

INFORMATION ON EDUCATION OF NON-POLISH NATIONALS



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OFFICE FOR
FOREIGNERS

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Education of foreigners is regulated by the following legislation:

- The Act of 14 December 2016, Education Law (Articles 165 and 166) (hereinafter the Act)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 23 August 2017 on the education of nonPolish nationals and Polish nationals and who have received education in schools operating in the education systems of other countries (hereinafter the Regulation)



Compulsory education and schooling

Every child in Poland between the age of 6 and the age of 18 is obliged to study.

Parents who have full parental responsibility are responsible for ensuring that their children comply with compulsory education requirements. It is the parents' duty to enroll their child in a preschool preparatory class ("zerówka") or in school.



PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION (SO CALLED "ZERÓWKA")

A child aged 6 is obliged to undergo one-year pre-school education in a pre-school, pre-school department in a primary school or in another form of pre-school education. This obligation commences at the beginning of the school year in the calendar year in which the child turns 6.

If the number of children to whom the Municipality Office is obliged to provide pre-school education, residing in the area of the Municipality Office, reported during the recruitment procedure to a preschool/ pre-school department in a primary school exceeds the number of places in that establishment, the head of the pre-school/primary school informs the head of the municipality/mayor/city president about non-admission of the child. In this case, the head of the municipality/mayor/city president must indicate another establishment that can accept the child (if possible the closest one) in writing to the parents.

Parents of a child subject to compulsory annual pre-school education are obliged to:

- register their child in a pre-school/pre-school department in a primary school,
- ensure regular attendance of the child in classes.

A 6-year-old child may start education in the 1st grade under several conditions, i.e.:

- at the request of parents,
- the child must show psychophysical maturity to start education.

The decision on the child's admission to school is made by the headmaster on the basis of:

- an opinion of the psychological-educational counselling service,
- if the child attended pre-school in the previous school year.



PRIMARY SCHOOL

A child's compulsory schooling starts at the beginning of the school year in the calendar year in which the child turns 7 years old and continues until the completion of primary school, but no longer than until 18 years of age. It is fulfilled by attending a primary school, either public or non-public.

A 7-year-old may obtain a postponement of compulsory education:

- on the request of parents, accompanied by an opinion of a psychological-pedagogical counselling service,
- by a decision of the headmaster of a public primary school of a district the child lives. The aforementioned application is submitted in the calendar year in which the child turns 7 years old, no later than by 31 August. Such a child continues education in a pre-school.

Parents of a child who is subject to compulsory education are obliged to:

- register the child in primary school,
- ensure regular attendance of the child at school,
- ensure conditions for the child to prepare for classes.



EIGHTH-GRADE EXAMINATION

The Eighth-Grade Examination is a compulsory national examination taken by students completing primary school (after finishing Grade 8). It covers three subjects: Polish language, mathematics, and one modern foreign language.

Taking the examination is a requirement for completing primary school. Every student graduates regardless of the result achieved. The results of the Eighth-Grade Examination are taken into account during admission to upper secondary schools (e.g. general secondary school, technical secondary school, or Stage I sectoral vocational school).

$E=mc^2$ SECONDARY SCHOOL

After completing primary school, compulsory education is fulfilled by:

- attending a secondary school,
- pursuing vocational training with an employer.

A pupil who has completed a secondary school before the age of 18 may also fulfil compulsory education by attending a tertiary school or a vocational qualification course.

The parents of a child subject to compulsory education are obliged, upon request, to inform the head of the municipality/mayor/city president where the child lives of the form of fulfilment of the child's compulsory education and of changes, in this respect.



MATRICULATION EXAMINATION

The Matriculation Examination (Matura) is taken after completing a general secondary school, technical secondary school, or Stage II sectoral vocational school. The examination includes compulsory subjects and at least one additional subject chosen by the student. To pass the examination, students must obtain at least 30% of the available points in each compulsory written and oral examination.

Holding a Matura certificate is a prerequisite for entering higher education, and the examination results are one of the main criteria used for admission to higher education institutions.



SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY



ENROL YOUR CHILD IN SCHOOL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

- Enrol your child in the district school of your place of residence (generally the school closest to your home).
- Children are admitted on the basis of their parents' application, even during the school year (Article 130(1) and (2) of the Act).
- A parent may choose a school other than the one in which district he or she lives with the child. In this case, the school headmaster decides whether the child will be admitted. If so, the headmaster of the school which accepts the pupil must inform the headmaster of the district school (Article 36 (13) and (14) of the Act).

