European School Copenhagen

Last updated
August 2026

Parents' *Guide*

This serves as a complete guide and work of reference for parents who seek admission for their children to European School Copenhagen.



Content

Click the page numbers to navigate between the pages.



3 **About European School Copenhagen**
Read more about the school.

3 **Language sections**
Find an overview of our language sections.

4 **The application process**
What you need to apply.

5 **Category and documents**
Learn about our admission priorities and the documentation we require.

6 **The screening process**
Learn about our screening process.

7 **Screening duration**
Find out how long the screening is for each year level and what it consists of.

8 **FAQ**
Frequently asked questions about our application process, screenings, and assessment.

About European School Copenhagen

European School Copenhagen is a tuition-free school run by the City of Copenhagen.

European School Copenhagen is an accredited school (AES), following the curriculum of the European Schools and is primarily aimed at children of international citizens living and working in the capital region of Denmark - including employees of the European Environment Agency.

ESCPH provides a unique, multilingual education for 900 students from ages 5-6 to 18, welcoming them into the school's P0 class (Børnehaveklasse).

Students graduate from the Upper Secondary with the European Baccalaureate diploma. The European Baccalaureate is recognised in Denmark on par with the Danish gymnasium/upper secondary school leaving qualification (Stx, Hfx, Hhx, Htx).

The EB is also recognised in all EU member states, as well as in many countries worldwide.

We offer three language sections in each year level: **Danish, French, and English.**

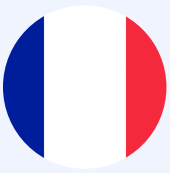
In these sections, students are taught most of their classes in the language of the section they attend (L1). We expect the applicants to master their L1 on a mother tongue/ dominant language level.

The students choose their first foreign language (L2) in P1 and their second foreign language (L3) in S1.

From S3, the students will be taught Human Science in their L2. From S4 to S7, the students will be taught History and Geography in their L2.

Language sections

We offer the following language combinations:

L1			
L2			
L3			

You can only apply for one langauge section.

The application process



Language

Determine which langauge section you want to apply for.

Is your child's mother tongue/ dominant language French, English, or Danish?



Category and documents

Determine which category you should apply under and ensure you have the required documentation ready to upload.

You can find our categories and view the documentation required on the next page.



Find your class

Find out which class you should apply for.

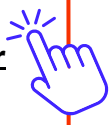
If you are unsure, check our comparison table where we have matched grade levels in the European School System to other school systems.



Submit application

Your application must be submitted online before the deadline stated on the website. Find deadlines and application links online:

P0 and Primary - **Secondary** - **Upper Secondary**



We will send you a confirmation e-mail when we have received your application. Communication regarding your application will be directed towards the contact e-mail address you have provided.



Screenings

We conduct screenings after the application deadline has passed. Read everything you need to know about the screening process here.

Category and documentation

The Copenhagen City Council is responsible for deciding on the admission criteria for European School Copenhagen. The most recent revision of these criteria was adopted on 30 November 2017. For further details, please refer to the decision document here.



Category

We prioritize applicants based on the following admission criteria:

Category a: EU staff members' children

- Children of EU institution staff members (whose education is funded by the EU Commission) are entitled to admission. Please contact the school for verification before you apply.

Category b1: International employees' children

- Children of whom one or both parents are international employees who come to Denmark with the purpose of working in Danish or international companies, organisations and educational institutions.

Category b2: Returned Danish employees' children

- Children of whom one or both parents are returned Danish employees working in Danish or international companies and organisations, and who have had a permanent workplace outside Denmark for a total of one year within the last five years.

Category b3: Children from other European Schools

- Children moving here from another European School.

Category b4: Local applicants

- In case of extra places, these may be offered to local applicants who meet the necessary language requirements for admission.



Required documentation*

Photo	**ID**	**Employment**	**Academic records**
A recent photo of your child	Copy of parents'/legal guardians' passport or birth certificate	Proof of employment (contract, letter from employer, pay slip)	Latest school or kindergarten report**

**Information submitted after the application deadline will not be considered*
*** If you have not received a report from your child's current school/kindergarten, you can find a template here instead.*

The screening process

1 Selection

After our application deadline, we evaluate all submissions and create an overview of available spots at the school. We select the candidates for screening who best meet our criteria, considering category, age, and language proficiency. The decision on language proficiency is made based on the stated language level and the detailed reports provided by the child's current school or kindergarten.

