

BMB

Bundesministerium
für Bildung

Welcome to the Austrian school system!

Englisch

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Bienvenue à l'école
à l'école autrichien
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it la școala austriac
المدرسة النمساوية
حياكم في المدرسة
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Добре дошли в австри
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ب اتریش خوش آمدید
سیستم مکاتب اتریش
Mirë se vini në shkoll
ne shkollën austriak
Марша дог1 ийла шу ав

Dear parents, Dear guardians,

You have only been in Austria for a short while. A lot about life here is new to you—including the Austrian school system. The Education Ministry would therefore like to share some important information with you about going to school in Austria. The teaching staff at your child's school will be pleased to answer your questions and can advise you as required.

1 Is my child allowed to go to school?

All children from 6 to 15 years of age who live in Austria must go to school, i.e. **school attendance is compulsory**. This also applies to the children of asylum-seekers and refugees.

Attending state-run schools is free of charge. There are also private schools, but these charge fees.

You must register your child at your local school. You and your child should attend the **school registration** process and take an interpreter with you if not yet able to speak German well enough. An invitation letter from the provincial education authority/city education authority of Vienna will explain to you when the school registration process will take place and which documents you must take along with you.

Your child will be given a timetable which shows exactly how long the lessons last each day. If your child is ill, you must inform the school. You must come to parents' evenings—with an interpreter, if you wish. You will be given important information at these events!

All pupils are given a school report at the end of each term and a certificate at the end of the school year. The achievements of each pupil are graded with scores from 1 to 5. 1 is the best score, 5 the worst. Children who do not yet speak German very well are not graded. Many primary schools do not give grades but describe the children's learning progress in words.

2 Who will help my child to learn German?

Your child will be placed in a class appropriate to his or her age. Children with different mother tongues are taught together.

School-age children who speak very little or no German are accepted into the school as so-called **non-regular pupils**. They are given two years in which to acquire a basic knowledge of the German language. They will not be graded during this period, but can nevertheless advance to the next school level.

Non-regular pupils can take part in a so-called **language support course**. They then receive intensive German lessons—either in a small group or by a second teacher in the class.

Many schools also offer **lessons in the pupils' mother tongue**. You must register your child for these. The lessons mostly take place in a double lesson in the afternoon. Ask whether your child's school or a nearby school offers lessons in his or her mother tongue.

3 Do we have to buy our own school books?

No, because all pupils receive free school books for all subjects as part of the **school book campaign**. Bilingual children can also get books on German as a second language as well as bilingual dictionaries. If your child attends lessons in his or her mother tongue, he or she will also receive a matching school book.

4 Which school will my child attend?

School-age children

Primary School (VS)

6 to 10 years of age

1st to 4th school year

Children from 6 to 10 years of age go to Primary School for 4 years. If a six-year old child is not yet ready to start going to school, he or she will be accepted into the pre-school stage. He or she then has an extra year in which to get used to the requirements of school.

New Middle School (NMS)

Higher General Education School (AHS)—Lower level

10 to 14 years of age

5th to 8th school year

After Primary School, children go to NMS or the lower level of AHS for 4 years. Children who come to Austria aged 10 years or older will be immediately accepted into NMS or the lower level of AHS in accordance with their age.

An NMS must accept all pupils, but an AHS has the right to reject applicants.

Pupils who successfully complete NMS or the lower level of AHS after 4 years can continue their school education at an advanced middle or higher school.

Polytechnic School (PTS)

14 to 15 years of age

9th school year

Pupils who do not attend an advanced school will complete their compulsory education at a PTS or at a one-year domestic science school. In this final compulsory year of school, the pupils are prepared for working life.

Special Education

6 to 15 years of age
1st to 9th school year

Consideration is taken of school-age children with **special educational needs** (e.g. blind or deaf children). They can attend a special school or—depending on their age—Primary School, New Middle School (NMS), the lower stage of a Higher General Education School (AHS), or the Polytechnic School, or the one-year Domestic Science School.

The following options are available after compulsory schooling:

Vocational School

from 15 years of age

After completing compulsory education (9 years), young people can undergo training for a vocation. They must find a company that will appoint them as an apprentice and also attend Vocational School at the same time. This lasts exactly as long as the apprenticeship (2 to 4 years). At Vocational School, the practical skills acquired in the company are supplemented with theoretical knowledge. The final apprenticeship examination entitles the individual to exercise the studied vocation. In Austria, there are approximately 200 different apprenticeships.

Young asylum seekers can take up an apprenticeship only in a so-called **understaffed profession**. These are professions for which workers are urgently needed.

Advanced schools

Advanced schools do not have to accept applicants. The school director takes all decisions on admissions. It is therefore often not easy for young people who are no longer in compulsory education to continue their education away from their country of origin, especially if they are still not able to speak German. In principle, however, it is possible to be accepted into advanced schools as a non-regular pupil. If you have certificates from your country of origin, please bring these with you when you register.

Higher General Education School (AHS)—Upper level 14 to 18 years of age

After NMS or the lower level of AHS, young people can continue their school education in the upper level of AHS. The AHS provides a good general education. It lasts 4 years and ends with the Austrian school-leaving examination (Matura). The Matura entitles the holder to study at universities, technical colleges or teacher training colleges.

Vocational Schools

There are various kinds of school in the commercial, technical, tourism, social and other fields.

Vocational Secondary Schools (BMS) 14 to 17 (18) years of age

Vocational Secondary Schools (or technical colleges) provide professional qualifications and general education. They last for 3 or 4 years and end with the final examination. After that, it is possible to enter working life or prepare oneself on an advanced course to complete a course of study at a Vocational Higher School.

Vocational Higher Schools (BHS)
14 to 19 years of age

Vocational Higher Schools provide a higher vocational education and a solid general education. They last for 5 years and end with the school leaving and diploma examination. This examination entitles the holder to study at universities, technical colleges or teacher training colleges.



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