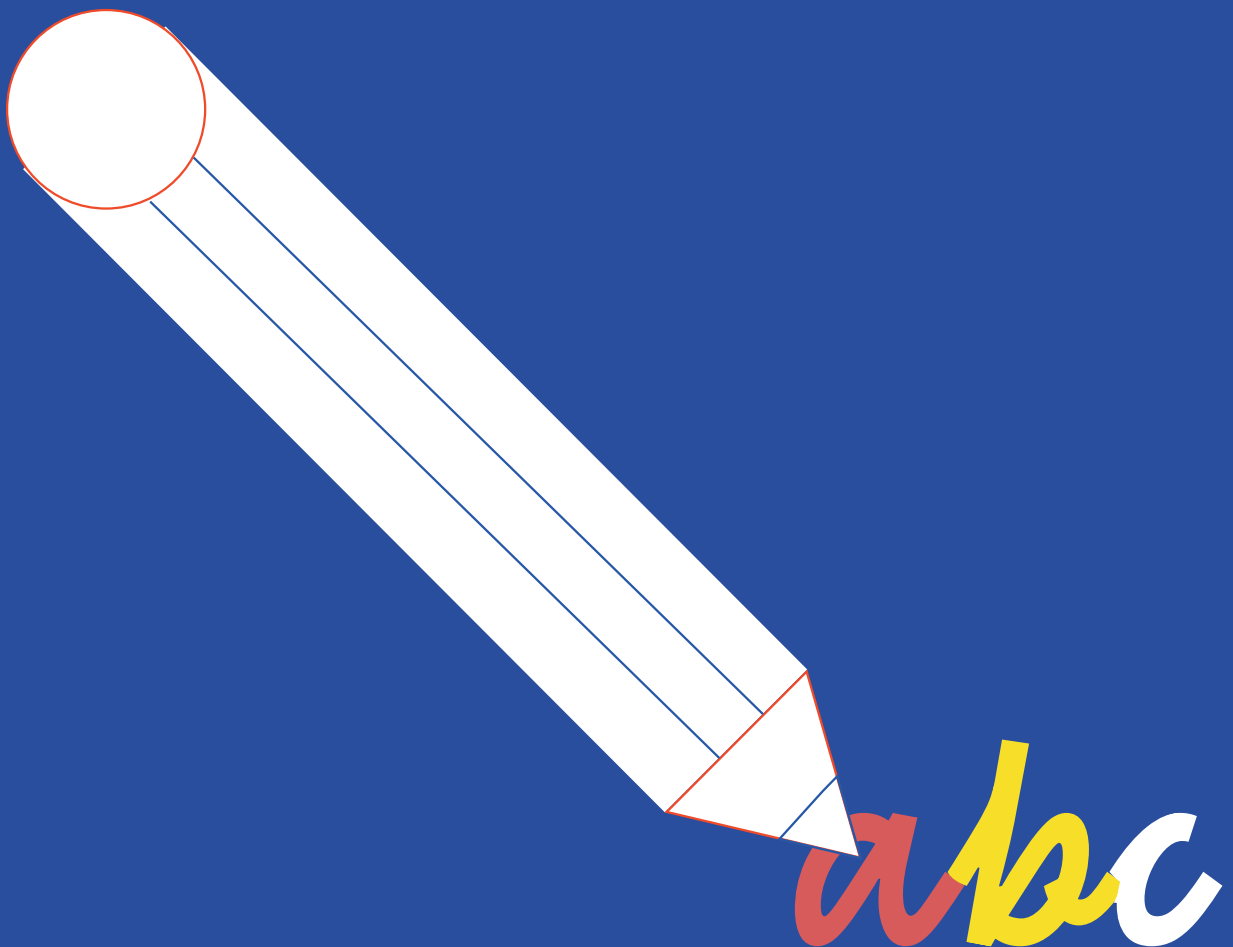


2025/26  
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# SCHOOL STARTER PACK





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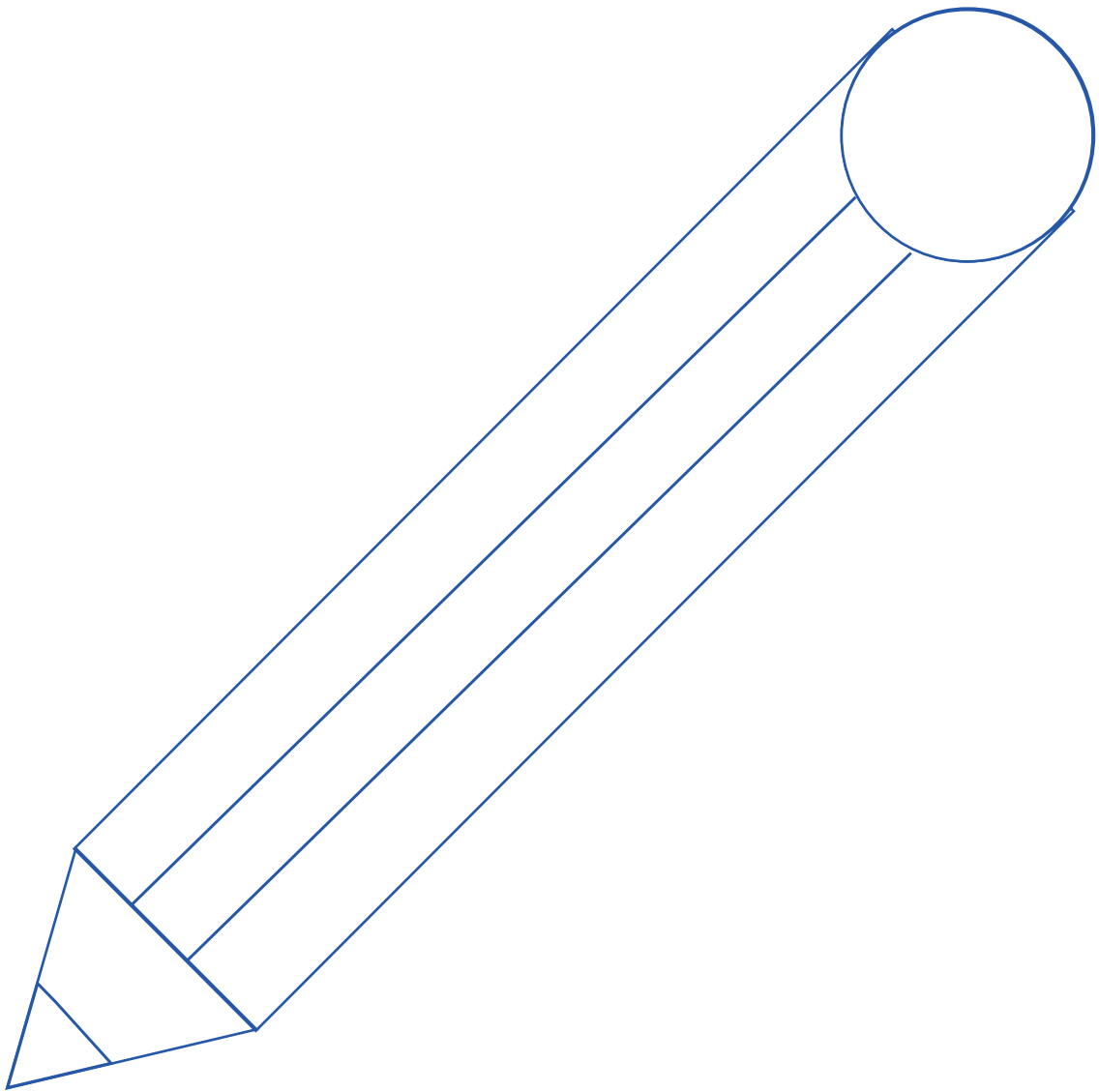
# 1. Introduction



## Welcome to the School World!

This guide was created with you in mind – both parents and guardians, as well as pupils who start or continue their education in Poland, whether they come from abroad or have returned to Poland after migrating to other countries. We understand that changing schools may be a significant challenge, so we want to help you find your way in the Polish education system.

In the publication, you will find useful information on how public schools in Poland function, explanations of key terms, and useful links to websites where you can explore the topics further. The guide also contains a practical glossary of school-related terms and templates of documents to facilitate communication with the school. We hope that thanks to this guide, you will feel more confident in your new school reality!



