



JOSÉ MARIA DOS SANTOS SCHOOL CLUSTER

Welcome Guide for Migrant
Students and Parents

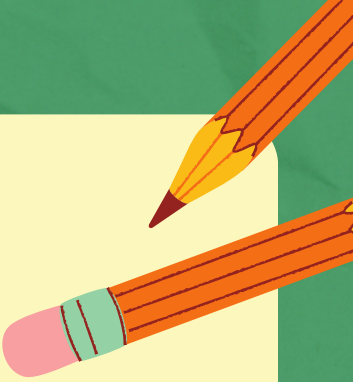


Welcome to AEJMS!

Living in Portugal can be challenging, especially when everything feels new – the language, the school system, public services and everyday routines.

That is why this guide was created: to help guardians and immigrant students, especially those who are learning Portuguese, feel more integrated, safe and confident in their new lives.

In this guide, you will find useful information about the school, available services and other practical aspects of living in Portugal.



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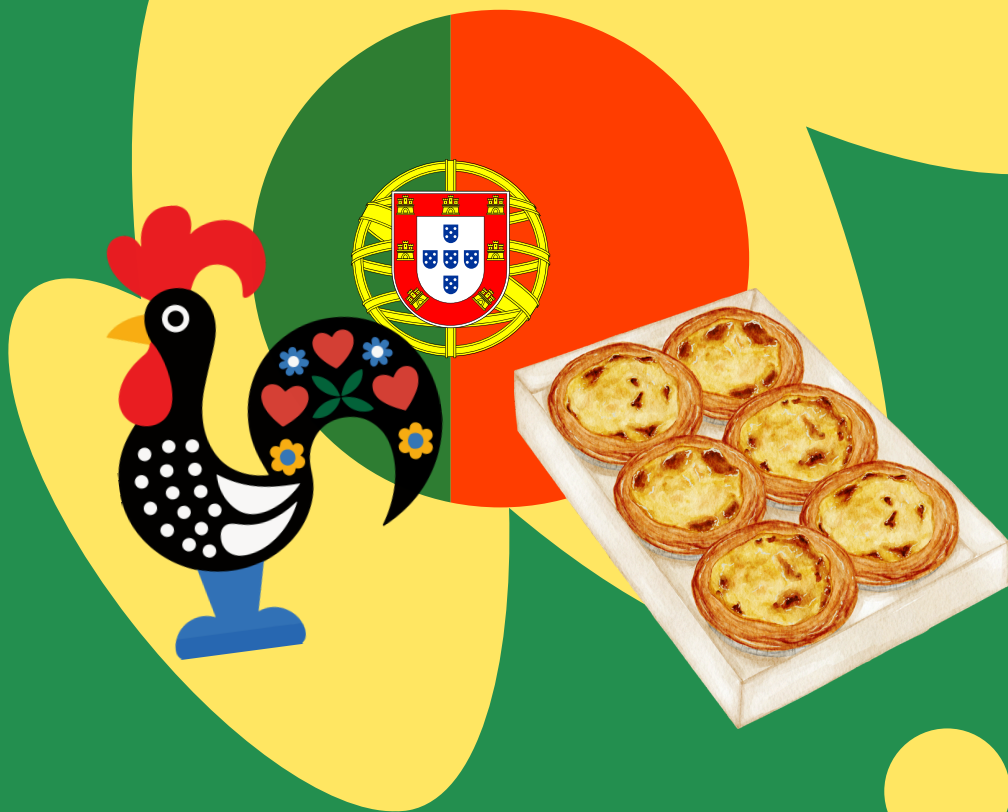
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Living in Portugal

General Information

Official name: The Portuguese Republic

Capital: Lisbon (Lisboa)

Official languages: Portuguese, Portuguese Sign Language, and Mirandese (officially recognized and spoken in some municipalities in the Northeast of Portugal)

Population: 10.749.635 people (2024)

Currency: Euro (€)

Religion: Predominantly Catholic Christian, but Portugal is a secular state.



DID YOU KNOW...?

The Portuguese language is the 5th most spoken language in the world!

There are around 260 to 280 million speakers in countries such as Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde and East Timor. It is also spoken in Goa (India) and Macau (China).

More than half of the cork in the world is Portuguese!

Portugal exports around 70% of the world's cork to countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The oldest bookshop in the world is in Lisbon!

Bertrand Bookshop has been in operation in Chiado since 1773. It is frequently visited by readers and tourists.

