

STARTER PACK

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

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An electronic brochure in Polish, English and Ukrainian language can be downloaded from the website:

www.wielokultury.wroclaw.pl

The brochure was created as part of the implementation of the „Wrocław Strategy for Intercultural Dialogue 2018-2022”

Wrocław miasto spotkań

WCRS



Wrocław, september 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. BEFORE ENROLLING FOR SCHOOL	3
3. DIAGRAM OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN POLAND	7
4. ORGANISATION OF THE SCHOOL YEAR AND SCHOOL EDUCATION	11
5. SCHOOL-PARENT COMMUNICATION	18
6. EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE	19
7. LANGUAGE	20
8. WHAT DOES SCHOOL EXPECT FROM A PARENT?	20
9. DOCUMENT TEMPLATES	21
10. GLOSSARY OF SCHOOL TERMS	

This guide is addressed to parents of pupils who start or continue their education in Poland and come from abroad or return to Poland from emigration.

It contains information about the Polish education system and tips on how to find their feet at school. Since we would like the children and their parents to easily adapt to the new conditions, therefore we would like to explain how public schools in Poland function and how to deal with them.

There are two sections in this guide – one for parents and one for pupils. There is also a very useful glossary at the end of the guide, which includes school vocabulary and parent-school communication templates.

Before enrolling for school:

Remember – your child has exactly the same rights as Polish children.

In accordance with the Polish law, children who are not Polish citizens and are subject to schooling obligation are entitled to education and care in public primary schools, public art schools, institutions and secondary schools under conditions identical to those of Polish citizens.

How to choose school?

PRIMARY SCHOOL

PRIMARY SCHOOLS HAVE CATCHMENT AREAS. It means that in order to be eligible to attend a certain school, one should reside within a school's catchment area. Pupils attending grades from I to VIII of the primary school are enrolled for catchment area schools ex officio and on the basis of documents.

When enrolling for a district school, you should present a document confirming that you live in the district. It could be:

- a lease agreement
- an agreement for purchase of a flat
- statement of the person with whom the pupil's family lives.

Document templates can be found on the following website:
www.rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl

If you would like to enroll your child for **some other primary school**, that is not within your child's district, pupils will be admitted on the basis of submitted documents, provided that places are still available at the given school.

If you would like to enroll your child for **a bilingual school, a sport school or an international school department**, apart from the documents you will also need the results of a physical fitness test and linguistic competence, provided that places are still available at the given school.

If it is not possible to enroll the child in a school outside the area of residence, parents may request the principal to state the reasons for such refusal within 7 days from the date of the refusal. The school shall state the reasons for refusal in the justification. The principal has 5 days to do so and then the parents have 7 days to appeal the decision.

Important: enrollment platforms are available in the Polish language only. If you do not speak Polish, ask people who speak Polish to help you.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

In order to be enrolled in a secondary school, a pupil must meet the following criteria. The documents needed during the enrollment are as follows:

- Certificate of Completion of Education in Primary School;
- in case of candidates who would like to enroll for a vocational school – a medical certificate stating the absence of medical counterindications to undertake practical vocational training.

If there are more applicants than places at school, additional criteria will be taken into account. Candidates will find all the necessary information on the following website: www.rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl

What you need for enrolment at school (at each level):

When enrolling, please submit a **school report card or a certificate** issued by the school abroad, confirming that the child has attended a school abroad and indicating the class or stage of education which he/she has completed.

This document should be translated into Polish, but there is no need for the document to be translated by a sworn translator. This document will help new teachers plan their work with the pupil and in case of any differences in the curriculum – help the pupil catch up on work missed.

Language test - the school has the right to test a child in order to verify his or her command of the Polish language. If it turns out that the pupil's language skills prove to be insufficient, the school recommends that the child be enrolled for a lower grade. This is not compulsory, but if parents do not agree for such solution, it is very likely that the child will have difficulty in acquiring knowledge on certain subjects.

Document from the psychological and pedagogical

Document from the psychological and pedagogical counselling centre - if the pupil has a certificate from the psychological and pedagogical counselling centre, it should be delivered to the school. This will help teachers to adjust their teaching methods and curriculum to the pupil's needs, and will give them the opportunity to enroll pupils for catch-up course in Polish or Mathematics. Such document will also help to assess whether the possible school difficulties are caused by a language barrier or whether they are caused by something else.

If you think that your child should be diagnosed, please visit Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre No. 1 in Wrocław. Employees of this counselling centre speak foreign languages, so they will surely be able to help you.