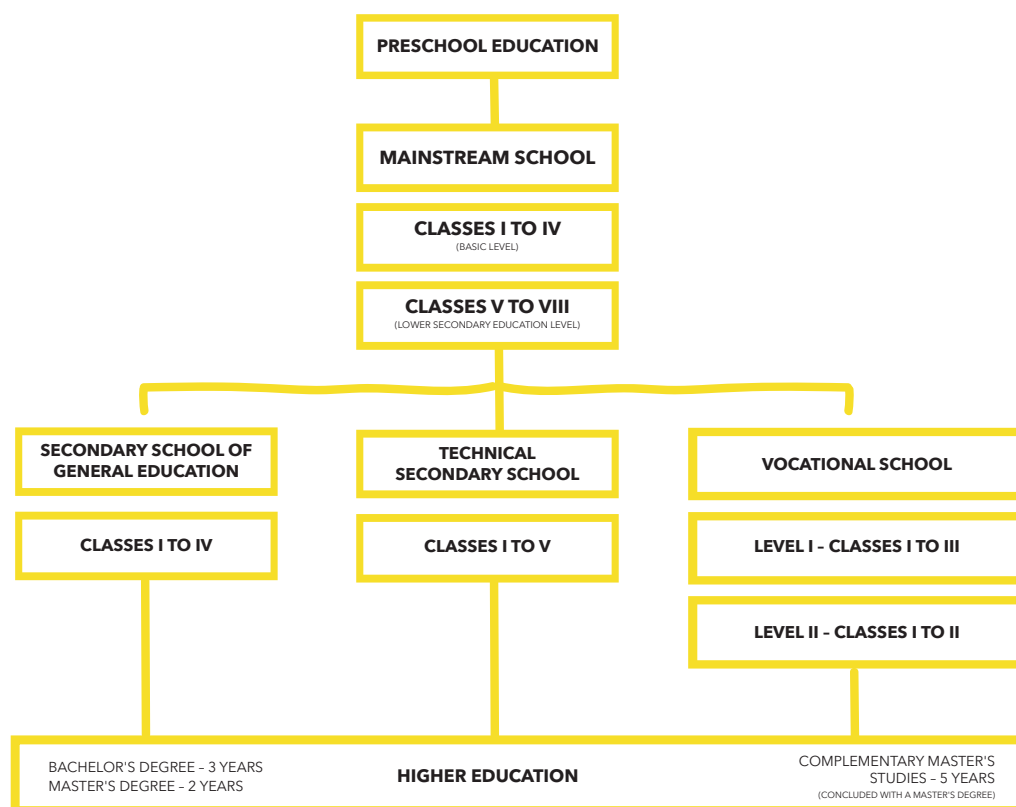
## 2. The Polish education system

Before we dive into the day-to-day aspects of school life, it's crucial to understand how the Polish education system works. This chapter will provide a comprehensive overview of the structure of the education system - in Poland - from preschool through primary and secondary schools, and on to opportunities for further education.

### In this chapter, we will:

- introduce you to the rules of how Polish schools operate,
- explain the rights and responsibilities of students and parents/guardians,
- clarify the specifics of each stage of schooling.

Understanding these fundamentals will make it easier for you to navigate your new environment and consciously participate in the education process.



### Preschool

In Poland, children aged 3 to 6 (or, in exceptional cases, 2.5 years) can attend preschool. One year of pre-school preparation is mandatory for all six-year-olds and can take place in a preschool, a preschool unit in a primary school, or other forms of preschool education.

### How to register a child?

Most parents and guardians use the electronic system [rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl](https://rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl). All you have to do is fill out an online application, enter your child's and your own data, select three institutions, and check off the criteria you meet. You attach scans or photos of the required documents to the application and confirm the whole process with a Trusted Profil \*. This is the most convenient and recommended way to apply.

### What if I don't have a Trusted Profile or internet access?

If you're unable to use the online recruitment system, you have the option of submitting documents in person at your first-choice institution. In that case, you must download the application directly from the selected institution or use our template, fill it out, sign it, and submit it along with the required attachments to the institution's secretariat.

### In the preschool admissions process, we distinguish between main recruitment and supplementary recruitment.

**Preschool admission** process takes place in two stages. In the first stage various criteria are assessed, such as: more than 3 children in the family, the child's disability, the disability of one or both of the parents, the disability of sibling, a candidate being raised in a single-parent family, and a candidate being in foster care. The second stage assessment is determined by the preschool management.

**Supplementary recruitment** is for any remaining open spots after the main recruitment period. The same rules apply as in the main recruitment process.

Recruitment dates are set annually and made public on the websites of the Municipality of Wrocław led by the Department of Education (Departament Edukacji), and individual institutions. It's important to follow this information in order not to miss any key deadlines.

If you plan to enroll your child in a preschool during the school year, after 1st September, the decision of admission is made by the head of the institution. If you have trouble finding a spot in a public preschool, it's a good idea to contact the city or municipal employees responsible for education directly. Information on open spots can also be found on the [rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl](http://rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl) website under the tabs „Preschool Recruitment” (“Rekrutacja do przedszkoli”) -> „Open Spots” (“Wolne miejsca”). Please remember that preschools operate throughout the entire school year, except for breaks set by the preschool management.

## Primary school

Primary school is a mandatory, 8-year stage of education in Poland, for children aged 7 to 15. This is where pupils acquire the foundational knowledge and skills for their future learning. The curriculum is carefully planned and implemented in two main stages:

**Stage I – Early School Education (Grades 1–3):** During this period, children learn in an integrated way. Typically, one teacher leads most of the classes, which allows for a smooth transition from preschool to school. The focus is on developing key competencies including reading, writing, and basic math, as well as fostering creativity and social skills. Children learn through play and experience, which helps them adapt to the school environment.

**Stage II – Subject Teaching (Grades 4–8):** Starting in the fourth grade, students have classes with different teachers who specialise in specific subjects. These subjects include Polish language, math, history, science (later biology, chemistry, physics, geography), foreign languages, art, music, technology, and physical education. In this stage, knowledge is systematised and expanded, and students are gradually prepared for the eighth-grade exam.

More detailed information on the functioning of primary schools, as well as the rights and responsibilities of students and parents, can be found later in our publication.

## Upper Secondary Schools

After completing eight years of primary school, students face an important decision regarding their future educational path. Polish upper secondary schools offer several options tailored to various aspirations and career plans.

### General secondary school (Liceum Ogólnokształcące)

A general secondary school is an ideal choice for those who plan to continue their education at a university. The programme lasts **four years** and is primarily aimed at preparing students for the **Matura exam** – a final exam that grants eligibility to apply to universities. In this type of school, students do not acquire a specific profession; the curriculum focuses on general subjects. Keep in mind that studying in a general secondary school requires consistency and readiness for intensive intellectual work. A successfully passed Matura exam opens the door to higher education, while completing general secondary school without pursuing further studies may limit professional opportunities.

### Technical secondary school (Technikum)

A technical secondary school is an excellent option for those interested in a specific profession who want to develop skills in a chosen field. The programme lasts **five years**. In addition to general subjects that prepare students for the Matura exam, students also intensively study vocational subjects. Besides the Matura exam, a technical secondary school also prepares students for a **vocational exam**, which, if passed, grants them the qualifications to perform a specific profession. This gives graduates a dual advantage: they can either pursue higher education or immediately begin working in their specialty.

### Vocational secondary school (Branżowa Szkoła I i II Stopnia)

If you want to acquire a profession and start working as quickly as possible, a vocational school is the right choice. It is divided into first-level vocational school (lasting three years) and second-level vocational school (lasting two years).

**In a first-level vocational school**, students primarily acquire practical vocational skills, often through classes at workplaces or specialised training centres. After leaving school, they are obliged to pass an exam confirming professional qualifications, which allows for a quick entry into the job market.

**A second-level vocational school** is a continuation of education after the first level. It allows for further deepening of knowledge and professional skills, and importantly, after its completion, **there is an option to take the Matura exam**, which opens the path to higher education.



## 3. Before enrolling your child in school:

### Important information for parents and pupils

Choosing a school and navigating the enrollment process is a key moment for every student. We want to share a few crucial points that will help you understand the Polish education system and prepare for the upcoming changes before we proceed with the formalities of registering your child.

#### In this chapter, you will find:

- practical tips on how to choose the right school,
- information on what documents you need to prepare,
- information on what to remember before your child steps into a Polish educational institution.

In Poland, **children are required to attend school until they turn 18**, which is when they legally become adults. Before this age, a child is under the authority of a parent or legal guardian, and their decision-making is limited. The child should be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian in situations such as visiting a doctor, travelling, or submitting school documents. Understanding these rules is extremely important to ensure that the entire process goes smoothly and without unnecessary difficulties.

Remember: A student arriving from abroad has the same rights as Polish students. According to Polish law, children who are not Polish citizens but are subject to compulsory schooling and education have the right to instruction and care in public primary schools, public art schools, and upper secondary schools on the same terms as Polish citizens.

#### Primary school

The system of primary school districting in Poland assigns every child to a particular primary school based on their home address. This ensures that children from a given district have priority for admission to their local school. However, if you prefer a school outside of your district, this is possible, but only if there are open spots and you get the approval of the school's administration.

In Wrocław, the process of enrolling a child in a primary school is done online, which makes the entire procedure much easier and faster. The main tool is a special online recruitment system.

#### How to enroll a child in primary school

Most parents and guardians use the electronic system [rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl](https://rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl). All you have to do is fill out an online application, enter your child's and your own data, and then select your preferred school—either your district school (the one assigned to your place of residence) or another school of your choice. You need to attach scans or photos of the required documents to the application and confirm the whole process with a **Trusted Profile**. This is the most convenient and recommended method for applying.

#### What if I don't have a Trusted Profile or internet access?

If you're unable to use the online recruitment system, you have the option of submitting documents in person at the school. In that case, you should get the application form directly from the selected school or use our template, fill it out, sign it, and submit it along with the required attachments to the school's secretariat (Sekretariat).