REMEMBER!

- If the school does not want to admit your child - contact the authority which manages the school - as a rule this is the Municipal Office/District Office where you live.
- If the admission of a pupil requires organisational changes in the work of the school resulting in additional financial consequences, the headmaster may admit the pupil with the consent of the leading authority - i.e. the Municipal/District Office (Article 130(3) of the Act).

DIRECTING TO A SCHOOL OTHER THAN THE DISTRICT SCHOOL (Article 166(1) of the Act)

If there are many pupils in a primary school in the district and admission of foreign children will require organisational changes (e.g. creation of new classes, employment of teachers, etc.) then the Municipal/District Office may indicate the following, as a place for the fulfilment of the compulsory education:

- another public primary school managed by the above-mentioned authorities,
- a public primary school managed by another Municipal/District Office, after conclusion of bilateral agreements.

If the aforementioned options are not implemented, the Municipality Mayor/City President shall apply to the Superintendent, who will indicate the primary school in which the children can be enrolled.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

The child is admitted:

- on the basis of foreign documents (total number of years of schooling in the country and abroad), may take into account the age of the pupil and the opinion of the parents,
- on the basis of an interview conducted in Polish or in the foreign language spoken by the pupil (in the absence of documents confirming the total number of years of schooling),
- on the terms and conditions and in accordance with the recruitment procedure for Polish citizens (to public pre-schools, artistic establishments, for classes developing interests and talents in a public educational institution, continuing education in non-school forms).

SECONDARY SCHOOL

The child is admitted:

- on the basis of foreign documents (total number of years of schooling in the country and abroad), may take into account the age of the child and the parents' opinion,
- on the basis of an interview conducted in Polish or in the foreign language spoken by the pupil (in the absence of documents confirming the total number of years of schooling),
- on the terms and conditions and in accordance with the recruitment procedure for Polish citizens (to artistic establishments, dormitories, boarding schools, classes developing interests and talents in a public educational institution, qualifying vocational courses, continuing education in non-school forms).



CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH COMPULSORY EDUCATION:

Non-fulfilment of the obligation of annual preschool education, compulsory schooling, i.e. unexcused absence within one month for at least 50% of the days of classes results in serious consequences, e.g.:

- written warning,
- imposing a fine on the parent (even up to PLN 10 000),
- filing a motion to the Family and Minors Court to review the child's family situation and take measures, including restriction of parental rights.

Parents should contact their child's home-room teacher regularly and ensure that their child attends school (or remote classes) regularly and that any absences are excused on a regular basis.

The rules for excusing absences from lessons are not covered by national regulation, they are determined by regulations or school statutes. Your child's homeroom teacher might be contacted for information regarding the rules for excusing absences.



RECRUITMENT DEADLINES

Deadlines for school recruitment and supplementary proceedings, including deadlines for the submission of documents (Article 154(1) of the Act):

- in the case of public pre-schools, public other forms of pre-school education or public primary school - are determined by the end of January by the leading authority (usually at the beginning of March),
- in the case of public primary schools for adults, first grades of public secondary schools, entry grades in secondary schools in which bilingual departments operate, and for the first semester of first grades of public II level industrial schools and public post-secondary schools - are determined by the competent school Superintendent by the end of January.

If a student arriving from abroad cannot submit documents, he/she is qualified for the appropriate class and admitted to school on the basis of an interview.

The interview shall be conducted by the school headmaster, if necessary, with the participation of a teacher.

In the case of a student arriving from abroad who does not speak Polish language, the interview shall take place in the foreign language spoken by the student.

If necessary, the school ensures the participation of speakers of the foreign language spoken by the child in the interview (§ 12(1) and (4) of the Regulation).

To apply for your child's place at the school, contact the school of your choice and ask about the required documents.



REQUIRED DOCUMENTS TO REGISTER A CHILD FOR SCHOOL

The most common requirements are the child's details (name, surname, date of birth, series and number of identity document), parents' names, e-mail address and parents' telephone number. Attach a statement of your and your child's place of residence to the written application.

ATTENTION!