Adress:

Poradnia Psychologiczno-Pedagogiczna nr 1

[Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre No. 1]

ul. Kościuszki 31/1

50-011 Wrocław

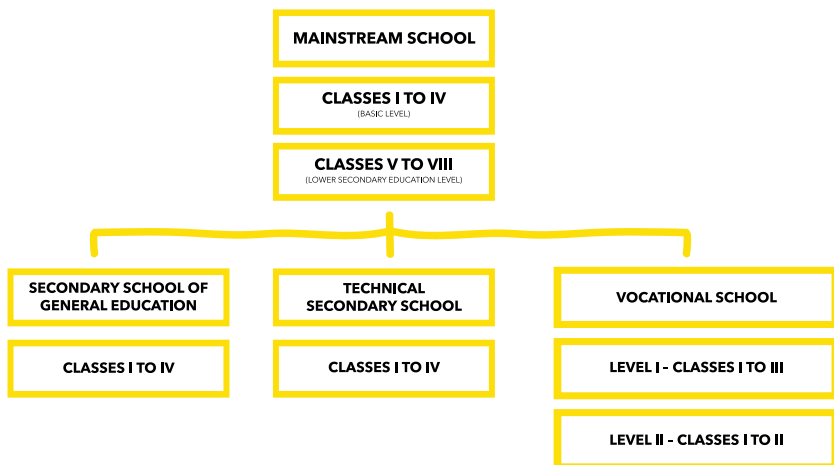
<http://www.ppp1.wroc.pl>

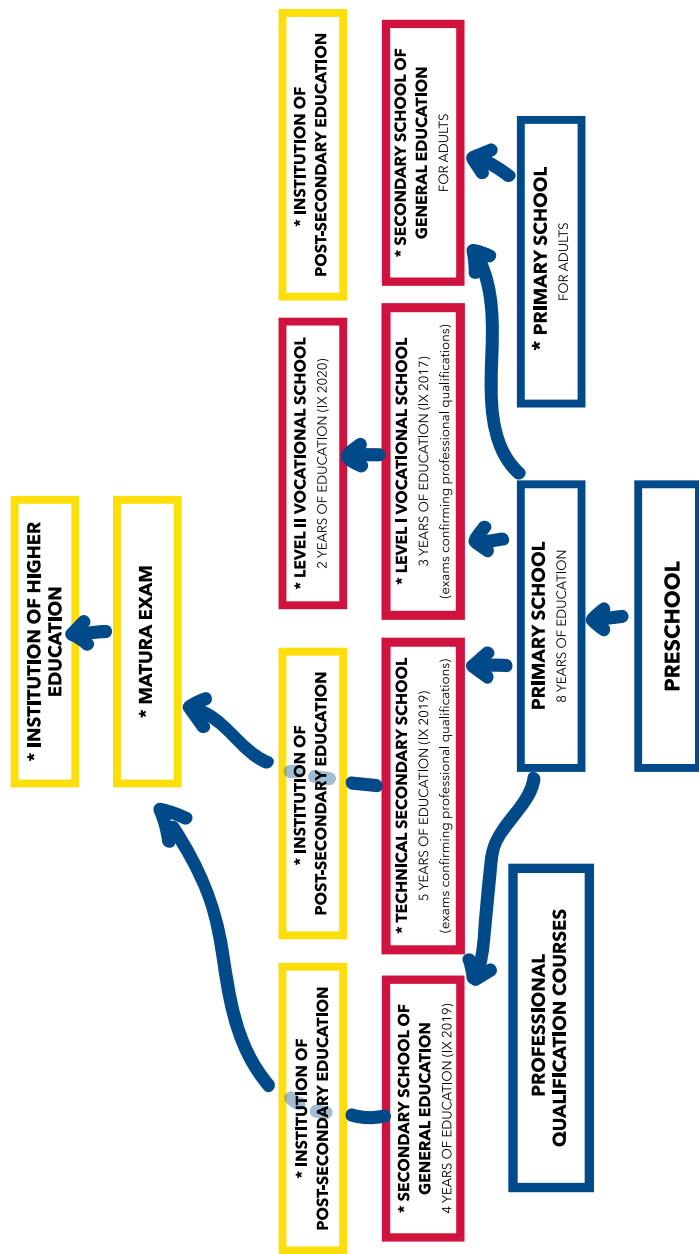
Important: Please remember that having such document will never harm your child, but only help him/her to develop better!

Medical records - it is a good idea to provide the school with a immunization record card and information about your child's health. Such information should cover chronic diseases (such as diabetes, epilepsy, etc.) and allergies. Thanks to this information the assistance provided by the school nurse, if necessary, will be much more effective.

Diagram of the education system in Poland

Education is compulsory in Poland until the age of 18. The first stage of education lasts 8 years and is called the primary school. Then, a pupil chooses an education facility he or she wishes to attend - secondary school of general education (4 years), technical secondary school (5 years) or vocational school (level I - 3 years of education, level II - 2 years of education). After graduation from secondary school of general education and technical secondary school, pupils have the right to take the secondary school final examination (Polish: Matura exam) and continue their education at a university.





EXAMS IN POLISH SCHOOLS

- Eighth-grade exam - an exam that pupils take in spring, when they are in the 8th grade of primary school. The exam consists of three parts and includes the following fields: Polish language, Mathematics and Modern Foreign Language.

- Examinations confirming professional qualifications - these are examinations conducted at the end of education in technical schools and vocational school. They include vocational subjects.

- Secondary school final examination (Matura) - this exam can be taken by pupils of secondary schools of general education and technical secondary schools.

Matura exam is divided into oral and written examinations.

Compulsory examinations in the oral part:

- Polish Language Examination (without specifying the level)
- Foreign Modern Language Examination (without specifying the level)

Compulsory examinations in the written part:

- Polish Language Examination (basic level)
- Mathematics Examination (basic level)
- Foreign Modern Language Examination (basic level)
- Optional Subject Examination (at the extended level)

Pupils can also choose to take the Matura examination from additional subjects of their own choice.

