

IPS HILVERSUM International Primary Education

NEWCOMERS' BOOKLET

Created in collaboration with the PTA



PIC • COLLAGE

International Education in Hilversum for ages 4 – 12 since 1986

we learn, we experience, we inspire



Samen meer dan uniek



Table of Contents

Welcome message
Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
Things to consider when you first arrive
Driving and driver licenses
Health
Other medical services
Housing, utilities and household garbage
Banking, Post Office and public transport
Swimming pools
Sports clubs
Other after-school activities, after-school care & babysitters
Children's birthday party ideas
Fun trips for the family
Bikes and cycling
Cinemas, library and pre-schools
Health clubs & fitness
Social network clubs and pets
Dutch lessons and other adult courses
Shopping
Churches with services in English
Shops & services recommended by parents
Restaurants recommended by parents
Cultural traditions in the Netherlands
Car parking advice for school
Sources of information
Important telephone numbers

WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear new families,

On behalf of the whole IPS Hilversum community we would like to welcome you to our school. As well as starting at a new school, many of you may also be unfamiliar with life in the Netherlands. This may bring a few surprises for some of you as it is often the simple matters that suddenly become a challenge.

In cooperation with our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) this booklet was created to help you begin to settle into your new environment. The Dutch language, food and weather may take a little longer to get used to but hopefully you will all soon feel at home in the school and the country.

Our only advice to you is that you should never hesitate to ask. Whatever the question may be it is almost certain that someone else in the school has needed to know the answer before. The PTA is here to help you, the teachers are here for your children and the office and the Assistant Principals are always available to answer your questions.

We all look forward to you joining our community and hope that you and your family will soon feel **at home** both at school and outside of school.

With our warmest regards,



Juliska Blom
Principal

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

The Role of the PTA

The main aim of our PTA is to organise fun events for children and families to enjoy. You can help build our community through these events by attending, participating, planning or organising. We plan to raise funds from these fun events, predominantly for our children at the school, and giving to others in the community.

All PTA-sponsored activities benefit both students and parents. Their success depends on parents' willingness to participate and contribute.

Role of the Class Representative

The PTA also organises a team of Class Parent Representatives that work with their assigned class group parents and teachers. These parents help recruit parents from that class for different activities, organise all communications to their parents from the PTA and sometimes from the teachers, collect funds for different events and manage the 'class fund'.

The Class Fund

The class fund is a fee of €15 per child for Group 1 to 7 that is requested from parents each year to fund its basic services. This fee is used to help fund extra class activities as well as to purchase extra items which an individual class may need. A fee of €25 per child for Group 8 is requested from parents each year to fund its basic services as well as their Graduation Event at the end of the year.

PTA Events

- New family welcome coffee morning
- Welcome for new and existing families
- Teacher appreciation lunch
- International Summer Fair

Lunch arrangements

Children are offered pizza for lunch on Thursdays or Fridays (depending on the location). Pizza slices are ordered through the year class representative and coordinated by the PTA and delivered directly to the school at lunch time. Orders for pizza are made and paid for in advance by slice for each child. This is arranged through the pizza team, which is part of the PTA.

School website

The PTA provides information to parents, via the parent newsletter which all parents receive by email on Friday afternoon, which is also posted on the school website. The PTA circulates other non-education-related information via the class representatives. It is important that parents regularly check the school website for news and forthcoming events www.ipshilversum.nl.

All the PTA sponsored activities benefit the children and parents alike. Their success depends on the parents' willingness to participate and contribute. If you'd like to join the PTA or get involved with events or activities, please email: PTA@ipshilversum.nl. We would love to hear from you!

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVE

Registration (Burgerlijke Stand)

Within three to five days of your arrival in the Netherlands, you are required to register with the local authorities (*gemeente*). This has to be done even if you live in temporary housing. If you intend to reside in Hilversum, go to:

Gemeente Hilversum

Afdeling Publiekszaken
Oude Enghweg 23, 1217JB, Hilversum.

Tel: 035- 629 2000

The office is open from 09:00 to 13:00, Monday to Friday and on Thursday evenings from 17:00 to 19:30. Useful website: www.hilversum.nl

To register you will need to bring:

- a valid passport
- a birth certificate
- marriage, divorce or registered partnership certificate
- an apostille from the local authorities of your last place of residence
- a rental contract or house purchase contract
- an employment contract

Once you have registered with the gemeente, within a few weeks you will receive registration documents and a Burgerservicenummer.

Burgerservicenummer (BSN)

Your BSN is a unique, personal number issued to everyone registered in the personal records database of a municipality. It is required by everyone including children to be in the healthcare system, open a bank account or start a job.

For further information, call BSN hotline tel: 088 - 900 1010

http://www.burgerservicenummer.nl/Veelgestelde_vragen/Frequently_Asked_Questions

Tax Office (Belastingdienst):

www.belastingdienst.nl

The above website has useful information about the Dutch tax system in English.

DRIVING IN THE NETHERLANDS

The most important rules for driving are: Drive on the **right**, overtake on the left

- 18 years is the legal minimum age to drive a **car** (or motorbike over 125cc)
- It is compulsory to **carry** a driving license, car registration papers and insurance documents in the car (see information below regarding foreign licenses)
- Mobile cellular **telephones** may *only* be used with a hands-free system while driving. Even holding a mobile in a moving vehicle is considered an offense (*also when you ride your bike*)
- **Seatbelts** are compulsory in the front and rear of the vehicle
- Children younger than 18 and shorter than 1.35m must sit in an approved **car seat** or raised, booster seat
- **Headlights** should be dipped in built-up areas but it is prohibited to use side-lights only
- Drivers should pay particular attention to **cyclists** who may ride two abreast
- Unless otherwise signposted, vehicles coming from the right have **priority**
- **Buses** have priority when pulling out
- **Trams** have priority except where signposted at major junctions

Children in cars

It is obligatory that children under 18 who are less than **1.35 meters tall** must travel in an EU approved child car seat or raised booster seat. This applies to traveling in the front and back seats. A child under three may not be transported in a car without being strapped into a car child seat.

Driving license

Once you have become a resident in the Netherlands, you can use your foreign license for a certain period. The length of this period of time depends on the country of the license. After the period of time has elapsed, you must obtain a Dutch driving license. Licenses from many countries can be exchanged for a Dutch driving license if you have a valid residence permit. See www.rijbewijs.nl/nl/english.asp for detailed information in English. If it is not possible to exchange your driving license, then you must take the standard theory and practical driving test.

For information on the regulations for driving in Holland including an explanation of road signs and speed restrictions, what to carry in your car and rules for children please see the government website:

<http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/brochures/2009/08/01/road-traffic-signs-and-regulations-in-the-netherlands-2009.html>

For information on driving licenses www.rijbewijs.nl, www.rdw.nl

The English website www.angloinfo.com has more suggestions and tips.

HEALTH

As soon as the family is registered at the Gemeente, relevant information is shared among the different government departments. One of them is the *Provinciale Eindhoven Administratie*, which is connected to the GGD (District Health Service) and is responsible for making sure that all children receive the required inoculations.

Parents are notified by the local District Health Services as to when they should take their child to be examined or inoculated. For most of the families in the school, this is done through Jeugdgezondheidszorg (JGZ), Youth Health care, which is part of the GGD. All children up to age 19 are monitored through the JGZ.

Young pre-school children aged 0-4 are checked and given vaccinations via the Consultatiebureau. There are several around Hilversum and you will be assigned to the one closest to your home.

School age children aged 4-19 are monitored by the GGD through check-ups at about age 6 (group 2) and about age 11 (group 7). There are further vaccinations at age 9.

Telephone: 035-692 6350 is the central number for the JGZ (Youth health care).

Website: www.ggdgooi.nl

The school doctor may be contacted at the GGD tel. 06-12735165, e-mail: s.grewal@jggv.nl. The GGD's school nurse Ms Hiltje Kuijt may be contacted at the GGD tel.: 06-50039006, e-mail: h.kuijt@jggv.nl

Health Insurance

General medical care is high in the Netherlands, but non-interventionist in nature. It is mandatory for everyone to have at least a basic level of health insurance (basisverzekering). However, you are free to choose your health insurer and the level of cover you wish to have. The standard basic package (basispakket) is much the same from all insurance providers, but costs may vary.

