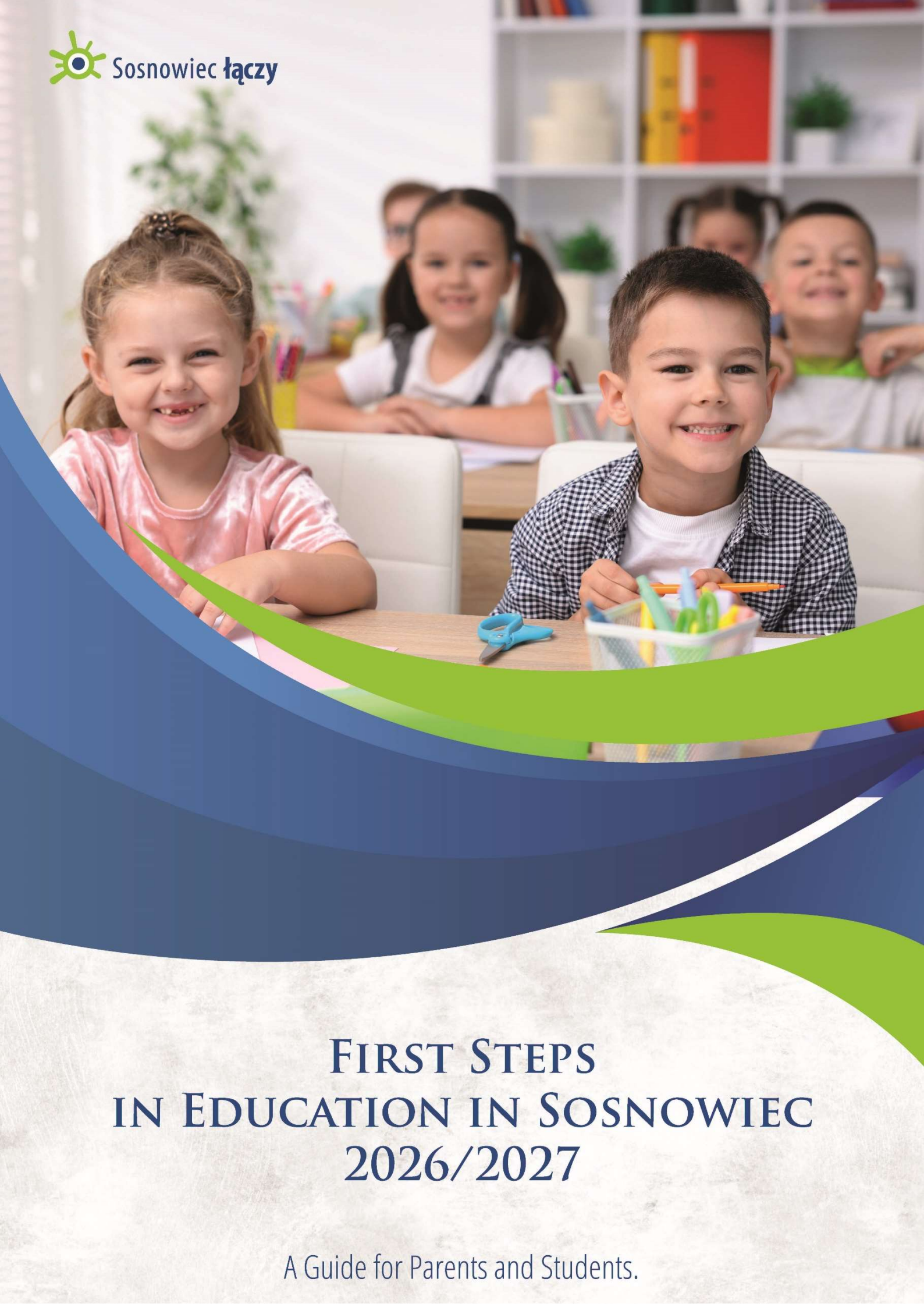




FIRST STEPS IN EDUCATION IN SOSNOWIEC 2026/2027

A Guide for Parents and Students.

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To Begin...

In Poland children are required to attend school until they turn 18 which is the age of majority. Until then they remain under the care of their parents or legal guardians. This means that they cannot make many decisions on their own, for example, regarding medical appointments, trips or matters related to school. In such situations they should always be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

It is important to know that under Polish law, children may travel independently on public roads once they are 7 years old. Until they reach that age, they should be accompanied by a guardian who is at least 10 years old.

Knowing these rules is important to ensure that everything runs smoothly and without unnecessary problems.

It is also worth remembering that students coming from abroad have the same rights and responsibilities in Poland as Polish students. Children who are not Polish citizens but live in Poland and attend school are entitled to education and care in public schools on the same terms as Polish students.

As a parent you are also required to use the electronic school register. The electronic register is the main communication tool between the school/kindergarten and parents and students. Be sure to check it every day so that you do not miss any important information.

Vaccinations for Children Before Starting Preschool Education

Most children starting preschool education in Poland have already received vaccinations protecting them against diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis B, rotavirus infections, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, infections caused by *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), pneumococcal infections, and poliomyelitis.

Mandatory vaccinations for children in Poland are administered in accordance with the Protective Vaccination Programme (Program Szczepień Ochronnych) and are free of charge, meaning they are funded by the state budget. Children can primarily receive vaccinations at the primary healthcare clinic (POZ) where they are registered. Free mandatory vaccinations as well as some recommended vaccinations are provided there.

Before enrolling your child in preschool it is advisable to consult a paediatrician to make sure that all mandatory vaccinations have been completed and to discuss recommended vaccinations.

Please note that failure to comply with the mandatory vaccination requirements may result in administrative consequences for parents including a financial penalty.

If a child has not received the required vaccinations the district sanitary inspector may send the parents a formal notice requiring them to have the vaccinations administered. If these measures are unsuccessful a formal reminder may be issued. As a further step the parent may be subject to a penalty for failing to fulfil the vaccination obligation.

Parents planning to send their child to preschool should obtain information from a paediatrician or family doctor about both mandatory vaccinations and recommended vaccinations that provide additional protection against infectious diseases.

If a child has food allergies or is allergic to specific medicines parents should inform the child's group teacher and the preschool management so that appropriate care and safety measures can be provided.

