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The school system and types of school in Bavaria

The Bavarian school system

Every federal state in Germany has its own school system. Some rules apply throughout Germany, such as the  [compulsory school attendance rule](#) and rules governing the grading system.

There are many state schools in Bavaria. State schools are free to attend. You don't need to buy any textbooks. Textbooks are borrowed from the school and returned at the end of the school year. Classes are usually held from Monday to Friday in the morning. There are also afternoon classes. Many schools will supervise pupils at lunchtime or even provide an all-day service after classes have ended.

The structure of the school system

1. Primary school (elementary level)

From 6 years old, as a rule, compulsory schooling applies and the children enter primary school. Primary school ranges from grades 1 to 4. The principle of residence applies here: This means that the children usually attend a primary school near their place of residence.

2. Transition from primary school to secondary level

After primary school, children attend a secondary school. There are three options: Mittelschule, Realschule or Gymnasium.

In the last grade of primary school it is decided which secondary school the children will attend after primary school. The teacher makes a school career recommendation for the secondary level. This school career recommendation is discussed in joint consultation with the parents. In Bavaria the recommendation is not binding, meaning that the parents can decide which secondary school their child will go to after primary school.


3. Secondary schools (lower secondary level and upper secondary level)

After primary school, the school system is divided into different types of school with different syllabus and types of leaving certificate. In Bavaria there are three options: Mittelschule, Realschule or Gymnasium.

In principle, it is possible to change which school your child attends if they meet the school's prerequisites. Once your child has successfully completed one type of school, they can continue to attend a school to achieve the next higher school-leaving qualification.


Which school qualifications are there?

Secondary general school-leaving certificate ("Mittelschulabschluss")

The secondary general school-leaving certificate qualifies above all for taking up  [dual vocational training](#). However, many companies providing training require an intermediate

school-leaving certificate.








Intermediate school-leaving certificate ("Mittlerer Schulabschluss")

The intermediate school-leaving certificate opens the way to many vocational training courses. In addition to dual vocational training, it also enables  [school-based vocational training](#) and provides access to the various types of school at the upper secondary level, such as specialised upper secondary school, two-year full-time vocational school, specialised academic secondary school and the higher education entrance qualification (Abitur).

Higher education entrance qualification ("Abitur")

The higher education entrance qualification opens up the possibility of studying at a university if this is desired. This can be a university or a university of applied sciences.

You can find more information on the different types of schools and school-leaving qualifications here, for example:

- An interactive overview of the Bavarian school system is available from  [Mein Bildungsweg](#) (available in 10 languages). Click on a school type or qualification in the graphic to learn more.
- Explanatory videos in  [German](#),  [English](#),  [Arabic](#) and  [Farsi](#).
-  [Handbook Germany: School](#) (available in 9 languages)
-  [Make it in Germany: School System](#) (available in 4 languages)

Compulsory schooling: Does my child have to attend school?

In Germany, attending school is compulsory: All children who live in Germany have to go to school. Compulsory schooling generally starts after reaching 6 years of age. If a child only becomes 6 years old after the start of the new school year (for example in October), they usually start school in the following year.

In Bavaria the new school year begins in September.

Compulsory schooling also applies to disabled children and adolescents.

The specific regulations on compulsory schooling differ in the individual Federal States. In Bavaria children and adolescents have to go to school for at least 9 years (primary school and lower secondary level). In Bavaria this is followed by mandatory attendance at a secondary school of upper secondary level (academic secondary school or part-time vocational school).

School attendance at State schools is free. In addition, there are private schools in Germany, for which school fees usually have to be paid.

Are you new to Germany?

Your child can attend school as soon as they are old enough. Compulsory schooling begins after three months in Germany at the latest and your child must go to school.

What is expected of parents or guardians?

Parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If your child fails to attend school without a telephone or written excuse, the school is required to search for your child.

If your child frequently fails to attend lessons without an excuse or a certificate, you may have to pay a fine.

If your child is ill or cannot attend school for other important reasons, you must sign him/her out at the school office before school starts. If your child is ill for several days, you must provide the school with a doctor's note.

School admissions examination

 [Handbook Germany: School Entry Health Checks](#) (available in 9 languages)

All school-age children are examined as part of the school admissions examination. It takes place in the year before admission to primary school. This examination plays an important role as it allows us to recognise at an early stage whether your child is developmentally ready for school or whether they still need support with preparing for school. The school admissions examination takes place on site at the kindergarten. You will be informed about the examination date by the kindergarten.

The examination is carried out by professionals from the health department. During the examination, your child's motor skills, vision, hearing and speech will be tested. Their vaccination status will also be checked.

Every child in Germany must sit the school admissions examination. If you have any questions, you can also contact your child's kindergarten.

Further information is also available from the Health Department of the Munich District Office:


 [08962211000](tel:08962211000)

 @gesundheitswesen@Lra-m.bayern.de

 [Admissions examination in kindergartens](#)

Measles Protection Act: Do I need to get my child vaccinated?

The Measles Protection Act has been in force in Germany since 1 March 2020. This law stipulates that **vaccination against measles is compulsory**. This means that your child must be vaccinated against measles in order to attend kindergarten, day care or school. Currently (as of 2023), only the measles vaccination is compulsory. Your child does not need to be vaccinated against other diseases. Vaccinations can protect your child from getting sick or becoming seriously ill with certain diseases.

You can find more information at  [Handbook Germany: Vaccinations for children and adolescents](#) (in 9 languages).


School holidays and public holidays


School holidays

Schools are closed during the school holidays. Pupils do not attend school during this period. These are the school holidays for Bavaria:

- 1 week autumn holidays All Saints' Day (1 November),
- 2 weeks Christmas break between Christmas (24 December) and Epiphany (6 January),
- 1 week winter holidays starting on Shrove Monday,
- 2 weeks Easter holidays around Easter,
- 2 weeks of Whitsun holidays around Pentecost,
- 6 weeks summer holidays from the end of July or beginning of August until the start of the new school year in September.

Bank Holidays

In addition to school holidays, schools will also be closed on bank holidays. You can find out which bank holidays there are in Bavaria here:  [Bank holidays in Bavaria](#).

Jewish, Muslim and Orthodox pupils are exempt from lessons on certain religious holidays  www.km.bayern.de/ministerium/termine/ferientermin...

Please inform the school if your child cannot come to school due to these holidays.