The results of individual Matura examinations are considered when applying for studies.

Examinations - facilitations for foreigners - non-Polish children and Polish citizens coming from abroad are also entitled to special conditions during state examinations in primary schools.

These facilitations consist in:

- the possibility of taking exams in a separate room,
- extending the exam-taking time,
- apply different assessment criteria, just like for pupils with learning difficulties – only in justified cases and after consultation with the Head of the Regional Examinations Board.

Grading scale

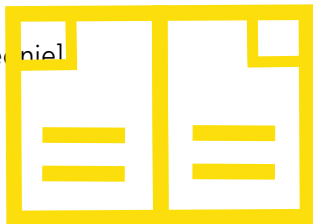
In grades 1-3 of primary school, teachers use descriptive assessments. From the fourth grade of the primary school on, pupils are graded on a scale from 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest grade, and 1 being the lowest. A pupil is expected to have at least an acceptable level of mastery of the material – and a passing grade (2) reflecting that. One can get poor grades up, after consulting the teacher.

Grades from subjects:

- 1 – failing [Polish: niedostateczny (ndst.)]
- 2 – pass [Polish: dopuszczający (dop.)]
- 3 – satisfactory [Polish: dostateczny (dst.)]
- 4 – good [Polish: dobry (db.)]
- 5 – very good [Polish: bardzo dobry (bdb.)]
- 6 – excellent [Polish: celujący (cel.)]

Pupils can also receive grades for pupil conduct. They are issued at the end of the semester:

- reprehensible [Polish: naganne]
- inappropriate [Polish: nieodpowiedzialny]
- satisfactory [Polish: poprawne]
- good [Polish: dobre]
- very good [Polish: bardzo dobre]
- exemplary [Polish: wzorowe]



Organisation of the school year and school education

The school year in Polish schools starts on September 1st and ends in the last week of June. In the table you will find the most important public holidays and days off. In case there are any other days off during the school year, the school will surely let you know about this.

MONTH	PUBLIC HOLIDAYS/DAYS OFF
SEPTEMBER	01.09 - Start of the school year
OCTOBER	14.10 - National Education Day (Teacher's Day) - a day off only for secondary school pupils
NOVEMBER	01.11 - Wall Saints' Day (public holiday) 11.11 - Independence Day (public holiday)
DECEMBER	23.12-01.01 - Christmas Break 24-26.12 - Christmas Day
JANUARY	01.01 - New Year's Eve (public holiday) 06.01 - Epiphany Day (public holiday)
JANUARY/FEBRUARY	Winter Break - 2 weeks (exact date is determined by the Ministry of National Education)
MARCH/APRIL	Easter Break – break – 6 days (in March or April - movable feast)

MAY	01.05 - Labour Day (public holiday) 03.05 - 3 May Constitution Day (public holiday)
JUNE	End of school year (last week of June)
JULY	HOLIDAYS
AUGUST	HOLIDAYS

Remember that the school year is divided into two semesters, and there's a two-week winter break between them.

School year 2019/2020 – details

<https://www.gov.pl/attachment/44e42d57-5ee7-4f7f-ac5d-2406b6a49bcc>

Class – class in Polish schools last 45 minutes and usually start at 8:00 a.m. However, it is a good idea to check your child's schedule because some schools operate in two shifts or start classes at 7:30 a.m.

Breaks – pupils always have breaks between classes. Most of these breaks last 10 minutes, but there is also one breakfast break (15 minutes) and lunch break (20 or 25 minutes) during the day. Remember to prepare your child a nutritious breakfast or sign him or her up for lunch.

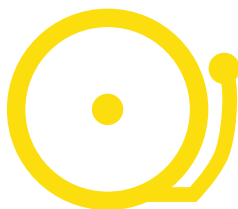
Lunches – it is possible to buy lunches for your child in most primary schools. You pay once a month for lunches. If you do not have enough money for this and you want your child to eat lunch at school, ask the secretary's office about the possibility of funding.

After school club – if your child goes to a primary school, he or she can attend an After school club. After school club is open after school (for younger pupils) and also during classes. If your child does not attend religion or family life education classes (they are not compulsory), he or she will be able to spend time safely in the after school club.

Fees – school education is subject to various fixed fees (parents' council, insurance, class fees) and additional fees (school trips). The class teacher will let you know about the fees at the first meeting with parents. Please note that not all fees are mandatory, you do not have to pay all of these fees.

Parents' participation in school life – if you have time, you can get involved in school life. The class teacher will inform you about all initiatives. What can you get involved in? You can help organize school events, bake a cake or help prepare decorations for the fair. Every initiative would be greatly appreciated!

Mobile phones – some schools banned mobile phones! Please remember to check if your child is allowed to take a mobile phone to school. If the use of mobile phones is banned and the child is caught red-handed playing on the phone – teachers along with the principal will take appropriate disciplinary measures. If you still want to be in touch with your child, don't worry! If something happens, your child can always call you from the school secretary's office.



