

ISH Primary PTA

Welcome Committee

Quick Tips

Info 2

This is a collection of quick tips from parents to help you settle in The Hague. It lists the organisations, websites and other publications from which you may find more detailed information and help. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Cheng.edit@gmail.com

Parent to Parent
Information

The following is only the essential practical information from our parents – we try not to repeat information which can be found elsewhere. Please **see 6** for a list of publications and websites from which you will find comprehensive and extensive information on various topics.

1. GETTING CONNECTED

Mobile phones

All sorts of identification is needed for a mobile phone contract. For a quick solution, and if your phone is compatible with the system here, you can simply remove your old sim card and replace it with a pre-paid/pay-as-you-go sim card.

If your phone is sim-locked, many people go to have it sim-unlocked, usually around the Holland Spoor train station area. It costs about EUR5.00 and takes only a few seconds.

Alternatively, there are often package deals where you can get a phone cum pre-paid card at a good price.

Different networks provide different discounts for calling and to txt/sms different countries, so do ask for details.

Internet, telephone, TV, cable, satellite

Apply for these services as soon as you can. It can take 5 weeks to 6 months for the application process to be completed.

There are as many as ten telephony companies operating here. They offer special “bundles” of the above facilities and have different discount rates for phoning different countries.

For discounts on international phone calls, you can use special telephone numbers, Skype, discount telephone cards. These are all free to subscribe to.

2. PAYING FOR GOODS AND SERVICES

Bank cheques are not used and credit cards are used only in relatively few places.

Cash, debit card (*pinpas*), electronic cash (*chipknip*), and bank giro is the norm.

When paying for groceries, be aware that some shops will quote an amount which has been rounded up or down.

3. IDENTIFICATION

Unless you already have your residents’ card, medical insurance card or any other identification, it is advisable to keep some sort of identification with you at all times.

Whether it is in the event of an emergency or simply to rent a push-chair on the beach, some form of identification is required.

4. TRANSPORT

Taxi

It is not common practise to hail a taxi whilst it is on the road. Either go to a taxi stand (at train stations, front of hotels, tourist office), or ring for one.

Call-out taxis:

- HCM 070 390 7722
- RegioTaxi Haaglanden 0900 9666 (this is equipped for less mobile people and does not charge as much as the normal taxis)
- Hofstad Taxi 070 346 2626

Alternatively, you could use the Tuk-Tuks (EUR3.50 per zone) which are operational in Spring and Summer. www.tuktukcompany.nl

Traffic

Generally, all traffic (including cyclists) coming from the right have right of way. Cyclists are king of the roads and it is a very serious matter to knock down a cyclist. Police are also very strict with car speeding. The automobile associations here are ANWB or Route Mobile.

From school, the nearest ANWB office/shop is at the Savornin Lohmanplein Shopping Complex, on Laan van Meerdervort (20minutes walk from school, a few minutes via Tram 3).

Trains

Children up to age 11 pay only EUR2.00 to travel anywhere in The Netherlands, anytime. www.ns.nl, click on the top right corner for English.

Train, bus, tram, car or bicycle?

The Hague has a good, integrated system where you can easily switch from one mode to another. The door-to-door travel planner www.9292ov.com gives you all the various options for travel by public transport.

www.routeplanner.9292.nl gives you options for **all** methods of travelling to your destination: it compares using public transport, using your car or a combination of both. It is quite a brilliant tool.

Route maps

To find your way around, try the following websites:

www.map.googlemap.nl, www.Routenet.nl (English, French, German)

For googlemap, you can search under business name or subject area; you don't need an address. For example, if you type "ISH School The Hague", googlemap will easily locate it.

5. SHOPPING

Be prepared to have to go to very many shops, and many places, to do your shopping. It is best to regard the various shopping areas as one large shopping centre - mega shopping complexes where you find food, electrical goods and clothes etc. under one roof do not exist. However, every local shopping area and shopping centre has its peculiarities and specialities, which makes it interesting to visit and discover.

Sundays, *avondwinkel* (night shops), other opening times

Open on Sundays:

- Large supermarkets (Albert Heijn, Jumbo, Plus, Hoogvliet, Super de Boer, Spar etc.)
- Shops in Kijkduin and Scheveningern
- Den Haag *centrum*. Here, Thursdays are late night shopping days.
- Other shopping centres, such as In de Bogaard (Rijswijk) are only open on certain Sundays of the month.

Different shops open at different times on Monday mornings.

Local shops may have their own opening times and avondwinkel (night shops) open the whole night till early morning. Check in your own area.

