



Everyone is a VIP@GO!







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Huis van het GO!

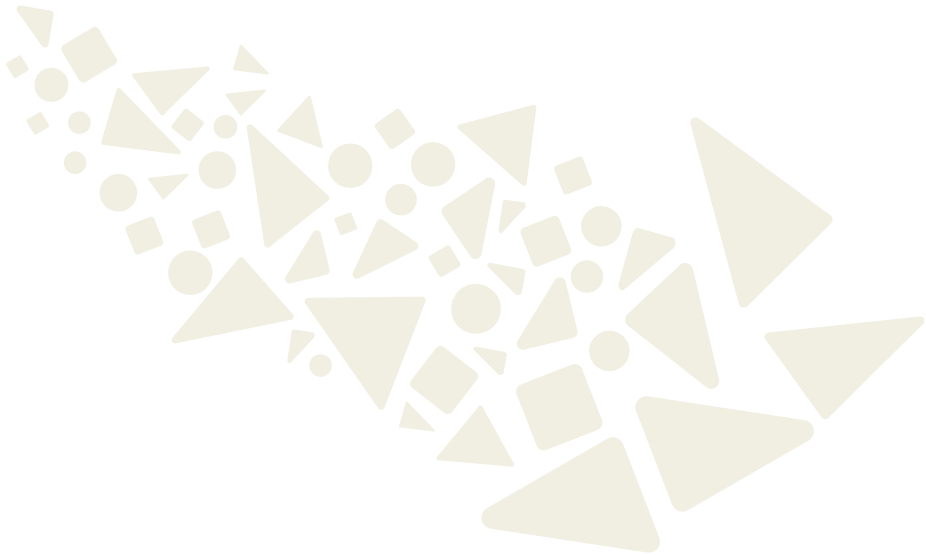
Willebroekkaai 36

B - 1000 Brussels

Tel.: +32 (0)2 790 92 00

www.g-o.be

info@g-o.be



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Foreword

Everyone is a VIP@GO!. Each pupil and student is regarded as a Very Interesting Personality and everybody is free to enrol in one of GO's educational institutions, regardless of age, origin and philosophical, ideological or religious beliefs. GO! education of the Flemish Community (in short: GO!) approaches every child, adolescent and adult as a unique individual and welcomes anyone with an eager mind to learn.

This booklet is meant to help our foreign friends and colleagues in the education sector to understand how the GO! educational systems in Flanders and the Brussels-Capital Region are organised. We will explain our mission, vision and values, our educational project and our drives and motivations. We will also go into how teachers and other staff members put all our theories into practice in our different schools and centres for education.

We hope that this booklet will give you a clear picture of what GO! has to offer for babies, toddlers, children, adolescents and adults and for society as a whole. It should also illustrate that our main goal is to offer everyone the best education possible and to enable all our pupils to develop their talents and skills to the fullest extent, without any distinction or discrimination. Learning to live together is therefore both our ultimate goal and our baseline.

Koen Pelleriaux
Managing Director



Table of Contents



Foreword	5
Education in Flanders	7
Responsibility at three levels	8
GO! in figures	11
GO!'s Mission, Vision and Values	12
Anyone can learn@GO!	14
Curricula	23
Learning and living together	24
Equal opportunities for everyone	27



Education in Flanders

GO! organises official education in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. It is an autonomous body of the Flemish government which functions independently of the Flemish Minister of Education.

GO! education makes up one of the three educational networks in Flanders: we also have the government-aided public network, run by our provinces and municipalities, and the government-aided private network, primarily organised by groups affiliated to the Catholic church.

GO! guarantees the practical implementation of every parent's constitutional right to freely choose a school within reasonable proximity to his or her home. The Belgian constitution also guarantees free access to compulsory education. Consequently, primary and secondary education is tuition-free.



Responsibility at three levels

GO! offers education at all levels, with the exception of higher education. GO! schools are spread all over Flanders and the Brussels-Capital Region. Many GO! schools have several locations, in different areas of a town or city.

By special decree in 1989, State Education became Education of the Flemish Community for the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium and Education of the French Community for the French-speaking part of the country. From then on, Flemish Community Education was run by an independent council on behalf of the Flemish Government. Gradually, its administration was decentralised and in the year 2000, responsibilities were finally established at three levels: the school (local level), the 'group of schools' (regional level), and the GO! council (central level).