The same applies to nurseries. In addition to the mandatory vaccinations included in the vaccination schedule, children attending a nursery should also be vaccinated against chickenpox. This vaccination is free of charge for children attending a nursery. Parents should also consider vaccinations against meningococcal infections and influenza.

School Attendance and Insurance

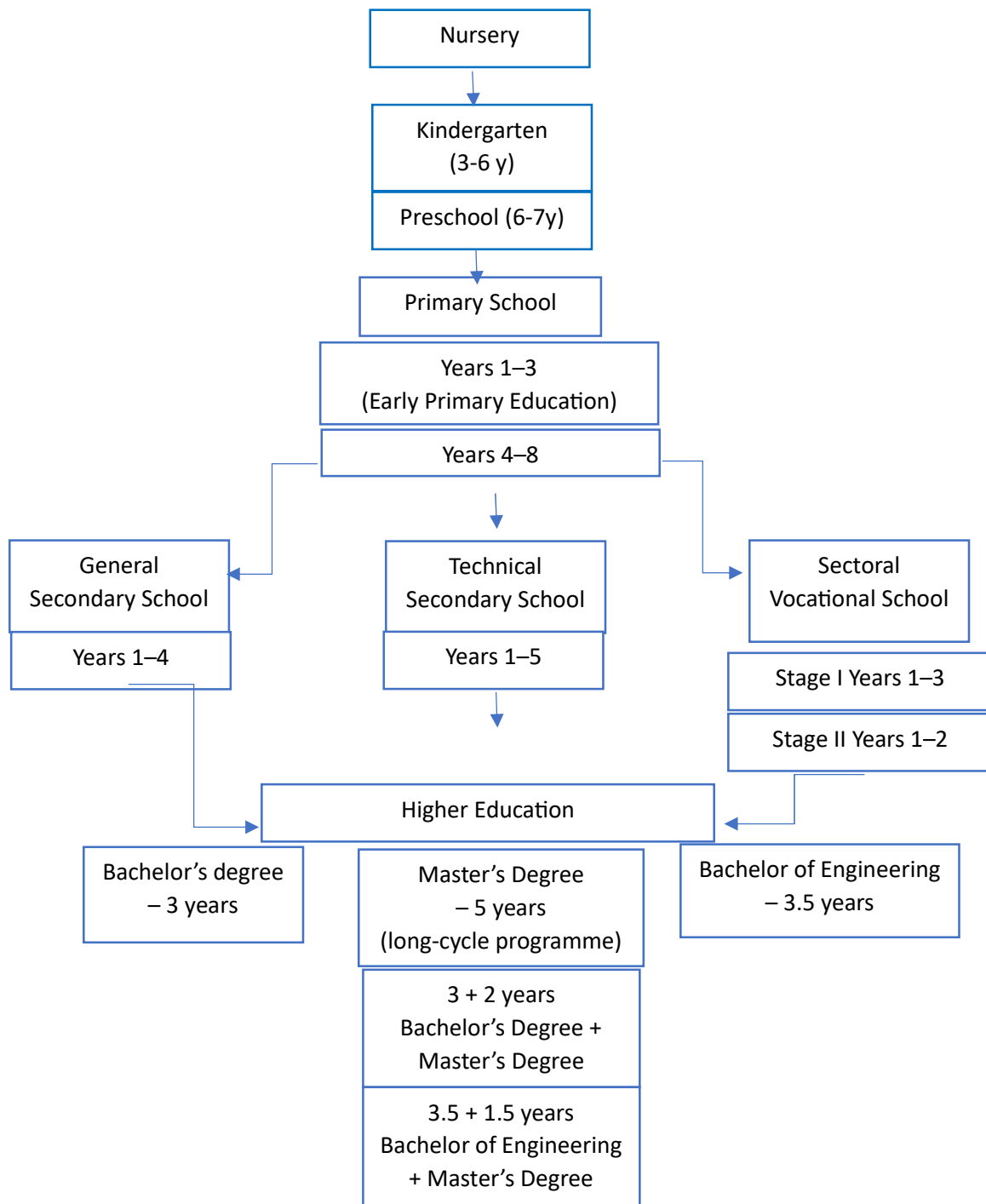
Students' attendance at school and reception class is monitored on an ongoing basis. In the case of frequent absences or unauthorised absence from classes the school may take steps to clarify the situation and, in some cases, family support services may also become involved.

At school and preschool parents can purchase voluntary private **personal accident insurance (NNW)** for their child from a selected insurance company operating in Poland. In many cases having such a policy is a requirement for a child to participate in school events and trips.

Personal accident insurance (NNW) provides cover for the consequences of accidents and may include, among other things:

- permanent injury or impairment resulting from an accident;
- the consequences of bites or stings from animals or insects;
- the costs of purchasing or repairing orthopaedic equipment and medical aids;
- medical treatment and related expenses following an accident; and
- a benefit for hospitalisation.

How Does the Education and Childcare System Work in Poland?



Childcare for children under 3 years of age

Nursery

Children's Club

At a nursery:

from 20 weeks of age to 3 years

At a children's club:

from 1 year to 3 years of age

Fee for childcare:

At nurseries and children's clubs run by the City, the monthly fee is PLN 1,500.00.

For children covered by the "Active in the Nursery" benefit, childcare is free of charge.

Meal fee:

The daily meal fee is PLN 8.00.

Parents who hold a Sosnowiec Resident Card (Sosnowiecka Karta Mieszkańca) are exempt from the meal fee.

Information on childcare and meal fees at nurseries run by non-public providers is available on empatia.gov.pl, under the section "Nurseries, Children's Clubs and Childminders".

In Sosnowiec there are both municipal and private (non-public) nurseries.

Municipal nurseries and the children's club provide childcare from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Parents can also take advantage of afternoon childcare through a two-shift system: 6:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., or 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. at Nursery Branch No. 7, 23 Sucha Street.

Starting in September this year childcare will also be available one Saturday per month at each nursery branch.

Parents are responsible for providing their child with nappies, wet wipes, indoor shoes, a change of clothes and any other necessary items.

Childcare facilities for children under 3 provide meals that comply with nutritional standards for young children and take into account special dietary requirements.

In Sosnowiec, admission to municipal nurseries is carried out through an electronic enrolment system. The online platform allows parents to submit an application for a place for their child in a nursery or children's club throughout the year. Applications are submitted via the following electronic system: www.zlobki.vulcan.net.pl/zzkdsosnowiec/News.

