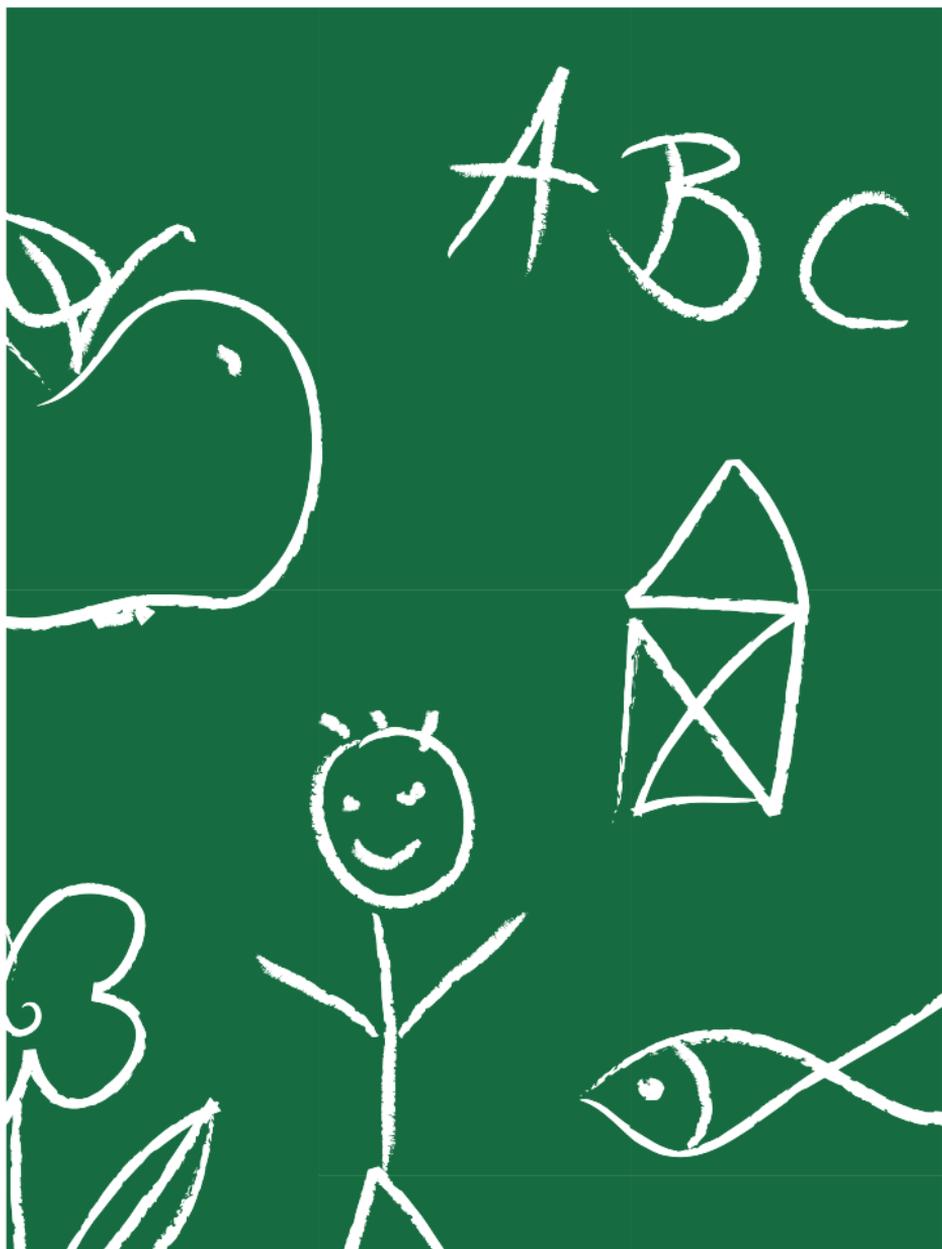


Information for parents of pupils attending elementary school



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With kind support from
the Sparkasse KölnBonn



and the
Center for Multilingualism and Integration (ZMI)

Information for parents of pupils attending elementary school

Dear parents, dear legal guardians,

this flyer will inform you about the school system and your child's time at the elementary school.

