

AGRUPAMENTO DE ESCOLAS D. AFONSO HENRIQUES

Alcanede · Santarém

WELCOME MANUAL

Foreign Students and Families

A complete guide to integration into the school community

School year 2026/2027



Generated by AI

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1. Welcome Message

Dear student and dear parents/guardians,

It is with great pleasure that the educational community of the D. Afonso Henriques School Group (AEDAH) welcomes you. We know that arriving in a new country, a new language and a new school can raise questions, expectations and, at times, some anxiety — both for students and for families. This manual was created precisely to help you understand, clearly and in an organised way, how our School Group works, what steps to follow in the first days, and who to turn to in each situation.

We believe that good school integration begins with accessible information and a relationship of trust between the school and the family. For this reason, this document brings together not only practical information — enrolment, schedules, support and contacts — but also an explanation of how the Portuguese education system works, which may be quite different from what you were familiar with in your country of origin.

How to use this manual

The manual is organised by topic, from the most general (the School Group and the education system) to the most specific (contacts and glossary of terms). It can be read from beginning to end or consulted only in the sections most relevant at any given time. Fields highlighted in yellow, marked [TO BE COMPLETED], correspond to information that the head school must fill in with specific, up-to-date details before the document is distributed to families.

We are available to answer any questions, at any time during the school year, and to support whatever is needed so that this new stage is experienced with confidence and success.



2. About the School Group

The D. Afonso Henriques School Group (AEDAH) is located in Alcanede, in the municipality of Santarém, and brings together several schools and kindergartens, from Pre-School Education through to Secondary Education, operating as a single pedagogical and administrative management unit.

2.1 Schools that make up the Group

The Group brings together different schools, each with its own identity, but sharing the same educational project, the same internal regulations and the same governing bodies.

Schools and Establishments		
13 Kindergartens (Pre-School)	12 Primary Schools (1st Cycle)	2 Basic Schools with 2nd and 3rd Cycles
Jl de Abrã	EB1 de Abrã	EB de Alcanede (Head School)
Jl de Achete	EB1 de Advagar	EB D. Manuel I – Pernes
Jl de Amiais de Baixo	EB1 de Amiais de Baixo	
Jl de Amiais de Cima	EB1 de Amiais de Cima	
Jl de Arneiro das Milhariças	EB1 de Arneiro das Milhariças	
Jl de Azóia de Cima	EB1 de Azóia de Cima	
Jl de Casével	EB1 de Casével	
Centro Escolar de Alcanede	Centro Escolar de Alcanede	
Jl de Gançaria	EB1 de Gançaria	
Jl de Pernes	EB1 de Pernes	
Jl de Sobral	EB1 de Tojosa	
Jl de Tremês	EB1 de Tremês	
Jl de Verdelho		

2.2 Head School

The head school hosts the Group's main administrative services and is usually the first point of contact for enrolment procedures and general matters.



Figure 2 – AEDAH Head School

CONTACTS

Escola Básica de Alcanede

Address: Rua da Feira de Alcanede, Apartado 22, 2025-999 Alcanede

Phone: 243 400 350 **Fax:** 243 400 373

Email: geralalcanede@ae-afonsohenriques.pt

School Group Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/agrupamentoescolasafonsohenriques/>

School Group Website: www.ae-afonsohenriques.pt

Service	Morning	Afternoon
Front Office / Secretariat		9:30 – 16:30
Stationery Shop	8:00 – 12:30	14:00 – 16:00
Bar		8:30 – 16:30
Canteen		12:00 – 14:00

2.3 Governing Bodies

The operation of the School Group is organised into different bodies, each with specific responsibilities:

- **Director** — represents the School Group and is ultimately responsible for its administrative, pedagogical and financial management.
- **Deputy Director and Assistant Directors** — support the Director in specific areas, such as pedagogical organisation, timetables and coordination between schools.
- **General Council** — the participatory body of the educational community (teachers, parents/guardians, local authority and community), responsible for the Group's overall guiding principles.
- **Pedagogical Council** — the body for pedagogical coordination and supervision, made up of representatives from the different curricular departments.
- **Class/Form Tutors (Diretores de Turma)** — teachers responsible for the direct support of each class and for liaison with families.

2.4 Educational Project and Values

The School Group bases its action on an Educational Project that defines the vision, values and priorities for intervention for the coming years, with particular attention to inclusion, school success and the participation of the whole educational community — principles especially relevant to welcoming students and families of other nationalities.