At the local level, the school and its different locations are managed by one headmaster, a school council, a parents' council and an educational council. At the regional level, the group of schools is managed by a managing director, a board of principals and a board of governors. The group manages all GO!'s educational institutions in a well-defined region. The GO! council's main mission is to guarantee the freedom to choose a school in Flanders and the Brussels-Capital Region. The council also decides on the major strategies for GO!'s future. It works under the supervision of an executive director, supported by administrative and educational services located at Huis van het GO! (*House of GO!*) in Brussels.

Our educational services act as critical partners and offer on-the-job support for teachers as well as guidance on a management level. They are also responsible for the development of curricula. In addition, they try and stimulate all kinds of innovative projects in education. The in-service training department offers all kinds of training and courses to teachers, headmasters and other members of staff.



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GO! in figures

Our organisation represents:

- approximately 1,000 schools and facilities
- more than 340,000 pupils and trainees
- 18 to 20% of the total amount of pupils in Flanders and Brussels
- 40,000 staff members



GO!'s Mission, Vision and Values

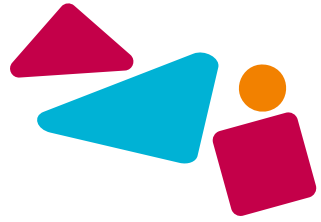
Mission

GO! strives for maximum learning improvement, personal development, active citizenship and individual well-being. We focus on what unites people and we teach children, adolescents and adults how to live together, beyond their differences. We make the school into a meaningful learning and living environment for the purpose of creating a more equitable society: a free democracy with active citizens who are all given equal opportunities to develop to their maximum potential.

We intend to achieve this by:

- organising and ensuring diversified, high-quality education that is geographically well-spread and accessible to all;
- actively pursuing the ideal of Extended Schools, in close cooperation with all our stakeholders;
- ensuring the democratic and continuous development and optimisation of our education;
- stimulating innovative views on education, as far as they are justified and realistic, and beneficial to our core mission.





Vision

The fact that our society is changing very rapidly and often quite radically, puts great pressure on the educational system, but it also opens up many opportunities. With our strategic plan 'GO! 2030', we respond to the changing needs and challenges.

- Quality education and equal opportunities for every learner are the focus of our future-proof vision.
- GO! is all about 'personalised collaborative learning', an approach that puts learners in charge of their own learning process so that they gradually learn how to take more control of it.
- Learning is personalised, but also collaborative. Supported by a team of educational professionals each with their own unique expertise, together with fellow pupils, students and with the entire ecosystem surrounding the school.
- This helps our network evolve into a professional learning community, making all children excel through personalised education.
- A school is much more than a building alone. School also involves online learning, developing knowledge together, investigating, bringing our experiences into class and collaborative critical thinking.
- GO! schools are diverse, they are ready to listen to one another and to learn from the different worldviews that come together at school.
- High-quality education, the best educational opportunities for every learner and 'learning to live together' remain our ultimate goals here at GO! and at our schools.

Values

GO!'s main objective: living and learning together based on respect, transparency, equality, sincerity, engagement and commitment. These values are the essence of active citizenship.

Anyone can learn@GO!

The Belgian Constitution stipulates that every child has a right to education. Therefore, education is compulsory for a period of twelve years, starting on 1 September of the year in which a child reaches the age of five and ending in the year that he or she turns 18.

Our non-compulsory education includes nursery care for children from three months up to 2.5 years old, pre-primary school for children from 2.5 years up to six, part-time art education starting at the age of six and, to conclude, education for adults from the age of 16 up to 99. Lifelong learning constitutes one of our most important assets.

In short, anyone between the ages of three months and 99 years is welcome at GO!'s institutions.

Day nursery: 3 months up to 2.5 years

High-quality education should already start in day nurseries. Attending nursery school is a vital condition for achieving equal education opportunities and building a successful school career. Day nurseries are stimulated to collaborate with our pre-primary schools, so that every child gets the opportunity to become acquainted with real school life. Early language training - in the first place Dutch - is one of our main assets, as an increasing number of children come from non-Dutch speaking families.

Pre-primary education: 2.5 to 6 years

From the age of 2.5, children can go to pre-primary school. In fact, the earlier they start, the better their chances to be successful in life. Our staff members make it possible for all children to explore their new world in a playful, creative and active way.

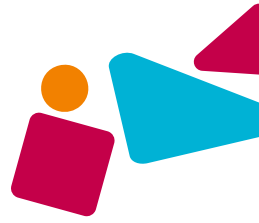


Primary education: 6 to 12 years

Throughout pre-primary school and also further on in primary school, we pay close attention to each child's full personality. We also take into account the number of pupils, their development level, their own rhythm, their fields of interest, their needs and individualities.

