Guideline universal design

Sheet 21: Wayfinding and signage

What? [1]

> **Wayfinding** literally means 'finding the way' in a built environment.

> **Signage** is the entirety of things that ensure that someone can quickly reach his or her destination in a built environment, for example: pictograms, visually visible signage or auditory signals when opening a lift door.

Why and for whom? [1, 2]

Wayfinding ensures that not only teachers, (support) staff and students, but also other visitors can maintain an overview in educational buildings. This is an absolute must especially for users who need sufficient structure and peace of mind, or who have problems with orientation.

Signage promotes ease of use and lowers the threshold for both new students and visitors, but also for specific groups of students who have problems with orientation or memory, for example, students who cannot receive certain sensory stimuli (such as hearing impaired, deaf, visually impaired or blind students), but also for non-native speakers.

Tips & Tricks [1, 2]

Wayfinding and signage

- ☐ **Grouping of spaces** | Ensure a logical structure of spaces / routes. Group rooms with similar functions together, for example: personnel desks, administration, classrooms, practice rooms, quiet / loud rooms.
- ☐ **Route guidance** | Provide route guidance along the route to be traveled, this can be done on the basis of:
    - natural elements: borders, green areas, paths, etc.
    - artificial elements: guidelines, tactile ripple and stud tiles, etc.
- ☐ **Basic signaling** | Provide good basic signage for each zone and space so that all locations and routes are clearly indicated. This preferably at every decision point and with every change of direction, in two directions. Be alert for superfluous or unclear signs, this can be confusing and / or cause irritation.
- ☐ **Visual, auditory and tactile** | Display information in different ways (visual, auditory and tactile).
- ☐ **Icons** | Where possible, also opt for international pictograms, such as those for the toilet, the exit or the lift, or opt for simple signs that are recognizable for all.
- ☐ **Visibility** | Make sure that the signage is striking, visible, recognizable, legible and placed at eye level (take into account the variety of eye heights).
- ☐ **Design** | Also choose appropriate backgrounds, colours and fonts for signage.
- ☐ **Glass walls and doors** | Provide glass walls and doors with a contrasting colour marking at different heights: eye level, hip height and floor height.

Know more?

- ☐ View here the inspirational guideline for integral accessibility of school buildings of the Agency for Infrastructure in Education (AGION) and Enter vzw (2014) (Dutch).

In practice

" "Our auditoriums have a name, but they have a number on technical drawings. That's why many people go to the wrong places, take this into account, consistency is important."

" "Maps must hang in visible places."

" " When students have lessons, the classroom is shown in their digital agenda. But it is also displayed visually. That's how students see it again."

" " All student counseling disciplines are bright green on every campus. That's how it stands out for students."

References

[1] AGION & Enter vzw (2014). Inspiratiebundel integrale toegankelijkheid van schoolgebouwen. Geraadpleegd op 25-09-2018 via https://www.agion.be/sites/default/files/images/Agion_271214_web_0.pdf

[2] Steunpunt Inclusief Hoger Onderwijs (2017). Universeel ontwerp [onuitgegeven intern document]. Gent: Steunpunt Inclusief Hoger Onderwijs