This standard insurance covers:

- Medical care, including general practitioner, hospital and specialist care

- Dental care (only until the age of 18)
- Medicines
- Ambulance services
- Midwife services and post-natal mother and baby care

You will need extra cover for adult dental cover, optical care, physiotherapy or other areas of cover, which are considered to be your own responsibility. Some healthcare providers are registered with the insurance company directly and invoice directly, others will expect you to pay and claim back yourself. There is a compulsory excess paid each year, in 2022 this is €385.

For more information on comparing different additional insurance companies, please visit www.kiesbeter.nl

Further information on health insurance from the Ministry of Health (in English) www.english.minvws.nl/en

The Family Doctor or *Huisarts*

The *huisarts* is the center of your health care while you live in the Netherlands. Through your family doctor, you have access to all the services of the Dutch medical system. He is the focal point as he refers you to specialists, paramedics and hospitals. He also gets copies of reports from hospitals and specialists and thus keeps your medical history up to date.

It is important to find a *huisarts* near your home as they make house calls when necessary.

A few suggestions to get you started:

- Ask neighbours and friends for recommendations.
- Look in the yellow pages under *Artsen-Huisartsen*.
- Use www.huisartsen.nl type in your postcode and a list of doctors nearby will come up.

You will need the *huisarts* assistance to:

- Call an ambulance for other than life-threatening emergencies.
- Be treated in the emergency room for other than life-threatening injuries.
- Be admitted into hospital for other than life-threatening situations.
- See a specialist.

At weekends or during the holidays when your doctor is unavailable, use the Huisartsenpost (see below).

Huisartsenpost Gooi en Vechtstreek

Telephone: 0900-9359/ 088 1309600

Address: The Huisartsenpost is based at the Tergooi Ziekenhuis Hilversum
Laan van Tergooi 2, 1212 VG Hilversum

If you or your child are sick in the evening or weekend, but it is not an emergency, you can call the Huisartsenpost for an appointment. They are open every day from 5pm until 8am the following morning. On the weekends they are open from Friday 5pm until Monday 8am. They are also open on public holidays. At all other times, you should go to your normal doctor.

First you must call and make an appointment. You will be required to provide

- Details of your health insurance number
- The name of your family doctor
- Details of the medical problem
- Details of any medication being taken

Next to the Huisartsenpost, there is also a pharmacy, the Dienstapothek opens at the same hours as the Huisartsenpost.

Specialists

Specialists are usually found in the *Polikliniek* (outpatient) section of the hospitals. To consult one, you need a referral letter from your *huisarts*, which he will give you only if, in his opinion, it is necessary that you see one. He will give you the name of the specialist to go to, but you still have the freedom to go to one of your own choosing. It is important to note that your choice of specialist determines your choice of hospital as well. All the results and the progress of specialist treatment are recorded and sent to your *huisarts*.

Hospitals

Registration

The first time you go to a hospital, you need to register. To register, you must provide:

- Your health insurance card
- Details of your family doctor
- Identification e.g. passport

Admission to hospital

Only a specialist can authorize hospitalization for treatment or surgery. Inform your insurance company immediately of the date of admittance to hospital. It is often best to go to the hospital nearest your home but you may be able to choose another one instead. Talk this over with your *huisarts*.

Tergooi Ziekenhuis Hilversum

Van Riebeeckweg 212

1213 XZ Hilversum

Tel : 088-753 1753

Emergency: 088-753 1560

Tergooi Ziekenhuis Blaricum

Rijksstraatweg 1

1261 AN Blaricum

Tel: 088-753 1753

Emergency: 088-753 1560 www.tergooi.nl

Emergency

There is an emergency room at both the above hospitals. For acute emergencies, **dial 112** for an ambulance. If you have a serious condition, which may require prompt attention, contact your family doctor immediately to be seen and referred if necessary to the hospital. If your doctor is not available, call the Huisartsencentrum 0900-1515 until 5pm. If after 5pm, then please call the Huisartsenpost (see above).

Pharmacy (Apotheek)

You may choose the pharmacy most convenient to you. Once registered, most prescribed medicine will be paid directly by your insurance company. Sometimes, you may have to pay a small fee. Should you need to fill your prescription in a pharmacy other than the one where you are registered, you may have to pay the full price. This can later be reimbursed by your insurance company.

Most *apotheken* (pharmacies) are open Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 17:30. However, there are a few 24-hour pharmacies. A listing of late-night pharmacies can be found in your local

apotheek or in a daily newspaper.

OTHER MEDICAL SERVICES

Emergency Dental help: 0900-8212230

Den2

Dentists, hygienists and orthodontists in one location.

Diependaalselaan 197, Hilversum

www.den2.nl

Tandartspraktijk

Gijsbrecht Van Amstelstraat 231, Hilversum

035-624 5107

Orthodontists

Orthodontiepraktijk Hilversum

's Gravelandseweg, Hilversum.

www.orthodontiepraktijkhilversum.nl

Wernerlaan 1, Hilversum

www.ortho-wernerlaan.nl

Physiotherapy

AktieFysio

Oude Amersfoortseweg 152, Hilversum

www.aktiefysio.nl

Chiropractor

Chiropractie Hilversum

Gezondheidscentrum Kerkelanden

Kerkelandenlaan 3-L, Hilversum

www.chiropractiehilversum.nl

HOUSING AND UTILITIES

Finding accommodation

It is common to appoint a broker or an estate agent (makelaar) to do much of the work: tracking down appropriate houses, arranging viewings, advising on negotiation and potential pitfalls. Another benefit might be that a makelaar knows which properties will come on the market shortly. The agent's commission will be 1-2% of the purchase price.

The Funda website lists all houses and apartments for sale and to rent, which gives you an idea of prices in different areas. www.funda.nl

There are also often announcements on the school notice boards for houses or apartments to rent or for sale.

Telephone, cable TV, Internet

The Dutch infrastructure is well developed and residents have easy access to electricity, gas, water, landline telephones and high-speed internet. There are several providers who offer packages including some or all of the telephone, cable and internet services. A selection of providers includes:

KPN Telecom www.kpn.nl

UPC www.upc.nl
Ziggo www.ziggo.nl
Tele2 www.tele2.nl

Sky TV can be purchased via Skydigibox
www.skydigibox.nl

Gas & Electricity

There are many providers and tariffs vary, so it is worth checking out prices using the following comparison websites:

Energievergelijken: www.energievergelijken.nl

Energieprijzen: www.energieprijzen.nl

Energy companies – there are many, here are just a few:

Nederlandse Energie Maatschappij: www.nlenergie.nl

Eneco : www.eneco.nl

NUON : www.nuon.nl

Oxxio : www.oxxio.nl

Utilities are often billed monthly at a fixed amount and then adjusted annually after the meters have been read.

Water

Tap water is drinkable throughout the Netherlands. The regional water board (Waterschappen) is responsible for the management of water resources and households are charged a tax, levied by the local *gemeente*.

Household Garbage

Household garbage is collected regularly every week, alternating between green, blue, orange and grey containers. The recycling varies from city to city. The collection schedule for your home can be found on www.gad.nl on 'ophaalkalender'.

Click on "ophaalschema" then you need to type in your postcode and house number. This should give you the schedule of collection for each type of household rubbish.

- Green containers are for garden and organic waste.
- Blue containers are for paper, cardboard and magazines.
- Orange containers are for plastics.
- Glass, bottles and jars should be taken to bottle banks located around the city
- Grey containers: for all other household refuse that cannot be recycled

Large items such as fridges or old furniture can be collected directly from your home. You must contact GAD and make an appointment. This can be done online via www.gad.nl or by telephone 035-699 1888

You may also take your extra garbage to the following dumping grounds:

Hilversum

Nieuwe Crailoseweg 10
1222AB
Hilversum

Batteries

There are containers in many shops and most supermarkets to put old batteries for recycling. The containers are marked 'Lege batterijen'.