We will contact you via e-mail if your child is invited for a screening.
All applicants will be notified once the admissions process has been concluded.

2 Screening

The screening for P0 takes approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. The academic part of the screening is a conversation with a screening teacher that takes 10-15 minutes. The child must be able to enter the screening room without parents. Before and after the academic screening, the applicant will participate in activities with the other applicants, which are arranged and observed by our school pedagogues. Read more about screening content and duration for different year levels on the next page.

During our screening process, a teacher will assess the child's language abilities to ensure the child will be able to thrive in the language section they are being screened for. The child's linguistic competencies are essential for their social integration, academic success, and, most importantly, their overall well-being.

If an applicant does not show up for the agreed screening time without prior agreement with the school, the screening offer lapses, and the application is rejected. There will not be given any feedback from screening staff after the screening.

3 After the screening

All applicants that were screened will be assessed by representatives from management, screening teachers, and screening pedagogues. The final decision on admission is made by an admissions committee that consists of a consultant from the City of Copenhagen, the school's Director, and the school's Deputy Director. The decision is based on the applicant's screening results, and they will consider, for example, school readiness, language ability, age, and class composition.

We will inform you via e-mail of whether your application was successful or rejected.

Screening duration

P0

The screening for new P0 classes takes approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. The academic part of the screening is a conversation in the applicant's L1 (language section applied for) with a screening teacher that takes 10-15 minutes.

Before and after the academic screening, the applicant will participate in activities with the other applicants, which are arranged and observed by our school pedagogues.

P0-P1

20 minutes screening in their L1 (language section applied for). The screening involves an assessment of the child's language skills and general academics.

P2-P5

20 minutes screening in L1 (language section applied for) and 20 minutes in L2. The screening involves an assessment of the child's language skills and general academics.

S1-S4

Written screening in 2 parts.

Part 1: Screening in student's L1 (language section applied for) for 30 minutes.

Part 2: Screening in student's L2 for 30 minutes.

In total 1.5 hours including reading time and break

There is a possibility that the students will be called in for an additional oral screening.



Frequently Asked Questions

Which objective criteria are used in evaluating screening results?

The assessment focuses on language competencies in the section's language, school readiness, and academic level. Ratings are given on a scale where "above expected" is the highest level.

- working towards
- at age expected
- above expected

What should I do if my child has special needs?

If your child has a permanent disability, be it long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment that has required special assistance at their current school or will require reasonable accommodation at the screening, this must be noted in the application. It can be noted under the field *special support requirements*. Medical documentation must be uploaded under *other documentation*. If your child does not have a diagnosis, you must attach a statement from the kindergarten/school describing the child's special needs.

If your child has a permanent disability, it will be taken into consideration in the selection process to prevent any distinction, exclusion, or restriction on the basis of the disability.

How are the results weighed in an objective manner?

The screening teacher notes whether the child answers correctly or incorrectly on various questions. In addition, the screening teacher evaluates the child's competencies based on their knowledge of what a child aged 5-6 is typically capable of during a screening and what competences are needed in P0 (Børnehaveklasse).

What is the objective definition of “mother tongue level/dominant langauge” for a 5-6-year-old child?

Mother tongue/dominant language is the language the student masters best in terms of speaking, reading, and writing. At European School Copenhagen, the mother tongue/dominant language serves as the foundation upon which all other language learning and the curriculum are built.

Mother tongue/dominant language level means that the child can speak with a slightly varied language and vocabulary that allows them to speak in coherent sentences. This is tested through conversation. We pay special attention to correct use of words in different forms and tenses. We expect the child to expand the language through conversations about their own life—anchored in "I" sentences—and not merely respond with single words or monosyllables.

What does the school readiness assessment consist of?

