



# Lycée Ermesinde

Lycée public autonome à plein temps

committed to discovering  
and developing personal interests and talents

lower and higher grades of the enseignement secondaire  
lower grades of the enseignement secondaire technique  
enseignement préparatoire



Dear parents,

Your child is about to start an important period in life that is distinguished by great potential and the chance to shape their future.

Choosing which road to travel is a chance to be seized.

Your child is now starting three crucial years for their future school orientation.

First, there are talents to be discovered and confirmed, and interests that need to be delved into, with pleasure and realism.

It is important your child develop an effort-driven work ethic and enjoy sharing. The Lycée Ermesinde Mersch (LEM) gives priority to the students' strengths and demands that the students dedicate time and effort in their favoured domain. It goes without saying that the best way to put one's knowledge to the test is by sharing with and explaining what one has learnt to peer students. It is through the process of explanation that one learns.

For this learning experience to be successful, it is essential that the students learn to communicate well and convincingly, that they know how to best present themselves confidently.

The LEM proposes to accompany your child on this journey to insure that this experience be a fruitful one.

The objectives mentioned are ambitious, which is why a laid-back and generous setting is essential. Through this brochure and our Open Days, we would like to invite you to discover the means we give ourselves to accomplish our objectives.

The Lycée Ermesinde School Administration

## *The Lycée Ermesinde counts on strengths.*

**Engaging in their favourite sector.**

**Developing and sharing their passions.**

**Benefitting from the engagements kept by other students.**

**Growing more aware of their personal potential.**

**Getting more involved in order to memorise better.**

**Keeping a balance between interests and capacity, fun and work.**

There are three keys to success: a domain of excellence, strong foundation, good general knowledge.

There are three different types of engagement for a coherent and pragmatic orientation.

In order to identify and reinforce the favoured domains, so as to specify and confirm their personalised project, the school provides three different types of engagements.

### **I. The so-called “travail personnel”: an individual and specialized piece of writing**

The “travail personnel” is a written assignment based on a specific topic, which is chosen by every student individually. So, the topic reflects the interests of the student. Students have a semester to write this assignment, do the research, take notes and writing a correct language. This assignment can be theoretical or practical, abstract or concrete. The assignment can feature art, manual or craft work. There can be a written part to it or it can consist of a collection of smaller essays. This piece of writing is solely based on the student’s experience, which he or she intends to deepen.

## **II. The “enterprises”: specialisation and cooperation in groups with shared interests**

The “enterprises” regroup activities revolving around a similar ‘subject area’, and are meant to bring students and teachers to work together to produce or showcase their common efforts. Specialists, who still practice their specialty outside of school, lead the enterprises. Each enterprise has to produce, develop or merchandise a product. These enterprises allow the students to experience true professional constraints and inevitably has them learning by doing.

Each student has to engage in one or two enterprises, a commitment which will support their personalized project. Involvement in an enterprise means that the students take responsibilities, improve and update their skills.

Workshops on offer at the LEM :

1. Arts & Crafts ( for example: an architecture atelier, wood work, metal work, sewing, painting, bicycle workshop and decorating)
2. Cuisine (cooking for and catering; preparing the 4 o’clock tea cakes to be sold after school; knowing how to decorate a table, etc.)
3. Film & Photo (documenting events at school through photos and videos, producing short films, doing the publicity)
4. Nature & Region (productive animals, garden, orchard, beekeeping ...)
5. Languages & Culture (Chinese, Greek and philosophy, creative writing, newspaper editing)

6. Performing Arts (music, dance, theatre, circus school)
7. Management, Trade & Marketing
8. School Guidance Counselors Club
9. Science Department
10. Sports Department
11. Boarding School

### **III. The subjects taught in class: general knowledge and solid foundations**

The subjects relate to specific lessons and classes. Students have to sign up for two or three subjects in which they are going to get most involved. The choice of the subject match their personal interests and goes hand-in-hand with their personalised project. These dedicated students work more in their selected subjects in order to help and support the teacher during the preparation and the execution of the lesson by assisting them. The students' capacities and interests are continually tested, which in turn strengthens their basic knowledge and helps them find out whether or not they want to continue their chosen path.