Deposits on plastic bottles and beer bottles

Drinks sold in plastic bottles, such as mineral water, coke, etc. and beer sold in glass bottles will usually be sold with a 'statiegeld'. This is a deposit you are charged for on the bottles, which is refunded to you when you return the bottles for recycling. To get your refund, bring your bottles to the special bottle return places within the supermarkets.

Secondhand shops

There are many secondhand shops around Hilversum. If you wish to get rid of items from your home e.g. furniture, clothing, white goods, you can take it to the Kringloper.

They offer a free pick-up service: telephone 0900-899 8180

De Kringloper

Noorderweg 96a, Hilversum

www.dekringloper.nl

BANKING

The Netherlands has a modern banking system incorporating traditional neighbourhood banks, cash machines as well as internet banking services. The major banks include:

ABN AMRO, ING Bank, Rabobank, Fortis and SNS.

Cash: Payment by cash is common but notes of €100 or €500 are often not accepted. Cash can be withdrawn at an ATM marked with the sign "Geldautomaat".

Debit card (known as PIN): This is the most common form of payment and is widely accepted.

Chipknip: This method of payment requires your debit card. You transfer money from your bank account to the debit card, and then you can use it to pay for items, such as parking meters.

Credit cards: These are not widely accepted and identification is usually required, such as a driving license. VISA and Mastercard are most likely to be accepted in large department stores.

Internet Banking Services: This is a simpler and more efficient method of dealing with your banking needs. Most banks have internet banking available in English. You can also authorize automatic payments for monthly bills.

Accept giro: Some companies will have an *Acceptgiro* attached to the bill. There is usually a charge to use them.

Cheques: Cheques are not used in the Netherlands for normal transactions. International cheques can be deposited in bank accounts, but there will be transaction fees.

Post Office

The Post services are run by TNT and many post offices have closed. Postal services can now be found in some supermarkets, shops such as Bruna, Albert Heijn.

See www.tntpost.nl to find post offices in your area.

Public Transport

- Services and travel planning: www.connexxion.nl

- Bus information: www.gvu.nl
- Public transport information within the Netherlands: www.9292ov.nl
- Train information within the Netherlands: www.ns.nl
- International Train services: www.nshispeed.nl

OV- Chipkaart

The OV-chipkaart has been introduced in recent years for payment for public transport. There are many different kinds of cards you can buy depending on the frequency you will use it. The card is the size of a credit card, which you preload with credit. Then the card must be 'swiped' as you enter and then leave the bus or tram. The fare is automatically calculated and deducted from your credit. OV cards can be loaded with credit at various points around the city, e.g. at Albert Heijn supermarket, in addition to machines at the station. For more information, including in English see: www.ov-chipkaart.nl

SWIMMING POOLS

De Lieberg

Jan van der Heydenstraat 170
1221 EM Hilversum
Tel: 035-683 0954
www.optisport.nl/lieberg

Zwembad de Zandzee

Struikheiweg 14, 1406 TK Bussum
This swimming pool complex also holds disco parties and children's birthday parties
Tel: 035-693 3554
www.dezandzee.nl

Zwembad De Lunet

Amersfoortseweg 13, Naarden
Tel: 035-694 0620
www.sportfondsen.nl

Bosbad Baarn

Outdoor swimming pools for all ages open May-September
Bosbadlaan 4, 3744 KD Baarn
Tel: 035-541 2214
www.bosbaddevuursche.nl

Zwembad De Biezem

Schapendrift 64, Laren
Tel: 035-531 4964
www.debiezem.nl

Swimming Lessons

Children who take swimming lessons aim to obtain Diplomas in swimming. Diploma A is the first level and it is required in order for your child to swim without armbands in the pool. Further Diplomas B, C and so on can be done afterwards if your child wishes. Lessons are often weekly or twice weekly and there is often a waiting list.

For younger children, there are parent and child swim classes available.

Swimming lessons also available at **Van Hellemond Sport**

Johan de Wittstraat 40, Hilversum
www.hellemond.nl

Zwem en Poloclub De Otters Het Gooi

Swimming and water polo club which uses the facilities at Zandzee pool, Bussum (see above)
www.deottershetgooi.nl

SPORTS CLUBS

FIELD HOCKEY

Hilversumse Mixed Hockey Club (HMHc)

Sportpark Loosdrecht, 't Jagerspaadje 24
Field hockey club for boys and girls in Loosdrecht.
www.hmhcnu.nl

Hockey Vereniging 't Spandersbosch

Field hockey club for boys and girls in Hilversum at Sportpark Crailoo.
www.spandersbosch.nl

FOOTBALL /SOCCER (Voetbal)

There are many football clubs around Hilversum and surrounding towns. This is just a small selection:

HC & FC Victoria

Big club in Loosdrecht with many teams. Sportpark Loosdrecht at 't Jagerspaadje 26.
www.victoria1893.nl

SC 't Gooi

Located in Hilversum, Sportpark Berestein, Kininelaantje 9, Hilversum
www.sc-tgooi.nl

F.C. Hilversum

Located in Hilversum, Sportpark Crailoo
www.fchilversum.nl

SV Olympia

Located in Hilversum, next to the Tulip Tennis Centre, Kininelaantje 11, Hilversum
www.svolymphia25.nl

V.V. Altius

Located in Sportpark Berestein, Kininelaantje 6-7, next to the Hilversum Rugby club
www.altius.nl

RUGBY

Rugby Club 't Gooi

Amersfoortsestraatweg 14, Naarden
Youth training Tuesday and Thursday evenings 19:00
www.pichero.com/clubs/rugbyclubgooi

Rugbyclub Hilversum

Located in Hilversum, Sportpark Berestein next to Altius Football club
Youth training on Thursday evenings 18:30.
www.rugbyclubhilversum.nl

HORSE-RIDING

Manege Hallinckveld

Lessons for children from age 6 or 7, located in Loosdrecht.

Tel: 035-582 1192

www.hallinckveld.nl

Manege de Kamphorst

Lessons for children from age 7, located in Nieuw Loosdrecht

Tel: 035-582 1980

www.dekamphorst.nl

TENNIS

There are many tennis clubs around the city, some are open all year, others only in the summer months. Some may have a waiting list to join.

Tulip Tennis Centre, Kininelaantje

This centre has indoor and outdoor courts available for rent by the hour, without needing membership. You can also become a member of the Hilverheide tennis club based there.

www.tuliptenniscenter.nl www.hilverheide.nl

Berry Ruijter

Berry offers tennis lessons at De Rading tennis club in the summer and at the Pandahallen, Loosdrecht (indoor) in winter. Used by many families in school. Telephone: 06-2150 3737

www.dijor.nl

De Rading tennis club: <http://derading.lisa-is.nl/site>

ICE SKATING & ICE HOCKEY

IJscentrum De Vechtsebanen, Mississippidreef 151, Utrecht

Semi-covered 400m ice skating rink and Ice hockey rink in Utrecht. There is a shop to hire skates. Lessons are organised by a separate company.

www.vechtsebanen.nl

Ice-skating lessons are run by Duosport: www.duosport.nl

Jaap Eden IJsbanen

Outdoor Ice skating rink in Amsterdam

www.jaapeden.nl

SAILING

There are many locations in the Netherlands to sail or do sailing courses. There are several in Loosdrecht, which run sailing courses during the school holidays.

Zeilschool de Vuurtoren

Oud Loosdrechtsedijk 97A, Loosdrecht. Tel: 035-582 8113

www.zeilschooldevuurtoren.nl

Zeilschool de Vuntus Horndijk 24a, Loosdrecht

www.vuntus.nl Tel: 035-582 8741

OTHER SPORTS

Baseball, Sportvallei, Zanderijweg 4-6, Bussum

Baseball club for adults and children

www.hcaw.nl

Cricket

Hilversum Cricket Club, Berestein Sportpark, Hilversum

www.hilversumsccheccricketclub.nl

Judo

Classes for children and adults at Van Hellemond Sport.

