

Applicable from 2012 enrolment

1. ENROLMENT RULES AND PROCEDURE

- a) **APPLICATIONS:** The applications (Cat I and Cat II) for the following school year have to be submitted to the school during the application period in January between the dates set by the Administrative Board.

ESH fills in the vacancies based on the applications submitted during this application period. Category I children have priority as stated in the Act on European School of Helsinki.

The school reserves vacancies for category I applicants who have not been able to submit their application during the application period because the category I status did not exist during that time (e.g. because of the working contract).

If the application has been submitted after the application period without an acceptable reason mentioned above ESH will endeavor but cannot guarantee a place for category I pupils.

Category II pupils will be enrolled within the limits of vacancies after taking into consideration the above.

- b) **LANGUAGE SECTION:** The applicant must apply for enrolment in the section of the child's native language or in the section whose language is the dominant language of the child (Act on European School of Helsinki 1463/2007 Section 10). In the following cases the dominant language can be considered as being different from child's mother tongue:
- i. The parents have a different mother tongue i.e. the family is truly bi- (or multi-) lingual and these two (or several) languages are actively used in communication with the children.
 - ii. The child has been educated during a substantial number of years in another language than his/her mother tongue; and the parents (or at least one of the parents) are able to communicate with the school in this language of the section. The number of years required depends on the age of child, the class level s/he is applying to, the type of earlier education or school attended etc. The eligibility will be decided on case-by-case basis.

More information on the school's language policy can be found in chapters 2.1 and 2.2.

- c) **ENTRANCE TESTS:** Category II applicants take entrance tests which are organised in February. Category I pupils can be asked to attend the entrance tests for reasons related to appropriate year level, language section, special educational needs or other relevant reason
- d) **SELECTION:**
- i. The school sets a maximum number of pupils for each teaching group depending on the number of year classes combined and the diversity of the group (pupils with special

educational needs, pupils in need of intensified language teaching, or any other pedagogical reason). Since the category I pupils have priority to ESH the school reserves vacancies in each teaching group for category I pupils applying after the application period, (see point 1 a).

- ii. Category II pupils are accepted to the places available each year in the order of the number of points achieved in the entrance test. Only applicants fulfilling the minimum requirements in the entrance test can be accepted. The following order will be respected:

1. The siblings of category II pupils already enrolled in the school have priority access. If there are more applicants than places the result from the entrance tests is decisive.
2. Applicants coming from other European Schools (Type I/II/III).
3. All others.

- e) **DECISIONS FOR ENROLMENT:** The school will inform the parents about the decision on the enrolment of their child(ren) into ESH in March/April and parents have to confirm by the date set by the school if they wish to accept the place offered to them. Failing to do so the enrolment ceases to be valid and the place can be offered to another applicant.
- f) **RESIGNATION:** If a pupil (Cat I or Cat II) resigns from ESH because of opting for another local school the child cannot be re-enrolled before the beginning of the following school year and must follow the normal application procedure.
- g) **EXCEPTION:** The only exceptions to the above are the pupils applying to the secondary level who can apply throughout the year because there are places available in all secondary classes (category I and II).

2. ENROLMENT POLICY

2.1 Language section

The European schools system is structured according to language sections. The number of different language sections differs from school to school. For financial reasons it is not possible to have all language sections in all schools, and especially in smaller schools the number of sections is limited. The European School of Helsinki has three language sections: English, French and Finnish.

Because the school has only three language sections there will always be a number of non-native speakers in different language sections. These pupils (SWALS = students without a language section) have no other choice than choosing English, French or Finnish section. Having non-native speakers in teaching groups is a challenge which the teachers and the school as a whole try to address in many different ways on a daily basis. Restrictions regarding the choice of the language section (1.b) have been introduced in order to minimise the dispersion of competences and skills in languages in the teaching groups. There are only limited resources of learning support available in the school. However, ESH strives to ensure that the quality of teaching remains good and that the learning objectives can be achieved.

In communication between the class teacher / tutor and home the language of the section is used. All information, leaflets, forms, reports etc are written in this language. Also parents' evenings and discussions

about the progress of the child are conducted in the language of the section. Parents' support for the child in learning the language of the section is of paramount importance especially in the nursery and primary.

2.2 Language L1

The school supports maintenance of the mother tongue and recognises the importance of maintaining the native language and cultural links to the home country.

Under certain conditions mentioned in the Act on European School of Helsinki (1463/2007) it is possible to have another language than English, French or Finnish as pupil's L1 language. This language needs to be the child's dominant language truly and spoken at home on a daily basis at least by one of the parents.

Although teaching of L1 other than English, French or Finnish is not equivalent to mother-tongue teaching in the country of origin, it does offer other educational benefits. Maintaining literacy in the mother tongue provides a solid foundation for achievement in other languages of study. It also serves as a tool to maintain and strengthen the cultural identity of the child.

Due to the small number of pupils in these languages different class levels are usually combined. Combined classes prove a challenge to both teachers and pupils. However, they allow greater opportunity for pupils to learn from each other and to contribute, and consider many different perspectives.

Smaller teaching groups allow for more one-to-one teacher and pupil interaction; individual strengths and areas for improvement are therefore more readily identified. The smaller group allows each individual an opportunity to speak and to be heard thus building both the pupils' ability to form and vocalise an opinion and their confidence in sharing their own points of view.

Once the L1 language has been confirmed upon enrolment it can only be changed in exceptional cases and for pedagogical reasons as long as the pupil studies at ESH. This is due to the fact that in most cases the pupil is lacking appropriate L2 skills to enable this kind of change. The consequences of choosing a L1 other than English, French or Finnish as regards the choices of other languages on the subsequent classes and cycles should always be discussed with the direction before the decision is made.

It should also be remembered that the number of lessons for L1 other than English, French or Finnish is lower:

Nursery and primary 1-2:	5 x 30 min vs 16 x 30 min in EN, FR, FI
Primary 3-5:	5 x 45 min vs 9 x 45 min in EN, FR, FI
Secondary 1:	3 x 45 min vs 6 x 45 min in EN, FR, FI
Secondary 2:	3 x 45 min vs 5 x 45 min in EN, FR, FI
Secondary 3-5:	3 x 45 min vs 4 x 45 min in EN, FR, FI
Secondary 6-7:	the number of lessons are equal i.e. 4 x 45 min

Fewer contact hours make for very intense classroom time with high expectations placed on both teacher and pupils; this can be both physically and mentally demanding for both parties. The limited contact time means that pupils must carry out a lot of independent study thus developing a life-skill that will benefit them throughout their studies and working lives.

The syllabi are not adjusted to the reduced number of lessons but the same targets should be achieved. This applies also to the European Baccalaureate exam. Also for this reason studying a L1 other than English, French or Finnish requires more commitment and independent work from the pupil.

Also, sometimes it is difficult or even impossible to find (qualified) teachers for these L1 languages. Distance teaching can be used whenever possible.

2.3 Pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

According to the Act on European School of (1463/2007) pupils shall be provided special support within the scope of the School's resources. Due to its special established legal status, ESH does not have the same resources that are available in special schools or classes.

Parents will provide ESH with all the relevant information needed in order to allow appropriate placement.

The pupils enrolled into ESH might sometimes benefit or require specialist support outside the scope of the School's resources. In these cases the parents are asked to provide this support which may have financial implications to the parents.

If the school, despite the special support offered to child, finds itself incompetent to offer the child a proper education, ESH and its personnel will help the parents in seeking other solutions or expertise outside the School.