Main pillars of the Educational Project:

- 1. Educational Service, Improving Learning and Results
- 2. Regulation of School Climate and Well-Being
- 3. Management, Organisation and Training
- 4. School-Family-Community Relations

2.5 Resources and Facilities

The Group's schools have various spaces and resources at the service of learning and student well-being, which are worth knowing about from the very first days.

- School libraries, part of the School Library Network, with reading spaces and digital resources
- Canteens and school snack bars
- Laboratories and computer rooms
- Sports hall and facilities for Physical Education and School Sport
- Student support office and/or school health office, depending on the school



3. The Portuguese Education System — Overview

The education system in Portugal may be organised differently from that of the family's country of origin. This section summarises its structure to help you understand your child's school path.

Level of Education	Typical Ages	School Years	Notes
Pre-School Education	3 to 5 years	—	Not compulsory, but strongly recommended; takes place in kindergartens
1st Cycle of Basic Education	6 to 9 years	Grades 1–4	A single class teacher for most subjects
2nd Cycle of Basic Education	10 to 11 years	Grades 5–6	Start of the subject-based system with several teachers
3rd Cycle of Basic Education	12 to 14 years	Grades 7–9	Completion of the minimum compulsory schooling cycle
Secondary Education	15 to 17/18 years	Grades 10–12	Science/humanities or vocational pathways

3.1 Compulsory Schooling

In Portugal, schooling is compulsory for all children and young people between the ages of 6 and 18 (or until completion of Secondary Education, if earlier), regardless of nationality or documentation status. This means that all foreign children resident in Portugal within this age range have the right — and the duty — to attend school.

3.2 Calendar Year vs. School Year

Placement of a student in a given school year normally depends on age and prior school history, and may be adjusted following a diagnostic assessment, especially when school documents from the country of origin are not directly equivalent to the Portuguese system.



4. Enrolment and Required Documents

Enrolment is the first formal step for a student's integration into the School Group. This section details the required documents and the procedure to follow.

4.1 Required Documents

- Student identification document (passport, citizen card or residence permit)
- Identification document of the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Proof of address in Portugal
- Tax Identification Number (NIF) of the student and the parent/guardian
- Health User Number (if available; if not, the school can advise on how to obtain one)
- Up-to-date vaccination record (National Vaccination Plan)
- School documents from the country of origin — certificates, transcripts or statements of the last year attended, translated into Portuguese or English whenever possible
- Two passport-sized photographs

4.2 Step-by-Step Enrolment

- 1. Contact the School Group's Administrative Services, in person or by phone/email, to schedule enrolment.
- 2. Gather the documents listed in section 4.1 (originals and, if possible, photocopies).
- 3. Fill in the enrolment form and the student identification form.
- 4. Submit the documentation to the Administrative Services, who will confirm receipt and inform you of the next steps.
- 5. If the student does not have a good command of Portuguese, a referral is made for a language-level assessment (PLNM) and, if applicable, a diagnostic assessment of knowledge.
- 6. The School Group confirms the school year and the assigned class, and communicates the start date of classes.
- 7. An initial meeting is scheduled with the class tutor to introduce how the school works and answer questions.

4.3 Equivalence and Grade Placement

If the student does not have complete school documentation, or it is not directly equivalent to the Portuguese system, the School Group may carry out a diagnostic assessment to determine the most appropriate school year, in coordination with the relevant Ministry of Education services.



5. Portuguese as a Non-Native Language (PLNM)

Students whose native language is not Portuguese are entitled to specific support in learning the Portuguese Language, through the Portuguese as a Non-Native Language (PLNM) scheme. This support is essential not only for school success, but also for the student's social integration.

5.1 How the Support Works

- Initial diagnostic assessment of the student's level of proficiency in Portuguese, generally within the first weeks after enrolment.
- Placement at one of the proficiency levels, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- Support classes, in a format defined by the school: replacement of the Portuguese subject, additional support outside regular hours, or specific tutoring.
- Regular monitoring of the student's progress, with the level of support adjusted throughout the year.

5.2 Proficiency Levels (CEFR)

Level	Designation	Description
A1	Beginner	Understands and uses very simple, familiar, everyday expressions
A2	Elementary	Communicates in simple, routine tasks on everyday matters
B1	Intermediate	Understands the main points in everyday school situations
B2 / C1	Advanced	Communicates fluently and accurately in academic and social contexts

5.3 Other Integration Support

The School Group seeks to ensure close support for migrant students and their families, including support in school-family communication and, whenever necessary, coordination with mediation and translation services.