Johan de Wittstraat 40, Hilversum www.hellemond.nl

Ballet/dance

MS Dansschool - Marianna Stefanovska. Lessons given in Hilversum.

Tel: 06-2557 5241

www.msdansschool.nl

Dansstudio Andrea Meyer-Rogge, Soestdijkerstraatweg 45, Hilversum

Children's dance classes from age 4.

www.dansstudioandreameyerrogge.nl

Tel: 035-685 0280

Marjolein's Dance Studio, Wezellaan 35, Hilversum.

Classic, streetdance, jazz dance and ballet from age 4 and up.

Tel: 035-623 1562

www.marjoleinsdancestudio.nl

Athletics

Gooise Atletiek Club (GAC), Arenapark

www.gooiseatletiekclub.nl

Gymnastics

Gymnastiek en Turnvereniging Hilversum (GTVH)

There are gymnastic classes for all ages at locations around Hilversum.

www.gtvh.nl

Little Gym, Hessenweg 187, De Bilt

Indoor gym with activities organised by the instructor. Activities are tailored to the childrens' ages from 1-12 years. Tel: 030-221 1011

www.thelittlegym-eu.com

Skiing (artificial ski slope)

De Wolfskamer Ski Club

IJsselmeerstraat 5, Huizen

www.wolfskamer.nl

MUSIC & OTHER AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The Globe Arts Centre, Heuvellaan 33, 1217 JL Hilversum.

Offer courses for children and adults in music, art, dance and drama.

Tel: 035-688 6800

www.globeckc.nl

International Scouts Hilversum

In English, meets every Thursday evening and offers indoor and outdoor programs.

There are two age groups; Cubs (age 7-11 years) and Scouts (age 11-14 years).

Clubhouse is at Orionlaan 60, Hilversum.

www.hilversum-intl.nl

Little Broadway

Tiffany Jansen offers drama courses for children after school.

www.littlebroadway.webs.com

Piano Room of i-arts – Yoshimi Kawai

Yoshimi is a parent in our school and she teaches piano to many children in the school of all ages and levels.

Tel: 06-4896 3873

www.i-arts.jp

Robbert's Music School, Koninginneweg 76 – 78, 1211 AT Hilversum.

Offer lessons in guitar, drums, piano and singing.

Tel: 035-623 1431

www.guitars.nl/musicschool

After School Care (*Naschoolse Opvang*)

The **Bink Kinderopvang** is the main headquarters for the childcare facilities in the Hilversum area. <http://binkkinderopvang.nl/>

Bink Kinderopvang offers day-care (*Kinderopvang*) and after-school (*Naschoolse Opvang*) care.

Kinderopvang (day-care) is available for children from 0 to 4 years. It is open from 08:00 - 18:30

on workdays and on school vacation days. A minimum stay of two days is required. Early registration is highly recommended. Waiting lists for placement are quite normal.

Naschoolse Opvang (after school care) caters to children from 4 to 12 years. It is open after school hours on workdays until 18:30 and from 08:00 - 18:30 during school vacation days. The number of supervisors/caretakers varies according to the number of children in the group.

Babysitters

The best way to find a babysitter is by asking other parents. There are au pairs and teenagers who advertise on the school notice boards in either of the school locations.

www.zoekoppas.nl is a website where you pay a fee to search for babysitters in your area or you can place your own advertisement to find someone.

CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTY IDEAS

Here are some of the party venues and other possibilities for birthday parties in 't Gooi.

Speelparadijs Kidzcity

Large indoor playground with rides for all ages up to about age 12. Located in Utrecht.

www.kidzcity.nl

Monkeytown

Indoor playground in Bussum for younger children up to about age 7 or 8.

www.monkeytown.nl

Rock steady climbing and skiing centre

For older children age 7 and up. Located in Bussum next to Monkeytown.

www.rocksteady.nl

Race Planet for kids

Indoor playground for children, aged 2-12 and indoor go karting for children aged 8 and over. Located in Mijdrecht and Amsterdam.

www.raceplanet.nl

Kartfabrique

Indoor go karting for children 1.35m and taller. Located in Utrecht.

www.kartfabrique.nl

Snowworld

Huge indoor skiing centre, located in Zoetermeer.

www.snowworld.com

Little Gym, Hessenweg 187, De Bilt

Indoor gym with activities organised by the instructor. Activities are tailored to the children's ages from 1-12 years.

Tel: 030-221 1011

www.thelittlegym-eu.com

't Kinder trefpunt

Various party possibilities; pirate party, indoor football, lasergame and disco.

Located in Oud-Loosdrecht.

www.kinderverjaardagen.nl

Bowling Centrum, Huizen

Plein 2000 No.13 Huizen.

Tel: 035-666 8653

www.bowling-huizen.nl

Kinderspeelparadijs Ballorig

There are several locations around the Netherlands. The closest ones are in Houten and Almere.

www.ballorig.nl

Bowling Loosdrecht

Bowling and party centre, in Oud Loosdrecht.

www.bowlingloosdrecht.nl

Qzone Lasergame, Huizen

Lasergame and pizza factory where children can play a laser game, then make their own pizzas.

www.coronel.nl

Spelekids

Recently opened an indoor playground for children up to about age 10.

Industrieweg 12, 1231 KH, Loosdrecht.

www.spelekids.nl

Avontuurfabriek

A company offering lasergame, glow-in-the-dark bowling, glow-in-the-dark golf and paintball.

Located next to Spelekids in Nieuw Loosdrecht, various arrangements for parties can be made.

www.lasergame.nl

www.avontuurfabriek.nl
www.paintball-centrum.nl

Confetti

Parties can be held in the shop in Hilversum or other locations such as Kasteel de Haar. Also for rent are themed costumes for a party at home.

www.hilversum.creatiefconfetti.nl

Abracadabra

Hire a chest full of costumes and party games by theme, eg pirates, princesses, mermaids, knights. Based in Amersfoort.

www.abra-ca-dabra.nl

Castle Muiderslot

Themed parties where children can dress up as a princess or a knight. Popular, so reservations must be made far in advance.

www.muiderslot.nl

Speelpark Oud Valkeveen

Outdoor recreational park with rides, boating lake and a beach. Open April to October each year.

www.oudvalkeveen.nl

Klimbos

Outdoor climbing in the trees, in the forest near Apeldoorn. Open April to October.

www.klimbos.nl

Zwembad de Zandzee

Swimming parties and Friday evening disco parties available. Located in Bussum.

Mini-Golf

Mini golf course next to the Baarns Bosbad De Vuursche.

www.bosbaddevuursche.nl/midgetgolf

Midgetgolftuinen Lage Vuursche, located in the village of Lage Vuursche.

www.midgetgolftuinen.nl

FUN FAMILY TRIPS

The Netherlands offers many fantastic places to visit, with its famous museums, art galleries, and attractions, such as the Keukenhof and Van Gogh museum. Closer to Hilversum there are also many things to see and do, some of which are listed below.

Museumjaarkaart

You pay an annual fee for the Museum card, which then gives free entry to many of the top museums across the Netherlands, such as Van Gogh in Amsterdam. If you visit at least 3 museums a year it will be good value for money. In 2023 the annual fee will be €64,90 for adults and €32,45 up to 18 years old.