Culture and Traditions

Local food:

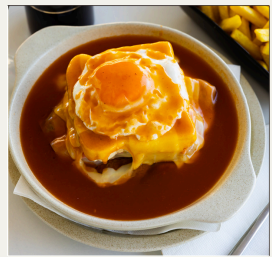
Despite its size, Portugal is a country with a **cuisine rich in flavors and variety**, from north to south. Each region has its own special set of dishes: the **Northern and Interior regions have plenty of meat-based recipes**, while **fish and seafood are popular in the Southern and coastal regions**. However, Portuguese dishes are often served with vegetables.



Caldo Verde



Bacalhau com natas



Francesinha

In Palmela, there are also many interesting dishes to try, such as **Caramela Soup (Sopa Caramela)** and the **Palmela-style Rabbit with Beans (Coelho com Feijão à Moda de Palmela)**. For desserts, there is **Rice Pudding with Sheep's Milk (Arroz Doce com Leite de Ovelha)** and **Pumpkin Pudding (Pudim de Abóbora)**.



National Holidays:

Holidays

January 1st (New Year's Day)

Good Friday*

Easter*

April 25th (Freedom Day)

May 1st (Labor Day)

Corpus Christi*

June 10th (Portugal Day)

August 15th (Assumption of Our Lady)

October 5th (Implantation Day of the Portuguese Republic)

November 1st (All Saints' Day)

December 1st (Restauration of Independence Day)

December 8th (Immaculate Conception Day)

December 25th (Christmas)

***These dates change every year.**

Local Events

In Portugal, local celebrations reflect each region's cultural identity. These festivities usually celebrate **religious, agricultural and cultural traditions**.

There are **local fairs and harvest festivals, medieval fairs**, and the **Popular Saints celebrations** in the summer. These events are dedicated to the patron saints of each locality. For example, **Saint Anthony (June 13th)** is celebrated in **Lisbon**, **Saint John (June 24th)** in **Porto**, and **Saint Peter** in **Sintra, Évora**, and several other cities. **(June 29th)**.

Pinhal Novo's patron saint is **Saint Joseph**, and the festivities take place during **the first 15 days of June**. These celebrations include many activities for all ages, such as **popular marches, stalls with traditional food, open-air concerts**, and much more.





Organization and Services

Portuguese Political System

Portugal is a democratic country, which means people **aged 18 and over** can choose their representatives **by voting**.

Foreign residents are also allowed to vote, but conditions vary depending on their nationality. For example, **citizens of the European Union and Brazil (with status of equal political rights)** can register on the electoral list at their local Parish Council (Junta de Freguesia). Citizens from other countries such as **Norway, the United Kingdom and Chile** must have lived in Portugal for three years before they can register to vote.

To find out more, **contact your local Parish Council** to learn about the specific requirements for your nationality.



Parish Council of Pinhal Novo



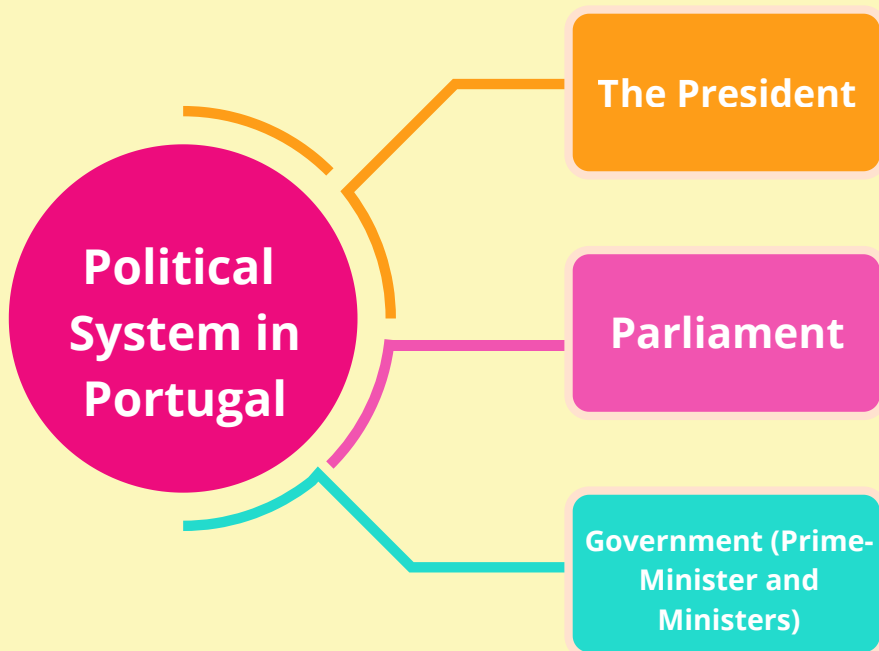
Avenida da Liberdade, 44

2955-114 Pinhal Novo

212 360 503

geral@jfpinhalnovo.pt

Government power is divided into **three main branches**:

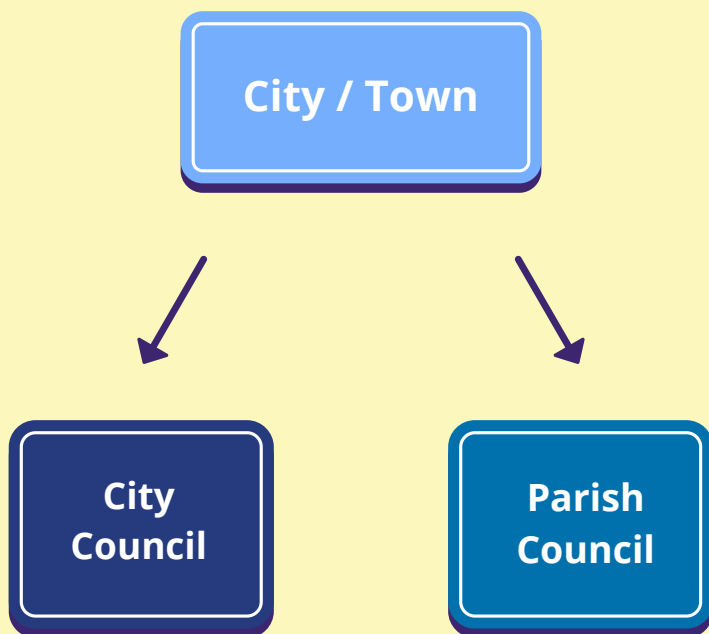


The **President (Presidente da República)** is the Head of State, **represents the country** and **is elected every 5 years**. The President **approves laws** and **can dissolve the Parliament** under special circumstances.

The **Parliament (Assembleia da República)** is where the **Members (deputados)** work. **They are elected every 4 years, create laws,** and debate topics such as the **national budget** and the **citizens' rights**.

The **Government (Governo)** is responsible for **implementing the laws** and **governing the country**. The **Prime Minister (Primeiro-Ministro)** leads the Government, and the **Ministers (Ministros)** assist with decision-making in specific areas, **namely health, education and the economy**.

Here is how power is organized **at a local level**:



The **City Council (Câmara Municipal)** is responsible for services such as **street cleaning, local transportation, schools, social assistance, and others**. The Mayor (Presidente da Câmara) and the Council Members (Vereadores) **are elected by the population**.

The **Parish Council (Junta de Freguesia)** is the **closest authority** to citizens. It manages **small local services, provides support to families, issues certificates, and more**.

Public Services

Essential Documents to Live in Portugal

Autorização de Residência (Residence Permit);
Número de Utente (National Health Service Number);
NIF - Número de Identificação Fiscal (Taxpayer Identification Number - for purchases, contracts, etc);
NISS - Número de Segurança Social (Social Security Number - required for work)
School ID or School Registration (Cartão da escola ou matrícula escolar)

AIMA

AIMA is the **Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (Agência para a Integração, Migrações e Asilo)**. It is a Portuguese government service that **assists immigrants with documentation, residence applications, family reunification, and other important important matters related to living in the country.**

- **Loja AIMA (Aima Store) - Setúbal:** Avenida Luísa Todi, 36, 38A e 40, 2900-450 Setúbal
- **Headquarters:** Avenida António Augusto de Aguiar, 20, 1069-119 Lisboa
- **Contacts:** (+351) 217 115 000 / geral@aima.gov.pt

Local Support Center For The Integration of Migrants (CLAIM)

CLAIM (Centros Locais de Apoio à Integração de Migrantes) exists to provide immigrants **with a place to ask questions and support their integration process at a local level**. Its mission is to help solve problems efficiently and with dignity, particularly those related to **bureaucracy (e.g. Residence Permit, acquisition of Portuguese nationality, access to education, health, social aid...)**; and **to refer migrants to relevant public institutions (e.g. Social Security, education, housing and legal services)**.

