



Changes to the Vaud School System

The school system in Vaud is currently in a period of transition as the application of [HarmoS](#), a Swiss-wide harmonization of the 26 cantonal school systems, will be introduced in Vaud in August 2013. At the same time, the new [Vaud education law](#), that was approved by popular vote last year, will also take effect.

Starting in August 2012 already, a new syllabus for the Suisse Romande, the [Plan d'Etudes Romand \(PER\)](#) has been rolled out.

Cycles et degrés de l'école actuelle		Âge des élèves	Cycles et degrés de l'école harmonisée		
Secondaire	Rac I et II		Rac I et II Rattrapage		
	9 ^{ème} année	9	14-15 ans	11	11 ^{ème} année
	8 ^{ème} année	8	13-14 ans	10	10 ^{ème} année
	7 ^{ème} année	7	12-13 ans	9	9 ^{ème} année
	Cycle de transition CYT	6	11-12 ans	8	Deuxième cycle primaire
	5	10-11 ans	7		
Primaire	2 ^{ème} cycle primaire CYP 2	4	9-10 ans	6	Degré primaire
		3	8-9 ans	5	
	Premier cycle primaire CYP 1	2	7-8 ans	4	Premier cycle primaire (dont l'école enfantine)
		1	6-7 ans	3	
Cycle initial CIN (facultatif)		-2	5-6 ans	2	
		-1	4-5 ans	1	

PRIMARY/ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – DEGRÉ PRIMAIRE

Enfantine (4-6 year olds)

Up to August 2012, the cut-off date for entry into non-compulsory École Enfantine was 30 June. Children needed to have turned four by the end of June to start school that academic year, i.e. in August. The parents of children born in May or June could request that their child start school one year later and the parents of children born in July or August could request to join school one year earlier than normal.

From August 2013 the cut-off date for entry into the now-compulsory first two years of primary school will be **31 July**, meaning children must be **4 years old by the end of July** to start school in August. This new cut-off date will be adopted by all public schools in Switzerland by 2015. There will also be an increase in the total number of hours of education, i.e. an additional three school periods per week.

Parents who aren't sure when their child should be starting school can enter their child's date of birth in the [Canton of Vaud's Educational Calculator](http://www.vd.ch/autorites/departements/dfjc/actualites/dossiers-en-cours/loi-sur-lenseignement-obligatoire-leo/entree-a-lecole-obligatoire/):

<http://www.vd.ch/autorites/departements/dfjc/actualites/dossiers-en-cours/loi-sur-lenseignement-obligatoire-leo/entree-a-lecole-obligatoire/>

Premier Cycle Primaire (4-8 year olds) & Deuxieme Cycle Primaire (8-12 year olds)

Currently, primary school (primaire) is considered schooling for children between the ages of 6 and 10 and is divided into Premier Cycle Primaire (CYP 1) (Children 6-8) & Deuxieme Cycle Primaire (CYP2) (Children 8-10) with two transition years (CYT) (children 10-12). From August 2013, these classifications are changing. The premier cycle primaire will refer to children between the ages of 4 and 8 (Years, 1, 2, 3 & 4H), and the deuxieme cycle primaire will refer to children between the ages of 8 and 12 (Years 5, 6, 7 & 8H). There will be no transition years.

From August 2013, marks from 1-6 will be introduced in 5H.

Language Instruction in Primary School

From August 2014, formal teaching of German will start for 8 year olds, 2 years earlier than today.

From August 2015, formal teaching of English will start for 10 year olds, 2 years earlier than today.

Class times

Currently, most primary/elementary schools in Vaud have a long break for lunch (1.5 to 2 hours), and most children go home (or to a friend's or other) for lunch or are enrolled within each school district's "Accueil du Midi" programme where lunch is served. There is no school on Wednesday afternoons. This will continue.