Kindergarten

ages 3 to 6
(in exceptional cases, from 2.5
years of age)

Childcare fees:

Free of charge for up to 14
hours per day.

Meal fee:

Depending on the child's
attendance,
approximately PLN 300 per
month.

Compulsory education in Poland begins at the age of 6 with the so-called "zerówka" (preschool), which is the final year of kindergarten education.

However, to make it easier for your child to continue their education in the future, develop their hand and finger skills, and learn Polish, it is worth enrolling your child in kindergarten from the age of 3. Children learn to draw and write, play with age-appropriate toys, make friends, and spend time on the playground. In the younger groups, children who need it can also have a nap during the day. Kindergartens employ qualified staff who can help monitor a child's development and provide support in areas such as psychology, education and speech therapy, or refer parents to a place where such support is available free of charge.

Parents should provide their child with indoor shoes, a change of clothes, and, where possible, art supplies, tissues, wet wipes, and any other necessary items specified by the kindergarten.

Kindergartens provide meals appropriate for the children's age and take into account specific dietary requirements.

Many kindergartens use an app through which parents can communicate with teachers, find out how much they need to pay each month, check the menu and read announcements.

In Sosnowiec, there are both municipal and private fee-paying kindergartens.

How to Enrol Your Child?

Enrolment in public preschools run by the City of Sosnowiec takes place every year online via the website <https://przedszkola-sosnowiec.nabory.pl/>. The enrolment process usually begins at the beginning of March. Information about the enrolment dates is published on the City's website by order of the Mayor of Sosnowiec and on the websites of individual kindergartens.

Parents or legal guardians submit an application through the city's enrolment system, where they indicate three preferred kindergartens, in order of preference.

During the enrolment process, parents complete an online application and attach documents confirming that they meet the relevant admission criteria. Both statutory criteria and additional criteria established by the City of Sosnowiec are taken into account when admitting a child. Candidates receive a specific number of points for meeting each criterion.

A description of the admission criteria, the points awarded and the required documents is available on the enrolment portal.

After submitting the application online, it must be printed, signed by hand and delivered to the kindergarten, together with other documents confirming that the relevant criteria have been met.

Once the enrolment process has been completed, the admission committees review the applications and publish lists of children who have been qualified and not qualified for admission.

Parents then confirm their intention for their child to attend the selected kindergarten. Only after this stage are the final lists of admitted children published.

If places remain available after the main enrolment process, supplementary enrolment is organised. This also takes place through the electronic enrolment system.

A list of educational institutions can be found at:

<https://www.bip.um.sosnowiec.pl/a,534100,przedszkola.html>

Primary School

ages 7 (6)–15 (14)

free of charge

Primary school education in Poland lasts 8 years and is divided into two stages.

Early primary education (Years 1–3) helps children make a smooth transition from preschool to school. Most lessons are taught by one teacher, who is responsible for the majority of subjects. Children develop key skills such as reading, writing and basic mathematics, as well as their creativity and social skills.

From Year 4, pupils are taught by different teachers who specialise in specific subjects such as Polish, mathematics, history, science, foreign languages, art, music, technology and physical education. In later years, science is divided into biology, chemistry, physics and geography.

Pupils gradually acquire more knowledge and prepare for the Eighth-Grade Exam. This is a compulsory examination taken at the end of primary school. It consists of three subjects: Polish, mathematics and a foreign language.

The result does not determine whether a pupil completes primary school — pupils complete primary school regardless of their examination result. However, the result is very important when applying to general secondary schools, technical secondary schools or sectoral vocational schools as a higher score increases the chances of being admitted to the school of their choice.

The examination takes place every year in May and is organised by the Central Examination Board (Centralna Komisja Egzaminacyjna).

Parents should provide their child with indoor shoes, a school bag, notebooks, a pencil case, a pen, a pencil, an eraser, coloured pencils, a ruler, scissors, glue, a pencil sharpener, sportswear for physical education, art materials and a water bottle.

The school provides textbooks on loan. In many cases, exercise books are also provided by the school library. However, if a pupil joins a class during the school year, it may be necessary to purchase any missing materials independently.

Pupils can also use the school library and borrow books that are on the required reading list.

Most schools have a canteen, where parents can purchase school lunches for their child for a small fee.

Younger children can use the school common room (światlica) so that they do not have to travel to or from school on their own. The common room often also offers free extracurricular activities and clubs.

In Sosnowiec there are both municipal and private schools. Private schools charge tuition fees.

How to Enrol Your Child in Primary School?

In Poland, primary schools have designated local areas, which means that each child is assigned to a particular primary school based on their actual place of residence. Children living within a school's local area have priority for admission to that school.

However, parents may choose to enrol their child in a school outside their local area. In such cases, admission depends on the availability of places and the decision of the headteacher of the chosen school.

Enrolment for Year 1 of primary school is carried out through the electronic NABO enrolment system. Enrolment dates are announced each year by an Order of the Mayor of Sosnowiec. The enrolment order, admission criteria and the resolution concerning school local areas are published on the City's website, www.sosnowiec.pl, as well as on the websites of individual schools. If parents choose their child's local school, the enrolment system will generate an application to register the child for Year 1 of primary school for the relevant school year. When completing the application, parents enter the child's home address, and the system automatically identifies the appropriate local school and prepare the application.

The application must be printed and submitted to the local school within the deadline specified in the Order of the Mayor of Sosnowiec. Submitting the application to the school guarantees the child's admission to Year 1.

The child's admission to the school is conditional upon submitting the printed and signed application to the school within the deadline specified in the Order of the Mayor of Sosnowiec.

If you choose schools other than the designated local school, the admissions system will generate an application for your child's admission to the first grade of primary school for the relevant school year. The system allows you to choose two schools; the third school will always be the designated local school.

The application must be printed and submitted to the school of your first choice within the deadline specified in the Mayor's Order.

The application will be considered in accordance with the admission criteria.

The form can be obtained from the school's administration office (secretariat) or downloaded from the school's website.

If you do not have access to a printer, you can obtain the form from the school and complete it by hand, or ask the school to help you print it.

The application/registration form requires the child's PESEL number. If the child does not have a PESEL number, you must provide the series and number of their passport or another identity document.