For details see www.museumkaart.nl

Museums

Naarden Vesting Museum

Restored fortress in the fortified town of Naarden, ramparts and interesting shops.

www.vestingmuseum.nl

Nederlands Spoorweg Museum, Utrecht

Fantastic museum all about trains, mostly indoors, with many exhibits and interesting rides.

www.spoorwegmuseum.nl

Zuiderzee Museum, Enkhuizen

Museum about the history, communities and crafts connected to the Zuiderzee, now called the IJsselmeer.

www.zuiderzeemuseum.nl

Netherlands Open Air (*Openlucht*) Museum

Wooded park outside Arnhem with over 80 historic houses, farmhouses and mills to discover.

www.openluchtmuseum.nl

Militaire Luchtvaart Museum

Aviation museum, which is for free! Birthday parties are also possible. Located in Soesterberg.

www.militaireluchtvaartmuseum.nl

Muiderslot, Muiden

Moated castle at the mouth of the river Vecht, built originally in 1280. It has two self-guided tours of the castle and frequent falconry displays. Birthday parties are also possible, but must be booked well ahead.

www.muiderslot.nl

Beeld en Geluid Institute

A fun media museum in Hilversum

www.beeldengeluid.nl

NEMO

Science museum in Amsterdam with many exciting interactive exhibits. Fun for all ages.

www.e-NEMO.nl

Aviodrome, Pelikaanweg 50, Luchthaven Lelystad

Aviation museum with many airplanes to climb on and interesting exhibits of the history of flight. www.aviodrome.nl

Space Expo, Keplerlaan 3, Noordwijk

A museum dedicated to space travel and the Space station.

www.space-expo.nl

Animals and Zoos

Kinderboerderij De Hertenkamp (petting zoo)

Hoge Naarderweg 205

www.kinderboerderijhilversum.nl

Amersfoort Zoo

Barchman Wuytierslaan 224, Amersfoort.

Large zoo in a woodland setting. Numerous playgrounds and a great dinosaur park. www.dierenparkamersfoort.nl

Dolfinarium

Strandboulevard Oost, Harderwijk

www.dolfinarium.nl

Burger's Zoo, Bush and Safari park

Great zoo with animals grouped by climatic areas.

Antoon van Hooffplein, Arnhem

www.burgerszoo.eu

Safaripark Beekse Bergen

Hilvarenbeek, Noord-Brabant

Drive in the safari bus or your own car through the safari park and see lots of animals. www.safaripark.nl

Outdoor fun

Natuurmonumenten

Many natural outdoor spaces are managed by the Natuurmonumenten around Hilversum. There is also a visitors centre at Noordereinde 54B, 's Graveland. The visitor centre offers information, a café, birthday parties, playground and nature trails.

www.natuurmonumenten.nl

National Park de Hoge Veluwe, Houtkampweg 9c, Otterlo, Gelderland

A large privately owned park, which charges an admission fee. Once inside there are white bicycles, which can be used free of charge on the marked paths. The visitors centre has an excellent exhibition on the wildlife and habitat in the park. For an extra charge, you can also visit the Kroller Muller Museum, which has a great collection of Van Gogh paintings and an outside sculpture garden.

www.hogeveluwe.nl

Speelpark Oud Valkeveen, Oud Huizerweg 2, Naarden

Outdoor recreational park with rides, boating lake and a beach. Open April to October each year.

www.oudvalkeveen.nl

De Efteling, Europalaan 1, 5171 KW, Kaatsheuvel

Large amusement park with lots of rides, open all year.

www.efteling.com

Kasteel Groeneveld

Castle, gardens and grounds on the edge of Baarn. It is a relaxing place to spend a sunny afternoon. Events and exhibitions held during the year. In the grounds of the castle, Hoeve Ravenstein, a farm shop and café have recently opened. The shop offers organic fruit, vegetables, cheese, dairy products and meat.

www.kasteelgroeneveld.nl

www.hoeveravenstein.nl

Kasteel Sypesteyn

Castle and gardens in Nieuw-Loosdrecht

www.sypesteyn.nl

Lage Vuursche

A small village to the east of Hilversum, surrounded by beautiful forests. Many possibilities to

walk and cycle in the area, then visit the village and enjoy a beer or pancake in one of the numerous restaurants.

www.lagevuursche.com

Water & boating

To the west of Hilversum lie the Loosdrechtse Plassen and the River Vecht. These lakes and the river offer many opportunities to enjoy the water on a fine day. There are many places to hire a boat, both motor boats and sailing boats. Be sure to book ahead when there is fine weather. The river Vecht has many beautiful mansions along the riverbanks and pretty villages such as Breukelen, Vreeland and Loenen. If it gets cold in winter, there is a good chance of ice-skating on the lakes.

Boat hire in Loosdrecht:

Bonnema Watersport, Oud Loosdrechtsedijk 272, Loosdrecht.

www.bonnemawatersport.nl

Ottenhome, Zuwe 20, Kortenhoef.

www.ottenhome.nl

Sloepen Verhuur Loosdrecht, Nieuw Loosdrechtsedijk 212, Loosdrecht.

www.sloepenverhuurloosdrecht.nl

De Otter Loosdrecht, Oud Loosdrechtsedijk 131, Loosdrecht.

www.deotterloosdrecht.nl

Bootverhuur Manten, Oud Loosdrechtsedijk 204, Loosdrecht.

www.bootverhuur-loosdrecht.nl

Beaches

Around the Loosdrechtse plassen there are a few beaches where you can swim:

- Recreatieterrein De Strook – on the south side of the Loosdrecht lakes, with a café, and swimming areas
- De Vuntus : small beach in Oud Loosdrecht

Further afield: Internet information: www.recreatiemiddennederland.nl

Recreatieplas Henschotermeer

Swimming lakes, beaches in the forest to the east of Utrecht.

Maarsseveense Plassen

This is situated between Utrecht and Maarssen.

IJsselmeer – the closest beach is at Gooierhoofd in Huizen.

North Sea : there are several resort towns along the North Sea beaches, such as Bloemendaal-aan-Zee, Zandvoort, Katwijk and Noordwijk, which are very crowded on warm, sunny days. Be sure to set out early.

BIKES AND CYCLING

The bicycle is an integral part of life in the Netherlands and getting on a bike is one of the best ways to appreciate life here. Everything is set up for the cyclist and you will soon find that it is the quickest and easiest mode of transport around the city. For excursions outside the city, there

is interesting countryside to explore all around Hilversum and 't Gooi. Maps showing cycle paths (fietspaden) are being sold at the tourist office and the ANWB. There are online planning websites too:

www.fietsen.123.nl

www.fietsersbon.nl

There are many bike shops around the area to buy all kinds of bicycles. If you wish to hire a bike, then most of the railway stations have a bike hire shop.

OV Fiets verhuur Hilversum, Stationsplein 2.

To prepare you for the Dutch weather, it is always a good idea to have wet weather gear. It can be purchased at most outdoor and bike shops, such as

- Antilope, Koningsstraat 6, Hilversum
- Perry Sport, Kerkstraat 106
- Hema, Kerkstraat 29
- Bever, Hilvertshof 115. This shop is great for all kinds of camping and outdoor clothing and equipment.

CINEMAS

Movies are often dubbed into Dutch for children, but adult movies are usually left in their original language with Dutch subtitles. For the original language, look for 'OV' (original version) after the movie name in the listings.

The VUE cinema shows commercial films in Dutch and original versions.

Langgewenst 20

1211 BB Hilversum

Tel.: 035-624650

www.vuecinemas.nl

Filmtheater Hilversum, Heerenplein 5, Hilversum shows independent films, in the original language with Dutch subtitles.

Tel.: 035-6235466

www.filmtheaterhilversum.nl

LIBRARY

All cities have libraries, many of which have some books, magazines in languages other than Dutch. They offer lectures, readings, as well as lending out books, CDs, and films. There is an annual fee for borrowing. The central library in Hilversum: Bibliotheek Hilversum, 's Gravelandseweg 55

www.bibliotheekhilversum.nl

PRE-SCHOOL

In Holland, a child can start school immediately upon turning four years old. However, should the parent want the child to go to a pre-school, there are several available in Hilversum. The average age to start preschool (**Peuterspeelzaal**) is 2½.

Most of the pre-schools in Hilversum are run by **Bink Kinderopvang**. See also notes below on after school care. They are all run in Dutch apart from the International Playgroup, which is located next to the Rembrandt Location.

Tel: 035-647 2289

Email: info@kinderopvanghilversum.nl

Website: www.kinderopvanghilversum.nl

Applications should be made as early as possible, as waiting lists are common.

Please Note: Although The International Playgroup is located in the same campus as the IPS at Rembrandtlaan 30, 1213 BH Hilversum, it is run by the Bink and is a separate entity from IPS Hilversum. The International Primary School Hilversum requires that all children entering Group Early Years go through the standard registration procedure. Registration in the International Playgroup does not mean automatic acceptance nor registration at our school. The standard application procedure for Group Early Years at IPS still applies for all children enrolled in the International Playschool.