Our pupils acquire the required knowledge, competences and attitudes to grow into independent citizens. We keep them constantly involved in the learning process in an active, creative, social and emancipatory way. Our primary schools make use of different working methods and modern media.





Secondary education: 12 to 18 years

In regular full-time secondary education, study orientation is the main focus in the first stage. In the second and third stages, pupils can choose an education programme based on a domain and an orientation. There are eight domains: Language and Culture, Art and Creation, Economy and Organisation, STEM, Agriculture and Horticulture, Society and Welfare, Food and Hospitality, and Sports. The education programmes within these domains are divided into 'orientations' (vocational orientation, orientation to higher education or combined orientation), representing the pupil's possibilities after graduating secondary school: either pursue higher studies or enter the job market.

During their learning process, pupils are continuously coached and assisted in their choice of study programme. In short, GO's secondary education leads the path to maturity and adulthood and prepares for life after the age of eighteen.

Pupils of 15 or 16 years of age who wish to combine learning at school with gaining experience in a professional environment, also have the option to enter part-time vocational or professional education. Pupils then spend for example 15 hours of class time per week at school, combined with work-based learning in line with their education programme. This helps them to develop the required attitudes to be successful in the world of employment.

We always keep our finger on the pulse of the job market and maintain good relations with the world of business and industry. Close cooperation between schools and companies is continuously stimulated.



Special needs education

GO's special needs education offers tailor-made solutions in a specialised environment for children and adolescents with learning and/or behavioural difficulties, or a physical, sensory or intellectual handicap. We focus on the individual's abilities, rather than his or her limitations.

Inclusive approach

In September 2015 a decree came into force making it easier for primary and secondary pupils with slight mental disabilities or learning disorders to attend classes in regular education. This reform entailed certain measures enabling students with special educational needs to enrol and remain in regular education. Therefore, schools must make 'reasonable adjustments' in order to successfully mainstream these pupils into regular education.

According to GO!, this is an important step towards real inclusive education, which in turn will lead to a more inclusive society. Our schools receive intensive support in the implementation of the necessary measures.

Part-time art education: 6 to 99 years

Besides the obligatory educational curriculum, Flanders also offers part-time art education where both young and old can develop their artistic skills. There are four domains: music, expressive language and drama, dance and (audio)visual arts. These courses appeal to a broad audience and fit in perfectly with our concept of lifelong learning. Part-time art education is accessible to children, adolescents and adults, artists and art lovers.



Adult education: 16 to 99 years

From the age of 16, anyone eager to learn is welcome at our centres for adult education, where they can enrol for numerous courses. The modular system makes it possible to put together your own training schedule and determine how much time you need.

Pupil guidance

Pupil guidance centres (CLBs) are affiliated to the groups of school and officially acknowledged by the government. They offer support (information, advice and guidance) to pupils, parents, teachers and headmasters in their efforts for growth, optimal development and optimized well-being on their premises. They also play an important role in the interaction between pupils, parents, the schools and welfare or health organisations.

These centres work free of charge and independently of schools. CLB staff members are bound by professional secrecy.

The CLBs focus on four aspects:

- learning and studying
- assistance with educational career and compulsory education
- preventive health care
- mental health and social behaviour.

The work ethic is focused on being respectful to everyone and always putting the interests of the child first. Priority is given to pupils with difficulties in educational or personal development, due to their home environment or social background. In the event of problems, the CLB team will try and provide solutions in close dialogue with the pupil, the parents and the school.

Language training

Since Dutch is the main language in our schools, pupils with a different mother tongue should get acquainted with it as much and as quickly as possible.

Foreign newcomers, between five and eighteen years old, who have only just arrived in our country and therefore do not speak any Dutch, are enrolled in so-called reception classes, either full-time or for a number of hours, depending on their personal situation. Sometimes they can attend the full curriculum in a regular class group.

Foreign adults can attend NT2 courses to adopt Dutch as a second language in one of our centres for adult education.





Curricula

Decisions about the attainment targets that should be met by schools and teachers all over Flanders and in the Brussels-Capital Region, lie with the Flemish Government. Every education network is allowed to translate these targets into a curriculum. GO! supports maximum autonomy of schools and teachers by developing minimum curricula. Nevertheless, all curricula have to be approved by the Flemish Minister of Education in order to ensure that the attainment targets are met.

