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WELCOME PROTOCOL for STUDENTS WITH MIGRANT BACKGROUND

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PREAMBLE

The Welcome Protocol is a document approved by the Teaching Staff Council that outlines **criteria and guidelines** for the **enrollment and integration** of students with a migrant background, with particular focus on newly arrived students (NAI) in Italy.

This document defines the **roles and responsibilities** of school staff, outlines the different **phases** of a "competent" welcome, and details activities to facilitate learning and/or consolidating proficiency in the Italian language, as well as guidelines for designing personalized learning paths.

The protocol serves as a flexible and practical working tool that can be integrated and revised based on real experiences.

The objectives of the protocol are as follows:

- To define **shared practices** within the Institute's schools regarding the welcome of students with a migrant background;
- To **support newly arrived students** in Italy during the adjustment phase to the new context;
- To foster a **welcoming climate** and attentive relationships that prevent and remove potential barriers to full inclusion;
- To promote a **collaborative relationship** between school and family;
- To build a **context conducive to encounters with other cultures**;
- To encourage communication and **collaboration between school and community** on issues of welcome and intercultural education, within an integrated educational system.



PROTOCOL ORGANIZATION

The Welcome Protocol outlines the following practices:

- **Administrative-Bureaucratic**: Concerns registration and the initial interaction of the family with the school from a bureaucratic perspective.
- **Communicative-Relational**: Relates to the tasks and roles of school staff in getting to know the new student and assigning them to a section/class.
- **Educational-Didactic**: Concerns the phases related to integration into the class/group, teaching Italian as a second language (L2), and drafting a personalized educational plan (PDP).
- **Social**: Identifies relationships and collaborations with the local community.

In particular, the Protocol:

- Provides for the establishment of a **Welcome Committee** (within the Committee Area 3);
- Contains criteria and guidelines for the **enrollment** and **integration** of newly arrived foreign students or those to be included in a welcome project;
- Outlines the **phases and methods of welcoming students** to school, defining the tasks and roles of school staff and those involved in this process;
- Includes **multilingual signs** in various points within the school;
- Provides for the identification of a **small group of foreign student tutors** with functions as language facilitators for newly arrived peers;
- Envisages the collection in an **archive** (paper and/or digital) of: bilingual dictionaries, simplified texts on various subjects, bilingual narrative texts, and intercultural education books for Italian L2.



WELCOME COMMITTEE

The Welcome Committee is composed of:

- The **School Principal** or a designated Assistant Principal who presides over the committee;
- **One teacher from each school level**;
- The **teacher responsible for Italian L2**.

It is open to collaboration from:

- A **linguistic-cultural mediator**;
- **Foreign student tutors** who can act as language facilitators to assist the new student thanks to their knowledge of the student's native language;
- **Parents**;
- Anyone willing to contribute to the welcome process.



ADMINISTRATIVE-BUREAUCRATIC PHASE

Enrollment represents the first step in the process of welcoming a student with a migrant background and their family.

It is established that, according to current legislation (D.P.R. 394/99):

- **Foreign minors have the right to education regardless of the regularity of their residence status** and are subject to compulsory education;
- Enrollment for foreign minors **can be requested at any time during the school year**.

This phase is managed by a **designated secretary** who will:

- Ensure the **completion of the enrollment forms** (if necessary, in multiple languages) and provide the family with adequate information regarding:
    - Enrollment form;
    - Form for communicating the choice to opt for or against Catholic religious instruction;
    - Authorizations and/or specific delegations for each school level;
- **Inform the family** about the school's organization, providing, if necessary and possible, informational notes in the native language of the new student or by using a cultural mediator;
- **Collect documentation and/or information** regarding the student's previous educational background;
- Provide the family with initial guidelines on the timing and methods of the student's integration;
- **Promptly notify the foreign student coordinator to arrange the first meeting** with the student and their family and organize subsequent welcome sessions.



COMMUNICATIVE-RELATIONAL PHASE

After enrollment, the **welcome phase** begins, during which the foundations for the effective inclusion of the student with a migrant background are laid. Welcoming positively means paying attention to the relational climate, putting others at ease, listening, and getting to know them.

In as serene and open a climate as possible, the **initial meeting** with the student will serve to:

- **Assess certain levels of competencies and skills**, primarily related to knowledge of the Italian language;
- **Gather detailed information** about the student's **personal history** and **educational background**.