The subjects taught at the lower grades are:

- German
- English

- French
- Mathematics
- “Sciences et techniques” (biology, chemistry, physical geography, physics)
- “Sport et santé” (human biology, sports, healthy foods, hygiene)
- “Art et société”(arts, human geography, history, literature, musical education)
- “Education aux valeurs” (economy, philosophy, politics, religious education)
- Latin (optional)

## ***Evaluation done in accordance with each student's personal project.***

**See diversity as an asset.**

**Orientation should prevail over summative evaluation.**

**School guidance done according to strengths rather than a choice taken by exclusion. Replace fear of failure by desire and ambition.**

The elaboration and harmonisation of the pupil's personal project starts in the first year of secondary school, year 7. A folder consisting of extended essays, contributions done during the lessons, scheduled and unscheduled tests and any other piece of work that has emerged from the subjects and the enterprises, gradually takes shape. The tutor and the parents follow the development of the folder very closely, signing every document before it is filed. Most pieces of work include a comment written by the teacher. During the weekly tutorial meetings, student and tutor interpret the results in the light of the personal project striven for.

Every student has a personal tutor responsible for the orientation during the entire schooling career at the LEM. The tutor is part of a group consisting of teachers and teaching assistants in charge of four classes. The orientation in the lower grades consists of establishing a folder that is presented to an external jury panel. The jury in charge vets the personal projects and confirms or discards the appraisal of the 'conseil the classe'.

School guidance in the upper grades ensures that the student follow the path they have chosen. The folder is an important piece of information and evidence. The number of universities asking for a portfolio is increasing. LEM students have the advantage of owning such a folder, containing amongst other things extended essays, personal works/projects and, of course, also classical tests.

The end of semester school reports are at the service of the orientation. Starting in year 7, reports are set up into three parts: 1) the personal project of the student is outlined, discussed during a mid-semester meeting, between the student, parents and tutor (the so-called 'entrevue intermédiaire'); 2) the covered course content, as well as teachers' comments about the extended essay, the student's internship reports and extracurricular activities; 3) the interpretation formulated by the 'conseil de classe' on the student's personal project in the light of his or her performances.

In the upper grades, the extended essay is replaced by a degree dissertation. This is a collective piece of writing in year 11 about a general topic. In year 12, it is an individual and more specialized piece of research. The students are guided by a dissertation director with whom they meet regularly to discuss the content and the quality of the dissertation. The dissertation is then evaluated by a school internal jury. The different school subjects are graded from 1 to 6; 1 being the highest mark and 6, the lowest. In final year, the national baccalaureate, the 'diplôme de fin d'études secondaires', is taken. Final year at the LEM is no different from final years in other schools, as the evaluation criteria is the one applied nationally.

An effective orientation is impossible with standardised evaluation criteria. By applying the same criteria to every student, and focusing solely on getting students to get through the academic year, the focus lies erroneously on the so-called 'weaknesses' of the student. The students' priority is to "move on", from one academic year to the next, instead of reinforcing and perfecting their strong points. By dividing the courses into a hierarchical order, and by standardising the evaluation of the students, honouring and developing any personal project remains but utopian.

## **The Lycée Ermesinde as a place where students and teachers alike love staying and working.**

**Shift from individual to collective work.**

**A cosy, compassionate, considerate and protective environment.**

**A request and a necessity to be of use and productive.**

**Have time for high quality work to be done.**

**Amicable support.**

The Lycée Ermesinde is mainly a place of culture; a culture of knowledge and values, of instruction and education. Its motto: effort – passion – friendship, reflects the conviction that personal apprenticeship and personal ‘blossoming’ are encouraged because there is a necessity to share, to stand out of the lot and to gain an awareness of one’s role inside this vibrant community. The Lycée Ermesinde considers every student and adult as a particular ‘enrichment’ to the community’s life, and expects them to develop their talents for themselves and for the community.

For this undertaking to be successful, one needs time and (if possible) some form of creative space. In the Lycée Ermesinde, the students must be present from 8.10 a.m. to 4.20 p.m., from Monday to Friday. Due to the specific legislation of the school, teachers and teacher assistants spend more time at school than they would in other schools.