Discount schemes

When paying at the till, you may be asked if you have a storecard (e.g. Bonuscard, Bijcard) or collecting air miles or *spaarzegels* (saving stickers) etc. These are various discount schemes.

Markets

Different neighbourhoods have different open-market days. Check in your own area or search for "markets" in www2.holland.com.

De Haagse Markt is one of the largest open-markets in Europe. www.dehaagsemarkt.nl

Food shopping

This can be tiresome or fun, depending how you look at it; there are so many different places to go just to get the basic ingredients, but you do get to meet lots of people this way. The small shops are usually friendly, in the Dutch way, and give treats to the children.

A common pattern is to get the basic supplies from the supermarkets or your local shops and then to get fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, cheeses etc from other small shops or the market.

If you can't find a particular ingredient or brand, do ask around. The Hague is such a mix of nationalities that you find products in unexpected places (e.g. Baxters soup from a deli in Archipel; Milo, popadums, vanilla pods and saffron from the Chinese supermarket; hair products for African hair types and PG Tips tea from a Pakistani shop; organic cosmetics from an Indian shop; American blueberries from the British shop). Then, there are the Italian, Portuguese, Balkan, Russian, Polish etc shops.

Some parents will be happy to take you for a quick "tour" to various places. Do contact us and we will put you in contact with the appropriate people.

Internet grocery shopping

The shops Albert Heijn, Etos, Hema and V&D do home deliveries for reasonable prices. You can pay by pinpas (debit card) or have them send an invoice. The websites are in Dutch.

Schlecker, a *drogist*, has webpages in 11 languages. It has everything from baby items to vacuum cleaners, from developing photos to food and drink. You can order on line or phone, and then pick your purchase up at your local store. Or you can have it delivered to your house and pay via bankgiro.

4. MEDICAL ISSUES

Doctors, hospitals

It is advisable to register with a doctor, (*huisarts*), as soon as possible. For medical emergency, the *huisart* will make sure you get efficient attention. Take note of the opening times of the clinic – some clinics only open twice a week which means you have to go elsewhere on the days they are shut.

If you are not registered and need urgent medical attention, go directly to the SEH (*Spoedeisende hulp* or Accident and Emergency) entrance of the hospital.

You will need details of your medical insurance. However, if you do not yet have that, do bring as many types of identification as you can. If possible, it helps to telephone to let them know you are coming.

If language is a problem, ask the staff to telephone the Tolkentelefon

- The nearest hospital (ziekenhuis) to the school is Haga Ziekenhuis on Sportlaan. Tel: 070 210 000

Similarly, for dental emergencies, if you are not registered with a dentist (*tandarts*), call the *Algemene Spoedgevallendienst* (General Emergency Service) 070 311 0305.

Pharmacy (*apotheek*)

Some pharmacies open Monday –Friday, others also open on Saturdays. If your pharmacy is closed, a notice at the entrance will tell you where the nearest pharmacy is.

Some pharmacies will deliver to your house or workplace; some offer a free service, some

charge for it. The apotheek Havinga has its website in English, French and Spanish. The apotheek International Health Centre can help with French, German and Arabic speakers.

The *Dienstapotheek* (24- hour pharmacies) are only for medicines with prescriptions from doctors. To find the one nearest to you, look in your local paper or tel: 070 345 1000.

For emergencies, there are 24-hour pharmacies at two hospitals: Bronovo Ziekenhuis and Leyenburg Ziekenhuis.

5. WINTER

Thermal vests and trousers are found in a variety of shops, some better quality than others. It is also advisable to have waterproofs (light raincoat or boots) as it rains a lot in autumn, winter and spring...and summer.

For those not familiar with winter driving, do make sure you have necessary equipment for winter driving (ice scraper, de-icer etc). Watch out for “black ice”. Switch on the fog-lights at times of poor visibility.

Cyclists: the police will happily give you a fine if your bicycle is not properly equipped for winter.

In some housing areas, you can find a large container of “salt”. This is used for de-icing the roads. Some parents use it for clearing their driveway.

Interesting to know: in **Summer (July)**, if you see some school bags, and perhaps some flags, hanging outside the windows of houses, this means that someone has graduated from high-school. It is quite acceptable for you to congratulate this complete stranger (and his parents!).

6. AT HOME

Local newspaper

Your free local newspaper has details of your community “night doctor”, *doktersnachtdienst*, local police and opening times of local shops and restaurants.

It will give you details of the Residents' Association or *bewonersorganisatie*, who can help with all sorts of housing enquiries.