In the Municipality of Palmela, CLAIM operates through the services of **Fundação Santa Rafaela Maria**, which **serves residents in Palmela, Pinhal Novo and Póceirão**.

- **Contacts:** 212 800 865 / 967 135 249 / claii.ponte.prata@fsantarafaelamaria.org

Finanças (Tax and Customs Authority)

This entity is responsible for **tax and customs matters**, such as **issuing the NIF (Tax Identification Number)**, receiving and checking **IRS returns (Personal Income Tax - Imposto sobre o Rendimento das Pessoas Singulares)**, as well as **managing other taxes and customs duties**.

- **Serviço de Finanças - Palmela (Tax Office):** R. Escola Preparatória Hermenegildo Capelo 23, 2950-246 Palmela
- **Contact:** 217 206 707

Institute of Employment and Professional Training (IEFP) / Qualifica Centers

Immigrants who need support **finding a job and/or improving their qualifications** can turn to IEFP (Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional). This public service **advertises job offers, professional internships, entrepreneurship support programmes** and also assists in the integration of people with disabilities.

Residents looking for **vocational training opportunities, skills recognition, or a chance to continue their education up to 12th grade** may be referred to the **Qualifica Centers (Centros Qualifica)**. These centers also **offer Portuguese language courses (PLA - Português Língua de Acolhimento)** to help adult immigrants integrate into life in Portugal.

- **Centro de Emprego e Formação Profissional de Setúbal (Job and Training Center)**: R. António José Baptista, 86, 2910-397 Setúbal
- **Contact**: 265 146 800

Segurança Social (Social Security)

This entity serves the population **who requires information or wishes to apply for social or financial support**. It provides protection to **people in situations of unemployment, illness, maternity, disability, or old age**. Here, you can **request your social security number (NISS)**.

- **Loja do Cidadão do Pinhal Novo (Citizen Shop)**: Praça da Independência - Edifício do Mercado Municipal do Pinhal Novo, 2955-120 Pinhal Novo
- **Contact**: 300 003 990

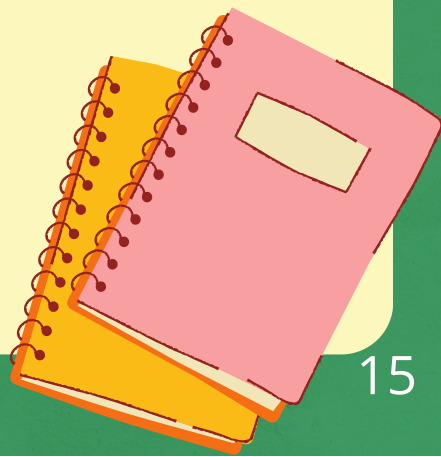


Social Assistance and Support Service (SAAS)

SAAS helps individuals and families in situations of **economic and social vulnerability**. It is a free service that provides support in areas such as **employment, housing, health and education** and assists by **referring people to public entities and social assistance programs**.

In the Municipality of Palmela, this service is provided by the Palmela City Council, with decentralized assistance available **in every parish by appointment**.

- **Palmela e Quinta do Anjo Parishes | Centro Social de Quinta do Anjo**
- **Contacts:** 212 881 358 / centrosocialquintanjo@gmail.com
- **Pinhal Novo Parish | Fundação COI**
- **Contacts:** 210 890 749 / saas@fundacao-coi.pt
- **Poceirão e Marateca Parishes | Cáritas Diocesana de Setúbal, Centro Comunitário de São Pedro**
- **Contacts:** 265 914 224 / 961 844 512 / ccspedro@caritas-setubal.com



Public Health System in Portugal (SNS)

Portugal has a public health system named **SNS - Serviço Nacional de Saúde (National Health Service)**. This service guarantees medical care for the population, including immigrants, **even if they do not have all of the official documents**. The SNS offers consultations, exams, vaccines, treatments and free hospitalization.

Foreign residents should head to a **Health Center (Centro de Saúde)** to obtain a **National Health Service User Number (Número de Utente)** and request a **Family Doctor (Médico de Família)**. This allows them to book **routine appointments**, children can have **regular check-ups** with doctors and nurses to ensure they are developing well and receive the vaccines from the **National Vaccination Plan**.