For admission to years other than the first year, an application for admission must be submitted to the school together with documents confirming the child's current level of education, including if the child has previously attended school abroad.

The child may continue their education either at the beginning of the school year or during the school year.

Documents confirming education completed abroad include:

- a school certificate, confirmation, or other document stating that the child has completed a school or a particular stage of education;
- a document issued by the school confirming the student's current grade or stage of education;
- a written statement from the parent or an adult student confirming the total number of years of schooling, if the total number of years of education cannot be established based on a certificate, confirmation, or other document.

Tips for Parents and Guardians

- If you cannot find a place for your child in a primary school, contact the Education Department of the City Office.
- If you do not have documents confirming your child's previous education, it is possible to submit an appropriate written statement.
- A child who turns 6 years old in a given year may start school earlier if the child meets the required conditions and have an appropriate assessment/opinion or document confirming school readiness.
- If your child did not attend "zerówka" (the preparatory year before primary school), the school may ask the parents to submit a written statement or provide an assessment from a Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre (see page 24).

In cases of developmental difficulties or lack of school readiness, it is possible to postpone the child's compulsory school attendance. To do so, an appropriate application must be submitted together with an opinion from a Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre.

Children with disabilities may have their compulsory school attendance postponed until they reach 9 years of age.

How to Enrol Your Child in School During the School Year

After the school year has started, you should contact the school of your choice directly to enrol your child.

Admission of a child who lives outside the school's designated local area depends on the availability of places at the school.

Additional Documents Worth Providing to the School

After enrolling a child who has special educational or health needs, it is advisable to provide the school with additional documents, such as:

1. Documents from a Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre

If your child has an assessment issued by a Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre (PPP) or a statement on the need for special education, it is advisable to provide these documents to the

school as soon as possible. They contain information about the student's educational needs, as well as recommendations regarding appropriate teaching methods, forms of support, and adjustments to educational requirements.

This information enables the school to better organise psychological and pedagogical support, including remedial classes, educational therapy, rehabilitation classes, and programmes supporting the development of the child's interests and talents.

2. Disability Certificate

A disability certificate plays an important role in organising appropriate support at school. Based on this document, the school may be eligible for additional funding to provide the student with the necessary assistance, including employing specialists, purchasing appropriate equipment, or adapting learning conditions.

The certificate may also enable the child to benefit from various forms of support, such as the assistance of a support teacher, specialist classes, rehabilitation equipment, and other accommodations tailored to the child's individual needs.

3. Medical Documentation for the School Nurse

The school nurse should be informed about any significant health conditions affecting the child. This is particularly important in the case of chronic illnesses, allergies (e.g. to food, medication or insect bites) or situations where the student needs to take medication while at school.

It is also important to provide information about conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy or asthma, so that the school can provide appropriate care and respond quickly in an emergency.

You can find a list of educational institutions on the following website:

<https://www.bip.um.sosnowiec.pl/m,6871,szkoly-podstawowe.html>

Eighth-Grade Exam and Additional Points in the Admissions Process

The Eighth-Grade Exam is a compulsory examination taken by students in the eighth year at the end of primary school. Taking the exam is a condition for completing primary school and receiving a school-leaving certificate. The exam cannot technically be failed because there is no minimum score required to pass. However, the results are very important during the admission process to secondary schools, as they affect a student's chances of being admitted to their chosen school. The exam is conducted entirely in written form. For each subject, students receive a separate examination paper containing both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. During the exam, each student works independently at a separate desk. The only items allowed on the desk are the examination paper and necessary writing materials, that is a pen or fountain pen with black ink. During the mathematics exam, students may also use a ruler. Students who are ill or have a disability certificate may have necessary medication and other officially permitted aids with them.

Eighth-grade students take exams in three compulsory subjects:

Polish language – Day 1, 120 minutes

Mathematics – Day 2, 100 minutes

Modern foreign language – Day 3, 90 minutes

Students may take the exam only in the foreign language they study at school as part of their compulsory classes.

Students who are not Polish citizens as well as Polish citizens returning from abroad whose limited knowledge of Polish makes it difficult for them to understand texts, may use a dictionary and receive additional time during the Eighth-Grade Exam. This need should be reported to the school principal well in advance.

After completing the Eighth-Grade Exam, every student receives a certificate showing their results in each subject. The certificate includes both a percentage score and a percentile score. The percentage score indicates what percentage of the total possible points the student achieved in a particular exam. The percentile score shows the percentage of students across Poland who achieved the same or a lower result than the student.

The exam results are final and cannot be appealed or changed through court proceedings. The results are converted into points, which are used during the admission process to secondary schools.

Students can also earn additional recruitment points for their activity and involvement, for example, by participating in competitions, contributing to class or school activities or taking part in other school initiatives. Such activities may be taken into account during the admission process to secondary schools.

On the other hand, negative points may be awarded for inappropriate behaviour, such as disrupting lessons, using cheat sheets or using inappropriate language. These points reduce the student's total score.

Additional points are also awarded based on academic performance:

Excellent (celująca) – 18 points

Very good (bardzo dobra) – 17 points

Good (dobra) – 8 points

Pass (dopuszczająca) – 2 points

A student may also receive 7 additional points for a school-leaving certificate with honours and 3 points for active participation in school volunteering.

All points earned are recorded on the primary school leaving certificate and are taken into account during the admission process to secondary schools.

Secondary school

General secondary school	from the age of 15 (14)	free of charge
Technical secondary school		
First- and second-stage vocational school		

Education is compulsory until the child reaches 18 years of age.
Young people can continue their education in:

General secondary school (liceum ogólnokształcące) – this type of school is intended for students who plan to continue their education at a university or other higher education institution. Completing a general secondary school does not provide a specific vocational qualification. Students receive a broad general education, and schools may offer specialised classes, for example, mathematics and physics, biology and chemistry or humanities. Education lasts 4 years and ends with the Matura examination, which is required for admission to higher education.

Technical secondary school (technikum) – is a good option for students who want to obtain a specific vocational qualification while also keeping the opportunity to continue their education. Education lasts 5 years. Students study both general subjects and vocational subjects related to their chosen field.

At the end of their education students take the Matura examination as well as vocational qualification exams. After graduating from a technical secondary school they can either continue their education at university or start working in their chosen profession. This gives them greater flexibility when choosing their future educational and career path.