Flowers and gifts for teachers – if you would like to thank the teacher for his or her work and commitment to help your child, please do so! Flowers, a small gift or a thank you card made by a child would make a perfect thank you gift. Sometimes pupils make contributions – give small amounts of money to buy their teacher a gift. In Polish schools we give presents to teachers on the Teacher's Day (October 14th) or at the end of the school year. Please, remember that there is no obligation to buy gifts for teachers.

School ID card - is a document issued to every child who attends school (including pupils – up to the age of 24). School ID card entitles to statutory discounts amounting to 37% when travelling by PKP trains and PKS buses and to free public transport in Wrocław. Pupils must remember to carry their school ID card with them whenever they would like to use the above services (including school trips).

IMPORTANT: Pupils must get a new stamp on their school ID cards at the beginning of school year, otherwise they are invalid! School ID card must bear a signature of its holder. In order to issue a school ID card, you need a pupil ID photo, which can be taken in a photo studio.



School-Parent Communication

Routine meetings and communication

The school offers the opportunity to report not only possible problems or incidents, but also a positive feedback for the school, i.e. what was successful from the parent's perspective. Remember that communication with the school is an important element of child's success at school.

Parent-teacher meeting/interview – is a meeting with the class teacher. Class teacher discusses the learning outcomes achieved by pupils, and provides the most important information from school life (sentence deleted). The information that the teacher will provide at the meeting applies to all pupils. If you would like to talk about your child, you can do so at the end of the meeting in private. Meetings are held at the same time for parents of pupils of given classes. In case you would like to talk to the class teacher about your child, but you have two children in the same school and cannot attend both parent-teacher meetings, please contact the class teacher. You can also make an appointment with the teacher to meet on some other day.

Consultation – is a meeting with teachers who teach different subjects at school. On that day, you can talk to each of them about your child's learning progress.

School information – class teacher provides parents with information about meetings, consultations and other important events. The teacher will choose the form of contact or will pass the information on to the pupil. It will most likely be an electronic class register. Some teachers send text messages or e-mails. It is also worth visiting the school's website and social media profiles to be up-to-date with the news.

If you have questions or difficulties

There are many people at school who can help you solve your child's educational problems. However, it is necessary to find the right person.

Issue with a specific subject: subject teacher -> class teacher -> counsellor -> principal

Behaviour issue related to our child or other pupils: class teacher -> counsellor -> principal

Language barrier problem: Polish teacher (teaching Polish as a foreign language) or cultural assistant

Problem with documentation, formalities: school secretary's office -> deputy principal -> principal

To whom to report when child's not feeling well - if a pupil is not feeling well in class he or she should report it to the teacher. The teacher will direct the pupil to a school nurse. If necessary, the class teacher or the school secretary's office employee will call the parents and ask them to pick up the child from school.

Exceptional situations - in case a pupil commits a forbidden act (e.g. using alcohol, drugs, smoking cigarettes, violating the rules of social relations), the school management contacts the parents. In case the school management cannot get in touch with the parents, the principal may call the police.

Please note that if a pupil commits the above acts, he or she will not be expelled from school, but may be subject to a misconduct assessment or suspension of pupil rights.

If a pupil makes an unauthorized departure from school, the school is not responsible for him/her.

Counsellor support – a counsellor is a person who helps pupils who cause problems at school. This person helps to solve conflicts, and can also help to gain financial contribution for children who are in a difficult financial situation.

Psychologist support – in some schools there is a school psychologist who supports the school counsellor and teachers in their work. Anyone who needs to talk about their emotions or would like to get some support in solving problems, can see the psychologist.

Contacting the class teacher – if you have any questions about school life or need to talk about your child, contact your child's class teacher. Depending on the arrangements, you can contact the class teacher via an electronic class register, telephone, text message, e-mail or in person. **Remember that you should make an appointment for a meeting, do not talk to the teacher during a break while the teacher is on hallway duty or before the classes start.**

Contacting the Polish teacher (who teaches Polish as a foreign language) – if your child attends additional Polish language classes, you can contact the teacher of this subject directly. The teacher will inform you about your child's progress or about any difficulties and topics that need to be worked on. Please ask the teacher at the beginning of the school year what communication method he or she prefers.

IMPORTANT: Remember that every foreigner has the right to attend additional Polish language classes (2 hours a week). Ask the school secretary's office for additional Polish classes.

Catch-up courses for pupils from other countries - if the curriculum of the previous school differed significantly from the current one, your child may attend catch-up courses for a given subject. Each pupil is entitled to 1 hour per week.

Ask the school secretary's office for catch-up courses.

Cultural assistant - in some Wroclaw schools there is a cultural assistant for pupils who come from outside of the European Union. Such person usually speaks Ukrainian or Russian and stays at school for a few hours a week. The assistant can help children during classes, help do their homework or solve conflicts and problems that arise as a result of language barriers.

Contacting the Board of Education - in exceptional cases - e.g. in situations related to visa problems and their impact on pupil's life or in cases of origin discrimination.