In case of a medical emergency, you must contact **SNS 24 (808242424)** before going to any Health Center or emergency service at any hospital, so you can be directed to the **nearest healthcare facility**.

In the event of a life-threatening medical emergency, contact 112.



Quick tip!

Foreign residents can now request their **identification numbers** (taxpayer number, social security number and national health service user number) **at once**.

-  Espaço Cidadão, at the Loja de Cidadão de Setúbal



School in Portugal

School System

In Portugal, every child and young person has the **right to free and universal education from ages of 6 to 18**. The educational system is divided into four levels, with **compulsory schooling from the 1st to the 12th grade**.

Pre-School Education (Kindergarten/Jardim de Infância) – 3 to 5 years old

- **Not compulsory**;
- May be provided by either **private or public institutions**;
- Children participate in activities such as **music, arts, reading, games, among others**.



Basic Education (Ensino Básico) – 6 to 15 years old

- It is divided into **3 cycles**: the 1st Cycle (**1st to 4th Grade**); the 2nd Cycle (**5th to 6th Grade**) and the 3rd Cycle (**7th to 9th Grade**);
- Students have several subjects, such as **Portuguese, Math, Sciences, History, English, Physical Education, Citizenship and Development, among others**.
- The 2nd and 3rd Cycles offer **optional classes (Moral and Religious Education)** and **study support sessions**.



Upper Secondary Education (Ensino Secundário) – 15 to 18 years old

- It prepares students for **higher education** or the **job market**. (10th to 12th grade);
- **The student may choose among the following courses**:
 - **Scientific-Humanistic Courses** – general programmes that prepare students for college;
 - **Vocational Courses** – programmes with hands-on training that prepare students for specific occupations;
 - **Artistic Courses** – programmes for students with talent in **Music, Dance, Theater or Visual Arts**.



Higher Education (Ensino Superior) – From the age of 18

- **It is divided into 3 cycles**: 1st Cycle (**Undergraduate degree – 3 to 4 years**); 2nd Cycle (**Master's degree– 1,5 to 2 years**) and 3rd Cycle (**Doctorate – 3 to 4 years**).
- **Students from general courses** may apply to Higher Education through **exams taken throughout Upper Secondary Education**. Students on **vocational courses** can also apply, but they **must take these exams as well**.
- Families in need of **financial aid** may apply for a **DGES study grant**. There are other scholarships offered by the **higher education institutions themselves** or by **local authorities**.

PLNM (Portuguese as a Non-Native Language) Students (European Union or Third Country Nationals)

School Support:

Students from immigrant households receive support **at every stage**, (school enrollment, class integration, diagnostic assessments, and more.) to help them to adapt to the Portuguese school curriculum. They can rely on the **support of their teachers and linguistic and cultural mediator**, who will help them **make friends at school and learn more about the local culture through school activities**.

Learning the Language:

Children **who are not fluent in Portuguese** take a **language proficiency test** after their **sociolinguistic profile** is outlined, in order to determine **the best way to support their integration into this new environment**. Students with **Beginner (A1 or A2) or Intermediate (B1 or B2) language levels** will attend PLNM (Portuguese as a Non-Native Language) **classes** and may also receive **additional PLNM support sessions**.

Family Support:

To assist with the **integration of foreign families**, AEJMS offers **information sessions with the Linguistic and Cultural Mediator** about institutions, school services and facilities that provide support to immigrants. Our goal is to make our schools **inclusive and welcoming environments for all students**. Therefore, we are **open to suggestions that may help improve everyone's well-being and integration**.



School Cluster Community

In Portugal, the person responsible for a child's education is called **Encarregado de Educação (guardian)**. This person monitors the child's education by **handling documentation, following their academic progress and participating in school events**. At our schools, your child will meet various staff members who will help them on a daily basis.



Operational Assistant

They help with the daily running of the school: they supervise students, provide support and guidance, carry out maintenance tasks and assist parents when needed.



School Principal

The School Principal manages, coordinates and oversees the operations of the school or school cluster.



Psychology and Guidance Service (SPO)

A specialized unit responsible for educational and vocational guidance services, psychological support, and strengthening the relationships between students, families and the school community.



School Cluster Library Coordinator

The Coordinator organizes the library, recommends interesting books and plans activities that promote reading and culture.



Teacher

They plan and teach lessons, help the students learn, and correct all assignments/activities.