- Possible support from an intercultural mediator, when available
- Support in translating essential communications for families
- Coordination with local associations supporting migrants and immigration



6. Organisation of the School Year

6.1 School Calendar

The school year is divided into two semesters, with breaks at Christmas, Carnival and Easter, following the school calendar set annually by the Ministry of Education.

1st Semester	2nd Semester
Start of classes – 14 September 2026	Start of classes – 11 February 2027
Christmas break – 23 December to 1 January	Easter break – 24 March to 4 April 2027
End of 1st Semester – 1 February 2027	End of classes: Grade 9 – 4 June 2027 Grades 5–8 – 11 June 2027 Pre-School and 1st Cycle – 30 June 2027

6.2 What to Expect on the First Day

On the first day of classes, the student is normally welcomed by the class tutor, class teacher (or the kindergarten educator, in the case of Pre-School), who introduces the class, the school's spaces and the basic rules of operation. It is an important day to ask questions and make initial contacts.



7. Meals and School Social Support (SASE)

The School Group provides a canteen service and School Social Support (SASE), which grants support based on the family's socio-economic tier, determined on the basis of the Family Allowance for Children and Young People.

7.1 Tiers and Support

Students are placed in a tier (A, B or no tier), which determines the level of co-payment for meals, textbooks and school supplies.

- **Tier A** — maximum support (free meals and textbooks, among other support)
- **Tier B** — partial support (co-payment for meals and textbooks)
- **No tier** — no SASE support, full payment for services

7.2 How to Access Support

- Confirm the family allowance tier with Social Security (or the equivalent body in the country of origin, if applicable).
- Submit proof of tier to the Administrative Services.
- Complete the SASE application, normally at the time of enrolment or at the start of the school year.

7.3 Canteen

Hours: 12:00 to 14:00.

Meal bookings are made on the SIGA platform (<https://siga.edubox.pt/auth>).



8. School Transport

Students who live beyond the legally defined distance from the school they attend may be entitled to free or subsidised school transport, generally provided by the Santarém City Council in coordination with the School Group.

- Transport requests are normally made with the City Council, and the school can assist in forwarding the process.
- Set routes and schedules exist for each locality within the Group's area.
- Cases of reduced mobility or specific transport needs should be reported as early as possible.



9. School Supplies and Textbooks

At the start of the school year, a list of textbooks and school supplies needed for each school year is provided, normally made available by the class tutor, class teacher or kindergarten educator, and also published on the School Group's website.

- Textbooks may be free or co-paid, depending on the SASE tier and the level of education.
- Free textbook distribution is normally carried out through a national digital platform, with prior registration.
- Everyday supplies (notebooks, writing materials, etc.) are generally the family's responsibility.



10. Student Assessment

Assessment in Portugal is continuous and, in our School Group, takes place over two semesters, combining formative assessment (regular monitoring of progress) and summative assessment (recorded on the report at the end of each period).

Level of Education	Type of Assessment	Scale
Pre-School Education	Descriptive	No numeric scale — record of the child's development
1st Cycle	Descriptive and/or quantitative	Depending on the school year
2nd and 3rd Cycles	Quantitative	Scale of 1 to 5
Secondary Education	Quantitative	Scale of 0 to 20

Families have access to assessment information through end-of-period meetings with the class tutor and through the school management platform, where they can check absences, grades and communications (INOVAR Platform).



11. National Exams and Final Tests

In certain school years, students take final tests or national exams, whose weight in the final assessment varies depending on the level of education. This information is especially important for families who are not familiar with the Portuguese system.

- Grade 9 — Final Tests in Portuguese and Mathematics, at the end of the 3rd Cycle.
- Secondary Education (Grades 10–12) — National Exams in subjects relevant to further studies, especially in Grades 11 and 12.
- Secondary-level national exams count toward the final subject grade and, where applicable, toward access to Higher Education.

Foreign students who need language support may, under certain conditions, benefit from adaptations to tests, namely extra time or a bilingual dictionary. This possibility should be confirmed with the School Group's management well in advance.



12. Educational Support

12.1 Multidisciplinary Team for Inclusive Education Support

Whenever a student has specific needs — learning, health, sensory, motor or other — the School Group has a Multidisciplinary Team for Inclusive Education Support, which assesses each situation and defines, together with the family, the most appropriate support measures.

- **Referral can be made by the class tutor, the parent/guardian, or through previous medical/technical reports.**
- The team assesses the situation and proposes learning support measures, tailored to the student's profile.
- Whenever applicable, an individual work plan is drawn up in coordination with the family.