Everyday school life

To make sure that your child feels comfortable in the new school and to get used to the new school life, please remember:

- check the electronic class register regularly (the link can be found on the school's website)
- check the notebooks (not all teachers put homework assignments in the electronic class register, especially in the older classes)
- buy one notebook for each subject (the teacher should specify what kind of notebook it should be)
- there is no need to buy textbooks – school lends them to pupils
- take care of the school textbooks that were lent to your child, otherwise at the end of the year you will have to pay for them
- buy your child lunch in the school cafeteria, if you'd like your child to have lunch at school
- if you decide not to buy lunches, give your child sandwiches or other snacks that he or she can bring to school
- if you want your child to leave school early (during a class) you must report this to the school secretary's office
- younger children (in grades 1-3) cannot go home alone, they must be picked up by an authorised guardian
- younger children (in grades 1-3) can stay in the after school club
- in some schools there is a possibility to do homework in the after school club – check if your school has such a possibility and if it is necessary, please register your child for doing homework
- children are obliged to attend school and all their absences must be justified



Language

The fact that your child needs to learn about a subject in a foreign language may be a bit frustrating. Take a language placement test to save your child from stress.

If not knowing the language will be a big barrier in learning, the teachers may decide not to promote the child to the next grade. This will be a good opportunity to learn the language better.

IMPORTANT: In case there is a language barrier, your child is entitled to come to additional catch-up courses.

What does school expect from a parent?

- Help children do their homework
- Provide all medical certificates and opinions relating to child's health
- Attend parents' meetings
- Monitor pupil progress (e.g. through the electronic gradebook)
- Justifying absences by means of an electronic class register and on paper – in Poland there is an obligation to attend school and children in primary school cannot miss school without stating a valid reason
- Report possible problems and/or incidents
- Provide children with clean and tidy clothes and gym clothes for physical education classes, as well as gym shoes. If pupils have to wear uniforms at school, the information about this can be found in school secretary's office.
- Participate in school life (events, meetings, etc.)

Document templates

USPRAWIEDLIWIENIE (nieobecność jednolnowa)

Proszę o usprawiedliwienie nieobecności mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....
imię i nazwisko

w szkole w dniudata

Nieobecność spowodowana była chorobą dziecka/złym samopoczuciem dziecka/ sprawami rodzinnymi/ koniecznością odbycia wizyty u lekarza.*

.....
Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna

* właściwe wziąć w kółko

USPRAWIEDLIWIENIE (nieobecność wielodniowa)

Proszę o usprawiedliwienie nieobecności mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....
imię i nazwisko

w szkole w dniach od do
data data

Nieobecność spowodowana była chorobą dziecka / sprawami rodzinnymi.*

.....
Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna
* właściwe wziąć w kółko

ZGODA NA SAMODZIELNY POWRÓT ZE SZKOŁY

Wyrażam zgodę na samodzielny powrót do domu mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....
imię i nazwisko

dnia po zakończonych zajęciach edukacyjnych/ po zakończonej wycieczce klasowej/ po zakończonym wyjściu klasowym.*

.....
Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna
* właściwe wziąć w kółko

ZWOLNIENIE Z LEKCJI WF

Proszę o zwolnienie mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....

imię i nazwisko

z lekcji wychowania fizycznego w dniu

data

z powodu złego samopoczucia/ niedyspozycji/ przeziębienia/ bólu głowy/ bólu ręki/ bólu nogi/ kataru.*

.....

Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna

* właściwe wziąć w kóło

ZWOLNIENIE Z LEKCJI

Proszę o zwolnienie mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....

imię i nazwisko

do domu po pierwszej/ drugiej/ trzeciej/ czwartej/ piątej/ szóstej/ siódmej* godzinie lekcyjnej w dniu

.....

data

z powodu konieczności odbycia wizyty u lekarza/ powodów rodzinnych.*

.....

Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna

* właściwe wziąć w kółko

ZWOLNIENIE Z ZAJĘĆ DODATKOWCH

Nie wyrażam zgody mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....

imię i nazwisko

na uczestnictwo w zajęciach religii/ etyki/ wychowania do życia w rodzinie/

(inne) *nazwa zajęć

.....

Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna

* właściwe wziąć w kółk

ZGODA NA UDZIAŁ W ZAJĘCIACH DODATKOWYCH

Wyrażam zgodę na udział mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....
imię i nazwisko
w zajęciach dodatkowych
nazwa zajęć
odbywających się
dzień i godzina
prowadzonych przez
imię i nazwisko prowadzącego / nazwa organizacji

.....
Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna
* właściwe wziąć w kółko

ZGODA NA UDZIAŁ W WARSZTATACH

Wyrażam zgodę na udział mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....
imię i nazwisko
w warsztatachnazwa warsztatów
odbywających siędzień i godzina
prowadzonych przez
imię i nazwisko prowadzącego / nazwa organizacji

.....
Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna
* właściwe wziąć w kółko

ZGODA NA UDZIAŁ W WYJŚCIU KLASOWYM

Wyrażam zgodę na udział mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....imię i nazwisko
w klasowej wycieczce do kina/ teatru/ muzeum/ na basen/ do parku trampolin /
(inne)
nazwa miejsca
w dniu
data

.....
Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna
* właściwe wziąć w kółko

ZGODA NA UDZIAŁ W WYCIECZCE KLASOWEJ JEDNODNIOWEJ

Wyrażam zgodę na udział mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....
imię i nazwisko
w klasowej wycieczce do
nazwa miejsca
w dniu
data

.....
Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna
* właściwe wziąć w kółko