In Sosnowiec, students can choose from fields such as: IT, programming, electronics, automation, sound recording; landscape architecture and arboriculture, interior design, construction; railway vehicle technology, railway transport, avionics, freight forwarding, logistics, port and terminal operations, airport operational services; automotive technology, mechatronics, welding, digital graphics and printing, electrical engineering, surveying, energy technology; photography and multimedia, fashion industry, hairdressing services, styling; advertising, veterinary studies, economics, food and catering services, hospitality, tourism organisation.

Vocational school (Szkola branżowa): this type of school allows students to quickly obtain a profession and start working.

A first-level vocational school lasts 3 years. Students mainly learn practical skills needed for their chosen profession. A large part of the education takes place during practical classes and vocational training. After completing a first-level vocational school, a graduate obtains basic vocational education and a diploma confirming their qualifications in a particular profession (after passing the vocational examination).

After completing a first-level vocational school, students have the opportunity to continue their education in their chosen profession at a second-level vocational school. The course lasts 2 years.

After completing this school, a graduate obtains secondary vocational education, the title of technician (after passing the vocational examination) and the opportunity to take the matura examination.

In Sosnowiec students can train in fields such as: Catering and food services: cook, confectioner, waiter; Craft and creative professions: hairdresser, photographer; Automotive and mechatronics: automotive mechanic, automotive electromechanic, driver-mechanic.

Admission to Secondary Schools

The dates for the secondary school admissions process including the deadlines for submitting applications for first-year classes are announced each year by the Silesian Superintendent of Education. Before making a decision about which school to choose it is worth checking and comparing the available secondary school options in your area. A list of schools can be found on the <https://slaskie.edu.com.pl/kandydat/app/offer.xhtml> website and on the websites of individual schools.

Admission to secondary schools is conducted online through www.slaskie.edu.com.pl/kandydat.

Basic documents required during secondary school admissions:

- an application for admission to a secondary school,
- a primary school leaving certificate confirming completion of Year 8,
- a certificate showing the results of the Eighth-Grade Exam.

What **other documents** may be required?

- diplomas or certificates confirming that the candidate has won a competition or academic olympiad.
- a medical certificate and a coach's certificate for candidates applying to sports classes.
- a medical certificate from an occupational medicine doctor for students entering vocational programmes, for example at a technical secondary school or vocational school.
- a certificate confirming the result of a language aptitude test for candidates applying to bilingual schools or bilingual classes.
- an assessment from a Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre (PPP) where required for continuing education in integrated classes or for implementing other recommendations specified in the document.

! Every primary school has a person responsible for providing students with information about the secondary school admissions process. This is usually a careers adviser or the student's class teacher. Ask your school for more details.

IMPORTANT: During the admissions process all of a student's achievements are converted into points. These include grades on the school-leaving certificate, Eighth-Grade Exam results, participation in competitions and academic olympiads and volunteering activities. The more points a student earns the greater their chances of being admitted to their chosen school.

A list of educational institutions can be found on the following website: www.sosnowiec.pl/edukacja

The Matura Examination

Students of general secondary schools, technical secondary schools and second-stage vocational schools can take the Matura examination. The Matura consists of oral and written examinations. It is the final examination at the secondary school level and enables students to apply for admission to higher education institutions.

Oral examinations:

- Polish language
- Modern foreign language

Written examinations:

- Polish language – basic level
- Mathematics – basic level
- Modern foreign language – basic level
- One or more chosen additional subjects – advanced level.

The results of the Matura examination are very important for a student's future educational path as they determine whether the student can be admitted to higher education. Results are presented as percentages and some university programmes require students to achieve a specific number of points in selected subjects. In addition to the compulsory subjects Matura candidates may also take additional examinations according to their interests and educational plans. Admission to university is determined by the results obtained in the individual Matura subjects.

To pass the Matura a student must achieve at least 30% of the points in each compulsory subject. If a student fails the exam in only one subject, they may take a resit examination later in the same year. If they fail more than one subject they must register to take the Matura examination again the following year.

Graduates of secondary schools from previous years may also take the Matura examination if they wish to improve their results. The Matura examination in Poland may also be taken by people who hold a secondary school leaving certificate obtained abroad.

! IMPORTANT: Before choosing the Matura subjects every student should check the admission requirements of the university or higher education institution they would like to attend.

Higher Education

In Sosnowiec are both public and private higher education institutions.

Public Universities:

University of Silesia (Uniwersytet Śląski): Modern languages and linguistics, e.g. German, English, French, Italian, Czech, Russian, etc. Natural sciences, Geography, Geology, Selected programmes in computer science and materials science, depending on the current organisation of the university's faculties.

Medical University of Silesia (Śląski Uniwersytet Medyczny): The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences in Sosnowiec offers programmes such as: Pharmacy, Medical analytics, Medical biotechnology, Pharmaceutical sciences.

Private Universities:

Humanitas University (Akademia Humanitas): Law, Psychology, Management, Administration, Education/Pedagogy, National security, Computer science, Finance and accounting, MBA programmes, Postgraduate studies

Higher School of Medicine in Sosnowiec (Wyższa Szkoła Medyczna w Sosnowcu): Nursing, Midwifery, Emergency medical services, Postgraduate programmes in medical sciences

Music Education

Music Schools Complex in Sosnowiec includes the State First-Level Music School named after Jan Kiepura and the State Second-Level Music School.

First-Level Music School

Education is offered in two programmes:

- Six-year programme – for children aged 6/7 to 9
- Four-year programme – for children aged 10 to 16

Music classes take place only in the afternoons and on Saturdays allowing students to combine music education with attendance at a general education school. Students can learn to play a wide range of instruments, including: piano, violin, viola, cello, double bass, guitar, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, accordion, and percussion instruments. Classes include individual instrumental lessons, general music subjects and ensemble activities such as choir and orchestra.

Admission: The entrance assessment for candidates to the First-Level Music School evaluates the child's musical aptitude, including: pitch recognition, harmonic hearing, analytical hearing, sense of tonality, sense of rhythm, musical memory. The assessment consists of oral and practical components. Every child is asked to sing a song. In the application parents indicate which instruments the child would like to learn. However, the final instrument assignment is decided by the admissions committee.

Every year in spring the school organises Open Days when children can learn more about the school and try out different instruments.