The extra-curricular activities in the so-called “enterprises” and the study times continue after 4.20 p.m. Numerous activities run by our partners take place, simultaneously. Indeed, the LEM hosts a large number of associations and societies that work collaboratively with the students and employees :

- AEHT (Association européenne des écoles d'hôtellerie et de tourisme)
- CLCCL (Centre de langues et de culture chinoises au Luxembourg)
- Feierblumm (association de production de films)
- LBBA (Luxembourg Basketball Academy)
- Zaltimbanq' (école de cirque)
- Mise en scène (cours de mise en scène, individuels et collectifs)
- CAVEM (école de musique)

The Lycée Ermesinde endeavors to be an open space for the local population of Mersch and it is looking out for collaborations with the – municipal, associative and economic-local authorities.

Lessons and study times take place mainly in the “maisons”, i.e. the houses. The latter regroup several rooms of different sizes that are assigned to one “équipe”, i.e. teaching staff team (teachers and teacher assistants) and their students. In these rooms, the adults have their offices and the students do their ‘study time’ and meet their tutors. The houses are under adult supervision and they are meant to provide students with a sense of closeness, a school within the school, as it were.

The mealtime is very important to develop and maintain close-knit and friendly relations. Eating in good company and in peace and quiet is integral part of a healthy diet. In the restaurant Mélusine, the students can take their breakfast from 7 to 8.10 a.m. and from 9.40 to 10.10 a.m. Lunch is served between 11.45 and 2.45 p.m. All the meals are cooked in our school kitchen using fresh ingredients. The staff employed belongs to our school. The Café Gëlle Fra, open from 10.30 to 4.30 p.m., serves tea, coffee, and hot chocolate, as well as cookies and pastries. Students and adults do the catering service.

In our shop Eise Kiosk, the school sells its house-made products, manufactured in the different manufactures: sewn garments, marmalades and jams, candles, biscuits and chocolate, nougat, olive oil, books, CDs, jewelry, etc.

Everything is implemented in order to create a place where it feels great to be: A serene, supportive and protected space. The numerous products manufactured in our school, fill students and adults with pride and satisfaction.

The LEM owns a large central library and there is a reference library in every classroom. Students use these books during the individual and collective study times. The “centres” are rooms, allocated for the learning and the practice of one discipline: French, English, German, Maths, Sciences and the Start-Up. The latter offers, for example, assistance to students who aim for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Generally, the “centres” are led by people passionate about something specific, and visited by students wanting to share their interest in a more informal and laid-back manner.

Every morning (except on Wednesday) at 9.45 a.m. there’s assembly in the theatre hall. It has become the perfect way to showcase and provide an overview of current class activities and on-going projects. It is a veritable show with moderators, musicians, visitors and many movies produced by Film & Photo.

The boarding school “Sigefroid” is reserved for pupils willing to extend their engagements. The philosophy of the LEM continues in the boarding school: connecting the individual and collective interests, pooling interests and skills, promoting effort, passion and friendship. For the students in boarding, an added sense of responsibility is required, as they have to participate in organising and running the place. They also need to contribute to the local anchoring of the LEM in Mersch. The students staying in ‘Sigefroid’ have their individual bedroom, with a bathroom and a balcony; there are also study rooms and common rooms. These students also get access to the infrastructures:

the library, the restaurant, the cinema, the dancing studio, the gardens, the orchard, apiary, music pavilion, sports hall, and theatre. Apart from their tutor at school, every student in boarding is given a reference person, who is a member of the boarding school's teaching assistants' group. There is no housemaster, but a team of six adults looking after the teenagers instead. The reference person is the contact person for the parents.

Thanks to the railway close by, transport facilities around the school are ideal.

## **Learning as a complex phenomenon.**

**Learning by doing is hands-on and implicit.**

**Learning goes through stages of creation and imitation.**

**Acquire experience and develop a personal style.**

**No know-how without knowledge.**

**Seize the importance of history and economy alike.**

**Specialisation consolidates general knowledge.**

Academic promotion at the LEM is based on the students' file ("dossier") that contains a variety of personal written work intended to point out their skills.