## Wrocław's school admission system operates in two stages:

**The first stage** is for children who live within a given primary school's district. A spot for them is guaranteed, and the process is a matter of filling out an application. If there are more candidates than spots available, the school asks the managing authority to indicate a nearby school with available spots.

**The second stage** concerns admission to schools outside of a child's home district. In this case, a child can only be admitted if the school has open spots after all children from its own district have been admitted and after any additional admission criteria set by the city have been met (e.g., having "Our Wrocław" ["Nasz Wrocław"] programme status or a sibling attending the school). The final decision in this stage is made by the school principal.

Admission deadlines are set annually and made public on the websites of the Municipality of Wrocław and individual schools. It is worth following this information so you don't miss any important dates.

If you are worried that your child will have a hard time adjusting to a Polish school, you can enroll him/her in a **preparatory class**. This option is for non-native-speaking children, including children with migration and refugee experience, as well as Polish citizens returning from abroad.

In a preparatory class, pupils have extra Polish language classes. They learn everyday communication, as well as words and expressions from mathematics, science, history, and other school subjects. They get to know Polish culture, participate in thematic lessons and integration activities, and learn about the city. At the same time, the child follows the curriculum for their level of education.

The list of preparatory classes is updated every year, so before enrolling your child, make sure that the school plans to open a preparatory class.

Next page:

– a template for PODANIE O PRZYJĘCIE DO SZKOŁY PODSTAWOWEJ  
(Application for Admission to Primary School)

Wrocław, dn .....

.....

.....

.....

(nazwa szkoły)

## PODANIE O PRZYJĘCIE DO SZKOŁY PODSTAWOWEJ

Proszę o przyjęcie do Szkoły Podstawowej

.....

(imię i nazwisko kandydata)

do klasy .....

### DANE UCZNIA

Data i miejsce urodzenia .....

PESEL .....

Dokładny adres zamieszkania .....

.....

### DANE RODZICÓW/OPIEKUNÓW

Imię i nazwisko matki .....

Imię i nazwisko ojca .....

Imiona i nazwiska opiekunów .....

Dokładny adres zamieszkania .....

Tel. kontaktowy .....

Tel. kontaktowy.....

.....

(podpis rodzica/opiekuna)

## Upper secondary school

The admission process for upper secondary schools in Wrocław (general secondary schools, technical secondary schools, and vocational schools) also takes place through an electronic system. This system is based on the total points a candidate receives, ensuring a transparent and fair selection process.

### How the admission system works

The process begins with **submitting an electronic application** on a dedicated recruitment platform ([www.rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl](http://www.rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl)). A student or their parent/legal guardian fills out the application, indicating a **maximum of six schools** and any number of classes within those schools. It's crucial to establish a list of preferences, or the order in which the student would like to be admitted. The most desired school and class should be listed first. The application can be signed electronically (with a Trusted Profile) or printed out and submitted in person at the first-choice school.

### What determines admission? The point system.

Admission to a particular class is determined by the sum of recruitment points obtained by a candidate. The total of points consists of several elements:

- Eighth-grade exam results. Points are calculated based on the percentage results of the exams in the Polish language, mathematics, and a modern foreign language.
- Grades on the primary school completion certificate. Points are awarded for grades in the Polish language, mathematics, and two other subjects that are indicated in the admission process for a given upper secondary school class. Grades from „excellent” to „sufficient” are assigned a corresponding number of points.
- Special achievements. Points can be earned for:
  - a primary school completion certificate with honours;
  - achievements in academic competitions, artistic competitions, and sports listed on the certificate;
  - social activity, including volunteering.

### Deadlines and next steps

The admission process takes place within specific deadlines, which are announced annually by the Board of Education (Kuratorium Oświaty) and are available on the websites of the Municipality of Wrocław and individual schools. The process typically involves several stages:

1. Submitting the application: The first deadline is for general classes, for classes requiring additional tests, e.g. bilingual or sports classes, the deadline may be earlier.
2. Supplementing the application with certificates and eighth-grade exam results: The application must be updated with the grades from the primary school certificate and the eighth-grade exam results, after their official announcement.
3. Taking required tests for special classes: Language proficiency tests or physical fitness exams etc.
4. Announcement of the lists of qualified and non-qualified candidates.
5. Confirming the will to study at the given school: To ensure a spot in the class the candidate must deliver the original documents (i.e., certificate, exam results certificate) to the school to which they were qualified. Failing to submit them by the deadline is considered a resignation from the spot.
6. Announcement of the lists of admitted candidates.

If a student is not qualified for any of the chosen schools in the first stage, it is possible to participate in supplementary recruitment, which takes place for any remaining open spots in the schools.

Remember to carefully review the recruitment schedule for the current year, as deadlines may change. You can find detailed information and instructions on Wrocław's official admission websites.

## Mid-year school enrollment for newly arrived children

Sometimes life brings unexpected changes and families move to Poland or to another city during the school year. In such a situation, the urgency to enroll a child in school is natural. The Polish education system is prepared for this. Public primary and upper secondary schools offer free education for children aged 7 to 18, regardless of their legal status in Poland, and the process of mid-year admission is both possible and regulated by law.

### How to enroll a child in school in Wrocław mid-year

#### 1. Direct contact with the school:

The most important step is to contact the principal of the chosen school directly (e.g., your district school—the one closest to your place of residence—or another one, if it has open spots). A public school principal has the right to place a student arriving from abroad into the appropriate class or semester, taking into account the student's age and the parents' opinion.

#### 2. Required documents:

To enroll your child, you will need the following documents:

- An application/enrollment form (available at the school or using the template above);
- Documents confirming the child's previous education abroad (e.g., class completion certificates, exam results). If you do not have such documents, the parent can submit a written statement about the number of years of schooling completed and the name of the institution the child attended. These documents may require a translation into Polish, but it usually does not need to be a sworn translation;
- Identity documents for the child and the parent/legal guardian,
- A statement of residence for the parent and child.

#### 3. Class placement:

The school principal will place the student in the appropriate class, taking into account the total number of years of schooling in Poland and abroad. In the absence of documents, placement may be based on an interview with the student (which can be conducted in their native language) and the opinion of the parents or guardians. It is permissible to admit a student to a lower grade, for example, due to their age or lack of Polish language skills.

**Language Test:** The school has the right to ask the pupil to fill in the language ability test. If it turns out that the student's language skills need improvement, the school may recommend placing the child in a lower grade. This is not mandatory, but if parents do not agree to such a solution, there is a high probability that the child will have difficulty absorbing information from specific subjects.

## Additional documents worth providing to the school

After enrolling a child with special educational or health needs, it's a good idea to provide the school with additional documents that will help them offer appropriate support. These documents aren't required for enrollment, but submitting them can significantly ease and streamline the process of adaptation and learning.

Examples of such documents include:

#### 1. Documents from a psychological-pedagogical counselling centre:

If your child has a written opinion from a psychological-pedagogical counselling centres (PPP – "poradnia psychologiczna – pedagogiczna") or a statement on the need for special education, be sure to provide it to the school. These documents contain detailed information about the child's individual educational needs, recommendations for teaching methods, forms of support, and adjustments to educational requirements. They will help the school organise appropriate psychological and pedagogical support, such as remedial classes, pedagogical therapy, rehabilitation, or classes for gifted students.

## 2. Disability certificate

Having a **disability certificate** for your child is very important for the school. Based on this document, the institution can apply for additional funding to hire specialists, purchase equipment, or adapt facilities to the student's needs. The certificate is also the basis for a child to receive various forms of support, such as a teacher's aide or specialised rehabilitation equipment.

## 3. Medical documentation for the school nurse

The school nurse needs information about your child's health, especially if he or she has a chronic illness, allergies (e.g., to food, medication, or insect stings), requires regular medication at school, or suffers from diabetes, epilepsy, or asthma. It's a good idea to provide the nurse with:

- Information on chronic illnesses: The name of the illness, medications, dosage, emergency procedures, and how to handle them;
- Discharge summaries from hospital treatment (if relevant);
- Certificates from specialist doctors confirming diagnoses and recommendations;
- A healthcare plan prepared by a doctor if the child requires specialised care at school (e.g., insulin administration);

Thanks to this information, the nurse will be able to provide your child with appropriate care in emergencies and look after their health daily. Remember, sharing this data is crucial for your child's safety and comfort at school.

# 4. The first day in Polish Primary School: Key moments and customs

The first day of the school year in Poland, which traditionally falls on **1st September** (or the first Monday unless it falls on a weekend), is an important event for both students and parents. It's a time full of emotions—the joy of seeing friends again, the excitement of new challenges, but also natural stress, especially for students starting in a new school or country.

## A formal beginning: the assembly

The day usually begins with a formal assembly (apel), a gathering of the entire school community. It most often takes place on the school playground, in the assembly hall, or in the gym. During the assembly, the school principal welcomes all students, parents, and teachers, gives a speech to inaugurate the new school year, and wishes everyone a successful school year. It's worth remembering that in Polish culture, there is no custom of giving gifts to teachers on the first day of school.