Second-Level Music School

Students at the Second-Level Music School can study the following instruments: piano, violin, viola, cello, double bass, guitar, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, accordion, and percussion instruments. The school operates six days a week.

After completing the First-Level Music School candidates take an entrance examination consisting of practical and theoretical components.

More information can be found on the school's website: <https://www.zsmsosnowiec.pl/>

Everything you need to know about education at school

A Day in a Polish school – organisation of learning and school customs

Organisation of the School Year

The school year in Poland is divided into two semesters. After the first semester, usually in January or February, students have a two-week winter break, known as *ferie zimowe*. The dates of the winter holidays are not the same throughout the country – they depend on the voivodeship (region) and may vary from year to year. After classes finish at the end of the second semester, students begin their summer holidays, which last approximately two months.

Days Off and Public Holidays

During the school year students have days off for national and religious holidays. On these days the school and its after-school care facility (*światlica*) are closed. In addition, a school may designate additional days without regular classes. Parents and students are informed about these dates in advance by the school principal. During such days the school provides after-school care for children who are registered for it.

One parent of children under 14 years of age is entitled to two additional days off per calendar year, regardless of the number of children. This entitlement applies only to parents who are employed under an employment contract.

School Calendar and Days Off

September

- 1 September – start of the school year (or the first working day after 1 September, if it falls on a weekend)

November

- 1 November – All Saints' Day
- 11 November – Independence Day

December

- 24 - 26 December – Christmas Eve, Christmas Days (Christmas break – usually begins shortly before Christmas and lasts until the end of the year or the beginning of January.)

January

- 1 January – New Year's Day
- 6 January – Epiphany

January / February

- Winter holidays – 2 weeks (the exact dates are determined each year by the Ministry of National Education)

March / April

- Easter holidays – a movable holiday

May

- 1 May – Labour Day (public holiday)
- 3 May – Constitution Day (public holiday)

May or June

- Corpus Christi – celebrated on Thursday, 60 days after Easter

June

- Last Friday of June – end of the school year

July / August

- Summer holidays

Details of the current school calendar are available on the websites of the Ministry of National Education and the Regional Education Authority as well as in the school's electronic school register.

Lessons and Breaks

In Polish schools lessons last 45 minutes. Between lessons students have breaks that are intended for resting, moving to another classroom, using the toilet or preparing for the next lesson. Breaks usually last around 10–15 minutes, and there is also typically a longer break during the school day when students can have a meal and recharge.

A detailed timetable, including lesson times and subjects, is provided to students and parents.

In Years 4–8 the organisation of learning differs from what students experience in early primary education. Instead of having one teacher teach most subjects, students attend lessons taught by different teachers who specialise in individual subjects. As a result, lessons may take place in different classrooms adapted to the specific subject. These may include science, chemistry, computer, or art classrooms equipped with the teaching materials and equipment needed for the lessons.

The Grading System in Poland

6 (Excellent – *celujący*): Awarded for outstanding results and a very high level of knowledge often exceeding the requirements set out in the curriculum.

5 (Very good – *bardzo dobry*): Indicates very good mastery of the material independent work, and active participation in lessons.

4 (Good – *dobry*): Indicates a good understanding and mastery of the material with only minor gaps.

3 (Satisfactory – *dostateczny*): Indicates a basic understanding of the material but with noticeable difficulties or gaps.

2 (Pass – *dopuszczający*): Indicates a minimum level of knowledge and skills that allows the student to continue their education.

1 (Fail – *niedostateczny*): Indicates insufficient mastery of basic knowledge and skills making it difficult for the student to continue learning.

Children attending Grades 1–3 of primary school are generally assessed using descriptive assessment. However some schools use the six-point grading scale from the beginning of primary education.

Promotion to the Next Grade

At the end of the first semester, usually in January or February, students receive mid-year grades, which show their performance and progress during the first part of the school year. At the end of the school year, in June, students receive annual grades, which reflect their work throughout the entire school year, not just the second semester. These are the grades recorded on the school-leaving certificate and taken into account when deciding whether a student can move on to the next year.

Throughout the year, students receive individual/ongoing grades, which are then used to calculate an average according to the weight assigned to each grade. Some grades are more important than others. For example, a grade from a test may have a greater weight than a grade for answering a question during a lesson. Grades are available in the electronic school register. It is worth remembering that these grades are indicative and help students understand what they still need to work on in order to improve their results by the end of the semester or school year.

If a student receives a failing grade (“1”) in accordance with the rules established by the school they usually have the opportunity to improve it within approximately two weeks.

A failing grade in the first semester does not automatically mean that the student has failed the school year. Promotion to the next grade is decided based on the annual classification.

If a student does not pass the school year they may in exceptional circumstances be given an opportunity to make up the required material usually by taking a resit examination organised towards the end of the summer holidays.

A student is not promoted to the next year if they do not meet the educational requirements, for example, if they receive several failing grades in compulsory subjects. Promotion may also be affected by a very high number of absences that makes it impossible to assess the student’s progress.

In addition to subject grades, students also receive a conduct grade, awarded at the end of each semester and for the entire school year. The detailed rules for awarding this grade are set out in the school’s regulations. However, they usually take into account, among other things:

- following the rules and regulations of the school,
- personal conduct and the way the student treats other people,
- responsible fulfilment of student duties,
- participation in school life and activities supporting others,
- commitment to learning and positive relationships with classmates.

A student’s conduct may be assessed as exemplary, very good, good, satisfactory, inappropriate or unacceptable.

The conduct grade does not determine whether a student is promoted to the next grade. However, it is an important part of the school-leaving certificate and summarises the student’s behaviour, attitude and overall conduct at school.

Communication with the School

Schools use electronic school registers to communicate with parents and students. Through the electronic register you can:

- communicate with teachers and the school principal,
- check the class timetable and any changes to it,
- read school announcements,
- submit excuses for your child's absences,
- check your child's grades.

Regularly checking the electronic school register is mandatory. Parents are also required to provide explanations for their child's absences by sending a message to the class teacher.

Parents must also inform the class teacher if their child needs to leave school before the end of the school day, for example, because they have a doctor's appointment or feel unwell.

School ID Card

A school ID card is a document issued to every student attending school. It confirms the student's status. To obtain one, you need to provide a recent photograph which can be taken at a professional photography studio.

