



**Ministère de l'Éducation nationale,  
de l'Enseignement supérieur  
et de la Recherche**

110, rue de Grenelle - 75357 Paris SP 07

T. 01 55 55 30 10

[spresse@education.gouv.fr](mailto:spresse@education.gouv.fr)

[www.education.gouv.fr](http://www.education.gouv.fr)

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## **A NEW PROGRAM TO TEACH CITIZENSHIP**

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- Days after the terrorist attacks in Paris killed 17 people in January 2015, President François Hollande promised **a new action plan for schools to strengthen teaching of republic values.**
  - Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister for National Education, Higher Education and Research announced the **“Great Mobilisation of the School for Values of the Republic”**, which includes teaching children such virtues as community spirit, citizenship and a culture of commitment, rejecting inequalities and embracing social interaction.
- From September 2015 all pupils from primary to high schools are studying a **new citizenship education programme.**
- Competitions and prizes, solidarity and awareness campaigns are among actions to teach pupils major themes related to citizenship.

### **Stated aims**

The 2013 framework law *Loi d'orientation et de programmation pour la refondation de l'école de la République* confirms the aims of education for citizenship:

- For citizenship education, the public education system must prepare pupils to live in society and to become responsible and free citizens, understanding the founding principles and rules of democracy;
- Learning about citizenship and community life are educational aims that are just as important as mastering academic subjects.
- To become young citizens, pupils must learn the principles of democracy and acquire civic skills through the education schools provide.

- Education helps make pupils aware of solidarity and mutual support between generations.
- Together with the family, the school must be guarantor of moral and civic education, which includes learning the values and symbols of France and the European Union, their institutions, the national anthem and its history.

In January 2015, in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Paris that killed 17 people, President François Hollande told the educational community that an action plan would be introduced.

“It will aim to strengthen the teaching of republican values to pupils. Respect for rights, mutual assistance, understanding of the general interest, participation in democratic life, citizenship; all these essential elements for the citizen that the young pupil has yet to become. All these rules will be taught to pupils from the youngest age.” he said.

Following the attacks Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, Minister for National Education, Higher Education and Research, announced the ‘*Great Mobilisation of the School for Values of the Republic*’, which includes teaching children such virtues as community spirit, citizenship and a culture of commitment, rejecting inequalities and embracing social interaction.

“One cannot devise a teaching programme that aims to educate future citizens without putting it into practice in the school setting” she said. “Schools must allow pupils to become involved in making their own choices, to participate in the social life of the class and school to which they belong.”

In the [Declaration of Paris](#) of March 2015, European Union education ministers made a commitment to promoting citizenship education and to shared values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination, at European, national, regional and local levels.

## How we are delivering

- The *Parcours citoyen* includes a programme of moral and civic education started in September 2015 for all pupils from the start of primary to the end of high school. It is included in the timetable, and involves all teachers, staff who run pupil activities and school managers. Pupils must understand the principles that regulate individual and collective behaviour (discipline), recognize diversity of opinions, beliefs and ways of life (freedom) and build social and political relationships (community of citizens). It promotes respect of rights and the law; equal respect for all people; solidarity; helping one another; cooperation; understanding of the general interest; and participation in democratic life. It combines issues such as fighting against racism and anti-semitism, against prejudice and all kinds of discrimination; rights and duties; the principle of secularism and religious neutrality.
- Cross-curricular education about the media and information, including online, the press and freedom of speech so pupils learn to read and interpret information and images, sharpen their critical minds and form opinions. Every middle and high school to develop its own media operation – radio, newspaper, blog or online site.
- Starting at primary school, pupils must learn to make judgements, debate and put forward an argument; and at secondary school they use these skills in all subjects. Appropriate teacher training and support will be introduced.

- Debating and philosophy workshops for vocational students and apprentices as part of their moral and civic education; and with social and civic activities when they are training in the workplace.
- Encouraging pupils' participation in initiatives such as:
  - Forming pupils' committees at primary school;
  - Involvement of pupils in local authority educational projects;
  - Support and extra resources for high school students to produce magazines, and for their partnerships with outside media and businesses;
  - The Week against Racism and Antisemitism;
  - Recognition of pupils' work in the community – for example helping children who are in difficulty or disabled, or who have just arrived in France.
- Involvement of parents in school projects promoting civic and community values;
- As part of the Great Mobilisation of School Values, a 'Citizen Reserve of National Education' was launched, it is a pool of volunteers, including parents, working alongside teachers and educational teams.

## Educational Actions

- **Competitions and awards**

Human rights are the focus for pupil competitions including the *Prix des droits de l'homme – René Cassin*, organised in partnership with the Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme; the biennial *Coupe nationale des élèves citoyens* (organised by Initiadroit with ministry support); and the annual *Concours d'affiches 'Agis pour tes droits'* (organised by les Francas with ministry support).

Others give children an idea of how France's institutions operate, such as the *Parlement des Enfants* (Children's Parliament) which has been organised by the National Assembly and the Education Ministry since 1994. Republican values are featured in the competition '*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*', organised by the Post Office and the Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research, in which competitors design a trio of postage stamps. The *Concours des écoles fleuries* promotes sustainable development, through gardening and decoration of schools through cross-curricular projects.

- **Other initiatives**

Dedicated weeks and days include the *Semaine de la solidarité internationale* (International Solidarity Week), Universal Children's Day (in partnership with UNICEF-France), International Human Rights Day, the *Semaine de lutte contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme* (Week against Racism and Antisemitism), *Semaine de la presse et des médias* (Presse and Media Week) and the EU Day of Solidarity between Generations.

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Campaigns supported by the ministry are *Opération 'Pièces jaunes'* ('Copper coins') which collects small change for the Hôpitaux de Paris – Hôpitaux de France; the *Campagne de la 'Jeunesse au Plein Air'*; and the Ligue d'enseignement's *Campagne 'Pas d'éducation, pas d'avenir!'*

## **For more information**

<http://eduscol.education.fr/pid33120/enseignement-moral-et-civique.html>

<http://eduscol.education.fr/cid46702/les-valeurs-de-la-republique.html>

<https://www.reseau-canope.fr/les-valeurs-de-la-republique.html>

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