## Meeting the class teacher and class:

After the official assembly, students go to their classrooms.

Younger students (grades 1–3) often go to their classrooms accompanied by their parents or guardians. This is a time for parents to briefly see the classroom, discover where their child will be learning, and make first contact with the class teacher.

Older students (from grade 4 upwards) typically go to their classrooms on their own, where their class teachers are waiting for them.

In the classrooms, class teachers welcome their students, discuss the schedule for the coming days, provide basic organisational information, and answer questions. This is an excellent opportunity for the first direct contact with the class teacher—it's a good time to introduce yourself, mention any important issues regarding your child, or simply establish a positive relationship. The class teacher will be the key contact person for matters related to your child's education and well-being at school.

The first day of school is not a day for regular lessons. It is an organisational day designed to introduce students to the new school year and prepare them for further learning.

## Formal attire

during official school ceremonies, students should wear clothing appropriate for the occasion. This most often includes elegant white blouses or shirts with black or navy blue skirts or trousers. Some schools have specific dress codes for formal attire listed in their statutes.

## Key documents to review at the start of the school year

To fully understand the school's rules and the rights and responsibilities of both you and your child, it is crucial to familiarise yourself with two key documents as early as possible.

### School statute

**The school statute is the most important internal document** – the „constitution“ of a given institution. It outlines in detail the rules for how the school operates, including:

- The rights and responsibilities of students;
- The rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians;
- The rules for student grading (including behaviour);
- The system of rewards and punishments;
- The rules for supplementary recruitment;
- The procedures for excusing absences;
- The organisation of school life (e.g., the functioning of the after-school club, the library).

Familiarising yourself with the statute is extremely important because it allows you to understand the rules for cooperation with the school and helps you avoid misunderstandings.

### Child Protection Standards

The Child Protection Standards are a document aimed at ensuring children's safety at school and outlining procedures for dealing with situations of threat, violence, or neglect. It describes the actions the school takes to protect students from all forms of harm, including cyberbullying. You'll find information on how to react in problematic situations, who to turn to for help, and the procedures for reporting disturbing events. This is a particularly important document that emphasises the priority of every student's safety and well-being.

### Where to find these documents?

Both documents – the **School Statute** and the **Child Protection Standards** – should **be available on the school's website** or in the „BIP (Public Information Bulletin).“ If you can't find them online, you can ask for them at the school's secretariat.

Should you have any questions or problems finding these documents, you can always ask for help from the **class teacher**, who will certainly be able to show you where to find them or provide the necessary explanations.

## 5. The organisation of the school year and education

The school year in Polish schools typically begins on 1st September and lasts until the last Friday of June the following year. This is a period of intensive learning, but also a time for rest and rejuvenation, thanks to planned breaks.

### School year structure

The Polish school year is divided into two semesters. At the end of the first semester, usually in January or February, students have a two-week winter break. The exact date of this break varies by voivodeship. At the end of the second semester, a two-month summer vacation begins.

### Days off and holidays

Throughout the school year, students have several fixed days off from classes for national and religious holidays. Schools provide additional information about any other days off that may be set by the school principal.

MONTH	PUBLIC HOLIDAYS/DAYS OFF
SEPTEMBER	01.09 – Start of the school year
OCTOBER	14.10 – National Education Day (Teacher's Day) – in some schools it is a day off
NOVEMBER	01.11 – All Saints' Day (public holiday) 11.11 – Independence Day (public holiday)
DECEMBER	23.12–01.01 – Christmas Break
JANUARY	01.01 – New Year's Eve (public holiday) 06.01 – Epiphany Day (public holiday)
JANUARY/ FEBRUARY	Winter Break – <b>2 weeks</b> (exact date is determined by the Ministry of National Education)
MARCH/ APRIL	<b>Easter</b> – 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	<b>HOLIDAYS</b>
AUGUST	<b>HOLIDAYS</b>

The details of the current school year calendar are available on the websites of the Ministry of Education and Science (Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki) and Lower Silesia Authority of Education (Kuratorium Oświaty we Wrocławiu).



## Daily life in a Polish school

Getting to know the daily routine and rules of a Polish school will help you adapt to your new environment. From the school bell to conduct grades, here's what you can expect.

### School secretariat (school secretary's office)

The school secretariat is the administrative heart of every school. This is where all the current paperwork necessary for the smooth operation of the institution is handled. Secretariat employees ensure that all formalities related to students, teachers, and the administration are completed on time and in accordance with regulations. Their key tasks include issuing various certificates (e.g., proof of school attendance, achievement certificates), maintaining detailed student records and progress reports, managing incoming and outgoing correspondence, and generally handling the flow of information within the school.

### Classes and breaks

A standard lesson (a unit) in a Polish school lasts 45 minutes. Each class is followed by a short break, usually 10–15 minutes, which allows students to change classrooms, use the restroom, or take a short rest. There is also one longer break during the day (e.g., 20–30 minutes), which is perfect for a meal or a moment to relax. The class schedule, which is the timetable for the day and week, is always available to students and parents.

## How is knowledge assessed in Polish schools?

In Polish schools, students' knowledge is systematically verified in various ways to assess their progress and understanding of the material. The primary forms of assessment are:

- **Quizzes („Kartkówki”):** These are short, either announced or unannounced, tests that cover a small amount of material, usually from the last few lessons. Their purpose is to quickly check current knowledge and skills.
- **Tests („Sprawdziany”):** These are more comprehensive written assignments that are always announced in advance. They cover a larger section of material and serve to summarise knowledge from a longer period of study.
- **Essays („Wypracowania”):** For humanities subjects, such as Polish language, essays are often used. These are longer written forms that allow teachers to assess a student's ability to analyse, synthesise, and argue, as well as their linguistic and stylistic correctness.

In addition to these, teachers also grade student participation in class, oral answers, and group or individual projects.

### Grading Scale

In the Polish education system, two grading scales are used.

#### 1. Subject Grades

Students receive grades for individual subjects (e.g., Polish language, mathematics, history) on a six-point scale:

- 6 (Excellent/Celujący): Signifies outstanding achievement, often going beyond the curriculum.
- 5 (Very Good/Bardzo Dobry): Full mastery of the material, independence, and active participation.
- 4 (Good/Dobry): Good mastery of the material, with minor gaps.
- 3 (Sufficient/Dostateczny): Basic mastery of the material, but with noticeable gaps.
- 2 (Passing/Dopuszczający): Minimal mastery of the material, enough to continue learning.
- 1 (Failing/Niedostateczny): Lack of mastery of basic material, further learning impossible.

These grades are given by teachers based on quizzes, tests, oral responses, or classroom participation.

In grades 4–8, students receive mid-year grades at the end of the first semester (usually in January or February) to reflect their progress during that period. Then, in June, they receive final grades, which are an assessment of the entire ten months of learning, not just the second semester. It is these final grades that determine a student's promotion to the next grade and are recorded on the school report card.

## 2. Conduct grade

In addition to subject grades, a student also receives a conduct grade (or so-called "behaviour grades") at the end of each semester and school year. The criteria are usually described in detail in each school's statute, but generally, the grade assesses:

- adherence to school rules,
- personal conduct and respect toward others,
- fulfillment of school responsibilities,
- social activity and engagement,
- attitude toward learning and peers.

The conduct grading scale is most often as follows (from best to worst): exemplary, very good, good, proper, inappropriate, reprehensible. The conduct grade does not affect a student's promotion to the next grade, but it is an important part of the school report card.

## School supplies and textbooks

Starting school means you'll need to put together a set of school supplies, including all the necessary items (notebooks, pens, a pencil case, crayons, gym clothes, etc.). Families in Poland can count on financial support for this. The government programme „Dobry Start"/„Good Start" (colloquially known as „300+") is a one-time benefit of 300 PLN intended for purchasing school supplies. The application for this support is to be submitted online.

You can find more information about the „Dobry Start" application in the chapter 8 "Parents and guardians in a Polish school."

In public primary schools, students are provided with free textbooks and educational materials. These are borrowed from the school library for the entire school year, and it's important to take good care of them so they can be used by future students. It's also worth knowing that some schools provide students with lockers where they can store their books and supplies, so they don't have to carry them every day. Whether lockers are available, however, depends on the specific institution—it's best to ask about this at the school your child will be attending.

## Important student documents:

### School ID and Bicycle License

In daily school life and beyond, some documents are particularly important for students. It's good to know what they are for and how to get them.

#### School ID (legitymacja szkolna)

– a document issued to every child who attends a particular school.

The ID entitles students to official discounts on train and bus travel (e.g., Lower Silesian Railways [Koleje Dolnośląskie], PKP Polish State Railways) of 37%. It also gives students attending schools located in Wrocław free public transport in the city. Students must remember to carry a valid school ID with them every time they use these services, including on school trips.

**IMPORTANT:** To get an ID, you need a passport-style photo, which you can get at a photo studio. Check with the school secretariat to find out which type of ID is used at your school. The traditional paper IDs are being replaced with e-IDs (a plastic version) and/or mLegitymacje (a version in the mObywatel mobile app).