Hopefully it will answer most of your questions, - for more information please contact the teachers of your child.



Compulsory school attendance

School registration

Compulsory school attendance

Law requires all children to start school at the age of 6 and then attend school for at least 10 more years. At the age of 6 your child will start elementary school. After completing elementary school your child will transfer to a secondary school providing a general education.

In general a child will attend elementary school for 4 years, however in certain cases dependent upon the child's achievement level the attendance may be for 3 or 5 years.

After the completion of the elementary school your child must attend a secondary school for at least 6 years and until his/her 18th year of life a vocational school (berufsbildende Schule) or a Gymnasium (UK: grammar school, USA: academic highschool). The time spent in both elementary school and grammar school results in an education lasting 12 or 13 years.

School registration

School always starts in summer. Up to November 15th of the year preceding your child's first day at school, all children must have been enrolled at an elementary school. The parents of all children required to attend school will be informed in writing by the school administration about the application procedure.

During the application process your child's grasp of the German language will be tested. Children who cannot speak German sufficiently must visit a special course (Förderkurs) to strengthen their German language skills. Children, whose German skills are already being developed in nursery school, are not required to visit an additional German course.

Children with considerable health problems may be exempted from school for a year. This decision will be made by the school's principal/ head teacher after a medical check.

School registration

The following information may be helpful to you regarding your child's application at an elementary school:

| integrated elementary school

In integrated elementary schools, children with different religious backgrounds will be taught and educated together. Only the lessons in Religion will be taught separately.

| faith-oriented school

In faith oriented schools, children will be taught and educated based on one religion, for example catholic or protestant.

| officially recognized private school and self-financed private school

Officially recognized private schools are not state-run but are largely financed through government funds. Self-financed private schools are financed through private funding, for example from school fees paid by the parents and from donations. In Germany there exist mainly state-run and state-sponsored schools.

| open all-day school

In open all-day schools children generally stay at school from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. In the morning, there are lessons. In the afternoon, there exists help with homework, as well as additional classes to help improve or develop your child's learning; for example, his or her language skills.

| bilingual teaching and learning

Currently in Cologne there exists one elementary school with a German-French class, one elementary school with a German-Turkish class and three elementary schools with a German-Italian class.

School registration

| coordinated literacy in the Turkish and German languages (KOALA)

Currently there are eleven elementary schools in Cologne in which Turkish children learn the Turkish alongside the German alphabet. All children in the class are taught by a German and a Turkish teacher for several hours per week.

| „Rucksack“ in the elementary school

„Rucksack“ is a programme to encourage parents' education and to develop the native language skills of their children. Currently in Cologne this programme exists in 10 elementary schools, and it is planned to establish „Rucksack“ in more elementary schools.

| Support for children with special needs

Handicapped students or students with learning difficulties will receive special support to meet their needs.

Lessons will be held in schools for children with special needs (Förderschulen) or in classes which integrate non-disabled and disabled children.

Förderschulen focus on 7 different areas: the emotional and social development, intellectual development, listening and communication, physical and motor development, learning, seeing, and language.

Based upon an application made either by the parents or by the school, the municipal school board association (Schulrat) will then decide on how, where and for how long the special needs tuition (sonderpädagogische Förderung) is required.