The school may specify its template application or template admission form

Enrolment of a child to public primary schools in the district where the child resides happens ex officio, i.e. on the basis of an admission without the need for the person concerned to submit an application. Parents attach a statement about their and their child place of residence to the application.

For enrolment to public primary schools and public secondary schools (secondary school, technical secondary school, industrial 1st level school), when the child resides outside the schools' district - pupils are admitted to the vacant places and qualified to the appropriate class after meeting the conditions set out for each type of school, i.e. e.g. medical certificate, medical or psychological certificate, written consent of parents, results of: physical fitness tests, test of linguistic aptitude, linguistic competence, aptitude test, suitability testing.

Enrolment to public II level industrial schools - (for vacant places) on the basis of the following documents:

- certificate or other document issued abroad considered as documents confirming basic industrial education in the Republic of Poland,
- final administrative decision on confirmation of basic industrial education in the Republic of Poland,
- medical certificate, medical or psychological certificate.

Enrolment to public post-secondary schools - (for vacant places) on the basis of the following documents:

- certificate or other document issued abroad confirming in the Republic of Poland secondary education, secondary industrial education or the right to apply for admission to university studies,
- final administrative decision confirming in the Republic of Poland secondary education or secondary industrial education or the right to apply for admission to university studies,
- certificate or other document issued abroad recognized by nostrification until 31 March 2015, as equivalent to a secondary school graduation certificate, general education secondary school graduation certificate, specialised secondary school graduation certificate or technical school graduation certificate,
- medical certificate, medical or psychological certificate.

General rule: no requirement for recognition of foreign documents, with the exception of postsecondary schools and 2nd level industrial schools.

Regulations governing the principles and procedure for the recognition of education obtained abroad:

- Articles 93-93h of the Act of 7 September 1991 on the educational system (Journal of Laws of 2025, item 881).
- Regulation of the Minister of Education of 22 December 2025 on the proceedings for recognition of a certificate or other document or confirmation of education or entitlement to continue education obtained in a foreign education system (Journal of Laws 2025, item 1848).



GRADING SYSTEM

In most Polish schools, students are assessed on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is the lowest grade and 6 is the highest. The grades mean:

- 6 (celujący) – the highest grade, awarded for outstanding achievement and knowledge exceeding the basic curriculum requirements.
- 5 (bardzo dobry) – the student has mastered the material very well.
- 4 (dobry) – the student has mastered the material well and achieves good results.
- 3 (dostateczny) – the student has mastered the essential knowledge and skills.
- 2 (dopuszczający) – the student demonstrates the minimum required knowledge and skills.
- 1 (niedostateczny) – the lowest grade, indicating that the student has not acquired the required knowledge and skills. If there is a risk of receiving a failing grade, students and parents should discuss with the teacher whether it can be improved. A failing final grade at the end of the school year usually means that the student must repeat the grade.

At the end of the school year, students receive a school report with their final grades. A special distinction is a report card with a red-and-white stripe (commonly called the "red stripe"), awarded to students whose average grade in compulsory subjects is at least 4.75 and who receive at least a Very Good behaviour grade. This distinction recognizes consistent effort, high academic achievement, and appropriate conduct.

Detailed assessment rules are set out in each school's statutes. These may specify, for example, methods of assessing knowledge and rules for improving grades.

In addition to subject grades, students also receive a behaviour grade, which reflects their fulfilment of school responsibilities, personal conduct, respect for school rules and others, and social behaviour. Behaviour is assessed using the following scale: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, and Unacceptable.



ELECTRONIC SCHOOL REGISTER

In most Polish schools, communication between the school, students, and parents takes place through an electronic school register. This online system allows users to check grades, attendance, timetables, homework, test dates, and comments concerning the student's behaviour.

Parents and students also receive information about school events and can read messages sent by teachers and the class teacher.

The electronic register may also be used to excuse absences and notify the school about planned absences. The available functions depend on the system used by the school and the school's internal regulations. Each user receives an individual login and password and can access the system through a computer or a mobile application.



PARENT ASSOCIATION AND CLASS FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

Parents are usually asked to make voluntary financial contributions to the Parents' Council and, in some schools, to the Class Parents' Committee. These funds are used, among other things, to organize school and class events, purchase prizes for students, subsidize school trips, and buy teaching materials.