### **Bicycle License (Karta rowerowa)**

A bicycle license is a document you get by passing an exam that checks your qualifications (knowledge of traffic rules in a written test and a practical exam). Any person under the age of 18 is required to have a bicycle license that authorises them to ride a bicycle, electric scooter, and other electric devices on the public roads. All children who are at least 10 years old can apply for a bicycle license.

A bicycle license can be issued by three authorities:

- the school principal – if the child is a primary school student and has the consent of a parent or guardian.
- the director of the Provincial Road Traffic Centre – if the child has already completed primary school.
- an entrepreneur running a driving school that has a special certificate confirming that they meet additional requirements, if the child has already completed primary school.

## **Organisation of learning in grades 1–3 of primary school**

The first years of Polish primary school, grades 1–3, are a period of what is known as early school education. Its main goal is to smoothly introduce children to the world of learning, develop fundamental skills, and support their general development. The organisation of classes during this period differs from that of older grades.

### **Integrated learning and the role of the class teacher**

Integrated learning is dominant in grades 1–3. This means that one teacher – the class teacher – leads most of the classes. This teacher is responsible for the curriculum in the Polish language, mathematics, and natural, social, and artistic education. This model allows for a more holistic approach to learning, adapting the pace of work to the group's needs, and building a strong bond between the student and the teacher. Children spend most of their time in the same classroom, which promotes a sense of safety and stability.

### **Compulsory and additional subjects**

Despite the integrated nature of the teaching, the class schedule also includes classes led by other specialists:

- **Modern Foreign Language:** This is most often English. Foreign language instruction begins as early as the first grade, focusing on play, songs, and basic phrases.
- **Physical Education (PE):** These classes usually take place in the gym or outdoors, developing children's physical fitness and coordination. Note: If your child cannot participate in PE classes for medical reasons, you must provide a certificate from a specialist doctor.
- **Computer Science/IT:** These classes introduce children to the basics of computer use and safe use of technology.
- **Music/Art Education:** These are often included in integrated learning but may also be taught by specialist teachers.
- **Religion/Ethics:** These subjects are optional. Parents decide whether their child will attend religion (which is Catholic and led by a catechist) or ethics classes. If parents do not consent to either of these subjects, the child has free time during this period or can stay in the school's after-school club. If you want your child to attend these classes, you should fill out the relevant form provided by the class teacher at the beginning of the school year.

## Assessment

In grades 1–3 of primary school, students receive descriptive grades. This means that instead of numbers, the teacher provides a detailed description of the child's progress and achievements in learning and of his/her behaviour.

### What does a descriptive grade include?

A descriptive grade is an extensive feedback report that focuses on the student's individual development.

It usually covers aspects such as:

- academic progress: How the child is doing with reading, writing, counting, and other skills.
- skill development, i.e., manual skills, artistic abilities, and logical thinking.
- activity and engagement in class.
- progress in social and emotional development: How the child cooperates in a group, handles emotions, and follows rules.
- tips for further work: What the child should practice and focus on to continue developing.

In some schools, students may also receive numerical grades during the school year, but the final school report card for every child will contain a detailed descriptive grade.

## After-school club

For many families, especially those with working parents, the after-school club is an invaluable form of support. It is a designated place in the school where students can stay under the supervision of teachers before and after classes. The after-school club serves as a place for caregiving, education, and development, as well as providing children with a safe and organised environment.

### Organisation and enrollment

- Enrollment for the after-school club usually takes place at the beginning of the school year, during the admission period, or in early September. Parents interested in having their child use the club must apply to the school secretary's office. The number of spots in the club may be limited, so it is a good idea to submit the application as soon as possible.
- A key part of the enrollment is to indicate the people authorised to pick up the child from the club. Parents or legal guardians are required to provide a list of individuals (e.g., grandparents, older siblings, other authorised adults) who are permitted to pick up the child from school. Without a written authorisation, the after-school club teachers will not release the child to anyone else, which is for the purpose of ensuring maximum safety.

## Organisation of learning in primary school – grades 4–8

After completing early school education, students in grades 4–8 enter a new stage of learning, characterised by a more subject-based teaching system and greater independence.

### Subject-based teaching and classroom rotation

Unlike in the lower grades, where most lessons take place in one classroom with one teacher, students in grades 4–8 have classes with different subject teachers. This means students move between classrooms, which are often specifically adapted for teaching a particular subject—for example, a biology lab with models, a chemistry lab, an art studio with easels, or a computer lab. This system requires students to be more responsible and organised.

## Compulsory subjects

The curriculum in grades 4–8 is significantly broader and more detailed than in class 1–3. Compulsory subjects include:

- Polish Language: Grades 4–8
- Mathematics: Grades 4–8
- Modern foreign language: Most often a continuation of English, with the possibility of choosing a second foreign language in grade 7 (e.g., German, Spanish).
- History: Grades 4–8
- Social Studies (Wiedza o społeczeństwie or WOS): Grade 8
- Science Subjects:  
In the initial years of this stage (usually in grade 4), students study Science (Przyroda), which combines basic topics from biology, geography, physics, and chemistry into one cohesive subject.

In later grades (typically starting from grade 5 or 7), Science is divided into separate fields:

- Biology: from grade 5
- Geography: from grade 5
- Chemistry: from grade 7
- Physics: from grade 7
- Computer Science (Informatyka): Grades 4–8
- Art (Plastyka): Grades 4–7
- Music (Muzyka): Grades 4–7
- Technology (Technika): Grades 4–6
- Physical Education (Wychowanie fizyczne or WF): Grades 4–8. Note: If your child cannot participate in PE classes for health reasons, you must provide a medical certificate from a specialist doctor.
- Education for Safety (Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa): Grade 8

## Additional subjects and extracurricular activities

Similar to the younger grades, students in grades 4–8 have the opportunity to participate in the following classes:

- Religion / Ethics: These are optional subjects. Parents decide whether their child will attend religion classes (which are Catholic and led by a catechist) or ethics. If parents do not consent to either of these subjects, the child has free time during this period or can stay in the school's after-school club. If you want your child to attend these classes, you should fill out the relevant form provided by the class teacher at the beginning of the school year.
- Health Education: These classes are intended to equip children with the knowledge and skills necessary for taking care of their physical and mental health. This includes the principles of healthy eating, the importance of physical activity, hygiene, and the ability to cope with stress and use the internet safely. The classes include basic information on sex education. The goal of these classes is to foster healthy habits and conscious attitudes.

## The eighth-grade exam

At the end of their eight years of primary school, every student takes the eighth-grade exam. This is a compulsory test that usually takes place in May and covers three subjects: Polish language, mathematics, and one modern foreign language (most often English).

The results of the eighth-grade exam are very important because they have a direct impact on a student's admission to their chosen upper secondary school (general secondary school, technical secondary school, or vocational school). The total number of points earned on the exam, combined with the grades on the primary school completion certificate and additional achievements, determines a candidate's position on the ranking list for specific schools and classes.

Information on any exam accommodations for students from other countries can be found in the chapter no. X „Newly arrived students in a Polish school”.

Would you like to learn more about the future exams awaiting students? You can find information about the Matura exam and the vocational qualification exam in the glossary at the end of our publication.

## After school - development beyond the classroom

Learning in a Polish school isn't just about mandatory classes. Outside of them, students have many opportunities to develop their passions, social skills, and spend time in interesting ways.

### Extracurricular activities and interest groups

Almost every school offers a wide range of extracurricular activities and interest groups. The offerings vary and depend on the specific institution, student interests, and teaching staff. Among other things, you can find:

- Subject-based groups are suitable for students who want to broaden their knowledge in subjects like math, Polish, foreign languages, or science. These often prepare students for competitions and school contests.
- Artistic and sports classes are for students who want to develop in various fields. These are sometimes led by teachers from the school and sometimes by specially hired individuals or external companies. Some of these classes may require an additional fee.
- Volunteering: Many schools encourage students to participate in volunteering activities, which teach empathy, responsibility, and social engagement. This can include peer tutoring, charity drives, or supporting local initiatives. Remember that volunteering can earn you extra points when applying to an upper secondary school—it's worth getting involved.

Information about available extracurricular activities is typically announced at the beginning of the school year by class teachers, on school websites, and on bulletin boards.

## School library

You can also spend your breaks and time after class in the school library. It's not only a place where students can borrow mandatory textbooks (the free ones mentioned earlier) and assigned reading materials, but also a space full of books for children and young adults.

## School holidays and ceremonies

Polish schools actively celebrate important holidays and organise their own ceremonies. These usually include:

- Formal assemblies: Organised for holidays or at the end of the school year. During these assemblies, students often put on artistic performances.
- Fairs and picnics: Some schools organise family fairs, picnics, or open days, which are opportunities for the school community to integrate and have fun together.

These events are an important part of school life, building a sense of community and allowing students to better get to know Polish traditions and history.

## School trips

Trips are an integral part of the Polish curriculum, allowing students to gain knowledge and experience outside the classroom. They can be of different types:

- One-day trips: These are short outings to nearby museums, theatres, cinemas, amusement parks, historical sites, or educational centres. Their goal is to supplement the knowledge gained in class or to encourage the class to integrate.
- Multi-day trips (overnight school trips, so-called „Green Schools”): These are longer trips, often to the mountains, the seaside, or other regions of Poland, where students learn and relax as a group for several days.

