

Liceo Scientifico 'Benedetto Croce' – Palermo

*Regional Hospital School Centre*

# Hospital School Section 'Giovanni Di Cristina'

Scuola in Ospedale (SiO)

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# The Hospital



# The hospital

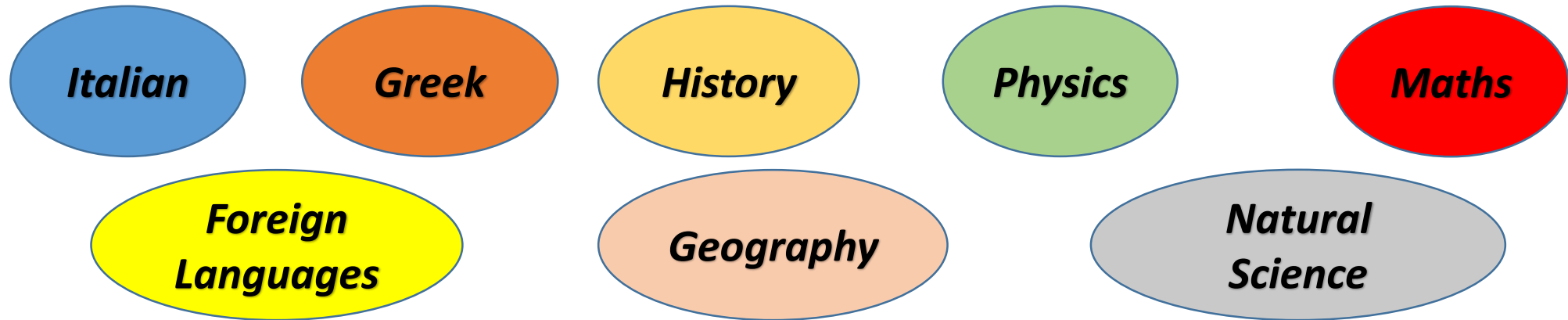
- The **children's hospital 'Giovanni Di Cristina'** is a public pediatric hospital located in one of the oldest areas of Palermo, between the two neighbourhoods *Albergheria* and *Ballarò*.
- Its building houses **our Hospital School Section** which is under the authority of '**Liceo Scientifico Benedetto Croce**' whose main task - as a ***Regional Hospital School Centre*** ('Scuola Polo Regionale') - is that of **coordinating all the 13 Hospital School Sections operating in Sicily**.
- The hospital is a **highly specialized pediatric centre** with a **First aid station** providing emergency care and treatment and **15 different Operating Units** (*Pediatric surgery, Cardiology, Anaesthesia and Intensive care, Dermatology and Allergology, Pneumonology and Pulmonary Rehabilitation, Nephrology, Child Neuropsychiatry, etc., ...*)

# The Hospital School Section 'G. Di Cristina'

- Our Hospital School Section provides education and didactic support to hospitalized children and adolescents who cannot attend 'normal' classes because of their pathological condition.
- Teachers from different **educational levels** work at this Hospital School Section:
  - **Kindergarten** (0-5 years old)
  - **Primary school** (6-10 years old)
  - **Lower Secondary school** (11-13 years old)
  - **Higher Secondary School** (14-18 years old)

# Our Student-Patients

- We work with **Higher Secondary School Students** who are **enrolled in various public and private schools** (lycées, technical and vocational schools).
- The **disciplines** taught are the so called '**common area subjects**' such as:



**\*Not all disciplines are taught in hospital** and, in case a student needs support in other **specific curriculum subjects**, an additional educational provision can be offered by a **Local Network of Schools**.

# Our Student-Patients

- Our students are hospitalized in different Units (**Pediatric Surgery**, **Cardiology**, **Nephrology**), but in recent years the great majority of adolescents we work with are hospitalized in the **Child Neuropsychiatry Unit** for both **neurological** and **psychiatric disorders**.



