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Children may go to primary school from the age of four, but attendance is not compulsory until the first school day of the month following the child's fifth birthday. Most children go to primary school for eight years. Children who need a lot of extra support may go to a special school for primary education. Under the Appropriate Education Act that came into force in August 2014, schools have a duty of care to offer all pupils an appropriate place.

[Primary education](#) [1] is regulated by the [Primary Education Act](#) [2] (WPO). The areas of learning prescribed by the WPO are listed in section 5.2.1. Attainment targets define what pupils are expected to have acquired in the way of knowledge, understanding and skills by the end of primary school (see 5.2).

The WPO governs both mainstream primary schools and [special schools for primary education](#) [3]. The latter type of school is intended for children with learning or behavioural difficulties, and children who need special facilities or extra assistance. Special schools for primary education have the same attainment targets as mainstream primary schools, but pupils are given extra assistance to achieve them. The classes have fewer children and more specialised staff. Pupils can attend special schools for primary education until their 14th birthday. They can then transfer to pre-vocational secondary education, practical training, other forms of mainstream education or special secondary education.

[Special education](#) [4] has its own attainment targets (see Attainment Targets in Special Education). For more information on special education, [see 12.2](#) [5].

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science publishes a national education guide for parents, carers and pupils containing information about what goes on at primary schools ('[Basisonderwijs 2013-2014. Gids voor ouders, verzorgers en leerlingen](#)' [6]; only in Dutch available).

School plan, school prospectus and right of complaint

Every school must have a school plan, updated every four years, describing the steps being taken to monitor and improve quality and indicating the school's policy on educational matters, staffing and internal quality assurance. Through this document, the school accounts to the Inspectorate and the participation council for its policies. A school plan may cover one or more mainstream primary schools and special schools for primary education and one or more other schools which share the same competent authority (school board). It must be approved by the participation council.

The school prospectus, which must be updated every year, contains information for parents and pupils about the school's objectives, how it intends to achieve them and what it has achieved. It also gives details about the voluntary parental contribution and the rights and obligations of parents and pupils. The prospectus has to be approved by the parent members of the participation council before publication.

The right of complaint supplements the existing opportunities for participation in decision-making and the management of the school. The school board is obliged by law to draw up a complaints procedure. Every school must also have a complaints committee with an independent chairperson.

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Links

[1]

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurydice/index.php?title=Netherlands:Glossary&action=approve&oldid=106487#Primary_education

[2]

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurydice/index.php/Nederland:Wetgeving#Wet_op_Primair_Onderwijs_.28WPO.29_en_Wet_op_de_Expertisecentra_.28WEC.29

[3]

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurydice/index.php?title=Netherlands:Glossary&action=approve&oldid=106487#Special_primary_education

[4]

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurydice/index.php?title=Netherlands:Glossary&action=approve&oldid=106487#Special_.28secondary.29_education

[5]

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Netherlands:Separate_Special_Education_Needs_Provision_in_Early_Childhood_and_School_Education

[6] <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/brochures/2014/03/21/basisonderwijs-2013-2014.html>