



Your Belgian school-transition timeline

Entry for the 2026-2027 school year (now) and the 2027-2028 inscription cycle · French-speaking Belgium (FWB): Brussels & Walloon Brabant

By a family who did it. We moved our own children into the French-speaking Belgian system, and this is the map we wish we had had.

Belgium's French-speaking school system (Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, FWB) runs on a fixed annual calendar and a single-form process that newcomers are rarely told about. Miss a window and you fall back to whatever places are left. This timeline lays out the dates and steps for the two situations most international families are in: **arriving now for the 2026-2027 year**, and **planning ahead for the 2027-2028 main inscription cycle**.

Dates are set each year by the FWB government and confirmed the preceding autumn. The 2026-2027 dates below are the official ones; the 2027-2028 dates are the expected pattern (based on 2026-2027) and must be confirmed when published. Always verify the current year on inscription.cfwb.be. IntoSchool.be facilitates; the authority decides.

1. The main cycle: entering 1re secondaire in 2027-2028

If your child will start the first year of secondary (*1re année commune*) in September 2027, this is the process that matters most. It is a once-a-year, single-form procedure (the *Formulaire Unique d'Inscription*, FUI). Within the four-week deposit window the *time* you apply does not matter; a composite index and objective criteria decide over-subscribed schools. You may rank up to 10 schools, and ranking several is strongly advised.

When	What happens	What you do
By ~23 Jan 2027	The FUI is issued to parents by the child's primary school (expected; 2026-2027 date was 23 Jan 2026).	If your child is in a Flemish, German-speaking, private, European or foreign school, or home-schooled, the FUI is NOT sent automatically — request or create it yourself.
~Early Feb – early Mar 2027	Four-week deposit window at your first-choice school (2026-2027 was 2 Feb – 6 Mar). Order within the window does not matter.	Rank up to 10 schools. Deposit the FUI at your first choice; keep the certified copy. Flag any priority (sibling, specific needs, immersion).
Week of ~9 Mar 2027	First-choice schools notify: a place (attestation d'inscription) or referral to the central commission (CoGI).	Read the notice carefully. If no place, your ranked choices go to the CoGI.
~Late Mar 2027	CoGI allocates remaining places using the composite index and objective rules.	Await results; prepare a fallback among schools with places.
From ~20 Apr 2027	Enrolment reopens for remaining places, now first-come, first-served (no priority).	Move fast on remaining places; use the FWB places tool to see availability.
June 2027	The CEB (end-of-primary certificate) confirms the secondary place.	Ensure the CEB is transmitted to the school to confirm enrolment.

New from the 2026-2027 procedure: the 8th coefficient linked to the primary school's socio-economic index was removed. The composite index still applies; a child arriving without an FWB primary history is generally assigned an average index, which is a known disadvantage in over-subscribed schools — a reason to rank widely and consider less-saturated schools.

2. Arriving now for 2026-2027 (or mid-year)

The 2026-2027 single-form cycle has already closed, and other year-levels (beyond 1re commune) are not governed by it. If you are arriving for this coming year or during it, enrolment is **direct with schools and chronological** — first come, first served among available places.

When	What happens	What you do
As soon as you know	Places for 2026-2027 are filled chronologically; popular schools fill first.	Start now. Shortlist schools around your (future) address and contact them directly about availability.
Before signing a lease	Where you live shapes which schools are realistic (commute, catchment feel, language).	Check school options around candidate addresses before you commit to a lease.
On arrival / mid-year	Mid-year moves are handled case by case by schools and the FWB inscription service.	Contact target schools; if stuck, call the FWB inscription service (0800 188 55 / inscription@cfwb.be).

3. If your child studied abroad: equivalence

A foreign school record usually needs an *équivalence* (official recognition) from the FWB before or alongside enrolment, especially for the upper years and for any diploma used to enter university. This is a separate process from inscription, with its own deadline, and it is the step that most often costs families a year when left late.

When	What happens	What you do
As early as possible	Equivalence review can take time and may request additional documents (translations, apostilles).	Gather diplomas, transcripts and certified translations early. Apply as soon as you can.
Typically mid-July	The standard application deadline for the coming school year is commonly cited as around 15 July — but it varies and must be confirmed.	Confirm the current-year deadline with the CFWB equivalence service before you rely on it.
Fees	Administrative fees apply, roughly €76 to €400 depending on the case.	Budget for the fee and for certified translations.

Equivalence outcomes and timing are decided by the FWB equivalence service, not by us or the school. We help you assemble a correct, complete dossier and submit it on time; we cannot guarantee the decision.

4. The other things newcomers are not told

The composite index / ranking. Over-subscribed schools rank applicants on an objective composite index. A newcomer without FWB primary history is typically assigned an average index — rank several schools and look beyond the most saturated ones.

DASPA (reception classes). DASPA can support some newly-arrived pupils, but it is eligibility-based (recent arrival, age, specific situations) and is often not the route for internationally-mobile families. Check whether it applies to you rather than assuming it does.

Language readiness. Instruction is in French. Early language preparation, and understanding the school's expectations, materially eases the first year.

Address and catchment. Your address influences which schools are realistic. Decide school options before, not after, you sign a lease.

5. What to do now — a short checklist

- Confirm the current-year FWB dates on inscription.cfwb.be (they change annually).
- Decide your address with school catchment in mind, before signing a lease.
- Shortlist and rank several schools — never just one.
- If your child studied abroad, start the equivalence dossier now and confirm the deadline.

- Note whether the main 1re-secondaire cycle applies to you, or direct/chronological enrolment does.
- Prepare documents early: diplomas, transcripts, certified translations, proof of address.

Want this mapped to your family?

This timeline is the general map. In a **School Fit Consultation**, we turn it into your plan: your child, your address, your languages and your dates, with the real risks named and a written pathway memo you keep — whether or not you go further with us. *We cannot guarantee a place. We can give you the map, the deadlines, the dossier and calm execution.*

Your data, handled with care. We are GDPR-compliant. Your dossier and your child's documents are deleted after your assignment ends; we keep only what the law requires (mainly invoices). Any newsletter sign-up is separate and opt-in, and you can ask us to erase your data at any time. Full detail in our privacy notice.

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