Participation in school trips requires parental consent and often involves an additional fee. However, they are valuable experiences that enrich education and create lasting memories.

## 6. Self-governance and student rights at school

In Polish schools, students have rights and can actively participate in the life of the institution. Student councils and student rights advocates play a key role in the process.

### Student Council (Samorząd Uczniowski)

is a body that represents all students in the school. It operates based on the school's statute and is composed of representatives chosen by the students in a democratic election. The tasks of the student council include:

- representing student interests: The council's voice is taken into account when making important decisions about school life.
- organizing events: The council often initiates and co-organises school events, dances, charity drives, and competitions.
- influencing regulations: It can propose changes to the school's rules or statute.

### Class Council (Samorząd Klasowy)

At the class level, there is a class council consisting of a small group of students (e.g., a president, a deputy, a treasurer). It is chosen by the students of that class, usually at the beginning of the school year. The main tasks of the class council are:

- representing the class: Communicating the class's opinions and needs to the class teacher and other teachers.
- supporting the class teacher: Helping to organise daily class life, such as duty rosters and collections.
- integration: Promoting good relationships within the class and organising group activities.

## Student Rights Ombudsman (Rzecznik Praw Ucznia)

Many schools also have a Student Rights Ombudsman. He/her is a teacher or another staff member whose main role is to protect student rights, provide support, and mediate in difficult situations.

The Student Rights Ombudsman is a person whom students and parents can turn to for advice or help in difficult situations, with the assurance of confidentiality and support. Information on who holds this role and how to contact them is usually available on the school's website or on the bulletin board.



## 7. Newly arrived students in a Polish school: support and adaptation

Starting school in a new country or returning to your homeland after years abroad is a significant challenge. Benefiting from the available support will help you adapt smoothly to the school environment. In Polish public schools, newly arrived students can benefit from the following forms of support:

### 1. Additional Polish language classes:

Students who don't know Polish or whose proficiency is insufficient are entitled to free, additional Polish language classes. A school can organise up to 5 hours of these classes per week (including any remedial classes for other subjects) for a period of up to 12 months. These classes are designed to help students quickly master the language needed for learning and daily communication.

### 2. Preparatory classes (Klasy przygotowawcze):

Preparatory classes are formed in some schools, where there is a larger number of newly arrived students. These are specially organised classes in which the teaching and educational process is adapted to the needs and educational capabilities of the students. Teachers in these classes often use methods that promote intensive Polish language learning and integration. The programme usually lasts one school year, but it can be shortened or extended depending on the student's progress.

### 3. Intercultural Assistant:

Some Wrocław schools employ intercultural assistants, whose role is to act as a middleman between the school, parents/guardians and students. This person most often speaks Ukrainian, Russian, or English. The assistant helps students overcome difficulties arising from a lack of Polish language knowledge and cultural differences. The assistant explains the specifics of the Polish education system to the student's parents and guardians, answers questions, and provides information on resources the student can use at school. Their presence makes both the student and their parents feel more confident and secure in a Polish school.

Their role involves:

- supporting communication: Assisting with translation and bridging language barriers between the student, parents, and teachers.
- facilitating adaptation: Helping students understand school rules and find their way in the new environment.
- educational support: Assisting teachers in their work with students, e.g., by explaining difficult concepts in the student's native language.
- remedial classes: In addition to Polish language lessons, newly arrived students can attend additional remedial classes for other subjects (e.g., mathematics, history) if they have difficulties due to a lack of specialised Polish vocabulary or curriculum differences. These classes can also be provided for a period of up to 12 months.



## 4. Accommodations during exams

The Polish education system also provides newly arrived students with possibility of accommodations and adjustments during exams, especially during the eighth-grade exam. These accommodations are meant to bridge the gap in educational opportunities and allow students to demonstrate their knowledge despite language barriers. They may include:

- additional time to complete tasks,
- the ability to use a bilingual dictionary (that translates words, not definitions),
- the presence of an intercultural assistant who does not translate the content of the tasks but can explain unclear instructions,
- adjustments to the format of the test to match the student's perceptual abilities.

Decisions on specific adjustments are made by the school's teaching council, usually at the request of parents and after consulting with a psychological-pedagogical counselling centre. It is important for parents to actively cooperate with the school in this regard.

If the parents want their child to benefit from accommodations, they must submit an application to the school administration by the deadline set at the beginning of the school year.

## WroMigrant: Support with residence matters

If you need information about legalising your stay, official procedures, or general adaptation support for families in Wrocław, it is good to know that the city offers a specialised support centre called WroMigrant. WroMigrant is an initiative of the Wrocław Centre for Social Development, created for people coming to the city from abroad. This centre provides free informational services in many key areas. You can get support with:

- residence legalisation procedures (e.g., residence cards, work permits);
- access to public services (healthcare, education, social assistance);
- support with official matters;
- information about city life, culture, and the local community.

WroMigrant offers in-person consultations at Przejście Dialogu (19 Świdnicka Street, Wrocław), as well as by phone and online. You can find more information about consultations on the website: <https://przejsciedialogu.wcrs.wroclaw.pl/uslugi-punktu-informacji/>.

## Przejście Dialogu – An intercultural space

Przejście Dialogu (Passage of Dialogue) in Wrocław is a unique place that actively promotes interculturalism and integration, serving as an open space for residents from diverse backgrounds. It offers a wide range of activities, including those focused on integration and community building, as well as Polish language classes. A variety of educational and developmental activities for children and adults are available there, conducted in Ukrainian, English, and Belarusian, which fosters mutual understanding and supports adaptation in Wrocław.

You can find all current information and the calendar of events here:  
<https://przejsciedialogu.wcrs.wroclaw.pl>

## 8. Psychological and pedagogical support: help for students

Polish schools aim to support every student in their development, not only academically but also emotionally and socially. For this reason, specialist psychological and pedagogical support is available in educational institutions.

### The role of specialists at school:

- **School Pedagogue (Pedagog Szkolny):** Supports students in solving school and personal problems, helps with adapting to the school environment, and advises on educational and upbringing issues. The pedagogue works with students, parents, and teachers, providing help in difficult situations such as learning problems, peer conflicts, or adaptation difficulties.
- **School Psychologist (Psycholog Szkolny):** Focuses on supporting students' mental and emotional health. They conduct individual consultations, group sessions, diagnose developmental and emotional difficulties, and help with coping with stress, anxiety, or relationship problems. The psychologist can also support parents in understanding their child's needs and building a positive relationship with them.
- **Speech Therapist (Logopeda):** Diagnoses and provides therapy for speech and communication disorders in students. The goal is to correct speech impediments, improve speech fluency, and expand vocabulary, which makes it easier for students to learn and function daily at school.

These specialists work on school grounds and are the first point of contact if any difficulties arise.

Psychological-pedagogical counselling centre (Poradnia Psychologiczno-Pedagogiczna – PPP) is an external institution that play an extremely important role in the student support system. This is where specialists (psychologists, pedagogues, and speech therapists) conduct in-depth diagnoses and issue:

- **opinions:** These indicate a child's specific difficulties (e.g., dyslexia, dysgraphia, specific learning difficulties) and suggest what accommodations the school should introduce into the teaching and grading process.
- **special education needs statements:** These are issued for children with diagnosed disabilities or other serious disorders that require comprehensive support. This statement obligates the school to create an Individual Educational and Therapeutic Programme (IPET) and to provide appropriate classes, such as rehabilitation or rehabilitation-educational sessions.

### Why is this so important?

Providing the school with an opinion or statement from the PPP is crucial because based on these documents, the school can activate a range of psychological and pedagogical support services, including:

- **Remedial classes:** Extra lessons for students who are having difficulties with specific subjects;
- **Corrective-compensatory classes:** Support for children with developmental disorders (e.g., difficulties with reading and writing);
- **Speech therapy classes:** Help with correcting speech impediments;
- **Social skills development classes:** Support for building relationships and navigating group settings;
- **Talent development classes:** For students who are particularly gifted in a certain area.

It is important to trust specialists and make use of their support. Opinions and statements are not meant to stigmatise—they are a tool that allows the school to better understand a child's needs and provide them with the right conditions to develop and achieve educational success. Thanks to these, it is possible to adapt teaching methods and requirements to a student's individual abilities.

## 9. Parents and guardians in school life

Active involvement from parents and legal guardians in a child's school life is crucial and has a huge impact on their academic success and well-being. The school and the family form a shared space of support where open communication and cooperation are the foundation for a student's harmonious development. Understanding the methods of communication and opportunities to participate in school life will help you become an involved partner in your child's education.