An exclusive promotion based on traditional tests appeals to a reduced number of competences and does not develop more complex competences, even though this is precisely what students will need in their professional careers and in their adult lives. It focuses, for instance, on writing almost exclusively, even though oral competences are vital, mainly when it comes to applying for competitive jobs or being offered a place at university or college. It neglects skills needed to do research, albeit highly necessary for the writing of the degree dissertations and required right from the first year at university. It doesn't prepare students to speak in front of an audience, despite the fact that this is precisely what they will have to do at a later stage: job interviews, or interviews as part of the university application process, or a viva. Last but not least, it doesn't encourage any in-depth knowledge of any subject nor does it develop the patience required to work on a specific subject over a longer period of time.

A common curriculum is a limitation. Seeing that the curriculum is exactly the same for everyone, everybody is expected to work the same. So, there is no possibility to encourage personal talents that go beyond the "given scaffolding". Even worse, it can preclude students from progressing more in the subjects they already feel at ease, because it

doesn't challenge them. Indeed, exclusive promotion focuses on problems, and is busy organising support and remedial courses here and there. During the school orientation, many students will try to escape these problem subjects and they will thus make their choices by exclusion. In other words, it is not a choice taken from a positive posturing, and many might be surprised to see themselves doing badly in the subjects they used to be so good at. They might then realise that what came easily and when they got their highest grades did not necessarily mean that they were actually fascinated by this and wanted to do their living out of this.

The LEM proposes a fuller and more complex learning experience. The required performances vary a lot between year 7 and 12, the penultimate year. They consist of long-term work, research work, announced and unannounced tests, oral and written contributions to the lessons, public presentations and other forms of participation, cooperation and communication. Each year the students' work done in lessons or "enterprises" is collected and put in a folder. These pieces of work are first shown to the parents and the tutor of the students, before they are put in the folder. At the end of the lower grade, the tutor and his tutee select the most telling and revelatory pieces of work from his folder as regards the personalised project to introduce to a jury of orientation.

A growing number of universities and businesses require folders before actually calling the candidates for an interview. It is therefore important to start collecting pieces of work as soon as possible. The folder should also include long term contributions or research work, such as the extended essay. The extended essays of year 11, which are written in a group varying from two to four students, are particular to our school. These essays are demanding, but very motivating because of the fact that the students have to sit together in a group and work on a topic of general culture.

Not only does the LEM claim a variety of contributions from the students, more importantly, it demands that the students be willing to build on their personal skills, that may come in handy for the community. The LEM sees every single student as a singular resource, and encourages every student to develop their particular knowledge, to acquire a personal style, to shape their own learning history, and get others to see this as enrichment to their collective living and learning experience.

There are many ways of learning and for the most part, learning takes place spontaneously and is not pre-programmed. At the LEM, participation is expected and necessary. Personal involvement is adamant. Implicit learning and self-satisfaction are essential. It is what gives the student the pleasure to want to delve more deeply into the subject matter and come up with the necessary discipline to do so.

It is evident that specialisation does not neglect general knowledge; quite the contrary is true. It is by deepening a specific subject that one inevitably comes across historical, scientific, societal, philosophic, economic information. “The” general knowledge is not transmitted explicitly. It is acquired through personal investigative work and contributions, but also through the explanations, presentations, exchanges and discussions.



## **Showing by example rather than showing what to do.**

**The teacher sets an example : he or she is a specialist as much as a learner.**

**Spirit of production. Spirit of commitment.**

**Working with rather than for the students.**

**Working in teams.**

**The school as a lively and productive *space*.**

It needs to be said outright that nowadays– and not even exclusively so– one expects young people, to be productive, independent and unique. It's time for the schools to abandon the pure reproduction and replace it by a production/creation of variation, to foment a certain desire and/or curiosity in the students, to make them more ambitious and simultaneously to oblige them to collaborate and learn to appreciate diversity.