PLAYGROUNDS IN THE 'T GOOI AREA (*Speeltuinen*)

De Zoutkeet

Zoutmanlaan 3, Hilversum. Entrance fee for non-members.

Open daily from Easter until the Autumn Break 10:00 - 17:00, Sundays 13:30 - 17:00.

www.zoutkeet.nl

Erfgooierskwartier

Erfgooiersstraat 92, Hilversum. Entrance fee for non-members.

Open Sunday to Friday from Easter till the Autumn Break from 13:30 - 17:00

www.sv-erfgooierskwartier.nl

De Eekhoorn

Elbert Mooijlaan 31, Kortenhoef. Entrance for non-members: €1.00

Open from daily from April to October on Monday – Friday 15:00 - 17:00, Wednesdays 14:00 - 17:00, Weekends from 11:00 - 17:00

Speeltuin Stad Gods

Soestdijkerstraatweg 151, Hilversum.

Playground situated in the forest behind the Stad Gods convent. Voluntary contribution.

Hilversum International Mums and Tots Group

A group aimed at the expat community in and around Hilversum. They meet every Thursday at 9.30. All tots aged 0-4 are welcome. Buurtcentrum De Lelie, Leliestraat 6, Hilversum. For more information, contact Kate van der Meijs: kvandermeijs@hotmail.com

INFORMATIONS FOR OUTINGS & UPCOMING EVENTS

Hilversum

www.uitinhilversum.nl: this website has information on films, theatre and other cultural events in Hilversum.

www.hilversumgoedbekeken.nl information on cultural activities in Hilversum.

www.vvwhilversum.nl Hilversum tourist office.

Across The Netherlands:

www.eropuit.nl suggestions for outings all over the Netherlands.

www.uitmetkinderen.nl suggestions for day trips and lots of information on opening times and events around the Netherlands.

HEALTH CLUBS (FOR ADULTS)

Van Haren Sport and Wellness

Franciscusweg 247, Hilversum

www.vanharensport.nl

Optisport Health Club

Dudok Arena, Arena 303, Hilversum

www.optisporthealthclub.nl/hilversum

Van Hellemond Sport

Johan de Wittstraat 40, Hilversum

www.hellemond.nl

Health City

Kerkstraat 63/31, Hilversum

www.healthcity.nl

Club Sportive

Groest 86-125, Hilversum

www.clubsportive.nl

Curves

Havenstraat 10, Hilversum

www.curves.nl

Squash & Wellness

Struikheiweg 16, Bussum (next to the Zandzee swimming pool)

www.squashenwellness.nl

Sjollema Sport & Fitness

Van Leeuwenhoekstraat 6, Hilversum

www.sjollemasport.nl

Fitness Club Gooimeer

Energiestraat 49a, Naarden

www.fitnessclubgooimeer.nl

Achmea Health Center, Loosdrecht (PandaHallen)

Industrieweg 10, Loosdrecht.

Fitness club also offers gym, fitness classes, indoor tennis, squash and badminton, and a crèche for young children.

www.achmeahealthcenterloosdrecht.nl

SOCIAL NETWORK CLUBS

The American Women's Club of Amsterdam

This is a non-profit, volunteer organization providing friendship and support among American women living in the area. General meetings are held monthly from September through June at the Industriële Groote Club, Dam Square in Amsterdam. Membership is open to other nationalities as well. There are many activities and social events organized.

www.awca.nl

British Society of Amsterdam

A forum to meet new people and get more out of life in the Netherlands. Open to all English speakers of all ages. There are regular sporting and cultural activities.

www.britishsocietyofamsterdam.org

International Women's Contact Utrecht

The purpose is to give women a chance to meet each other, exchange information and socialize. It is open to women of all nationalities, ages and circumstances, although some level of English is helpful since all the activities are conducted in English. They meet monthly and many activity groups such as Mums & Tots, gardening, wine tasting and book club.

www.iwcu.nl

ACCESS

A non-profit foundation that aims to assist English speakers relocating to the Netherlands by providing information and/or advice in various matters such as schooling, housing, counseling for children with special needs, etc.

www.access-nl.org

Pets

Dogs must be registered at the local town hall (gemeente) and an annual tax (hondenbelasting) has to be paid to the tax office (Belastingdienst). Cats and other pets do not require registration. Lost/found animals are usually taken to the local rescue centre (dierenasiel).

If you plan to leave your pet at a kennel (dierenpension) while you are on vacation, you must have a pet passport and keep vaccinations up-to-date. Kennels get booked up during school vacations, so it is advisable to book early.

There are good veterinary services available in all towns (dierenarts). There is always a veterinary practice open for emergencies at night and at weekends. If you have an emergency outside normal practice hours, then call your vet and a recorded message will give you the telephone number of which vet is available.

If your pet is lost or you find a lost or injured animal, you can contact the Dierenambulance Gooi en Vechtstreek. Tel: 035-683 0300 <http://dierenambulance-gooivecht.nl>

DUTCH LESSONS

Foreign Student Service

Provides information on Dutch language training courses in the Netherlands

Tel: 020-671 5915

www.foreignstudents.nl

Volksuniversiteit Hilversum

Offer courses to learn Dutch for beginners and more advanced. Based in several locations around Hilversum.

Tel: 035-689 2051

www.volksuniversiteitihilversum.nl

ROC van Amsterdam, Gooi en Vechtstreek

Arena 301, Hilversum

www.rocva.nl/gooienvechtstreek

The Boswell Institute (University of Utrecht)

Offers a wide range of intensive Dutch courses at all levels.

www.jbi.uu.nl

Stand-By Bussum

Various courses available run by Sylvia Clements

www.learnndutchfast.nl

Building Blocks Multilingual

Sarah Johnson teaches many parents from school and offers an intensive course.

Tel: 035 623 2746

Email: johnsonsl@mac.com

Dutch help on the internet

www.dutchgrammar.nl

www.taalklas.nl

www.nt2taalmenu.nl

Other courses and education**Alliance Francais du Gooi**

French Lessons and cultural activities for all levels at various locations around Gooi.

www.alliance-francaise.nl/gooi

Volksuniversiteit Hilversum

Many courses for adults are available

www.volksuniversiteit.hilversum.nl

Globe Centrum voor Kunst en Cultuur

Heuvellaan 33, 1217 JL Hilversum.

Offers music and art courses for adults and children.

www.globeckc.nl

Klein Daan, Art classes and workshops available for adults and children. Based in Bussum. www.kleinedaan.nl

SHOPPING

The centre of Hilversum has many of the chain stores, seen all over the Netherlands, such as Hema, C&A, Intertoys and Perry Sport. There is a large indoor shopping centre called the Hilvertshof, which has many shops for clothes, food and also has a car park on top.

Gijsbrecht van Amstelstraat in Hilversum: this is a street near the school, which has many interesting and good quality individually owned stores. There is an excellent bakery, butcher, toy, clothing and shoe shops. Beware of the parking wardens, who are quick to give out parking fines.

Many other towns in 't Gooi offer good shopping, such as Bussum, Naarden, Laren and also Utrecht, Amersfoort and Amsterdam offer excellent shopping and a wider range of shops.

Shops are generally not open on Sundays in Holland, although Amsterdam and Den Haag are exceptions. In some bigger cities, there is a designated *koopzondag* (Sunday shopping). Many shops also stay closed on Mondays or do not open until 1pm. Each town has its own late

shopping night, *koopavond*, usually Thursday or Friday.

Supermarkets

There are several supermarkets; some have a customer loyalty card, which entitles you to discounts. There are no hypermarkets; and the supermarkets vary in size and selection depending on the area. The larger supermarkets in Hilversum are:

Jumbo www.jumbosupermarkten.nl Larenseweg 155

Albert Heijn www.ah.nl Langestraat 53, Kapittelweg 267 in Kerkelanden, Seinstraat 13.

Dirk van de Broek www.dirk.nl in the Hilvertshof, lower ground floor.