### Parent/guardian contact with the school:

#### How to communicate effectively?

Effective communication between home and school is key. Polish schools focus on organised and transparent forms of contact:

- **Electronic gradebook (dziennik elektroniczny lub e-dziennik):** This is the primary communication tool in most Polish schools. Through the e-gradebook, parents have access to their child's grades, attendance, notes, class schedule, and messages from teachers and school announcements. Most importantly, contact with teachers is preferred through the e-gradebook, rather than via private phone calls or other messaging apps. This maintains a level of formality, records correspondence, and helps teachers manage communication effectively. There are several electronic gradebook systems on the Polish market (e.g., Librus, Vulcan). You will receive your login and instructions from your child's class teacher or the school secretariat.
- **Parent-teacher meetings (wywiadówki):** These meetings are held regularly, usually 3–4 times a year. They are formal meetings with the class teacher and subject teachers to discuss the class's progress, important organisational matters, and individual student results. Important: During a meeting, the academic progress or problems of specific students are not discussed in front of the entire group. Such matters are discussed privately after the general meeting or during individual consultations.
- **Individual consultations:** If you need to speak with a teacher outside of the parent-teacher meeting schedule, most schools offer regular consultation hours. It is very important to arrange such a meeting with the teacher in advance and not try to „catch” them in the hallway during a break—this disrupts their work and doesn't allow for a calm discussion.

### Absences and exemptions from classes

Parents have the obligation and the right to excuse their child's absences from school and to request exemptions from classes.

- **Excusing an absence:** In the case of illness or another justified reason for a child's absence from school, a parent must provide a formal excuse to the class teacher. This can be a written note (in a communication notebook or on a separate sheet of paper) or, increasingly, through the electronic gradebook. It is important to submit the written excuse within the deadline set by the school (usually up to 7 days from the child's return). If the child has received a sick note from a doctor, you should inform the class teacher and provide it to the school.
- **Exemptions from individual classes or a full day:** If a child needs to miss a single class (e.g., for a doctor's appointment) or a whole day of school, a parent should inform the class teacher or the school principal in writing (or via the e-gradebook), stating the reason and the time the child will be picked up.
- **Exemption from Physical Education (PE) classes:**
  - Single-class exemption:** If a child cannot participate in one PE class (e.g., due to a minor injury), a parent can write a short note.
  - Full-year or long-term exemption:** For chronic illnesses or more serious injuries that require an exemption from PE for a longer period, a medical certificate from a specialist doctor is necessary. This certificate should be provided to the school principal, who makes the final decision on the exemption.

## Additional parent involvement in school life

Beyond day-to-day communication, parents have many opportunities to get more actively involved in school life:

- **Parent council (Rada rodziców):** This is a representative body for all parents in the school. It works for the benefit of the school, for example, by raising funds for additional teaching aids, organising events, and supporting initiatives by students and teachers. Participation in the Parent Council provides a real influence on the institution's functioning.
- **Class committee (Trójka klasowa):** This is a body representing the parents of a specific class, elected at the beginning of the school year. It usually consists of a president, a deputy, and a treasurer, and its main tasks are to support the class teacher, manage class funds, and represent the interests of parents and students. The Class Committee is elected by parents during the first meeting of the school year.
- **Assistance with school initiatives:** Schools often need parent support to organise school ceremonies, festivals, trips, or charity events. This type of help is always greatly appreciated and is a great opportunity to meet other parents and get involved in the school community.
- **Cooperation on class projects:** Parents can support the class in various projects, for example, by preparing materials, helping organise outings, or sharing their knowledge and experience.

## Additional school fees

Education in a Polish public school is free, meaning there are no tuition fees. However, there are some additional costs that parents may incur throughout the school year. These are usually voluntary, but it's good to be aware of them.

### Accident insurance (NNW)

Schools often offer parents optional accident insurance (NNW) for their child. This insurance is voluntary and paid once a year (most often at the beginning of September). The policy covers the child on school grounds, during extracurricular activities, on trips, and often outside of school, 24 hours a day. Parents are not obligated to use the insurance offered by the school; they can purchase an NNW policy for their child individually from any insurance provider.

This is not a mandatory fee.

### Parent Council Contribution

The Parent Council is a body in every school that represents the interests of all parents. The Parent Council collects voluntary contributions from parents for the benefit of the school and students. This money is used for various purposes, such as purchasing teaching aids, sports equipment, or classroom supplies; supporting the organisation of school events, competitions, or trips; funding small class needs (e.g., art supplies, games); and providing material assistance for students in need.

The amount of the contribution is set by the Parent Council at the beginning of the school year, and paying it is a way to support initiatives for the children.

This is not a mandatory fee.

### Płatne wycieczki szkolne

Participation in school trips and outings, one-day trips (e.g., to the cinema, theatre, or museum) and longer ones (e.g., „green schools” or sightseeing tours), usually involves additional fees. These costs cover things like transport, entrance tickets, accommodation, and meals (for multi-day trips). The school always informs parents in advance about planned trips, their costs, and the programme. Participation is always voluntary and requires a parent's written consent.

If you are in a difficult financial situation but would like your child to go on a trip, ask the school principal about the possibility of financial support. The Parent Council or other institutions often provide support for such purposes.

## Governmental financial support for families [Data for 2025]

Financial support for families with children in Poland includes a range of benefits aimed at helping to cover the costs associated with raising children and supporting their development. Below are the most important benefits that families may be entitled to:

### „800+” Child-Rearing Benefit

This is one of the most well-known and common benefits. It is granted for every child in a family under the age of 18, regardless of the family's income.

**Application:** Applications for the „800+” benefit are submitted to the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) exclusively through electronic means (via the PUE ZUS platform, online banking, or the mZUS app).

### „Dobry Start” Program

The „Dobry Start” programme is a one-time financial support at the beginning of the school year.

Amount: 300 PLN per student starting the school year.

Eligibility: It is available for children up to 20 years old, and for students with a disability, up to 24 years old. This benefit is not dependent on family income.

Application: Applications are submitted annually from 1st July to 30th November, also exclusively through electronic means (via the PUE ZUS platform, online banking, or the Emp@tia portal).

## 10. Support for families in difficult situations

In Poland, schools have both an educational and a supportive function. Specialists working at the school—psychologists, pedagogues, class teachers, and principals—monitor whether students attend classes regularly and how they behave during lessons and breaks. This allows for the early detection of difficult and crises, the implementation of appropriate procedures, and the provision of help to the student and their family. Every educational institution (including nurseries, kindergartens, schools, non-governmental organisations, and institutions working for children and youth) is obligated to publish and comply with Child Protection Standards (in Poland, a person is a minor until they turn 18). This document describes potential threats that children may face from adults and peers, as well as clear procedures and course of action to take when behaviours indicative of violence against a minor are observed. This allows for the problem to be solved and the child to be supported in a difficult situation.

We encourage you to familiarise yourself with the Child Protection Standards at your child's school. This will help you understand all the procedures and actions the school will take in the event of a violence-related situation.

## What actions can a school take in a situation of danger or threat?

### Emergency Hotline

– in a situation of immediate threat to a child's life, every school employee or bystander, is obligated by law to provide help and call emergency services (medical emergency, police, fire department). The report is usually made to the emergency number 112, which speeds up the dispatch of the appropriate services.

## „Blue Card” Procedure

- is a procedure that consists of actions taken by representatives of various institutions and entities obligated to respond to a suspicion of domestic violence. Its goal is to ensure the safety of children in the home environment. The card can be initiated by a person such as a police officer, social worker, doctor, school teacher, or school nurse. The local Social Welfare Centre (MOPS or GOPS) receives the completed document and conducts further actions, such as an environmental interview. MOPS reserves the right to refer the case to a family court to revoke the parental rights of the person using violence in the family if it is confirmed to threaten the health and life of the child.

### Definition of domestic violence

Domestic violence is defined as a one-time or repeated, intentional action or omission that violates the rights or personal well-being of close relatives and other people living together or running a household. This is especially true if such actions threaten their life, health, violate their dignity, bodily integrity, or freedom (including sexual freedom), cause physical or mental harm, or inflict suffering and moral harm on the victims of the violence.

The initiation of a Blue Card is not the same as filing a report of a crime, nor does it form the basis for initiating criminal proceedings. However, if a report is filed and proceedings are initiated, it can be used as evidence in the case.

### Actions that can be taken as a result of the Blue Card procedure:

- Providing a person affected by domestic violence with comprehensive, free assistance, particularly in the form of medical, psychological, legal, social, professional, and family counselling.
- Protection from further harm: by preventing persons using violence from using the shared home and by forbidding them from contacting or approaching the victim.
- Providing a medical examination to determine the causes and type of bodily harm related to the use of domestic violence and to issue a medical certificate.
- Developing an individual family assistance plan. The team developing the plan also includes school employees (e.g., a school pedagogogue) who are meant to provide the child with support in the school environment.

**Application to family court for child welfare check** – the school is obligated to submit an application to the family court for a child welfare check if it observes difficult situations related to the student, and also when all other methods of action have been exhausted (e.g., meetings with parents, providing the child with psychological and pedagogical assistance).

The school may submit an application for a child welfare check if it observes:

- low attendance (the child misses lessons/classes too often).
- in poor psychophysical condition of the child.
- the child's engagement in risky behaviours (e.g., alcohol consumption, drug use, self-harm, suicide attempts, premature sexual activity).
- the child's engagement in violent behaviour toward other students, e.g., cyberbullying (harassment, defamation on the Internet, dissemination of pornography), petty crimes, hooliganism, vandalism.
- suspected failure of the parent to fulfill their parental duties (e.g., the child neglects their studies, misses lessons, runs away from home).