It is great time we stopped separating school from the economy. This schism is due to a practice too much focused on neutrality, objectivity and equality for all. There is no unfairer treatment than an egalitarian treatment. There is nothing more intolerant than ignoring diversity. At the LEM, we believe that school has to activate the potential of young people and to push them further for their own good but also for the community's interest.

Reproduction should not be confused with imitation. There is nothing wrong with students following the example set by adults, on the contrary. The adults must, however, practice the competences they wish to see developed, both in front of and with the students. This begins with learning. For the students to learn, the adults must learn too, and this counts for all other competences, too. If we want the students to cooperate, to be passionate, to express themselves well, to distinguish themselves, the adults must do so, too. The same goes for the participation and the evaluation. As a result, the teachers at the LEM commit themselves fully, with the will to broaden their knowledge and to use their entire life experience by undertaking projects with their colleagues and students alike.

The teacher assistants at the LEM are also encouraged to take part in projects, to work with the students and to be more flexible. They are there to listen to students and adults, and, having had time to observe the situation, they can give them informed advice.

## **School as a social and political agent.**

**Contributing to job market diversity.**

**Working to ensure a responsible and sustainable growth.**

**Valorizing industry, craftsmanship and commerce.**

**Promoting entrepreneurship.**

**Reclaiming valuable work experience.**

**Among the school's responsibilities should feature: the education and the employability rate of our students.**

The only way to diminish the school's failures is by diversifying and stop organizing subjects into a hierarchy, from the most to the least 'valued' subject. It is time we valued the industry, entrepreneurship, craftsmanship and the primary and secondary sectors, more generally. There is also a necessity to go beyond the commonly held oppositions between the public/private, school/economy, in order to work more closely with businesses and the labour market too. Schools need to get closer to society and seek to set up exchanges with groups from all walks of life, including the elderly.

Excellence needs to be encouraged in all domains. School guidance needs to be done in a horizontal manner and in such a way that it opens, rather than closes, perspectives into revalued vocational trainings, and jobs that will enrich the economic panorama.

The LEM organizes internships in all school sections, including the "classique", right from 5e. The internal "firm", "Orientation", focuses on orienting the students and organizes on-going events centered around meeting business people or visiting private ventures or enterprises. The LEM collaborates with various enterprises, where mutual interests are targeted. Appreciating one's own culture goes hand in hand with getting to know about other cultures. The LEM has had on-going exchanges with Chinese and American schools, and it has been welcoming visitors from all over of the world.

## **Today's professional and academic world requires young people to be confident speakers.**

**Paying close attention to form and content.**

**Increasing specialized vocabulary in their favourite domain.**

**Speaking with eloquence and precision.**

**Being more confident.**

**Being reliable.**

**Having good manners.**

Appearance matters, let us not be deluded about it. Learning the art of communication from a young age is of great advantage. Being a confident speaker by using the precise language is key to any successful interview. Yet, the art of good oratorical skills is but slowly but surely developed by daily being put in the need to take a stance. In this context, the pleasure to talk about one's interests and passions are adamant.

In many ways, the English language is vital. At the LEM, the students use English right from the first year of secondary school. Beyond the classroom setting of the English lesson, English is also used in activities and students are free to decide if they want to write their extended essays in English. This is without any doubt an advantage should they consider further studies at an English-speaking university.

**Entry to universities and professions at large are increasingly based on a portfolio and interviews. Universities require extended essays right from year one, without nonetheless dismissing the importance of conventional final exams.**

**Diversify the ways of producing, presenting and evaluating.**

**Researching, producing and defending.**

**Taking position and arguing.**

**Acquiring strategies in order to pass the finals.**

**Coordinating many activities and managing time efficiently.**

**Taking initiatives.**

For several years now, the LEM has been working in cooperation with a dozen university professors from different countries. The CEIP (conseil d'évaluation et d'innovation pédagogique, council for educational innovation) consists of highly reputed professors, who visit the LEM twice a year, to support and evaluate the school. They testify to the commitment of our students and teachers, as well as, to the noticeable feeling of solidarity.

Two thirds of the Luxembourgish students fail their first year at university. It is important to use the previous school years and take advantage of their youth to consider and develop the key aspects, locate a country, identify a university, as well as a field of study matched to their strengths and weaknesses. All too often, students tend to wait too long before making informal decision.