Our curricula are based on certain principles that GO! considers to be of great importance: active and constructive learning, focus on broad education, extended care and connection. The core values of our educational project have also been translated into concrete targets and pointers.

All GO! teachers must have a thorough command of the curricula that are relevant to their subject(s) and personal practice in the classroom.



Learning and living together

Through our educational project 'PPGO!' we help children and adolescents discover that there is no one universal truth to philosophical, ideological and religious questions. And that we should all focus on how to learn to live together, despite our differences in opinion. Therefore, our PPGO! project has defined the baseline 'Learning to live together' as a core mission for everyone.

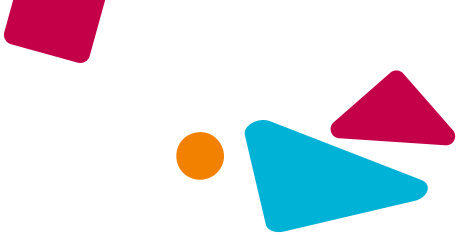
What matters most here, is that every individual is given the freedom to make his or her own choices and to look at things with a critical eye. This implies allowing children and adolescents room for hesitation, the freedom to ask questions and to acquire the required skills to develop a critical attitude.

An enquiry among our professionals revealed that equality, mutual respect, strong commitment, sincerity, freedom of thought and critical introspection are still primary values.

Since 1989, GO! has been carefully fulfilling its duty to offer 'neutral' education, a mission that is enshrined in the Belgian Constitution. Over the years however, the concept of 'neutrality' has become much broader. Nowadays, schools are facing certain challenges related to the phenomenon of 'super-diversity' in our society. That is why GO! has chosen an active form of neutrality.

Neutrality at GO! means that we do not value one specific opinion over another. No one philosophical, ideological, or religious conviction prevails, they are all equal. Moreover, entering into dialogue is not merely a noncommittal exchange of views.

It is not about being right or wrong. We teach our pupils to create sincerity by explaining that participants in dialogue should talk on equal terms and show mutual respect.



Being a member of a society is what we call citizenship. Citizenship is about

- democracy, with a positive interaction between society and its citizens, despite conflicting interests and balance of power;
- participation, requiring strong involvement and commitment to society from every citizen;
- identity, relating to the interaction between personal freedom and one's environment.

We want our pupils to learn to live together in all of these areas, so they can develop into active citizens. We teach them the basic values of a democratic society: respect for other people's convictions, the freedom to make philosophical, ideological and religious choices, the equality of man and woman and the equality of all people, regardless of differences.

GO! welcomes people of all convictions and respects their individuality, as long as they respect the laws of our country, help apply human and children's rights and get actively involved in our fundamental values and targets. Our educational project is the central pillar guiding us in our efforts to learn and teach how we must live together.

Building blocks for learning to live together

Foundations of active citizenship

Respect: both a goal and expectation

Respect is a fundamental value in GO!'s overall policy. Respect for oneself and for others' unique personality, respect for everyone regardless of skin colour, origin, conviction, philosophy or religion, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation, respect for the elderly, for nature and our environment, for classroom equipment or practice rooms. Respect at work, among colleagues, respect for the headmaster, mutual respect between pupils and teachers and between parents and teachers.

Awareness of active citizenship is continuously being built in our schools, through specific educational projects but also in class, on the playground or during excursions. Active citizenship is impossible without respect. Learning to live together implies reciprocity: everyone should be respectful towards others. Active citizenship is about justice and equality. Democracy requires active citizens.

Participation: a means of triggering emancipation and involvement

All our staff members, regardless of their place of work, are free to take part in the decision-making process. We regularly ask for their opinion on educational topics through online enquiries, social media, workshops etc.

Schools and parents form a solid unit, sharing responsibilities, talking and listening to each other as equals, joining efforts to promote pupils' well-being and positive development. We enable parents to participate through school councils and boards of principals within each group of schools. They are also free to join the specific parents' association attached to each school, which organises all kinds of activities to raise extra funds.

Pupils also have a say through their own council. Some schools also organise youth parliaments, forums, working groups, focus groups, discussion rounds, and so on. In addition, they can express their opinion via the school's website, the notice board, the school newspaper, the suggestion box, and so on.



Equal opportunities for everyone

GO! ensures that everyone receives equal opportunities for personal development, without any discrimination. Prejudice is countered and cooperation is stimulated.

Schools must ensure that every child is given the same opportunities to receive the best possible education. Our school teams guarantee that every teacher fulfils this duty.