The decision will be based on a medical and special needs assessment in cooperation with the parents

School Entry Period

Class teacher

School Entry Period

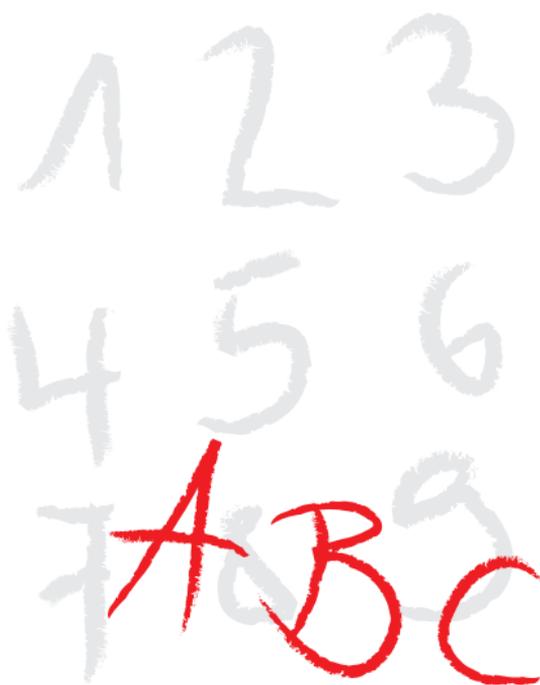
The first two classes of elementary school create the so-called school entry period, which will last until the pupil's transition into class 3.

Your child may complete the school entry period in one, two or three years depending on his/her achievement and development level.

Class teacher

The class teacher is the most important person for the pupils in the elementary school. He/she will teach most of the lessons and be with the class every day.

The class teacher will always be the first person to contact should questions or problems arise.



Lesson subjects

Lesson subjects

The timetable covers the subjects German, General Sciences , Mathematics, Special Needs Tuition, Art, Music, English, Religion and Physical Education.

The following information about the different lesson subjects should also be known:

| Native language lessons

It is important for your child to learn the language spoken in your family's native country. If you wish that your child attend an additional native language class, please contact the principal's/head teacher's office. The school will then organise a placement for your child. Currently native language classes are being taught in 13 languages.

A good grade received in this class may compensate for a bad grade in a foreign language class in secondary school. The attendance in a native language class is voluntarily.

| Religious education

In the schools, both protestant and catholic religious education is offered as a regular lesson. If you desire Islamic religious education for your child, he/she can participate in the Islamic tuition which is integrated into the native language lessons. Additionally some schools teach Islamic religion in the German language as a separate class.

Since August 2008, some elementary schools offer (starting with class 1) religious education based upon the values of love, respect and tolerance for others as a pilot project for the duration of 6 years.

Within the confines of the native language lessons, there is a school in Cologne which offers Greek-Orthodox religious education.

Lesson subjects

| Encountering other languages

“Encountering other languages” deals with a theme that is not taught as an individual lesson, rather aspects of other languages are playfully integrated into other lessons. The schools themselves choose which of the world’s spoken languages will be used.

| German lessons

In their German lessons, the children will learn how to read and write, first in block letters. This is the style of writing, that the children will most often encounter in their immediate surroundings, and as such will simplify the process of learning how to read and write. Later the pupils will develop their own personal handwriting style. Besides learning how to read and write the focus is also on learning how to speak, for example how to talk in bigger groups or how to listen to each other.

| English lessons

English is a compulsory subject that is taught in class 1 starting in the second half of the school year. Children, who have been actively developing their native language and German, generally have no problems to learn English in addition.

| Special needs tuition

Special needs tuition is integrated into the lesson plan and supports every child’s individual learning process, so developmental and learning difficulties can be prevented. At the same time, the elementary schools pay careful attention that pupils with high achievement levels receive appropriate tuition to further develop their abilities.

Homework · Class trips

School books and learning aids · Tests

Homework

Homework should be done without the help of the parents. In this way, children will learn to work and practise on their own and prepare themselves for lessons.

Class trips

Class trips or hiking trips lasting several days give children a chance to discover and share common interests and goals outside of their usual school lessons. The focus of these trips is social learning. Sometimes working on an educational project can also be part of a class trip.