From August 2013, the system of "appui", which meant that some children were excused from one or two periods of teaching a week to allow the teacher to spend more time with smaller groups of children, will no longer exist, all children will go to school for 28 periods a week and any additional support will be given either in school time or outside school time.

SECONDARY SCHOOL – DEGRÉ SECONDAIRE

Cycle de Transition (10-12 year olds, these years belong to primary school from 2013)

As mentioned above, from August 2013, the transition years (10-12 year olds) will be part of primary school and secondary school will start normally at the age of 12.

At the end of the cycle de transition or new end of primary the students will be oriented into one of two secondary school streams (VG or VP – see below), based on results in the key subjects including the results of the ECR cantonal exam (30% weight) for Maths, French and German (just Maths and French for those children who are in the final year of the cycle de transition in 2012-13). It is expected that just over 1/3 of students will enter the VP/Pre-Gymnase stream and just under 2/3 will enter the VG/General stream.

In previous years the orientation was determined by marks but also by an assessment of the attitude to school work and capacity to adapt to the learning style that would be required in the different streams. The subjective elements meant that decisions were not always accepted by parents and were appealed. From this year on the orientation will be based only on objective results.

An example of the calculation done to orient a child to VG or VP:

Average of the marks obtained in class	: 5
Result of the ECR exam (30% weight)	: 4.5
Calculation	: $(5 \times 0.7) + (4.5 \times 0.3) = 4.85$
Average for the year (rounded to the half point)	: 5

The entry criteria for the VP stream is the combination of :

Group I : French* + Maths* + German + Science = 19 points and above

Group II : Geography + History = 9 points and above

*with ECR exam results included in the calculation of the average for the year for each subject according to the above example

The access to the two different levels for French, Maths and German in the VG stream will be according to:

Level 1 : Average for the year* in the subject 3.5 or below

Level 2 : Average for the year* in the subject 4 or above

*with ECR exam results included in the calculation of the average for the year for each subject according to the above example

Secondary School for 12-15 year olds in 2012-13

In the past, secondary school students were oriented into one of three streams: Voie Secondaire a Options (VSO), Voie Secondaire Générale (VSG) or Voie Secondaire de Baccalauréat (VSB). Students who start in one of these streams in August 2012 will follow the existing 3 stream system until the end of their schooling but will benefit from other changes introduced in 2013, such as the catch-up class and the ability to move up a stream at the beginning of their final year, and all but the final year will follow the new syllabus from August 2012.

VSO is primarily for students who expect to continue into an apprenticeship at the end of Year 9. VSO students complete work experience (stages) during years 8 & 9. At the end of Year 9 students graduate with a VSO certificate.

VSG prepares students for either an apprenticeship or for further academic study. In Year 8, students enrolled in the VSG stream complete work experience (stage). At the end of Year 9 they graduate with a VSG certificate.

VSB is for those students who expect to continue on to higher education (US: High School, UK: College). There is no work experience (stages). Most VSB students continue studies by attending a [Gymnase](#) (e.g. the Gymnase de Nyon, de Morges or de Lausanne). They graduate VSB at the end of Year 9 with a VSB certificate.