12.2 Psychology and Guidance Service (SPO)

The School Group has a Psychology and Guidance Service, which supports students with emotional well-being, school and vocational guidance, and support during adjustment processes — particularly relevant for students going through a change of country and school.

- One-off or ongoing psychological support, upon referral.
- School and vocational guidance, especially at cycle transition points.
- Support for the social and emotional adjustment process of newly arrived students.



13. School Health and School Insurance

13.1 School Insurance

All students enrolled in public schools are automatically covered by School Insurance, which covers accidents occurring during school activities, including the journey between home and school, at no additional cost to the family.

13.2 School Health

The School Group may coordinate with the local Health Centre on school health initiatives, including screenings and awareness sessions. Students with specific health needs (allergies, chronic conditions, regular medication) should report the situation to the class tutor and the administrative services, to ensure appropriate follow-up.

- Always report food or medication allergies at the time of enrolment.
- Submit relevant medical reports, whenever applicable.
- Inform the school of any need to administer medication during school hours.



14. Enrichment and Extracurricular Activities

The School Group promotes various activities that contribute to students' social integration and personal development, including school sport, themed clubs and community outreach projects — particularly valuable spaces for new students to build friendships.

- School Sport — various activities, with regular training and participation in competitions.
- Themed clubs (science, arts, environment, European affairs, among others, depending on each year's offering).
- Volunteering projects and connections with the local community.
- School libraries, with reading-promotion activities.



15. Rights and Duties

15.1 Students' Rights

- To be treated with respect and fairness, regardless of nationality, language or origin.
- To benefit from teaching and support appropriate to their development and needs.
- To have their safety safeguarded at school and during school activities.
- To be heard on matters that concern them, in a manner appropriate to their age.

15.2 Students' Duties

- To be diligent, punctual and committed to fulfilling their school duties.
- To treat all members of the educational community with respect and courtesy.
- To contribute to a positive learning environment, respecting the rules of conduct.
- To care for the preservation, maintenance and cleanliness of school facilities and materials.

15.3 Rights and Duties of Parents/Guardians

- The right to be informed about their child's integration and school progress.
- The right to participate in school life, through meetings and participatory bodies.
- The duty to attend meetings and contacts requested by the school.
- The duty to ensure their child's attendance, punctuality and necessary school supplies.

These rights and duties are set out in detail in Decree-Law No. 51/2012 (Student Statute and School Ethics) and in the School Group's Internal Regulations, the reference document for the functioning of school life.



16. Rules of Conduct

School community life is based on the principles of mutual respect, responsibility and compliance with the rules set out in the School Group's Internal Regulations.

- Punctuality and attendance are essential for school success.
- Mobile phone use in the classroom is subject to the rules set by the school.
- Appropriate clothing may be required for some activities (e.g. Physical Education).
- Cases of misconduct are handled in accordance with the Internal Regulations, with the involvement of the parent/guardian.

The complete Internal Regulations are available for consultation on the School Group's website and at the Administrative Services, and all families are encouraged to read them.



17. School-Family Communication

Communication between the school and the family is essential for the success of the student's school journey, especially during a period of adjustment to a new school and cultural context.

- Meetings with the class tutor / class teacher / kindergarten educator at the start of the year and at the end of each semester.
- Student's logbook / digital platform for day-to-day communications.
- Availability for appointments at a pre-arranged time.
- Whenever necessary, the school can arrange translation support for essential communications.



18. Parents and Guardians Association

The Parents and Guardians Association (APEE) is a participatory structure that represents families within the School Group, collaborating in organising initiatives and defending the interests of students and families.

- Voluntary participation, open to all parents/guardians.
- Collaboration in school activities and events.
- Representation of families on the School Group's General Council.

Joining the Parents Association is a good way for new families to get involved in school life and to meet other parents/guardians, which can help social integration.



19. Checklist — First Steps

This checklist summarises, in practical terms, the main steps to complete in the first weeks of integration into the School Group.

Before classes start

- ☐ Gather the documents required for enrolment (see section 4.1)
- ☐ Complete enrolment with the Administrative Services
- ☐ Confirm the SASE tier, if applicable
- ☐ Obtain the list of textbooks and school supplies
- ☐ Check whether school transport is needed

In the first week

- ☐ Attend the initial meeting with the class tutor
- ☐ Submit relevant medical information (allergies, medication, health insurance)
- ☐ Confirm access to the digital school management platform
- ☐ Clarify the assigned PLNM level, if applicable

In the first month

- ☐ Attend the first parents/guardians meeting
- ☐ Enrol the student in extracurricular activities of interest
- ☐ Confirm understanding of the Internal Regulations and rules of conduct



20. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q — My child doesn't speak Portuguese. Can they still enrol?