These other supermarkets are found in several locations around Hilversum and 't Gooi : C1000 www.c1000.nl Plus, Hoogvliet, Aldi www.aldi.nl Lidl www.lidl.nl

Albert Heijn also does home delivery for a small charge. www.albert.nl. It is connected to Gall & Gall (liquor store) and Etos (drugstore), which are also available for home delivery.

Opening times vary, but most are open Monday to Saturday 8am to 8pm. Some supermarkets are open on Sunday afternoon 16:00-20:00. At the Hilversum central station there is an Albert Heijn To Go open on Sundays, which has a very limited food range, including milk and bread.

Markets

There is a market on Wednesday and Saturday mornings in the centre of Hilversum.

Household goods and Furniture:

There are a number of out-of-town 'Woonboulevards' which have many kitchen, bathroom and furniture shops. www.woonboulevard.nl

Woonboulevard Utrecht : Hollantlaan, near IKEA

Woonboulevard Amersfoort: Amsterdamseweg

Villa Arena in Amsterdam: Arena Boulevard, Amsterdam Zuid-Oost.

Nijhof Baarn, Minervaweg 3, Baarn

Large department store for household items, including furniture, DIY items, kitchenware, outdoor furniture. It also has a La Place café and supervised childcare. www.nijhofbaarn.nl

IKEA

Large department store where you can furnish your whole house at reasonable prices. Supervised childcare available for up to 1 hour (aged up to 10) and a café. Nearest locations are Utrecht and Amersfoort.

www.ikea.nl

BCC: for white goods, electronic TV, audio and computer equipment.

Building materials and DIY : Gamma, Karwei, Hubo and Praxis.

Baby Stores

Ukkepukken, Neuweg 134, Hilversum.

Stocks quality second hand and new clothing and accessories for babies and young children.

www.ukkepukken.nl

Prenatal, Kerkstraat 102, Hilversum.

Stocks clothing, equipment and accessories for babies, young children and pregnant ladies.

www.prenatal.nl

Mevrouw Groen, 's Gravelandseweg 46, Hilversum.

Fun collection of furniture and accessories for babies and young children.

www.mevrouwgroen.nl

Children's clothing and shoes

Large chain stores which sell a range of children's clothes include:

H&M, C&A, Zara, Okaidi and Hema.

Shoe shops:

Van Haren (Kerkstraat 10-12), Bristol (Zeedijk 33) and Scapino (Noordse Bosje 7) stock the soft shoes children need for gym and have a range of well-priced shoes and sports shoes.

Decathlon

Large store selling all kinds of sports equipment and clothing at reasonable prices. Located by the Arena, Amsterdam.

www.decathlon.nl

Books

Books in English and other foreign languages are found in some larger bookshops, but can be very expensive. Online alternatives are often better value, such as:

www.bol.com, www.amazon.co.uk

CHURCHES WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES

Cross Roads, International Church Amsterdam

Amstelveen College, Startbaan 12, Amsterdam

www.xrds.nl

Thousand Hills International Church

Neuweg 148, 1214 HA Hilversum (The Zuiderkerk)

Weekly Sunday service : 10:30 AM

www.thousandhills.cc

Parish of Blessed Trinity (Roman Catholic)

Zaaiersweg 180, Watergraafsmeer, 1079 ST Amsterdam

Mass in English every Sunday at 10:30 and 12 noon.

www.blessedtrinity.nl

St. Vituskerk (Roman Catholic)

Emmastraat 7, Hilversum

1211 NE Hilversum (opposite Gooiland Hotel)

Mass in English celebrated every Saturday 5.30pm

Contact : Alma Patist : Tel : 035-628 2298 or Fr. Dresme : Tel : 035- 624 7415.

Website : www.vitus.nl

St. Augustine's Church (Roman Catholic)

Oudegracht 69, Utrecht (next to Rembrandt's cinema)

Mass in English every Sunday at 12:30pm

<http://englishmassutrecht.blogspot.com>

Christ Church, Amsterdam (Anglican)

Groenburgwal 42, 1011 HW Amsterdam

Services every Sunday at 10am

www.christchurch.nl

Holy Trinity Church (Anglican)

Van Limburg-Stirumplein, Utrecht

www.holytrinityutrecht.nl

English Reformed Church (affiliated to Church of Scotland)

Begijnhof 48, 1012 WV Amsterdam

www.ercadam.nl

SHOPS AND SERVICES RECOMMENDED BY PARENTS

A&S Financial Advisers

Hoge Naarderweg 6a, Hilversum

Provide financial advice including investments and mortgages.

www.asfa.nl

Piano tuner (piano stem service)

YPMA Pianos make appointments for regular tuning of your piano.

www.ympapianos.nl

Bike repair service at your home

www.fietsenserviceaanhuis.nl

Boarding Kennels for cats, dogs

Dierenpension Naarden.

www.dierenpension-naarden.nl

Tax Advisers: Habermehl Belastingadviseurs

Emmastraat 51, Hilversum

Tel: 035-628 5753

HandyMan

Many international families have used Bart and he runs his own company 'Bartworks'.

Trustworthy, fast and reliable and speaks perfect English. Bart is a qualified engineer and can help with gas, electrics, plumbing and painting.

Email: bart@bartworks.nl Tel: 06-4406 6172

Yoga lessons in English

www.yogamar.eu

My Studio Fotografie

Ericaweg 31, Laren 035-531 7094

Photographic studio specialising in children's and family photos

www.mystudio.nl

Batavia Stad Factory outlet shops for many different fashion brands. Located in Lelystad.

www.bataviastad.nl

Makelaardij Voorneveld, Gijsbrecht van Amstelstraat 303, Hilversum

Erwin Voorneveld is a highly recommended realtor for buying a house in

Hilversum. Erwin@voorneveld.nl

RESTAURANTS RECOMMENDED BY PARENTS

General websites to find restaurants, which may have been independently reviewed:

www.iens.nl

www.lekker.nl

For quick lunch in Hilversum

- Bagels and Beans, Kerkstraat 3
- Koffie en Theeschenkerij van Zijtveld, Kerkstraat 100
- Your coffee, Kerkstraat 38A
- Parc, Havenstraat 58

Restaurants in Hilversum

Kings IJscfé, Emmastraat 2, Hilversum

Delicious ice cream ... watch the world go by. Next to the Gooiland Theater.

IJssalon de Hoop, Huizerweg 10, Blaricum

Excellent ice cream café in the middle of Blaricum.

www.ijssalondehoop.nl

Tiramisu Koninginneweg 101, Hilversum

Relaxed Italian restaurant with friendly ambiance. Also an ice cream shop

www.tiramisuhilversum.nl

Gandhi India & Nepal Restaurant, Kampstraat 21, Hilversum

Friendly Indian restaurant with a wide variety of authentic dishes. Also does takeaway and home delivery.

India Poort Tandoori, Gasthuisstraat 1, Hilversum

Also does home delivery within Hilversum.

Proeverij De Open Keuken, Laanstraat 31-35, Hilversum

Excellent seasonal menu in a welcoming, cosy restaurant. Large terrace outside.

www.deopenkeuken.nl

Surya Indian and Nepalese Restaurant, Langestraat 126, Hilversum

Delicious food in a relaxed and comfortable ambiance.

De Gulle Graef Laanstraat 35a, 1211 HG Hilversum

Very nice atmosphere and friendly service. Famous for its variety of beers.

info@gullegraef.nl

Restaurants around 't Gooi

Theehuis 't Hooge Erf, Hoge Vuurseweg 11, Lage Vuursche. 035-646 8212

In the forest near Lage Vuursche. Relaxed café with delicious coffee, cakes, lunches and supper. Great place to eat after a long walk or bike ride.

www.theehuislagevuursche.nl

De Tafelberg Oude Naarderweg 2, 1261 DS Blaricum, 035-538 3975.