# Neurological disorders

- They receive care and treatment for **neurological disorders** such as:
- *Epilepsy syndromes*
- *Migraines and Chronic Headaches*
- *Attention Deficit and Learning Disorders (ADHD)*

# Psychiatric disorders





# Psychiatric disorders

- Unfortunately, over the last ten years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of adolescents suffering from psychiatric disorders including:
- ***Mood and Anxiety disorders;***
- ***Psychosis;***
- ***Eating disorders ;***
- ***Substance abuse and new addictions***
- ***Behavioural disorders***
- ***Self-injury/ Cutting***

# Psychiatric disorders

## ***Mood and Anxiety disorders:***

Major depression, Bipolar disorder, Seasonal affective disorder, etc.

## ***Psychosis:***

Schizophrenia

## ***Eating disorders:***

*Anorexia and Bulimia*

## ***Substance abuse***

(drugs, alcohol, medicines )

## ***and new addictions***

(mobile-phone and Internet addiction)

## ***Behavioural disorders***

(‘Hikikomori’ or social withdrawal)

## ***Self-injury/ Cutting***

# The hospital teacher's task

- The main **goal** of our intervention is **to guarantee the Right to Education for hospitalized children and adolescents** according to their health conditions and individual needs as well as **to ensure education for students with chronic diseases** or for **those who are convalescing at home** and need educational support and monitoring **after their discharge**.
- Hospital teachers are required to **plan, organise and deliver *customized learning*** for their students, to **set suitable targets** and **liaise with their 'home' schools**. They generally work in partnership with a **multi-disciplinary caring team**.
- Hospital teachers provide an '**educational care**' which is an **integral part of the patient's therapy** .

# The hospital teacher's task

## Teachers help hospitalized children and adolescents:

- to maintain their **student-role**;
- to **facilitate learning** through the use of suitable strategies, methods and new technologies;
- to **normalize** their everyday life in hospital;
- To prevent/reduce **school drop out** and **early leaving**;
- To relieve **back-to-school stress**

# The hospital teacher's task

Hospital teachers act as a ***bridge*** between the hospitalized children/adolescents and

- **home school teachers and classmates** (promoting the patients' inclusion and supporting their motivation)
- **external reality** (facilitating the adaptation of hospitalized students and their family).

# The teaching approach

- The approach must be **empathic** and **flexible** focused more **on learning** rather than on teaching;
- Hospital courses must be **adapted** (as for time and tools) to the **health conditions** and **abilities** of the children/adolescents **in cooperation with the ‘home school’**
- **Lessons** can be organized for **individuals** and **small groups** (either in the **hospital classroom** or at the **bedside**);
- A **variety** of teaching **methods**, **strategies** and **resources** shall be used to facilitate the learning process and prevent isolation.



# The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Hospital Schools

- In order **to prevent virus transmission**, hospital school sections were **closed** from **March to September 2020**.
- Covid-19 has deeply changed all our lives, **transforming homes and hospital wards into virtual classrooms**.
- During the lockdown period many children/adolscents have suffered from isolation and have tried to cope with it through distance learning.
- In September 2020, in order to re-organize a suitable learning and safe environment for hospitalized students, **new agreements containing strict safety measures and recommendations** were signed between the Regional School Offices (USR), the Regional Hospital School Centres and the different Hospital Administration Offices.

# The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Hospital Schools

- All patients and companions **are screened** with nasopharyngeal **swabbing** before being admitted;
- Teachers and visitors's **temperature is always checked on arrival**;
- Almost all teachers working in a hospital section **have been vaccinated** and are **weekly swabbed**;
- **Safety measures** are strictly respected (social distancing, use of face masks and other personal protective equipment, frequent handwashing, sanitizing surfaces and didactic materials).

# Useful references:

- Here below, you find a short list of useful links and biographical references on the topic:
- <https://scuolainospedale.miur.gov.it/sio/>
- <https://www.hospitalteachers.eu/>
- <http://www.hshlombardia.it/formazione/bibliografia/>

T. Catenazzo (a cura di), *La scuola in ospedale e l'istruzione domiciliare. Formazione degli insegnanti e Linee d'indirizzo nazionali*, Carocci editore, 2019, Roma.

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Thank for your attention!  
Any questions?



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