ZGODA NA UDZIAŁ W WYCIECZCE KLASOWEJ WIELODNIOWEJ

Wyrażam zgodę na udział mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....
imię i nazwisko
w klasowej wycieczce do
nazwa miejsca
w dniach od do
data data

.....
Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna
* właściwe wziąć w kółko

ZGODA NA UDZIAŁ W KONKURSIE

Wyrażam zgodę na udział mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....
imię i nazwisko
w konkursienazwa konkursu
odbywającym siędzień i godzina
w
nazwa organizacji

.....
Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna
* właściwe wziąć w kółko

ZGODA NA SAMODZIELNE POWROTY ZE SZKOŁY

Wyrażam zgodę na samodzielne powroty do domu mojej córki/ mojego syna*

.....
imię i nazwisko
w roku szkolnym 2019/2020 po zakończonych zajęciach edukacyjnych.

.....
Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna
* właściwe wziąć w kółko

Glossary of school terms (for parents and pupils)

Class register / electronic class register

Teachers enter subject, grades and behavioural assessments there. Sometimes the register takes form of a paper book and sometimes it's electronic. Parents and pupils can log in to the electronic register at home to check their grades or contact teachers.

School ID card

Pupil's ID card which entitles the pupil to free travel on public transportation in Wrocław or to discounts on intercity transport. The ID card must be stamped every year at the secretary's office and signed in the designated place.

Parent-teacher meetings / interviews

Those are the parents' meeting with the class teacher. The aim is to discuss children's progress at school and other important issues concerning school life.

Attendance is not obligatory, but it is worth to attend those meetings, and sign documents on a regular basis. This is also the best way to get information about your child.

Consultation / open door

SMeetings with teachers who teach specific subjects. Parents can meet with them and talk about their children's performance.

Grading scale

From the fourth grade of the primary school, pupils are graded on a scale from 1 to 6, where 6 is the highest grade, and 1 is the lowest grade. A pupil is expected to master syllabus content in a level allowing them to achieve at least grade 2.

Grade's weight

Each grade has its own weight. This means that some grades are more important than others, e.g. a test grade will be more important than a homework grade.

Proposed grade

For each course you will receive a main grade at the end of the semester. A proposed assessment is a proposal for the teacher's final assessment. You will get it early enough to have a chance to improve your grade to a higher one by improving your partial grades (from tests, short quizzes, tasks and other activities).

Final grade

You will receive a final grade from each subject. This is a summary of the semester's work. The final grade is often the result of the average of the partial grades obtained in the semester.

Test

This is a test prepared by a teacher of one of the subjects. It most often involves a specific part of the material (e.g. a chapter in a textbook) and is related to practical tasks (often open tasks, where you have to write an answer with your own words or solve specific math tasks). The test is always announced in advance.

Class test

It's a paper on a specific topic written during class. It is usually announced in advance and pupils have one or two hours to write it. The teacher provides the topic and pupils should elaborate on it.

Short quiz

This is a short test prepared by a teacher of one of the subjects. Short quiz can be announced or not. If it is not announced in advance, it can include material from the last 3 classes.

Homework

Task to be done at home and presented to the teacher at the next class. Sometimes teachers put the homework information in the electronic register, but remember to always write down what you have to do for the next class in your notebook. If you didn't complete your homework, you may receive an unsatisfactory grade (1).

Assembly

A school celebration organized for holidays. During the assembly, you will most often watch a stage performance and listen to the speech of the school principal. Remember that on the day of the assembly, pupils must be dressed formally.

Festival

It is a party organized on the school premises. It is sometimes accompanied by dancing, sports competitions and games, a fair (selling cakes or decorations made by pupils, for example) or other stage performances. Festivals are organized on various occasions.

Overnight school trip

This is a few days trip for pupils with a class teacher or other teachers. Overnight school trip has educational nature – not only tourism is important, but also the opportunity to learn something new from different fields.

School trip

This is a trip with a class teacher or other teachers. Those often include sightseeing tours, giving the opportunity to visit the area. There are also trips within the city (e.g. to the cinema, museum or other cultural institutions).

Absence

In Poland, children are obliged to attend school. If the child does not attend school, parents are required to write a justification, i.e. explain why the child did not attend school or provide a medical certificate when the child was sick.

Semester/half year

That's half the study year: the winter semester usually lasts from September to January, the summer semester from February to June. After the first semester (half year) you will receive grades from each subject; after the second half year you will receive grades at the end of the school year that will appear on the certificate.

Semester break

After the first semester, pupils in Poland have a two-week break – winter holidays.

Holidays

It's time off from school in the summer. It lasts from the last week of June to the end of August.

Class teacher

Class guardian. Each class has one or two guardians assigned to it. You can go to your class teacher with any problem.

School principal

The person who runs the school.

Deputy principal

Deputy of the school principal.

Secretary's office

A place where you can arrange all the formalities, e.g. a school ID card. If necessary, you can call your parents from there.

School counsellor

A specialist who helps children who are experiencing difficulties at school.

School psychologist

A specialist who helps pupils deal with difficult emotions and feelings.

Speech therapist

A specialist who helps pupils with speech impairments.

Psychological and pedagogical counselling centre

It is a place where specialists examine children for opportunities to benefit from education. They help children who face barriers in education.