The information collected will be a valuable reference for making appropriate decisions both regarding the class that will host the student and for the possible development of support pathways for learning.

This phase is managed by the **foreign student coordinator**, who will arrange a first meeting with the student and their family (if necessary, with the presence of a cultural mediator). In this meeting:

- The **documentation collected** during enrollment will be **reviewed**;
- **Information about the organization of the school will be provided**, and additional details about the student's situation will be gathered;
- **Further information about the student's situation** will be collected;
- **An interview with the student** will be conducted to get to know them and to make an initial observation of their level of proficiency in Italian;
- The **need for ongoing collaboration** between the school and the family will be emphasized;
- **The Principal will be informed** of the gathered elements to determine the appropriate class/section for the student;
- The **information will be shared** with the relevant class/section teachers and the **Class Council**.

Responsibilities of the School Principal:

- **Review of Documentation**: Check the documentation submitted at the time of the enrollment request.
- **Enrollment**: Enroll the student, even if their status is pending regularization or if some documentation is missing.
- **Class/Section Assignment**: Determine the section/class where to place the new student, taking into account the following criteria.



STUDENT INTEGRATION INTO CLASSES

Phase I

The School Principal, considering the legislative provisions and the information gathered during the initial welcome phase, proposes the assignment of the student to a section/class.

The 2014 Guidelines stipulate that: "Foreign students are generally enrolled in the class corresponding to their age, unless the Teaching Staff Council decides, based on specific criteria, to enroll them in a different class, taking into account, among other things, the student's competencies, skills, and level of proficiency in Italian. These **exceptions will be evaluated after administering a test** that will allow professionals to understand the starting level of the student (according to the CEFR). In such cases, t**he student will be assigned to at most the immediately lower or higher class compared to their age-appropriate class**." Therefore, as a rule, the student with a migrant background will be enrolled in the class corresponding to their age, and only exceptionally in a different, immediately lower or higher class, based on an assessment of their competencies, the educational system of the country of origin, and the course of study followed.

The Principal then reviews all the information received from the Italian L2 Coordinator and analyzes the situation of the section/class where the student is to be placed, taking into account not only numerical criteria (number of students per section/class) but also other factors that contribute to a successful integration for the student and the overall class group.

Considerations include:

- The presence of **other students from the same country** in the class;

- The presence of **other students with a migrant background** and/or the possibility of support from other student tutors from the same country;
- The **complexity of the class** (number of students with special educational needs: issues, disabilities, dropout, etc.);
- The distribution of students with a migrant background across classes **to avoid creating sections with a predominance of foreign students**.

Phase II

The process will proceed with linguistic screening to assess skills, competencies, and specific learning needs, and with the actual integration into the section/class and accompanying activities.

Responsibilities of the Italian L2 Coordinator and **the Class Coordinator**:

- Administer a **linguistic placement test** conducted by the Italian L2 Coordinator;
- **Share the results** and information gathered with the class Council of Teachers;
- **Develop integration pathways** to be implemented at the educational (PDP) and relational levels aimed at:
    - Helping the student overcome difficulties encountered in the new environment;
    - Educating about meeting, respecting, and coexisting with diversity;
    - Identifying classmates to act as tutors.

Responsibilities of the Italian L2 Teacher:

- Organize and implement level-specific courses for foreign language literacy for students referred by the Class Councils, in the morning during curricular hours, as well as activate Italian L2 workshops in the afternoon.



EDUCATIONAL-DIDACTIC PHASE

Integrating a student with a migrant background into a class involves all the teachers in the class, as only through this collaboration and synergy can the goal of effective inclusion be achieved. The role of tutoring by a student who has been in the country for a few years and speaks the same language as the new arrival (especially in secondary school) is also important.

The **group of teachers** should:

- **Raise awareness in the class** about welcoming the new student and dedicate time to welcome and introductory activities;
- **Identify one or more classmates** particularly suited to act as tutors;
- **Facilitate the new student's understanding** of the school's spaces, schedules, and organization;
- Identify **specific learning needs**;
- **Promote integration** in the class by encouraging small group activities or intercultural education projects;
- **Encourage participation in class activities** even if the student does not yet have sufficient language skills (using non-verbal communication);
- **Implement systematic reinforcement in class** that seeks and activates the involvement of the migrant background student, even if they cannot follow lessons. **Full participation will help maintain motivation to learn** and, therefore, academic success;
- **Develop a personalized educational plan (PDP)**, which may be extended over two years: identify and apply methods for content simplification and language facilitation for each subject, setting minimal content and adapting assessments and evaluations accordingly;
- Create a **literacy pathway tailored to the student's starting level**;
- Inform the student and their family about the PDP;
- Maintain **collaborative relationships with the family**.