Linguistic and Cultural Mediator

The Mediator facilitates the integration of foreign students and supports in communication between the school and their families.



School Coordinator

They manage and coordinate a school within the cluster.



Homeroom Teacher (2nd e 3rd Cycle) Class Teacher (1st Cycle) Preschool Teacher (Preschool)

They supervise their class, monitor the students' progress and maintain communication with parents.



Frequently Asked Questions

Student Affairs

Question 1: I would like to know about my child's academic progress.

- **Answer:** The school organizes **parent-teacher meetings at the end of each school term** to inform guardians about their student's progress. Guardians may also **schedule a meeting with the Homeroom Teacher/Class Teacher/Preschool Teacher**, if they wish to discuss other matters in private.

Question 2: I would like to understand how the school assists foreign students.

- **Answer:** Guardians of PLNM students can contact their **Homeroom Teacher/Class Teacher/Preschool Teacher and the Linguistic and Cultural Mediator** to learn more about the **school's integration strategies and activities**.

Question 3: How do I know which schoolbooks I should buy?

- **Answer:** The **School Cluster's website** provides the official textbook lists for guardians to consult. However, A1 and A2 level students **should not purchase them or redeem their textbook vouchers without first consulting their Portuguese/PLNM teacher**.

Question 4: How and where do I enroll my child?

- **Answer:** The school enrollment is done through the **Enrollment Portal (Portal das Matrículas)**. If guardians encounter any difficulties, **they should schedule an appointment with the School Administrative Services (School Office: Secretaria)**. All information about the enrollment is available on the School Cluster's website. **We also recommend regularly checking the page Notícias do Agrupamento for updates on the provisional and final lists of admitted students.**



Bureaucratic Affairs

Question 1: I would like to take care of my child's documentation.

- **Answer:** All matters related to student documentation are handled **at the School Administrative Services (School Office)**. If necessary, guardians of PLNM students **may request the support of the Homeroom Teacher/Class Teacher/Preschool Teacher and the Linguistic and Cultural Mediator for further clarification.**

Question 2: My child is enrolled in the 2nd/3rd Cycle, but I still have questions regarding the subject of Moral and Religious Education (EMR).

- **Answer:** This subject is optional and it is offered in the **Catholic (EMRC) and Evangelical (EMRE) denominations**. Once selected during the enrollment process, **it becomes mandatory** and cannot be cancelled. **Clarifications may be requested from the School Administrative Services (School Office) during the enrollment process.**

Question 3: I still do not have all the necessary legal documents.

- **Answer:** We understand that some legal documentation may take time to be issued by official authorities. To finalize enrollment, **you only need to bring:**
 - **NIF (Taxpayer Identification Number)**
 - **NISS (Social Security Number);**
 - **Passport / Residence Permit;**
 - **Proof of Residence (Water/Light/Gas bill; rental contract/property deed);**
 - **Proof of household composition validated by the Tax Authority;**
- For more information, please **visit the page "Notícias do Agrupamento"**.



School Life

Question 1: How can I find my way around the school? / I would like to speak with someone.

- **Answer:** If guardians or students cannot locate a building, service or staff member, they can ask **one of the Operational Assistants** for assistance.

Question 2: My child has been struggling mentally.

- **Answer:** The student should speak **to their Homeroom Teacher/Class Teacher/Preschool Teacher**, who can, if necessary, refer them to the **Psychology and Guidance Service (SPO)**. Students can receive counselling from the school psychologist and discuss their concerns in a safe and supportive environment.

Question 3: My child has been discriminated against by his classmates. Who should I speak to?

- **Answer:** The student or guardian **should report the situation to the Homeroom Teacher/Class Teacher/Preschool Teacher, who will carry out the necessary proceedings**. Students may also rely on the support of their **Linguistic and Cultural Mediator** to help with their integration and well-being.

Question 4: I am interested in enrolling my child in extracurricular activities.

- **Answer:** AEJMS offers a variety of activities for all students. Guardians can enroll their children in the **Ocupação Tempos Livres (OTL - Leisure Time Activities) program**, available **at the School Headquarters (2nd and 3rd Cycle)**, and in the **Escola a Tempo Inteiro (Full-time School) program for Preschool and 1st Cycle students**. The full list of available activities is provided on the School Cluster's website.





Have a Great School Year!

For more information:



www.aejms.net



**196, R. Infante Dom Henrique, Pinhal
Novo (School Headquarters)**



212 388 630