Detailed information about the amount of the contributions and how the funds are used is provided by the class teacher or parent representatives.



FORMS OF SUPPORT AND FACILITATION IN PUBLIC AND NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Preparatory departments:

- facilitate adaptation to school, with adaptation of methods and forms of teaching to individual needs and abilities of students,
- teachers may be assisted by a person speaking the language of the student's country of origin,
- max. number of students - 25,
- number of hours of lessons per week:
 - in primary school: for grades I-III - min. 20 hours
 - for grades IV-VI - min. 23 hours
 - for grades VII and VIII - min. 25 hours
 - at secondary school - min. 26 hours
- the period of education lasts until the end of the school year in which the pupil was qualified for the preparatory department - it can be shortened or extended, but not longer than by 1 school year.

Additional hours of Polish language:

- not less than 2 lesson hours per week, with the hours of Polish language in the preparatory department increased to min. 6 hours a week,
- is organised by the school,
- no longer than for 24 months.

Additional hours of compensatory classes:

- organised at the request of a teacher,
- if there is a need to supplement curriculum differences,
- 1 lesson per week per subject,
- max. for a period of 12 months,
- max. in total 5 lesson hours per week for one student (including additional hours of Polish language and compensatory classes).

Employment of a teacher's assistant (so-called intercultural assistant):

- a person speaking the language of the child's country of origin,
- employed by the school headmaster,
- for up to 12 months.

Possibility to study the language and culture of the country of origin:

- for pupils who are not Polish citizens and are subject to compulsory education, a diplomatic or consular post of their country of origin operating in the territory of the Republic of Poland or a cultural and educational association of a given nationality may organise at school the study of the language and culture of their country of origin,
- min. 7 students,
- max. 5 lesson hours per week.

Facilities for external examinations (Article. 44 z.zr (7) of the Act on the Education System):

- a child who takes the eighth-grade or Matura examinations in a given school year and has benefited from psychological and pedagogical assistance at school may take this exam under conditions adapted to his/her educational needs and psychophysical capabilities on the basis of a positive opinion of the pedagogical council,
- children with limited command of the Polish language may take the eighth-grade and Matura examinations (with the exception of examinations in a foreign language) under conditions adapted to their educational needs and psychophysical capabilities on the basis of a positive opinion of the Council of Teachers (in the case of the eighth-grade examination, adapted examination sheets are prepared),
- adapting the form of the eighth-grade and Matura examination consists of the use of specialised equipment and teaching aids (e.g. a bilingual dictionary), extension of the examination time, and the presence and assistance of a support teacher during the examination.



EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE OF THE OFFICE FOR FOREIGNERS

The Department of Social Assistance of the Office for Foreigners, pursuant to the Act of 13 June 2003 on granting protection to foreigners in the territory of the Republic of Poland, provides educational aids to foreign minors receiving education and care in public institutions, primary and secondary schools in the form of a school starter kit (in-kind or in the form of vouchers for its purchase).

In order to receive the aforementioned aid, you should send to the Office:

- a current school certificate for the current school year,
- a completed application for the issue of teaching aids available on the website of the Office for Foreigners <https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc/edukacja>.

A school starter kit is available once a school year.

In addition, secondary school pupils and children realizing obligatory annual preschool education are provided with school books.

In order to receive the aforementioned aid, you should send to the Office:

- a current school certificate for the current school year,
- a list of textbooks received from the school,
- a completed application for school books available on the Office for Foreigners website <https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc/edukacja>.

Where possible, the Office also provides coverage for extracurricular and recreational/sports activities.

To do so, you must:

- submit an application for funding of extracurricular or recreational/sports activities,
- a certificate from the respective entity for provision of extracurricular activities,
- a current school certificate for the current school year.

Depending on the support you want to receive, submit a set of documents:

- to the centre for foreigners (a list of centres with addresses can be found at <https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc/kontakt-do-osrodkow>),
- to the Foreigners Service Team of the Social Assistance Department of the Office for Foreigners, 16 Taborowa Street, 02-699 Warsaw
- by post to the Department of Social Assistance of the Office for Foreigners, 33 Taborowa Street, 02-699 Warsaw



If you have additional questions concerning education, please contact:

- the Office for Foreigners' helpline at 47 721 76 75, on working days from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- by e-mail: edukacja@udsc.gov.pl



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