School books and learning aids

Parents are required to pay part of the cost of their child's school books and learning material. You will be exempted from these costs should you receive financial aid from social welfare, Hartz 4, in accordance with the German social welfare law for asylum seekers (Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz) or economic aid for young people (wirtschaftliche Jugendhilfe). In this case, please provide the necessary documentation justifying your exemption to the school.

Tests

In the elementary school, children will gradually be made aware, that their school performance will be assessed. This process begins in class 1 and 2 with short written exercises, which can be awarded grades in class 2. In class 3 and 4, written tests are only given in the subjects of German and Mathematics, and these tests will be subsequently graded.

School report/Report cards

Recommendation for a secondary school

School report/Report cards

There is a difference between a school report with grades and one written in a descriptive form. The descriptive school report gives an account of the pupil's learning development, his/her achievement level, as well as his/her working behaviour and social competence in words. During the school entry period, pupils receive their school report at the end of the school year written in a descriptive form.

The recommendation to move up to class 3 (Versetzungszugnis) and the school report of class 3 include a description of the pupil's learning development, his/her achievement level, as well as his/her working behaviour and social competence. Additionally, grades are reported for each learnt subject as well as a grade for the pupil's working behaviour and his/her social competence.

The school reports given in class 4 are no longer descriptive, but rather contain grades. The grades awarded for working behaviour and social competence may be complimented with a written description.

Recommendation for a secondary school

At the beginning of class 3, the children write tests in German and Mathematics. These tests are evaluated by the subject teacher. In this way, the teachers receive feedback about each individual child's understanding of what they have been taught so far in German and Mathematics. The knowledge level appraisal will not be graded or included in the recommendation for the secondary school. The appraisal is used as the basis for which, if any, individual tuition measures are required.

Recommendation for a secondary school

Recommendation for a secondary school

In Germany, the following forms of secondary school exist:

- Hauptschule (secondary modern school)
- Realschule (junior high school for ages 10 to 16, or secondary school leading to intermediate qualification)
- Gymnasium (academic highschool or grammar school)
- Gesamtschule (comprehensive school)

Elementary school teachers will advise you on choosing a secondary school. If you disagree with this recommendation, you can decide for your child which school he or she should attend.

School rules and regulations

School rules and regulations

When many children and adults come together on a daily basis, it makes sense, that certain rules are applied to ensure that school life runs calmly and to everybody's satisfaction. To this end, many schools have established their own specific regulations, worked out and agreed by the teachers, children and parents.

In any case, you should be aware of the following points:

| Rights and obligations

Students are entitled to school lessons, to information about their achievement level and to counseling. They have a right to freedom of expression, their need to be listened to on controversial questions, and they are entitled to their own personal school identity card.

Students must attend classes regularly and punctually and follow the rules of the school.

| Written excuse

If your child gets sick and cannot come to school, you must contact the school immediately.

On your child's return to school you must submit a written excuse explaining your child's absence. The school may request a doctor's certificate. After a 3-day-absence you are required to submit a medical certificate. Repeated absence from physical education also requires a medical certificate.

| Requests for a leave of absence

In foreseeable and good reasoned cases, your child may take a 2-day leave within a half year period.

A leave of absence immediately preceding or following a vacation is not possible.

Parent Teacher Meetings and Teacher Consultations

Parent participation

Parent Teacher Meetings and Teacher Consultations

At least once a year class teachers will offer a parent-teacher meeting in the evening.

This meeting will give you a chance to get to know the teacher and to ask any questions you might have regarding school lessons and the class situation.

At least once every 6 months-period the school invites parents to attend a teacher's consultation period. You will be able to have a private one to one discussion with your child's teacher.

Parent participation

As parents or legal guardians you are able to actively participate in making decisions concerning school matters, if you get involved in the following school committees:

| Class conference

Members of the class conference are the school teachers who teach the respective class. Two representatives chosen from the parents of the pupils in the class (Klassenpflegschaftsvorsitzende and a second nominated parent) take part regularly in the class conference in an advisory function.

| Class parent committee

Members of this association are the parents of the students of a class. They discuss and decide on all class issues. They elect the chairpersons and their substitutes, who in the class conference and meetings of the parents' association will represent the interests of the class. In addition, their representatives will also be sent to participate in subject conferences (Fachkonferenz).