A — Yes. All children of school age have the right to enrol, regardless of their command of the Portuguese language. The student will be referred for PLNM assessment and support.

Q — How do I know which school year my child will be placed in?

A — Placement takes into account age and prior school history. When documents are not directly equivalent, a diagnostic assessment is carried out to confirm the most appropriate year.

Q — Are there costs for enrolling in or attending public school?

A — Public education in Portugal is free. There may be occasional costs associated with meals, textbooks or supplies, which vary according to the student's SASE tier.

Q — What happens if my child doesn't yet have a Health User Number or NIF?

A — The school can guide the family on how to obtain these numbers, but enrolment is not normally prevented by their temporary absence; it is advisable to sort out these documents as soon as possible.

Q — How can I keep track of my child's grades and attendance?

A — Through the digital school management platform used by the School Group, with personal credentials provided at the time of enrolment.

Q — Who should I contact if I have questions about my child's integration?

A — In the first instance, the class tutor. For administrative matters, the Administrative Services; for questions about the Portuguese language, the PLNM coordination team (see contacts in the next section).

Q — Can my child continue to have lessons in their native or home language?

A — The national curriculum is taught in Portuguese, but the School Group values multilingualism and, whenever possible, can support initiatives to maintain the language and culture of origin, namely through the school library or local partnerships.

Q — If we move house within the municipality, does the student need to re-enrol?

A — A new enrolment is not necessary, but you should notify the Administrative Services of the change of address, especially if it affects the school transport route.

Q — How can I get support if I don't speak Portuguese well enough to fill in school forms?

A — You can request support from the Administrative Services or the PLNM coordination team, who will try to facilitate communication, including, whenever possible, translation or intercultural mediation support.

Q — Can my child miss classes for religious or cultural reasons?

A — Absences must always be justified with the class tutor, in accordance with the Internal Regulations. Specific situations should be discussed with the school in advance.



21. Useful Resources and Links

In addition to the School Group's own services, there are national and local entities and resources that may be useful to foreign families in the process of integration:

- Directorate-General for Education (DGE) — information about the Portuguese education system
- High Commission for Migration (ACM) — support and information for migrants, including a helpline for immigrants
- Nearest National Centre for the Support of Migrant Integration (CNAIM)
- Santarém City Council — local social and educational support services
- Social Security — information on family allowance and social support



22. Useful Contacts

Service / Contact	Function	Contact
School Group Management	Management	243 400 350 geralalcanede@ae-afonsohenriques.pt
Administrative Services	Enrolment and documentation	
SASE / School Social Support	Socio-economic support	
PLNM Coordination	Portuguese Language Support	
Multidisciplinary Team / Inclusive Education	Special educational support	
Santarém City Council	School transport	
School Group website	General information	https://ae-afonsohenriques.pt/



23. Glossary of Portuguese Education System Terms

Term	Meaning
Agrupamento de Escolas	School Group — a set of schools of different levels of education under a single management structure.
Encarregado de Educação	Parent/Guardian — the person legally responsible for the student before the school (usually a parent).
Diretor de Turma	Class Tutor — the teacher responsible for coordinating and supporting a class.
PLNM	Portuguese as a Non-Native Language — support for learning Portuguese for students whose native language is different.
SASE	School Social Support Services — financial support for students (meals, textbooks, supplies).
Ano de Escolaridade	School Year — the year of the student's school path (e.g. Grade 5, Grade 9, Grade 12).
Ciclo de Ensino	Cycle of Education — grouping of school years (1st, 2nd, 3rd Cycles of Basic Education, and Secondary Education).
Regulamento Interno	Internal Regulations — the document defining the operating and conduct rules of the School Group.
Inovar Alunos	Digital school management platform used to check information about the student.
Equipa Multidisciplinar	Multidisciplinary Team — responsible for assessing and supporting students with specific educational needs.
Seguro Escolar	School Insurance — automatic accident cover for all students in public education.
Abono de Família	Family Allowance — the social benefit that determines the student's SASE support tier.
Conselho Geral	General Council — the body through which the educational community participates in the School Group's strategic decisions.
QECR	CEFR — the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, used to define proficiency levels (A1 to C1).