There is no standardised test for school readiness. The assessment is done individually and holistically, focusing on language awareness and maturity. It is based on the professionals' experience with what is expected in P0 (Børnehaveklasse), as well as what is typically observed in the average applicant. During the academic part of the screening, the screening teachers follow the child; this means that the dialogue with the child can be differentiated to match the child’s zone of proximal development.

We observe whether the child can:

- Enter the room independently, put away their belongings, and settle in
- Understand simple instructions and follow directions
- Work independently
- Concentrate on tasks
- Converse with the adult in the room about their daily life

Additionally, emphasis is placed on the child's overall maturity and approach to learning.
The kindergarten's assessment of children's readiness for school does not necessarily align with the evaluation made by European School Copenhagen. Admission to European School Copenhagen involves meeting a broader set of expectations beyond those evaluated by their kindergarten. It is important for students to be able to navigate the linguistic complexity required by the European School System.

What is academic performance?

During the screening, the child's knowledge and competencies are considered, and the screening is adapted progressively to match the child's zone of proximal development, ensuring they are not held back by demands they cannot meet.

The screening teacher talks to the child about numbers, letters, and shapes. Other matters can also be included in the conversation. Furthermore, there will be conversations based on pictures that allow the child to express their vocabulary and provide perspectives.

During the screening, it is observed whether the child demonstrates language awareness and curiosity about the world, learning, letters, and numbers, as these are part of the academic focus at this age level.

What if I was rejected before/after the screening?

We receive a high number of applications every school year that exceed the number of spaces we can offer. This means that it is necessary for us to prioritize applications based on admission category, language proficiency, age, and maturity.

We encourage you to apply again for rolling admission in the next school year, should a space become available. Please note that rolling admission is intended for children who are already enrolled in another school; thus, it is not an option for children still attending kindergarten. If your child is still in kindergarten, we only accept their application for our new P0 classes.

Do siblings of current students take priority in the admissions process?

The following sibling priority rule only applies to applications made for our new P0 classes.

Siblings of pupils already enrolled in the European School Copenhagen are always invited to a screening and will be assessed in each category (b.1.-b.4.) on an equal footing with the other applicants. Siblings cannot skip a category. Siblings are only admitted if they meet the academic, linguistic, and social criteria. Otherwise, there is a risk that the child may not thrive academically and socially.

How does the language assessment work?

This framework outlines key areas that we use to evaluate a child's language development in the language of the section you have applied for.

It is especially important for the child to demonstrate language awareness and curiosity to thrive in the European School System.

Language comprehension
The child can:

- Understand and follow common everyday requests and messages
- Understand questions with who, what, where, when, and why
- Comprehend stories, rhymes, chants, and fairy tales
- Perceive and distinguish between sounds in language (phonological awareness – e.g., rhymes and initial sounds)

Expressive skills (productive language)
The child can:

- Speak in coherent sentences with correct word order
- Use a varied vocabulary, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and conjunctions
- Talk about experiences, such as what happened over the weekend or in a story
- Ask questions and engage in dialogue with both children and adults
- Explain desires, needs, and feelings

Phonetic and grammatical level
The child:

- Speaks with clear and understandable pronunciation, though some pronunciation variations are still normal. Stuttering or speech impediments will not affect the result.
- Has a grasp of basic grammar (e.g., verb forms like "I ate," "he walked," "we play")

Communication competences
The child:

- Actively participates in conversations and role-play
- Understands taking turns in speaking
- Adjusts language according to the situation and audience (speaks differently to an adult than to a peer)
- Uses language creatively and playfully (e.g., in role-play)

Pre-writing skills (related to later written language)
The child:

- Shows awareness of letters and sounds (e.g., can recognize and name letters in their own name)
- Can play with rhymes and initial sounds
- Shows interest in books and reading aloud and can retell a story

Do you still have questions?

If there are questions this guide has not been able to answer, please give our admissions team a call during the hours below. During admission hotline, we are by the phones and ready to help you.



Tel. +45 3614 0190

Admission hotline

Hours (CET):

- Mondays from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Tuesdays 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
- Thursdays from 13:00 p.m. – 14:00 p.m.

Thank you for reading!



European School Copenhagen