From a strictly linguistic perspective, it should be emphasized that, especially in the initial phase of integration, **teaching Italian as a second language (L2)** should focus on acquiring functional proficiency in oral and written Italian, first for interpersonal communication and school integration, and then for studying other subjects, through the implementation of language enhancement courses. **Learning**

and developing Italian L2 should be central to teaching activities, with specific planning focused on the student's real needs and ongoing monitoring.

Various tools should be used to promote the student's ability to use Italian for communication and socialization. Only after this phase should the focus shift to language development for studying, to avoid academic failure.

In secondary school, in the initial phase when the student is focused on learning Italian L2, **the study of other languages can be suspended or postponed, to be resumed at a later time**.



ASSESSMENT

Another important aspect to consider is **assessment**.

"Foreign minors present in the national territory are evaluated in the same ways and forms as Italian citizens" (Guidelines – February 2014): thus, **they are entitled to periodic and final assessments that are transparent** and timely, based on criteria defined by the Teaching Staff Council, as well as specific protections in cases of difficulties related to special educational needs.

The student should be assessed in the **subjects included in their personalized study plan**. By the end of the school year, the goal is to assess the student in all subjects, through personalized planning and using facilitated texts as necessary.

Class Councils or teaching teams evaluating students with a migrant background will adapt the criteria and methods of assessment according to the adjustment of goals based on the real needs of each student and the planned objectives.

In this context, **formative assessment is prioritized**, as recommended by recent ministerial guidelines for all students, considering:

- The student's previous educational history;
- Possible objectives (relative to the starting situation);
- Motivation;
- Progress;
- Results obtained in learning Italian L2 in language literacy courses;
- Effort;
- Demonstrated learning potential.

For students with a Personalized Educational Plan (PDP), assessment parameters will be established based on the personalized plan.

Literacy activities will be subject to oral and/or written tests (to be conducted in class) prepared by the literacy teacher and agreed upon with the subject teacher, but above all, to documented **observation of progress** in learning and the acquisition process of Italian L2.

If the student with a migrant background has a good command of a foreign language (e.g., English or French), this language may initially be used as a medium of instruction for acquiring and presenting content, provided that appropriate materials are prepared.

Additionally, it is important to consider the potential linguistic disadvantage and **respect the time required for learning Italian L2**.

Regarding academic learning, it is necessary to consider **the knowledge** and **skills achieved** based on **the customization of the planned pathway** in relation to the **minimum objectives** set for the class.

Class Councils or teaching teams should **involve the family** in various stages of the assessment process and, if necessary, include a language mediator during meetings with parents.



SOCIAL PHASE

The school must **seek financial resources** aimed at promoting the effective inclusion of all students (e.g., funding from provincial, regional, national, European sources, etc.). Additionally, the welcome protocol serves as the foundation for building a network of coordination **between the school institution, local authorities, and associations** present in the area. These aspects are essential to ensure that every student with a migrant background is granted the fundamental right to education and the development of their personal identity, and they are the primary responsibilities of the School Principal.

In summary

Secretary	**For Registration:** • Complete the registration forms. • Inform the family about the process and requirements. • Collect necessary documentation. • Notify the Italian L2 coordinator promptly.

Italian L2 Coordinator	• **Schedule Meetings:** Arrange meetings with the student and their family. • **Review Documentation:** Examine all relevant documentation collected during registration. • **Provide School Information:** Inform the family about how the school operates and its organization. • **Conduct Initial Interview:** Hold a discussion with the student to understand their background and assess their initial level of Italian. • **Report to the Principal:** Communicate the gathered information and assessment results to the School Principal. • **Share Information with Teachers:** Distribute relevant details to the section/class teachers and the Class Council (CdC) to ensure coordinated support.

Phase I - Student Integration

School Principal	• Document Review and Enrollment; • Class/Section Assignment.

Phase II - Student Integration

Italian L2 Coordinator	• linguistic screening; • Sharing Results and Information with the

	Class Council (CdC).
Class coordinator and Class Council	• Preparing a Personalized Educational Plan (PDP)

ITALIAN L2 TEACHER	• Organization and implementation of level-specific Italian language literacy courses