Parent participation

All parents, whose children attend the same class, meet every six months at the parents' association to discuss class concerns.

At the first class parent committee meeting of the school year, two chairpersons will be elected, who function is to represent class concerns within the school and act in an advisory function at class conferences.

| School conference

At the school conference, the highest committee of the school, parents and teachers are represented. The school conference makes decisions over a number of issues concerning the school, for example also whether lessons will be distributed over 5 or 6 days of the week.

| Parent-teacher association

The parent-teacher association is represented by all chairpersons of the class parent committee (Klassenpflegschaft). The parent-teacher association elects parent representatives for the school conference and gives advice to parents on matters concerning the school.

| Fundraising committee

In many schools parents have founded a committee for fundraising. Members of this club pay a membership fee and are entitled to accept donations. This money helps to finance school events such as excursions and festivities.

Newly arrived students

Newly arrived students

If your child has recently arrived from a foreign country please arrange for a personal consultation at the RAA (Regionale Arbeitsstelle zur Förderung von Kindern und Jugendlichen aus Zuwandererfamilien: local office for support of children and young adults of immigrated families) under this telephone number: 0221 22129292.

| Rheingasse 11
50676 Köln

After the consultation, the municipal education authority will secure a place for the child in a class consistent of children of numerous nationalities. In this class your child will learn German and other required subjects intensively and afterwards be integrated into the regular classroom lesson structure.



Counseling

Counseling

Throughout your child's entire time at school teachers will be available for consultation. For a consultation, please make an appointment with your child's teacher.

The RAA will also give advice and information on all questions and problems concerning school attendance and development with the school system.

Office hours

Tuesdays: 14:00 p.m. - 17:00 p.m.

Thursdays: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.

Rheingasse 11

50676 Köln

Haltestelle: Heumarkt

Stadtbahn: 1, 7, 9 und Busse: 106, 132, 133

Tel. 02 21/221 - 29292

Fax 02 21/221 - 29166

raa@stadt-koeln.de

You may also consult the RAA with any questions regarding your own formal education, such as catching up on getting a school leaving qualification or how to find a German class meeting your needs.



Regionale Arbeitsstellen
zur Förderung von Kindern
und Jugendlichen
aus Zuwandererfamilien

School forms and qualifications of general educational schools in Germany

Possible qualifications	Fachoberschulreife Secondary intermediate or technical secondary school certificate* (after class 10B)	Fachoberschulreife Secondary intermediate or technical secondary school certificate*
	Secondary modern school certificate (after class 10A)	Secondary modern school certificate (after class 10)
	Secondary modern school certificate (after class 9)	Secondary modern school certificate (after class 9)
School forms	Secondary modern school	Secondary school leading to intermediate qualification

Higher education entrance qualification (after class 13) Fachoberschulreife Secondary intermediate or technical secondary school certificate*	Higher education entrance qualification (after class 12) Educational part of the Fachhochschulreife Fachoberschulreife
Secondary modern school certificate (after class 10)	Secondary modern school Certificate (after class 10)
Secondary modern school certificate (after class 9)	Secondary modern school Certificate (after class 9)
Comprehensive school	Academic high school (U.S.) grammar school (U.K.)
Elementary school	

* with the Fachoberschulreife it is possible to transfer from the Hauptschule, Realschule and Gesamtschule into the upper secondary school (gymnasiale Oberstufe: Sekundarstufe 2) to further study for the Abitur, however particular school report grades are required



Impressum:



Der Oberbürgermeister

Amt für Weiterbildung

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von Kindern und Jugendlichen
aus Zuwandererfamilien

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