The school ID card entitles students to various discounts including reduced fares on public transport such as trains and buses. For example, students receive a 37% discount on PKP and Koleje Śląskie services. The card may also provide discounts for admission to cultural and sports institutions.

In the Metropolis GZM including Sosnowiec and other cities in the region a valid school ID card together with a ZTM card allows children under 16 to use public transport free of charge including buses and trams.

The ZTM card can be obtained at Passenger Service Points. In Sosnowiec at ul. 3 Maja 17, opposite the PKP railway station hall.

The card must be validated/tapped on the ticket readers on public transport vehicles every time the child boards a bus or tram.

Cycling Licence

A cycling licence (karta rowerowa) is a document confirming that a person has passed an examination testing their knowledge of road traffic rules and practical skills related to safe cycling. People under 18 years of age are required to have the appropriate authorisation to ride a bicycle, electric scooter or other similar devices. The cycling licence is one such document and can be obtained by children who are at least 10 years old.

The cycling licence may be issued by the school principal if the child is a primary school student and has their parent's consent.

If the child has already completed primary school the licence may be issued by the director of a Regional Road Traffic Centre (WORD) or by an entrepreneur operating a driver training centre.

After-School Care (Świetlica szkolna)

The school after-school care facility is an important support service for families especially those where parents work. It is a place at school where students can stay under the supervision of teachers before lessons begin and after they finish. It serves not only a childcare function but also an educational and developmental role providing children with a safe and well-organised environment in which to spend their time.

Organisation and Registration

- Registration for the after-school care facility usually takes place at the beginning of the school year during the admissions process or in September. Parents who wish to enrol their child submit an appropriate application to the school office. The number of places may be limited so it is important to meet the deadlines.
- When registering parents must also indicate who is authorised to collect the child. Parents or guardians provide a list of people who are allowed to pick up the student from the after-school care facility such as grandparents or other trusted adults. Without written authorisation the child will not be released to anyone else. It ensures the child's safety.
- The school's regulations specify when and under what conditions a child may leave the school independently.

School Office

The school office is where the school's administrative matters are handled and where important organisational issues are dealt with. Office staff are responsible for maintaining records and providing administrative support to students, parents, teachers and the school management.

Their duties include, among other things, preparing and issuing certificates and official documents, maintaining student records, receiving and sending correspondence, and providing important information related to the functioning of the school.

School Trips

School trips are an important part of education in Poland because they allow students to gain knowledge and experience outside the traditional classroom.

- One-day trips – short trips to museums, theatres, cinemas, amusement parks, historical sites, or other educational venues. Their purpose is to expand on knowledge acquired during lessons and to help students build relationships with their classmates.
- Multi-day trips (e.g. "green schools") – longer trips usually to different regions of Poland such as the mountains or the seaside. Students spend several days or even a couple of weeks together, learning, sightseeing and relaxing.

Participation in school trips requires parental consent and often involves costs covered by the parents. Trips are a valuable experience that supports learning and helps students build relationships within the group. Students are also often required to have insurance coverage.

Parent–Teacher Meetings

Several times a year the class teacher organises a meeting during which parents receive information about students' academic performance and behaviour as well as current matters, upcoming events and the organisation of school life.

Parents are not legally required to attend these meetings but they are an important part of cooperation between parents and the school so it is recommended that parents participate.

If a parent does not attend meetings particularly when there are concerns about the child's academic performance or attendance the school may take appropriate steps to determine the reason for the parent's lack of involvement in the child's education.

School Customs

The beginning of the school year in Poland is a special occasion for students and their parents. It usually takes place on 1 September, and if this date falls on a weekend, the opening ceremony is held on the first Monday after 1 September. The school year usually ends on the last Friday of June. On this day students receive their school-leaving certificates and officially begin their summer holidays. The exact end date may vary slightly from year to year, as it is determined by the school calendar published by the Ministry of Education.

For the opening and closing ceremonies of the school year, celebrations of national holidays and other school events such as assemblies, ceremonies or examinations students are expected to wear formal school attire. Formal attire usually consists of a white shirt or blouse and dark smart trousers or a skirt (typically in colours such as white, grey, black, or navy blue). Some schools require students to wear a school uniform or another type of clothing identifying them as students of that school.

Unwritten Rules and Customs

A tradition in Polish schools is parental involvement in school life and close cooperation with teachers.

At the first class parents' meeting, the so-called class parent committee (*trójka klasowa*) is elected from among the parents. It usually consists of a chairperson, deputy chairperson, and treasurer. They coordinate class-related matters and represent all the parents in the class.

The Parent Council (*Rada Rodziców*) is then elected from representatives of the class parent committees. Its decisions can have a direct impact on school life, for example, regarding rules for assessing student behaviour, the school's regulations, purchasing educational materials and small school investments.

Parents are expected to:

- Take an interest in their children's education and progress – attend parent–teacher meetings, check the electronic school register and respond to any problems such as behavioural or academic difficulties.

- Take an active part in school life – participate in school ceremonies and other events and help organise school fairs and similar activities.
- Respect social norms and school rules both as parents and together with their children.
- Inform the school about any special needs resulting from the family situation, health, cultural background or religion.

Some of the rules and standards generally expected in Polish schools include:

- Showing respect to teachers, school staff and other students.
- No verbal or physical aggression. Students are expected to use respectful language and avoid vulgar or offensive words. Teachers and other school staff are addressed politely, for example, “Proszę Pani” (Excuse me, Miss/Ms) or “Proszę Pana” (Excuse me, Sir).
- Appropriate clothing and appearance suited to the situation. Students should avoid excessive make-up, extravagant clothing or accessories, clothing that reveals too much of the body and symbols or slogans that may promote violence, hatred or discrimination, as well as content contrary to the principles and rules applicable in Poland.
- Maintaining personal hygiene and keeping hair and clothing clean.
- Being punctual and prepared for lessons including having the necessary school supplies, notebooks and materials.
- During lessons students should listen to the teacher, avoid disturbing others and ask for help when they do not understand something.
- Respecting shared spaces, classrooms, school equipment and other people’s belongings.
- Keeping the school and its surroundings clean.

Hygiene and Student Health

A student should take care of their personal hygiene every day and come to school clean and prepared for classes. It is important to wash hands regularly and take care of the cleanliness of hair, teeth, and clothing.