Parents' council

A school body made up of representatives of parents in each class. The Council supports the school in its activities and organises various events.

Library

A place where pupils can use the school book collection free of charge. Pupils can also borrow books and take them home.

After school club

This is a place where you will be safe to spend time after school, waiting for your parents, or during classes you do not attend.

School outfit

Your outfit must be neat and appropriate to the occasion. Remember to always choose clean clothes that are appropriate for your age and place.

Outfit for physical education classes is important as well. You should have replacement shoes (sports shoes!), as well as sports shorts and shirts.

Official outfit

Official outfit should be worn for all school events such as the beginning and end of the school year, holidays and assemblies.

Girls should wear a navy blue skirt and white blouse, while boys should wear navy blue trousers and white shirt.

Remember, sportswear is not suitable for such events.

Non-compulsory classes

Both religious and family education classes are not compulsory. A parent may ask for the arrangement of extra ethics classes at the school instead of religion.

Extra-curricular activities

Classes that take place at school after classes. These can be catch-up courses, or classes where you can develop your interests or learn something new.

Special interest club

Additional activities organized at school to deepen and develop hobbies, e.g. journalism or art club. You have to ask about your special interest clubs in a particular school.

If you feel unwell during a break, report it to the teacher on duty (even if you don't know him/her). If you don't see a teacher nearby, ask a friend, they will be happy to help you and call for help.

Cultural assistant - in some schools you may meet a cultural assistant. This is a person who speaks Ukrainian or Russian and stays at school for several hours a week. The assistant can help you during classes, with your homework, or solve problems that arise from the fact that you do not speak Polish well yet.

Catch-up courses for pupils from other countries - if the curriculum at your previous school was very different from the one you are currently attending and you are behind the schedule - you can take advantage of the catch-up courses. Those are the additional classes in a subject that is difficult to you.

Serious problems and emergencies - you must remember that at every school there are rules and regulations in force. If you break them, the school management has the right to punish you for this (you may receive a grade that is reprehensible for your behaviour or even be suspended from your pupil's rights). When you do something forbidden, the principal will call your parents.

Remember that if you leave school during classes without permission, the school does not take responsibility for you.



Psychologist support – school psychologist is a person who helps pupils cope with difficult emotions and feelings. If you feel like talking to someone, you can always see the psychologist.

Contacts with your class teacher – if you have any questions about school life or if you have any problem, talk to your class teacher. This is a class guardian who will certainly help you and answer all your questions.

Contact with the teacher of Polish (who teaches Polish as a foreign language) – each school provides additional Polish classes. It is worth to take advantage of them! The teacher will help you to find your way in the new environment and familiarize you with the most important vocabulary.

If you don't feel confident because you don't speak the Polish language well yet – do a placement test – it will help you to determine.

If you're **not good at learning in a foreign language**, teachers can decide that you need to repeat the year – it's a great opportunity to improve your language skills.

If you don't understand everything during a class, please contact your class teacher. The school will arrange additional catch-up courses for you. Learning difficulties are usually caused by insufficient language skills, so you don't have to be afraid to admit that you have difficulties.

If you feel unwell in a class, report it to the teacher. The teacher will direct you to a school nurse who will make sure to help you. If necessary, the class teacher or the secretary will call your parents to pick you up early from school.

Flowers and gifts for teachers – if you want to thank your favourite teacher for their work, you can give them flowers or a small gift to celebrate the Teacher's Day (October 14th) or at the end of the school year. Remember that the nicest gifts come straight from the heart! Maybe it's worth to prepare such gift yourself?

Exams – if you are about to take your eighth grade exam, don't worry! The school principal can try to adjust the exam so that you can take it in a separate room and give you more time.

Who can support you when needed?

Who should you report concerns and difficulties to?

There are many people at school who can help you solve your school problems. However, it is necessary to find the right person.

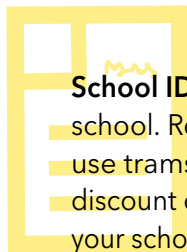
Problem with a specific subject: subject teacher -> class teacher -> counsellor -> principal

Problem related to school life or contacts between you and your peers: class teacher -> counsellor -> principal

Language barrier problem: Polish language teacher (who teaches Polish as a foreign language) or cultural assistant

Problem with documentation, formalities: secretary's office -> deputy principal -> principal

Counsellor's support – a school counsellor help you to solve conflicts with other pupils and teachers. It is a person you can fully trust – he/she is at school to help you!



School ID card – this is a document that you will receive at your school. Remember that if you have your school ID card, you can use trams and buses in Wrocław free of charge. You will get a discount on trains and intercity buses. Remember to always have your school ID card with you when using public transportation!

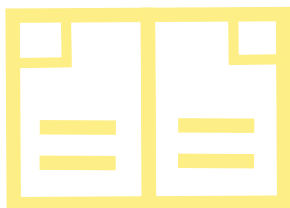
IMPORTANT: The school ID card must be stamped at the secretary's office at the beginning of the school year, otherwise it is invalid! Remember to sign it in the designated place.

Lunches – if your parents enroll you for lunches, you can eat them in the school canteen. This is not compulsory, instead you can take your own food to school or buy something from the school shop.

