**SCHOOL SYSTEM IN ITALY**

Article 33 of Italian Constitution lays down that the State is obliged to provide a State –school system accessible to all young people, providing opportunities commensurate with their aspirations, regardless of economic status and social situation, such as ethnic or linguistic background.

The Freedom of teaching is a principle established by the Constitution of the Italian Republic. Teachers are free to choose textbooks and teaching methods.

In Italy teachers, or professors, are mainly civil servants, recruited by competitive examination. The Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) is responsible for the general administration at national level.

At the decentralized level, the MIUR works through the Regional School Offices (Uffici Scolastici Regionali– USR) that take care, within its territorial competences, of carrying out national policies for students.

At local level, to the Provinces, in relation to upper secondary schools, and to the Communes, in relation to schools of lower levels, are delegated the functions concerning the establishment, aggregation and the closing down of schools, the interruption of teaching for serious and urgent reasons, the setting up, control and vigilance, as well as the dissolution of school collegiate bodies.

Specific administration and management of schools have become increasingly decentralized and grant schools autonomy in teaching, administration, research, and development.

Each school prepares a Piano dell' Offerta Formativa (POF), a plan that includes the philosophy, missions, and goals of the school.

The POF is devised by the Teacher Council: it is available to the public and given to students and their family on enrolment. The Indicazioni (National guidelines) are nationally determined and adapted to local needs by each school according to school autonomy by the POF. Knowledge and skills are indicated for each subject; the school will help pupils to transform them into personal competencies. The guidelines define the essential performance levels that should been sured by each school.

The Collegio dei Docenti (Teacher Council) is made up of the permanent and temporary teachers of the school and is chaired by the Dirigente Scolastico (school manager). It makes decisions regarding teaching and learning on the basis of general objectives defined by the Consiglio di Circolo (Cycle Council) or Consiglio di Istituto (Institutional or School Council).

From 1998, the heads of schools who granted autonomy, took the title of school manager (Dirigente scolastico). School managers are no longer registered in a national roll but instead in regional rolls. The school manager is responsible for the overall management of the institution, of which he will have legal responsibility; he is responsible for the management of financial and material resources and for the quality of the service provided.

Starting from school-year 2000/2001, the administrative manager of school is called Direttore dei servizi generali e amministrativi (DSGA). The Director for general and administrative services (DSGA) supervises, with operative autonomy, within the general instructions given by the school manager of the school. DSGA co-ordinates the pertaining staff and is responsible for and provides for gathering information and making the necessary preparation, relative to the stipulation of contracts, agreements and conventions.

The school-year comprises at least 200 days between the beginning of September and the end of June.

Schools open five or six days a week, full day or half day, depending on the institution.

Compulsory annual teaching hours are 891; this amount is subdivide into 33 teaching weeks with an average amount of 27 weekly hours.

According to school autonomy, each educational institution is responsible for the organization of its annual teaching time.

In Italy we have many foreign students that are distributed in a different way in the Italian regions.

**ITALIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL STRUCTURE**

Daycare: 4months-3 years (not compulsory, expensive)

Kindergarten (scuola dell’infanzia): Age3-5

Primary school (scuola primaria o elementare): Age 6-11

Lower secondary school (scuola secondaria di primo grado o media): Age11-14

Upper secondary school (scuola secondaria di secondo grado o superiore): Age14-19

University (università)

**Kindergarten (scuola dell’infanzia)**

The Kindergarten is the first stage of the education (children from three to five years) and training system and it is not compulsory. Two teachers split the day.

Pre-primary education is offered free of charge. Families are asked to pay a sum for transport and canteen services. Families with low incomes are exempted.

**Primary school (scuola primaria o elementare)**

Primary school begins at age six and continues for five years.

Class sizes generally run about twenty-five children per class with a minimum of ten students, but in the last years instead of the fund cutting in most classes we could find 30 children.

In villages with not many people there are mixed-level classes, that have between six and twelve students. Schooling and text books are free.

Students with special needs are integrated into main stream education and specialist support is provided (if the municipality has enough money to pay for a social worker; in most cases the support is only for few hours).

Lessons must be spread on no less than 5 days a week. Schools have autonomy in the organization of the daily time table. There are teachers for different subjects. Catholic religion is not compulsory.

Starting from the first grades of primary schools, families choose among the following models of weekly time tables: 24 hours a week; 27 hours a week; up to 30 hours a week, including teaching activities additional to the 27-hour time table 40 hours a week, the time devoted to canteen included, corresponding to the so called' full time timetable. The time table is chosen by parents at enrolment.

Each school can decide to start and pay for prevention projects such as SEL or resilience curriculum.

**Lower secondary school (scuola secondaria di primo grado o media inferiore)**

Lower secondary school is attended by students from eleven to fourteen years old.

Formerly at age fourteen, compulsory education was considered complete. Nowadays compulsory education last until sixteen years.

While the schooling is free, books must be purchased at the secondary level. Class size is about 20 students per class but in large cities there are eve 30-35 students per class.

Together with compulsory primary school, lower secondary school makes up the first cycle of education which lasts eight years

In the lower secondary school curriculum includes: religion, Italian language, English language, a second foreign language, history, geography, science, math, technology, information technology, art and drawing, music and physical education. Students must take and pass an exam before moving up to upper secondary school

**Upper secondary school (scuola secondaria di secondo grado o media superiore)**

Upper secondary school last 5 years and is addressed to students from 15 to 19 years of age.

Upper schools are currently divided in the following way:

Classical upper secondary school LiceoClassico

Scientific upper secondary school LiceoScientifico

Linguistic upper secondary school Liceo Linguistico

Upper secondary school with a sociological and pedagogical orientation Liceo Psico-Pedagogico

Art school Liceo Artistico.

Licei are more academic and usually prepare students to the university studies.

Istituti are essentially divided in:

Technical school Istituti Tecnici

Vocational school Istituti Professionali

Technical school prepare students to work in agriculture, industry, commerce, administration and marketing. Vocational school offers vocational training for various jobs.(enology, gastronomy, tourist promotion, social health).

After completing upper secondary school, students must pass another exam in order to receive their Diploma di Maturità. Once they have their diplomas, they either begin their careers in their professions or move on to the University.

**University**

The reform of the Italian University System in 1999 has introduced important innovations in the organization of the academic degrees, implementing the decisions taken by EU Ministers in Bologna in 1998. The university system is now organized on 3 cycles: the 1st cycle academic degree, that is the Laurea, grants access to the 2nd cycle, and the Laurea Specialistica/Magistrale.

The main degree of the 2nd cycle, gives access to 3rd cycle doctorate programs resulting in the degree called Dottorato di Ricerca.

•Diploma universitario (Degree)

•Laurea Specialistica/Magistrale (Bachelor of Arts/Science),

•Dottorato di Ricerca (PhD) or Diploma di Specializzazione (Specializing Master)