Young children starting school all carry different social and cultural baggage. Disadvantaged children have a harder time meeting school expectations. Compared to other children, they are more likely to develop learning difficulties, to repeat a school year or to drop out. We recommend that children start school as early as possible. The sooner they start their education within a well-structured environment, the more opportunities they are given to succeed and develop into balanced and harmonious people.

Fulfilling our mission

GO! Polestar Vision 2030

GO! is already preparing for the education of the future. Therefore, we focus on our 'Polestar Vision' in our strategic plan 'GO! 2030': **"Our learning community is the most favoured, personalised to each individual, a reflection and building block of society"**. It constitutes our pedagogical-didactical response to the educational challenges of the 21st century.

GO! continuously responds to the needs of our ever-changing society. After all, schools are no longer just brick buildings where lessons are taught within fixed timeframes. In our philosophy, a school is first and foremost a dynamic learning and living community, with an open view of the world. In order to achieve this, we bring children, adolescents and adults together. We provide them with guidance so that they can work on their development, at their own pace and free of a specific place or time.



Through our polestar vision, we aim to provide a response to an ever-increasing social diversity while working on quality education for every learner. We adapt learning environments to individual differences and provide customised support for each learning process. We teach pupils and students to (gradually) take control of their personal and joint learning processes. This way, GO! works purposefully towards increased quality of education, maximised learning benefits for each learner and improved learning motivation.

Core teams consisting of teaching professionals play a pivotal role in providing pupils with direct instruction and practice to develop all the necessary knowledge and skills. GO! regards the learning process also explicitly as a social event, meaning that these core teams coach pupils while they develop new knowledge and insights by working together. Creating diverse learning and living environments that connect to the outside world helps achieve this goal, since schools - as professional learning communities - are the motor of a complex ecosystem which also includes other societal actors and sectors (such as work, welfare, culture, sports, etc.).

This unity of pupils and students, core teams, the school team and possible upper school teams makes up the professional learning community that GO! aspires: a group of people with the desire and openness to learn with, through and from each other, and who stimulate, help, support and inspire each other.





Personalised collaborative learning

GO! is firmly committed to personalised collaborative learning, aiming to broaden the learning process of pupils and students through learning in interaction. We also want to encourage them to gradually take more control over what and how they learn. Both national and international educational experts are putting personalised collaborative learning forward to prevent school fatigue, improve wellbeing and better manage highly diverse class groups. But also to motivate students and maximise learning improvement. At the same time, we respond to the learning needs of vulnerable pupils and we challenge excellent pupils. This is how GO! realises its educational project (PPGO!) and achieves equal educational opportunities.

GO! implements personalised collaborative learning by aiming for maximum efficiency in terms of learning ability, improvement and motivation for each pupil. We achieve this through goal-oriented differentiation and the systematic teaching of self-management skills. In addition, learning always takes place in a social context. Teachers and pupils learn from and with each other and increasingly direct the learning process together, hence the term 'personalised collaborative learning'.

The role of teaching professionals

As managers of the learning process, GO! teaching professionals strive for the greatest possible learning improvement and motivation for each learner through targeted differentiation and personalised learning paths. As supervisors and role models in terms of self-management and social management, teachers ensure that personalised collaborative learning achieves maximum effect.

GO! abandons the idea that each individual teacher should singlehandedly take on all teaching roles. Instead, it delegates these different roles to self-managing, multidisciplinary core teams consisting of various teaching professionals who work directly with learners.

These core teams improve their functioning by working together and learning with other GO! teaching professionals and with partners in the immediate school environment and the wider school community. This is how we develop a close GO! learning community embedded in a broader 'ecosystem'.

School as a concept

In our vision, a school* is and will remain a hub where children, adolescents and adults meet to learn from and with each other. At the same time, a school is at the core of a broader ecosystem with various actors (from the employment sector, welfare, culture and sport,) collaboratively building a high-quality learning and living environment.

A key feature of this learning and living environment is its hybrid nature: it extends beyond the boundaries of classrooms and schools and is not tied to one fixed place or restricted to fixed class hours. Learning in a physical location goes hand in hand with digital learning, both online and offline.

Lastly, schools are also inclusive: they use diversity to stimulate dialogue, to take a tailored approach and develop everyone's talents to their full potential.

GO! Education of the Flemish community:



* By 'school' we mean every educational institution, including academies for part-time art education, centres for adult education, pupil guidance centres, boarding schools...