Parents should regularly monitor their child’s health including checking the scalp and looking for signs of infection. If lice, pinworms, other parasites or infectious diseases are discovered, appropriate treatment should be provided and the class teacher should be informed.

A child should come to school only when they feel well and are able to safely participate in classes. In case of illness the child should stay at home to avoid infecting others. The school does not administer medication on its own without prior arrangements with the parents. If your child has a chronic illness please establish appropriate procedures with the class teacher.

Mobile Phones

In kindergarten and primary school, students are not allowed to use mobile phones during lessons or breaks. In secondary schools the rules regarding the use of mobile phones are determined by the school principal.

Changing Schools

If you are planning to transfer your child to another school during the school year first contact the new school and find out whether they can accept your child. Then inform the current school about the planned transfer. The student's records are usually transferred between the schools and the entire procedure generally takes a few days.

Important

Parents are required to inform the school if their child changes schools. Failure to provide such information combined with the child's prolonged absence may result in an investigation and legal consequences.

Enrolling in school during the school year for newly arrived children

Moving to Poland during the school year does not mean that you have to wait until the new semester to enroll your child in school. The Polish education system provides for such situations and allows students to be admitted to school during the school year.

Public primary and secondary schools provide free education to children and young people aged 7 to 18 (or until they complete secondary school) regardless of their residency status.

The rules for admission to school during the school year are set out in the applicable regulations allowing parents to arrange their child's continued education efficiently after moving to Poland.

Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre

A Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre (*Poradnia Psychologiczno-Pedagogiczna*) is an institution that supports children, young people, parents and teachers in addressing difficulties related to learning, development and emotional and social functioning.

The specialists working at the center including psychologists, educational specialists and speech therapists, help identify a child's needs and recommend the most appropriate forms of support. Parents can contact the center when they notice difficulties with learning, concentration, communication, behavior, relationships with peers or managing emotions.

The center conducts psychological, educational and speech and language assessments and issues professional opinions and decisions that may provide the basis for obtaining appropriate support at school or kindergarten. Specialists also provide advice and consultations for parents, helping them better understand their child's needs and support their development.

The services of the Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre are free of charge and voluntary. Seeking professional support early can help identify a child's difficulties sooner and provide more effective assistance in everyday life.

A child's developmental, educational or emotional difficulties can be a major challenge not only for the child but also for their parents. The assessment process often involves many emotions and questions

so parents and caregivers may also need support and help understanding the situation and finding the best ways to support their child.

Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centres offer assistance not only to children but also to parents. They organize consultations, workshops and training sessions on parenting child development and dealing with difficulties that arise in family life. Parents can also receive individual psychological support.

The professional opinions and decisions issued by the center are provided only to the child's parents or legal guardians. They decide whether and to what extent these documents will be shared with the school and the school's psychological and educational support team so that the child can receive appropriate assistance.

There are two Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centres in Sosnowiec and district allocation applies:

- Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre No. 1
ul. Piłsudskiego 114, 41-209 Sosnowiec
www.poradnia1.sosnowiec.pl
- Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre No. 2
ul. Białostocka 17, 41-219 Sosnowiec
www.poradnia2.sosnowiec.pl

Psychological and pedagogical support at school

Every school has a team of specialists responsible for providing psychological and pedagogical support to students. The team includes, among others:

School pedagogue – this is the person to turn to first when difficulties arise. They help develop an appropriate support plan for the child and provide assistance in resolving behavioural problems, peer conflicts and difficulties in relationships with teachers.

School psychologist – provides consultations when a child is experiencing emotional problems, difficulties in relationships with family members or peers, low mood or violence. They also offer support in crisis situations such as conflicts or behavioural problems.

Special education teacher – supports students with special educational needs and assists teachers in working with children who require additional support.

Educational therapist – conducts remedial and compensatory sessions recommended on the basis of a psychological and pedagogical assessment. These sessions are aimed at supporting the child's development in areas where they experience difficulties.

Speech therapist – diagnoses and provides therapy for speech and language disorders. They also conduct screening assessments among students in Years 1–3.

Consent for a child to receive psychological and pedagogical support at school is usually included in the documents signed by parents at the beginning of the school year or when the child is enrolled in the school.

If you notice that your child is experiencing various difficulties, such as:

- problems adjusting to a new environment or a prolonged adaptation process,
- difficulties with learning, lack of progress or achievement, or low motivation to work,
- difficulties learning to read and write, recognising letters or communicating verbally,
- problems establishing and maintaining relationships with peers, social withdrawal, or excessive shyness,
- difficulties managing emotions, stress or anger that affect the child's functioning at school,
- sleep disturbances an irregular daily routine or problems related to eating,

it is worth consulting the school pedagogue or psychologist. They can help identify the child's needs and plan appropriate forms of support.

Child Protection Standards

Child Protection Standards are rules designed to help ensure children's safety at school, kindergarten, sports clubs and other institutions. They define how adults should interact with children, how to respond to situations that may threaten their safety and what to do when there is a suspicion that a child may be experiencing harm or abuse.

The purpose of these standards is not to make cooperation with parents or staff more difficult but to create a safe environment in which every child is respected, listened to and protected. Thanks to these standards everyone—staff, parents and children—knows what rules apply and where to seek help when needed.

What can a school do in a situation of risk?

In the event of a threat to a child's life or health the school may call the appropriate emergency services for example by dialling **112**.

If there is a suspicion of domestic violence the "Blue Card" procedure may be initiated. It can be initiated, among others, by a police officer, teacher, social worker, doctor or nurse. Its purpose is to ensure the safety of the child and family by taking appropriate supportive measures.

Domestic violence means any deliberate act or omission that harms a family member or violates their rights, dignity, health or safety causing physical or psychological suffering.

Starting a "Blue Card" procedure does not automatically mean that criminal proceedings will be initiated. However, the documentation collected as part of the procedure may be used as evidence if the case is referred to the relevant authorities.

Actions taken as part of the "Blue Card" procedure may include:

- providing the child and family with free psychological, pedagogical, legal, medical or social assistance,
- taking measures to protect the person experiencing violence from further harm,
- referring the child for a medical examination if there is a suspicion that violence has occurred,
- developing a support plan for the child and family in cooperation with specialists including school staff.

Application to the family court

If the child's situation raises serious concerns and previous support measures have not produced the desired results the school is required to notify the family court which may take further steps to ensure the child's safety and appropriate care.

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