

Information on education in the Polish educational system for people arriving from abroad

The third article in the framework of the Information Centre for Foreigners in Police. We would like to introduce you to the education system in Poland.

In the Polish education system it is compulsory to study until the age of 18. Currently, the Polish education system is divided into the following forms:

- public crèches and non-public crèches (children aged 20 weeks to 3 years can come to such institutions). This form of education is optional;
- nursery schools (which are open to children from 3 to 6 years of age). This form of education is optional;
- so-called "pre-school" (this is a compulsory form of education that can be provided either in pre-school facilities or in primary schools);
- primary school (is a compulsory form of education for children aged 6/7. Primary school consists of grades 1-8);
- secondary school (can be the following forms: 4-year high school, 5-year technical school or 3-year vocational school).

It should be emphasised that all children arriving from abroad who are aged 7-18 (including those who apply for or are under international protection) are entitled to benefit from education in public schools on the same basis as Polish children.

In addition, foreign children are entitled to the following forms of support in Polish schools:

1. individual Polish language lessons or group classes in groups of no more than 15 pupils (a minimum of 6 lesson hours per week is assumed as support);
2. preparatory departments (in such classes, the teaching process is individualised and adapted to individual needs as well as educational possibilities of particular students. Learning in such a place lasts one year, but there is a possibility of extending such a period up to 2 years. Learning takes place in groups of 25 pupils and the class size is between 20 and 26 hours per week. This varies according to the year of study and the type of school. During these classes, students learn Polish for no less than 6 hours each week.
3. compensatory classes (these are classes aimed at bridging the curriculum differences between the Polish school and the school from the child's country of origin. A foreign child has the right to attend such classes at the rate of 5 hours per week. The child has the possibility to attend compensatory classes for 12 months);
4. allowing the child to use the support of a teacher's assistant in the form of a person communicating in the language of the student's country of origin. The teacher's aide is not required to have a pedagogical background;

5. equal access to the assistance of a school teacher and psychological-educational counselling services;
6. eligibility to apply for scholarships;
7. the right to learn the native language and culture of the student's country of origin, within the framework of classes organised in Poland.

The conditions for the enrolment of persons arriving from abroad in Polish schools are defined by the following legal provisions:

- Articles 165 and 166 of the Act of 14 December 2016. - Education Law (Dz. U. of 2020, item 910) and the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 23 August 2017 on the education of persons who are not Polish citizens and persons who are Polish citizens who received education in schools operating in the educational systems of other countries (Dz. U. of 2020, item 1283) (<https://dziennikustaw.gov.pl/D2020000128301.pdf>) - with regard to kindergartens and schools operating according to the new school system

and

- Article 363 of the Act of 14 December 2016. - Introductory provisions of the Act - Education Law (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 60) and the regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9 September 2016 on education of persons who are not Polish citizens and persons who are Polish citizens and who received education in schools operating in educational systems of other countries (Journal of Laws of 2016, item 1453) (<https://dziennikustaw.gov.pl/D2016000145301.pdf>) as amended (Dz. U. of 2017, item 1634), (<https://dziennikustaw.gov.pl/D2017000163401.pdf>) (Dz. U. of 2019, item 666) (<https://dziennikustaw.gov.pl/D2019000066601.pdf>) - with regard to lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools, until education in these schools is completed.

IMPORTANT!

Facilitations for foreigners (art. 44zzr par. 7 of the Act on the Educational System)

A pupil/graduate whose limited knowledge of the Polish language makes it difficult to understand the text being read may take:

- the eighth-grade exam, except for the exam in a foreign language - under conditions and in a form adapted to his/her educational needs and psychophysical capabilities, on the basis of a positive opinion of the pedagogical board;
- Matura exam, except for the exam in a foreign language - in conditions and form adapted to his/her needs and psychophysical abilities on the basis of a positive opinion of the pedagogical board.

Registration of a child for kindergarten:

According to the announced recruitment schedule for kindergartens, recruitment takes place. It is customary to do so in the spring of each year. If a parent wishes to register a child for kindergarten after the official recruitment deadline has ended, he or she must personally contact the management of the individual facilities and determine the number of vacancies in a particular age group.

Registering a child for school:

1. primary school - a very important consideration when registering a child for school is districting. Therefore, priority is given to children residing in the perimeter of a particular primary school. Pupils from a given precinct are automatically admitted on the basis of their application and the enclosed statement of residence. If a parent wishes to enrol a child in another primary school, he/she is obliged to participate in the recruitment process (which is very often conducted electronically). However, it should be remembered that the decision to enrol a child from outside the district is made by the headmaster.
2. post-primary school - the decision to enrol a child in a post-primary school is taken by the headmaster. The decision is made on the basis of the submitted school certificate, certificates or other documentation issued by the school in the child's country of origin. The submitted documents must be translated into Polish.

Useful materials on supporting students coming from abroad are available on the websites of the Centre for the Development of Polish Education Abroad (<http://powroty.otwartaskola.pl/>).

Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 18 February 2011 on the framework program of Polish language courses for foreigners

<https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20110610306>

Recognition of education obtained abroad

<https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja/uznawanie-wykształcenia-uzyskanego-za-granica>