After school club – if you are a primary school pupil, you can use the after school club. This is a place where you will be safe to spend time after school, waiting for your parents, or during classes you do not attend (e.g. religion or family education). At the after school club, you can do your homework, have fun with your friends and play various games.

Parent-teacher meetings – these are the meetings where parents and teachers discuss your progress and resolve any problems you may have. Remember to keep your parents informed about those meetings.

Mobile phones – at some schools pupils are not allowed to use mobile phones. If your school does not allow to use mobile phones, remember to follow the rules and leave your phone at home.





When you're already attending a Polish school

Beginnings in unknown places are always difficult. Below you will find some important information about the Polish school and its rules. **In order to feel comfortable at school and to cope with all the challenges, remember the following:**

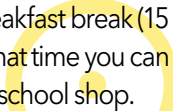
- note information about homework in your notebook (if you didn't understand what to do or bring for the next class - ask the teacher)
- one notebook per subject - ask the teacher what kind of notebook does the subject require
- handle textbooks with care - if you lose or destroy them, you will have to pay for them
- do not leave the school alone during classes
- the school expects you to wear clean and tidy clothes.

We leave our jackets and shoes in the locker room. We wear replacement footwear at school.

School information - the class teacher or other teachers will provide with you all the information you need. They will also contact your parents via an electronic class register or pass on information through you. If this is the case, remember to write down the information provided by the teacher or make sure not to lose the card/message for the parents.

Classe - each class lasts 45 minutes. Remember to always have your schedule with you and keep an eye on the school bells - this way you'll never be late!

Breaks - School is not only about classes, but also about breaks! Breaks usually last 10 minutes, but during the day there is one breakfast break (15 minutes) and one lunch break (20 or 25 minutes). During that time you can have your breakfast brought from home or bought in the school shop.



Who's vocational school for?

If you want to have a profession as soon as possible and start working right after school, you should consider vocational school. You study there for three years, gaining practical skills in workplaces and in practical training centres. At the end of the school, you must pass an exam confirming your professional qualifications.

What you should know before applying for school:

Remember, you have exactly the same rights as Polish children at school. In accordance with the Polish law, children who are not Polish citizens and are subject to schooling obligation are entitled to education and care in public primary schools, public art schools, institutions and secondary schools under the conditions identical to those of Polish citizens.

In order to enroll for the school, you and your parents should bring your school certificate to the new school. Once teachers have read the document, they will be able to help you make up for the curricular differences.

Information about your health – share all information about your health with your parents.

Language test – it is possible that teachers working at the school will put you through a language test. There's nothing to be afraid of! The test will help you to determine which class you should be enrolled in, so that learning at a Polish school will be interesting and developing for you. You don't have to worry if you don't speak Polish – you'll be placed in a special preparatory class. If there is no such class at your school, you will be able to attend additional Polish classes.

How long does compulsory education last in Poland?

You have to study until you're 18. First you need to finish primary school (8 years) and then you can choose which school you want to attend. You can choose between a secondary school of general education (4 years), a technical secondary school (5 years) or a vocational school (level I – 3 years of education, level II – 2 years of education). After graduating from secondary school of general education or a technical secondary school you can take the final exam and enroll for studies.

Who's secondary school of general education for?

If you like to study and would like to study in the future, choose high school. Secondary school of general education lasts three years. If you decide to attend this type of school, remember that you will have to study a lot and that you will not gain a profession there. The school's task is to prepare pupils for the Matura exam. With passed Matura exam, you will be able to apply for higher education studies. Secondary school of general education without higher education does not offer many career opportunities.

Who's technical secondary school for?

Technical secondary schools are intended for people who are interested in a specific profession and want to grow in this direction. In addition to the vocational subjects, you will also be able to study core subjects for the Matura exam. You will also have to take a professional exam. The Matura exam allows you to apply for higher education studies, while the professional exam entitles you to practice your learned profession.

This guide is addressed to pupils who start or continue their education in Poland and come from abroad or return to Poland from emigration.

It contains information about the Polish education system and tips on how to find their feet at school. Since we would like the children and their parents to easily adapt to the new conditions, therefore we would like to explain how public schools in Poland function and how to deal with them.

There are two sections in this guide - one for parents and one for pupils. There is also a very useful glossary at the end of the guide, which includes school vocabulary and parent-school communication templates.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. HOW LONG DOES COMPULSORY EDUCATION LAST IN POLAND?	3
3. WHO'S SECONDARY SCHOOL OF GENERAL EDUCATION FOR?	3
4. WHO'S TECHNICAL SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR?	3
5. WHO'S VOCATIONAL SCHOOL FOR?	3
6. WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE APPLYING FOR SCHOOL	4
7. WHEN YOU'RE ALREADY ATTENDING A POLISH SCHOOL	5
8. WHO CAN SUPPORT YOU WHEN NEEDED?	7
9. GLOSSARY OF SCHOOL TERMS	

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An electronic brochure in Polish, English and Ukrainian language can be downloaded from the website:

www.wielokultury.wroclaw.pl

The brochure was created as part of the implementation of the „Wrocław Strategy for Intercultural Dialogue 2018-2022”

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Wrocław, september 2019



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INFORMATION FOR PUPILS