It will also give you details of any street parties being planned, this seemingly a favourite pastime of the locals!

Rubbish and recycling points

There are specific ways of disposing of waste (household, paper, glass, plastics, garden etc). Do take note or you will be fined.

From school, the nearest textile recycling bins are located on the "island" near the Pisuussestraat tram stop (opposite the BP petrol station).

Siren

If you are in the centre (*centrum*) of Den Haag, please note that on the first Monday of each month, at 12 noon, the emergency siren is tested. You are not required to do anything.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

1) Go to the **Xpat Desk** at the *Stadhuis* (Town Hall) in the centre of The Hague. They are located at the back of the atrium, on the left. They are from the Den Haag municipal office and are very helpful.

If you are not comfortable with using English, they can help put you in touch with people who speak your language, and may therefore be able to deal with your enquires more effectively.

Tram 3 and Bus 24 from school take you directly to the *Stadhuis*. Get off at Spui or Centrum.

The car park is underground.

Xpat Desk, *Stadhuis* (Town Hall)
Spui 70, The Hague
Monday-Friday: 0900 – 1700 hrs
Tel: 070 353 5043
Email: xpatdesk@denhaag.com or
contactcentrum@dsb.denhaag.nl

2) Go to the **Den Haag municipal website** for the International Community, www.denhaag.com (in English, French, German, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese). Here you will find extensive and up-to-date information about The Hague.

For example, click on “living in The Hague”. Under the sub-heading Relocating and Settling, there is information on:

- *Burgerservicenummer* (BSN) (personal number)
- driving licence
- importing your vehicle
- municipal taxes
- registration procedures (municipal and immigration office)
- settling procedures
- the sub-municipal offices
- rubbish collection and utilities (gas, water, electricity, internet and telephone).

Under “Getting Around”, there is information on trains, buses, trams, car parking, paying fines, route maps, child safety and car seats, emergency road service.

Under “Health”, it explains the healthcare system, health insurance, treatment after-office hours, child and baby care, pharmacy system.

3) **ACCESS** is a voluntary organisation. It has a helpline and can also provide personal help and counselling. Tel: 070 346 2525
Information Helpline: info@access-nl.org

At their website, www.access-nl.org, click on “publications”. Here, you will find information on various subjects including:

- telephone, internet and television
- banking
- childcare
- health care
- housing and accommodation
- marriage, registered partnership, cohabitation and ending a relationship
- obtaining a driving licence
- the Post Office
- public transport
- succession and wills

4) At the **VVV (tourist information office)** you can find lots of good books about The Hague and The Netherlands. Here you can ask about shops, restaurants, markets, getting about, events, sight-seeing, sport and leisure activities etc.

www2.holland.com, www.holland.com

5) Useful publications (free):

- The Hague Finder
- The Hague Information Guide
- City in One – The Expat Guide of The Hague
- Expat Survival Guide

Other useful websites: www.thehagueonline.com, www.angloinfo.com, www.expatica.com, www.justlanded.com, www.outpostthehague.com

NO INTERNET CONNECTION!

If you **do not** currently have **internet access**, Xpat desk (see above for details) can print out the relevant information for you or you can use

their computer, or the one at the VVV, for a short while.

Alternatively, you can use any of the library (*bibliotheek*) facilities dotted around The Hague. The Central Library is next to the *Stadhuis* (Town Hall). The charge is one of the cheapest in town, at EUR 2.00 for an hour or 70cents for 15mins. Or you could get a 30 day pass. You have WIFI access over five floors, free.

The closest library to the school, with internet access is the Nieuw Waldeck. It also has free WIFI. The Atlantic Hotel at Kijkduin has WIFI hotspot at EUR6.00 for an hour. Kijkduinpark charges EUR9.00 per day or EUR30.00 per month.

HELP NUMBERS (non-urgent matters)

Police: 0900 8844
(or call 070 424 1760 to find out he/she is for your local area).

Fire brigade: 070 424 4600

ROAD EMERGENCY SERVICE:

ANWB: 0800 0880
Route Mobiel: 0800 0504

HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCIES

Electricity and Gas (Eneco): 0800 0072

If you do not know who your supplier is, call the National Emergency Service number for **electricity and gas: 0800 9009**

Plumbing emergencies: ?

FOR URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION, when your doctor's clinic is closed, call

070 346 9669

Or go to your nearest hospital (*ziekenhuis*)

EMERGENCY: 112

- **Fire**
- **Ambulance**
- **Police**
- tell them what you need: fire, ambulance or police
- give them your address