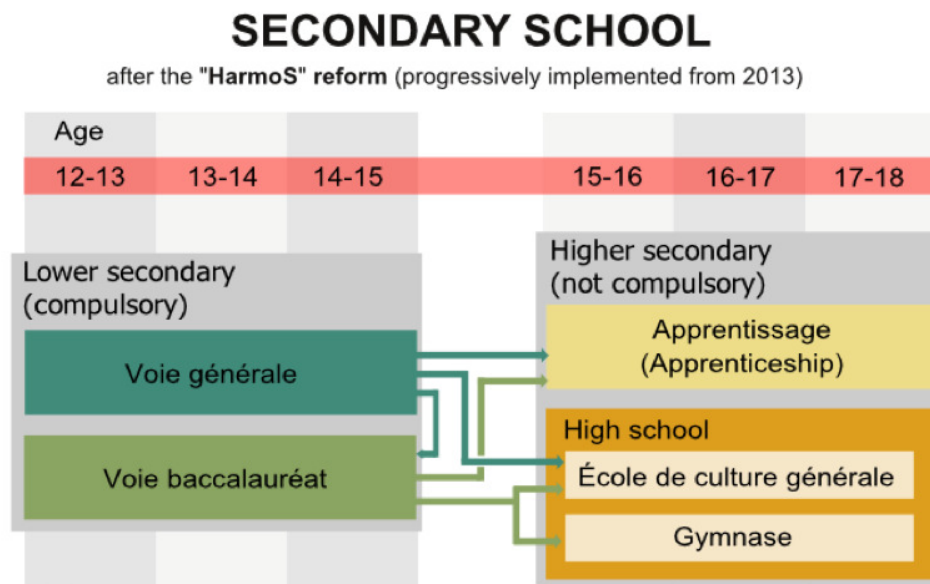
If a student's results in the core subjects (Maths, French and German/English) are sufficiently high, he/she can move between these three streams at the end of Year 7 and at the end of Year 9. If a student moves up a level they redo the academic year,

which will mean joining the new system of 2 streams. Likewise students who do not achieve the minimum results required of them can move down a level, but these students are not expected to redo the year.

Those students who completed the cycle de transition in July 2012 will be the last class to start VSO, VSG or VSB streams for the 2012/13 academic year.

Secondary School for 12-15 year olds from 2013

Starting in August 2013, the VSO stream will be discontinued. Instead, the VG (voie generale) will have two different ability-levels for Maths, French and German: basic or advanced. A students' placement is dependent upon on his/her results for the subject in Year 8H. See image inset.



The discontinuation of VSO means that current CYT students will be oriented into one of two streams (VG or VP), based on results in the key subjects plus the results of the ECR cantonal exam (30% weight) for Maths, French and German (just Maths and French for those children who are in 6e in 2012-13). It is expected that just over 1/3 of students will enter the *VP (Voie Pre-Gymnasiale)* stream and just under 2/3 will enter the *VG (Voie Générale)* stream.

To ensure students are in the right stream, every 6 months VG students will be assessed and those who have progressed well may move from the basic to the advanced group or from the VG-advanced level to the VP level.

Students that are identified as being in difficulty will be offered specialized teaching attention, the modalities of which will depend on the school (e.g. additional lessons, either individually or collectively).

Students that have progressed sufficiently may change stream at the end of the first term of the Year 9H, at the end of Year 9H, or at the end of Year 10H (i.e. between the ages of 13 & 15). In all streams, the students are asked to choose a specific option that will help them in their career choices after secondary school (i.e. after the age of 15). All children are expected to successfully complete Year 11H, even if they repeated a year and are already 16 or 17 years old.

Catch-up classes

From August 2013, any student who does not obtain their end of school certificate at the end of Year 11H will be automatically expected to repeat the year or spend a year in a catch-up class.

In addition, catch-up classes are available to students that do well in VG. These students can spend a year in a catch-up class to qualify for the VP certificate.

A student in the VP stream that does not successfully complete the requirements and therefore cannot graduate with a VP certificate, will be eligible to receive a VG certificate. If his/her marks meet the requirements, a VG certificate will be awarded.