Plenty of European universities are overcrowded and feeling of gaining access to certain universities is more and more difficult, and chances of passing the first year small. It is important to know about these competitive conditions in order to prepare for later studies. Each of our former students insist that the autonomy and self-organisation gained in high-school, helped them to pass their first year at university. They are in agreement that the extended essays, as well as the extra-curricular activities, which are important pillars of our school, have prepared them well for their new lives as university students.

## **General Information**

### **The Lycée Ermesinde**

An annual fee is to be paid at the beginning of the school year. The money will contribute towards buying the books used in the classroom libraries. The amount of money asked for is equivalent to the money parents usually have to spend on buying the books that feature on the national curriculum. This means that parents will not need to order nor buy any books for their children.

Two open days are organized each year. The dates can be found on our website, [www.lem.lu](http://www.lem.lu).

The Lycée Ermesinde takes on students from all of the regions in the country, as it is not bound to the convention of the ‘lycée de proximité’. The LEM respects the ‘avis d’orientation pour le passage de l’enseignement fondamental à l’enseignement secondaire’, the expert opinion emitted by the teachers and primary school headmaster on the pupil’s school guidance to follow.

Each year, the LEM sets up six classes of year 7: three classes equivalent to grammar school classes with 25 pupils each (7CLA), three classes equivalent to the vocational classes with 20 pupils each (7TEC) and one class with 15 pupils (7PRE) which is equivalent to a vocational class focusing extensively on manual work and work placements.

The LEM offers the cycle inférieur (the lower classes, years 7, 8, 9, which we call 7e, 6e and 5e) in both ‘technique’ and ‘préparatoire’ and offers grammar school students the opportunity of doing all of their schooling there (year 7-13, i.e. 7e-1e).

Admission requests can be sent in throughout the year, up until 10th June, enclosing all the necessary documents to the students’ secretary :

*Lycée Ermesinde 45, rue de la Gare L-7590 Beringen (Mersch)*

Admission requests need to contain the following documents:

- *the admission form (which can be downloaded from [www.lem.lu](http://www.lem.lu))*
- *the pupil's personal statement*
- *a recent photo of the pupil*
- *the most recent school records*

A notice of delivery will be sent out to every request that is received, provided all the documents have been handed in. Incomplete requests will not be taken into account.

Interviews with members of the school's administration are organised throughout the school year. Pupils are selected according to various criteria, always with a concern for diversity (regions, boy/girl, school results, etc.).

Parents are notified whether their child has been accepted or not after 23rd June and a few days before the secondary schools national admissions closing date. Parents are asked not to send in the 'avis d'orientation' before the admission to our school has been confirmed. Only once the admission has been confirmed and we have received the 'avis d'orientation' before 1st July, is the pupil definitely enrolled in our school for the following academic year.

The personal statement will have to be written by the pupil themselves. The parents can of course address a note to the headmaster, should they wish to do so.

The personal statement should provide information on the pupil's ideas, projects and preferences as regards the 'engagements' (see inside for further explanations) to be taken

- for the 'personal written work'
- for the 'entreprises'
- for the school subjects

The pupil will have to explain his or her choice by making direct reference to his or her experience, interests and know-how.

## **Boarding at the Sigefroid**

The annual fee for any pupil in boarding is 3100 euros. This fee includes the accommodation costs as well as the costs for breakfast and dinner.

Pupils interested in the boarding facility Sigefroid are invited to hand in their completed admission request and a personal statement to the student secretary of the LEM before 10th December for an admission in January and before 10th June for an admission in September.

N.B. Pupils in year 7 will only get access to the boarding as of January.

In their personal statement, the pupil will explain what reasons encourage him or her to want to stay in boarding, and more particularly, which engagements he or she plans to 'reinforce'.

Admission interviews take place before 20th June for boarding starting in September, and before 20th December for boarding starting in January.

Only once the pupil has signed the convention and the parents have countersigned to state that they are responsible for payments due, is the enrolment completed.





[www.lem.lu](http://www.lem.lu)