level, the more theory-based the course of education is and the longer they will be in high school for (it can vary from 4 to 7 years, depending on the level). As you might have guessed, the lower levels are more practical-based. I don't like calling them higher and lower levels though.

5. How are your schools funded?

Our government mostly funds our schools. That being said, schools do often have a variety of activities that can help gather more money for anything needed. Parents are also required to pay

for school trips (field trips and such) if they have the means to. Lower income families are relieved of this burden by either the school or the government supplying extra support.

6. Do students eat meals at school? How much does this cost for students?

That depends on the school. More often than not, the students bring their own food. Primary schools have this as a requirement, including which foods the children are and aren't allowed to bring (healthy eating is important). High school has much of the same, but they usually offer a place where students can buy food if needed. The same goes for universities and such. All in all, most people just bring their own food.

7. Are most schools public? Private?

I don't believe we really have public or private schools. We do have different types of educational schools such as Jenaplan, Dalton, Montessori, Freinet, religion based and such (each school having their own philosophy on how teaching should be done et cetera), but I don't believe public or private schools are really a thing here. I'm not entirely sure though.

8. Do your schools train any students for the workforce? Or is it mostly college prep?

A mix of both. In high school, students are required to pick their courses based on a profile. Some courses are mandatory of course, but others can be adjusted to fit their needs best. Examples of these profiles are Economics, Healthcare et cetera. Each profile has courses best suited for those specific areas of the workforce. It does include a fair bit of college prep as well, though.

9. Is school free for most people?

Yes, very much so. Not many costs come into play until college or university, but even the costs of those are still quite low. For example, a full educational year at Windesheim costs around 2000 euros.

10. When COVID-19 shut schools down, what platforms did most schools use to communicate and learn?

Microsoft Teams is very big in the Netherlands, and it is definitely the more preferred option. I do know of some schools that use Zoom instead, though.

11. How did instruction change with virtual learning?

We are taught to teach our students by doing rather than just throwing theory at them and wishing them luck. It's why most teachers here use a lot of activities to stimulate our students and their learning process. This was made much more difficult with virtual learning and everyone had to adjust. It was very difficult for both teacher and student. We work much more theory based now.

12. Do you have a favorite school memory?

I never really liked high school, but college gifted me with many wonderful memories. Including the time where my instructor did a cartwheel in front of the classroom. That was fun.

13. Do you have school sports? What other extracurricular activities are a part of the schools?

Our government makes sport a requirement until you reach a certain level of education, but even then most colleges and universities will have work out facilities for the students to make use of. A healthy lifestyle is recommended here and many students make use of the facilities or engage in sports outside of school. I rarely meet anyone who is not practising a sport or who doesn't at least go to the gym. We don't necessarily have clubs or anything of the sort, but there are plenty of opportunities.

14. How much (on average) are teachers paid?

It depends on the level and age you teach, as well as your experience but I think on average, about 3500 euros? I'm not entirely sure about that though.

15. Do you have standardized testing/end of the year assessments?

Yes, we do. Primary schools have the CITO test, high school has multiple exams checking their progress throughout their schooling as well as final exams at the end of their schooling. Colleges and universities are much the same, both having exams throughout the entire year as well as entire degree course.

Hope this helps you out!!