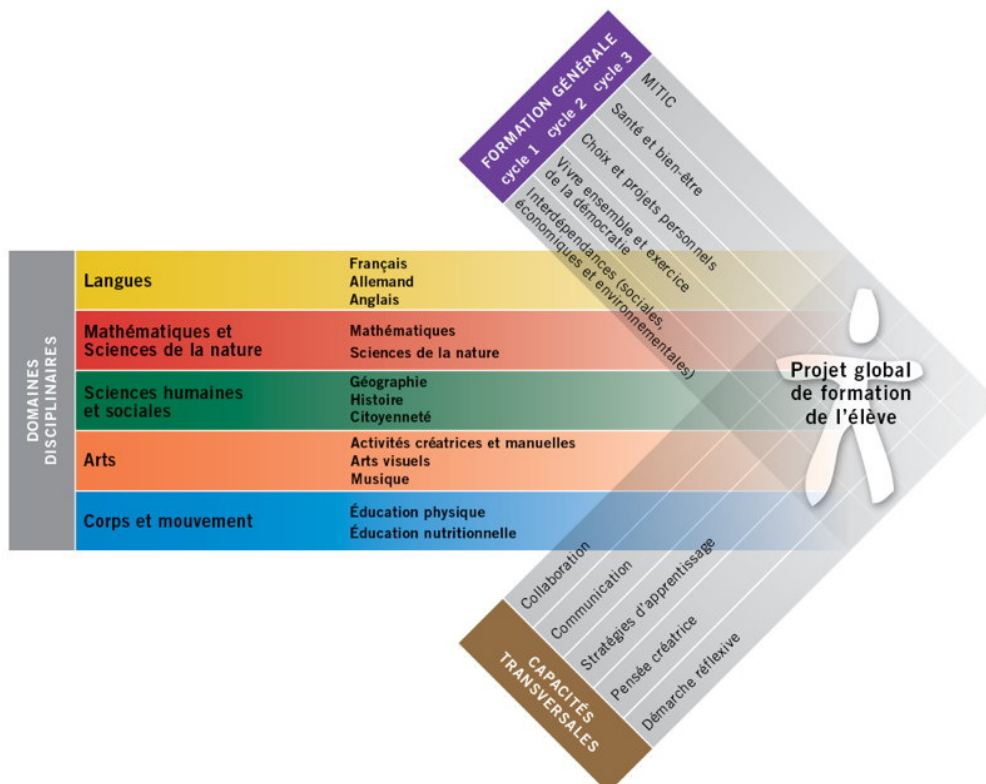
SYLLABUS – PLAN D'ETUDES ROMAND (PER)

The content of what is taught has been harmonized across the 7 French-speaking or bilingual cantons in Western Switzerland and documented in the PER. It has been introduced in the canton of Vaud in August 2012 with a few exceptions that will be introduced later but before 2015, i.e. History for which the new teaching materials are not yet ready and German and English for which extra teachers are being trained.

The mission of the syllabus is to build knowledge and skills, transmit social values and acquire and develop general abilities. It is organized into 5 disciplines, languages, science, art etc with transversal aims to develop general capabilities, such as creativity, collaboration and communication and to educate in a wider sense, for example, use of new media, preventive health, sustainable development.

The new syllabus does not only update the content but includes new teaching aims, new minimum standards and new teaching materials. Teacher training is ongoing to support this transition.

Parents have access to very detailed information on the internet at www.plandetudes.ch



INTEGRATION OF NON-FRENCH SPEAKING CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Language Classes

With a large expatriate/immigrant community, where French is not the mother or native language of many students, it is recognised that additional help in French is a service the school-system must provide. As such, each school will continue to provide Intensive French Lessons to students who do not speak French or have limited French language skills. These lessons are done in small groups or, for children aged 8-15, they may be done in a specific class for non-French speakers. It is expected that special measures should only be required for 1 to 2 years.

For students who enter the educational system and who speak German or English as a native or mother tongue, there is no formal differentiation made between them and those who are learning German or English as a second language. All children follow the same syllabus. This said, parents and teachers are able to work together to try to create a suitable programme for those children who are already fluent in German or English.

Interpreters

The education law says that schools can use interpreters to communicate with the families of children who do not have French as a mother tongue and there will be no cost to the parents.

SOURCES

<http://www.vd.ch/autorites/departements/dfjc/actualites/dossiers-en-cours/loi-sur-lenseignement-obligatoire-leo/>

<http://plandetudes.ch/>