Located in Blaricum next to the heide, this restaurant is fabulous for children. The restaurant has a gate leading out to the heide for the children to run around and play. They even supply

footballs for the children to borrow. Parents can relax inside in winter or dine on the large outdoor terrace. A very child friendly menu and yummy food for the grownups. You must book in warmer weather one week in advance. All the locals know about this gem!!!

www.tafelberg.nl

Restaurant de Paddestoel, Vuursche Dreef 180, Hollandsche Rading

Relaxed restaurant on the edge of the forest near Hollandsche Rading. Playground for the children and a wide choice of food, including pancakes.

www.de-paddestoel.nl

Eethuys-Café de Generaal, Lt-Gen. van Heutszlaan 5, Baarn

Popular cafe situated in historic old station of Baarn.

www.degeneraal.nl

Café Restaurant de Otter, Oud-Loosdrechtsedijk 131-K, Oud-Loosdrecht

Friendly café with a large terrace overlooking the water. Live jazz every Thursday night.

www.restaurantdeotter.nl

Restaurant de Prinsemarij, Sint Janstraat 1, 1251 KX Laren

Located in the heart of Laren this restaurant is fantastic for a family meal or in a group. There are two floors of dining with an outdoor courtyard. The real bonus is...there is a toy room on the third floor with Lego, table tennis, playstation etc. Take note this is unsupervised. The food is excellent with a great children's menu.

www.prinsemarij.nl

Bellevue Restaurant Blaricum, Huizerweg 11, 1261 AS Blaricum. This restaurant is lovely in winter with a big roaring fire. Great menu with a special children's menu as well. Children get a gift at the end of the meal.

www.bellevueblaricum.nl

De Coeswaerde Pannenkoekenhuis, Brink 18-A, 1251 KW Laren. Located in the heart of Laren this restaurant is famous for its pancakes although there is an extensive menu with other (lighter) options. The children love this as they order a pancake and get to choose a toy as well! There is also a small toy room on the first floor. In winter there is a roaring fire to add to the atmosphere.

Restaurant de Molen, Loodijk 30, 1244 NL Ankeveen.

This restaurant is all about atmosphere. The food is simple. The novelty is that the restaurant is inside an old windmill. It's tiny so it's best to book ahead.

www.restaurant-demolen.nl

Restaurant Watertuin, Oud-Loosdrechtsedijk 185, 1231 LW Loosdrecht. Located in Loosdrecht right by the marina, this restaurant has a great menu and fabulous atmosphere anytime of year. There is a children's menu. Children especially love it in summer time as they can walk around the boat moorings whilst you enjoy the sun on the terrace. Take note...there is no rail along the piers. www.indewatertuin.nl

Restaurant Mauritshoeve, Maartensdijkseweg 9, Bilthoven.

Located just on the edge of the forest outside Maartensdijk. It can be reached by car or by a great ride through the forest by bike. It offers a wide menu, including pancakes and a children's menu. Outside there is a terrace and play area for children. www.mauritshoeve.nl

Theehuis Rhijnauwen, Rhijnauwenselaan 16, Bunnik.

Large pancake restaurant located next to Fort Rhijnauwen and a popular recreation area outside Utrecht. There is a large playground, as well as walking, cycling paths and canoe hire.

CULTURAL TRADITIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Oud en Nieuw (New Year's Day)

Midnight, December 31

The Dutch welcome the New Year with a bang!

Fireworks can be bought in specified locations all over the country and are allowed to be lit for a few hours only for this day of the year. Traditional pastries such as *oliebollen* (a round doughnut-type pastry) are served throughout the day with champagne, coffee or tea.

Carnaval

Carnival is a Christian festival held on the Tuesday before Lent. It is a chance for people to enjoy themselves before Lent begins. In the Southern part of Holland, especially in the city of Maastricht, this is a major event with carnival parades complete with floats, marching bands, and costumed participants. Carnival in Rio with a Dutch flavour!

Kings Day (Koningsdag) April 27

This is a national holiday in the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles, and Aruba on 27th of April or on 26th of April if the 27th is a Sunday. Kings Day celebrates the birthday of the King of the Netherlands and is supposed to be a day of national unity.

Kings Day is known for its "free market" (*vrijmarkt*) all over the country, where everybody is allowed to sell things in the streets. Other activities during Kings Day are children's games, individual musical performances, and music concerts. The night before Kings Day is called Kings Night (*Koningsnacht*) and is marked with celebrations especially in the city of Amsterdam and The Hague.

Orange is the colour of the day - the colours of the royal family, the House of Orange-Nassau. Most homes and public buildings will display their national flag and the orange flag on this day.

Memorial Day (Dodenherdenking) May 4

Remembrance of the Dead is held annually in the Netherlands. It commemorates all civilians and members of the armed forces of the Kingdom of the Netherlands who have died in wars or peacekeeping missions since the outbreak of World War II.

Traditionally, the main ceremonies are observed in Amsterdam at the national monument on Dam Square. This ceremony is usually attended by members of the cabinet and the royal family, military leaders, representatives of the resistance movement and other social groups. At 20:00, 2 minutes of silence are held throughout the country.

Liberation Day (Bevrijdingsdag) May 5

Liberation Day is the celebration of the liberation of the Dutch people from German occupation. This is often accompanied by fanfares, markets and fireworks in the evening.

Avondvierdaagse

This is a Dutch early summer tradition in which many schools and other organisations participate. It involves 4 organised walks, along specified routes around town on four consecutive evenings in May or June.

Prinsjesdag

The 3rd Tuesday of September sees the State opening of parliament. The King rides in a golden coach through Den Haag.

Sint-Maarten, November 11.

Celebrated in traditionally Catholic villages, this feast is marked by the making of lanterns and a procession around the village ending at the Church where a Mass is held to commemorate the kindness of a soldier-saint. Much like Halloween, the children go around the neighbourhood in the early evening with their lanterns and time-honoured St. Martin songs. They are rewarded with candies and fruits.

Sinterklaas , December 5th

A tradition very dear to the Dutch. It is celebrated throughout the country with parades and big festivities. *Sinterklaas* celebrates the feast day of Bishop Nicholas of Myrna who was made a saint about 1000 years ago. He is the patron saint of children and this is his feast day.

Sinterklaas and his assistants, the *Pieten*, arrive in the Netherlands in mid-November and there are big festivities in each town to watch them arrive. From the date of his arrival until Sinterklaas leaves (Dec 6th) children leave their shoe by the fireplace each night and hope for some goodies to be there in the morning. The celebrations on December 5th are usually a very private family affair. There are special decorations, poems, songs and food served on this occasion.

ANWB

This is a motoring organisation, which has lots of useful information, including traffic information: www.anwb.nl/verkeer

USEFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

De Gemeente gids: Each city produces a booklet with useful information about the city and contact numbers

ACCESS: www.access-nl.org

Access is a non-profit organisation which aims to assist English speakers who relocate to the Netherlands. It has a range of booklets, courses and information, some of which are available free online as a PDF file. For some information and courses, there is a charge.

Expatica

Information for expats on various countries
www.expatica.com

Angloinfo: information in English on a wide range of topics for the Netherlands and other countries. www.angloinfo.com

Goudengids (yellow pages)

Online search in English www.goudengids.nl

Telephone Book (white pages)

<http://nationaltelefoongids.goudengids.nl>

Weather information: www.buienradar.nl

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY (SOS telephone assistance) 112

For fire, ambulance and police, so only used for real emergencies. Tell the operator which service you need and they will connect you.

For less urgent help call:

Hilversum Police Department 0900 - 8844

Groest 69, Hilversum

Fire (Brandweer) 035 - 688 5555

Ambulance 035 - 683 5200

Animal Ambulance 035 - 683 0300

24 hour information for Doctors and dentists 0900 - 1515

General Doctors Office (Huisartsenpost)

For medical help in evenings and weekends 0900 - 9359

Emergency dental help: 0900 - 821 2230

National emergency number for gas and electricity 0800 - 9009

Transport

Schiphol General Information 0900 - 0141

Public Transport Information 0900 - 9292

Tourist Information HILVERSUM (VVV) 035 - 629 2810

Automobile Association (ANWB) 035 - 624 1751

IPS Hilversum

IPS Hilversum (Rembrandt Location) 035 621 6053

IPS Hilversum (Mondrian Location) 035 3037163