The application is reviewed by the family court. If the court finds irregularities (violence, neglect), it can restrict or revoke the guardian's parental rights. During this time, the school is obligated to provide the child with psychological and pedagogical assistance and support from other teachers.

### Next pages:

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  - a template for USPRAWIEDLIWIENIE (nieobecność jednodniowa) (One-Day Absence Note)
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  - a template for ZWOLNIENIE Z LEKCJI WF (PE Class Exemption Form)
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## USPRAWIEDLIWIENIE

(nieobecność jednodniowa)

Proszę o usprawiedliwienie nieobecności mojej córki/ mojego syna\*

.....  
 (imię i nazwisko)

w szkole w dniu .....  
 (data)

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

### ZGODA NA SAMODZIELNE POWROTY ZE SZKOŁY

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

.....imię i nazwisko

w roku szkolnym..... po zakończonych zajęciach edukacyjnych.

.....  
(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/  
ból głowy/ bólu ręki/ bólu nogi/ kataru.\*

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

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 DODATKOWYCH  
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 kółko

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 warsztatach .....nazwa warsztatów  
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 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 WIEŁODNIOWEJ

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 konkursie .....nazwa konkursu

odbywającym się .....dzień i godzina

w .....  
(nazwa organizacji)

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

## 11. Glossary of school-related terms

### **Legal guardian (opiekun prawny):**

A person appointed to care for the living needs and property of another person who requires such care. A legal guardian is typically appointed for children and individuals who are fully incapacitated.

### **Gradebook/electronic gradebook (dziennik zajęć/dziennik elektroniczny):**

A document or an application where teachers record subject grades and conduct grades. Sometimes the gradebook is a paper booklet, and sometimes it's in an electronic format. Parents and students can log in to the electronic gradebook from home to check grades or contact teachers.

### **Educational platform (platforma edukacyjna):**

An online space that teachers use to contact students, conduct online classes for remote learning, or to diversify their lessons.

### **Recruitment platform (platforma rekrutacyjna):**

An electronic platform that allows you to enroll a student in a school/kindergarten/institution run by the Municipality of Wrocław. You can find more information on the website: [www.rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl](http://www.rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl).

### **Trusted Profile (Profil Zaufany):**

A free tool that allows a citizen to confirm their identity online and handle official matters from home. It works like an electronic signature, enabling you to securely submit applications, letters, or declarations, such as for school recruitment. You can create or confirm it on websites like:

PZ (Profil Zaufany): <https://pz.gov.pl/pz/register>

ePUAP: <https://epuap.gov.pl/>

### **„Our Wrocław” (Nasz Wrocław):**

A loyalty programme for residents of Wrocław that offers free admission and discounts to city attractions, cultural institutions, sports facilities, and services. It also provides cheaper public transport tickets and a range of other benefits. If you want to join the program, you just need to register on the website [www.naszwroclaw.pl](http://www.naszwroclaw.pl) and confirm your data (e.g., proof of residency and settlement of your income tax [PIT] in Wrocław). The process is simple and takes place online. After your data is verified, your account is activated. You can use it via an app or the website.

### **School ID (legitymacja szkolna):**

A student identity document entitles them to free public transport in Wrocław or discounts on intercity transport, as well as discounts at cultural institutions. You need a student's photo to get a school ID. You can get more information about this document from the school's secretariat.

### **Parent-teacher meeting (zebranie z rodzicami/wywiadówka):**

A meeting between parents and the class teacher. Its purpose is to discuss the children's academic progress and other important matters concerning school life. Attendance is not mandatory, but it is recommended to attend and sign any necessary documents. It is also the best way to get information about your child.

### **Consultations for parents and guardians (konsultacje dla rodziców i opiekunów):**

Meetings with teachers of specific subjects. Parents can meet with them to discuss their children's results. They are often organised on a specific day when all of the child's teachers are available at school.

**Consultations for students (konsultacje dla uczniów):**

Many schools have consultation hours for students. On these days, teachers are available, and any student can come to ask for clarification on a topic or to retake a written test.

**Grading scale (skala ocen):**

Starting from the fourth grade of primary school, students are graded on a scale of 1 to 6. 6 is the highest grade, and 1 is the lowest. A student is expected to master the material to at least a 2 (a passing grade).

**Grade weight (waga oceny):**

Each grade has a weight. This means that some grades are more important than others; for example, a test grade will be more important than a grade for a task completed during a lesson.

**Suggested grade (ocena proponowana):**

For each subject, a student will receive a main grade at the end of the semester. The suggested grade is the teacher's proposed final grade. It is communicated early enough for the student to have a chance to improve their grade by retaking partial grades (from tests, quizzes, assignments, and other activities).

**Final grades (oceny końcoworoczne):**

Also called final grades, these are grades that summarise a student's year-long work in a given subject and their behaviour. They consist of grades for academic achievement (i.e., grades for individual subjects) and a conduct grade. They constitute a formal summary of the school year and affect promotion to the next grade or school completion. Remember that you can also receive a final grade after the first semester.

**Functional assessment (ocena funkcjonalna):**

An assessment designed for students with neurodevelopmental difficulties—such as those on the autism spectrum, with sensory disorders, or with intellectual disabilities. A functional assessment is meant to consider the individual needs and abilities of each student. Therefore, it focuses not only on academic results but also on how the student handles daily situations—with responsibilities, emotions, and their environment. It assesses things like independence and social skills. This assessment is based on a „contextual diagnosis,” which involves observing the student in their natural environment. This assessment, often in a descriptive format, is issued by a teacher in cooperation with the school psychologist and the student's parents.

**Subject-based grading system (przedmiotowy system oceniania -):**

A set of rules and criteria that a teacher uses to evaluate a student's progress in a specific subject. The PSO is adapted to the core curriculum and the internal grading system (WSO) of a given school.

**Integrated learning (nauczanie zintegrowane):**

Also known as early school education, this is a teaching method used in primary school grades 1-3. It combines different fields of knowledge into a single, thematic process. Instead of a traditional division into subjects, students discover knowledge in a more integrated way, which is intended to help them understand the connections between different fields.

**Test/class test (sprawdzian/klasówka):**

A test prepared by a subject teacher. It usually covers a specific portion of the material (e.g., a chapter in the textbook) and involves practical tasks (often open-ended questions where the student must write an answer in their own words or solve specific math problems). A test is always announced in advance.

**Class essay (praca klasowa/wypracowanie):**

A written assignment completed in class. It is most often announced in advance, and students are given one or two class periods to write it. The teacher provides the topic, which the student must then develop in writing.

**Quiz (kartkówka):**

A short test prepared by a subject teacher. A quiz may or may not be announced. If unannounced, it may cover material from the last three lessons.

**Assembly (apel):**

A school ceremony organised for a holiday. During the assembly, you can usually watch a stage performance and listen to a speech from the school principal. Remember that on the day of an assembly, formal attire is required.

**Overnight school trip, green school(wycieczka szkolna z nocowaniem, zielona szkoła):**

A multi-day trip for students with their class teacher or other teachers. A „green school” is educational in nature; tourism is important, but so is the opportunity to learn something new from various fields.

**School trip (wycieczka szkolna):**

An outing with the class teacher or other teachers. These are often sightseeing trips that provide an opportunity to explore the surrounding area. There are also trips within the city (e.g., to the cinema, a museum, or other cultural institutions).

**Absence (nieobecność):**

In Poland, children are required to attend school. If a child does not come to school on a given day, parents are obligated to provide a formal excuse—that is, to explain why the child was absent—or to provide a sicknote if the child was ill.

**Semester (półrocze):**

A half-year of learning: The first semester usually lasts from September to January, and the second semester from February to June. After the first semester, a student will receive grades for each subject, and after the second semester, they will receive final grades for the school year, which will appear on their report card.

**Winter break (ferie zimowe):**

A two-week break from school that takes place after the first semester in January or February. In Poland, it is usually divided into three rounds, with different voivodeship having its break at a different time.

**Summer holidays (wakacje):**

The free time from school during the summer. It lasts from the last week of June until the end of August. This is a time to rest from school, but in exceptional circumstances, if a student receives a failing grade at the end of the year, they may take a retake exam, which most often occurs in August.

**Class teacher (wychowawca):**

The class guardian. Each class is assigned one or two guardians. You can approach your class teacher with any problem.

**School principal (dyrektor szkoły):**

The person who leads the school. They most often have many years of experience as a teacher and appropriate qualifications in educational management.

**Vice-principal (wicedyrektor):**

The deputy director. A principal often has several deputies, and each specialises in a different area (e.g., early school education, psychological-pedagogical support).

**Classes (lekcje):**

A single class in Polish schools lasts 45 minutes. Classes usually start at 8:00 AM. However, it's good to have your child's schedule, as some schools operate on a two-shift basis or start classes at 7:30 AM.

**Breaks (przerwy):**

Students always have breaks between classes. Breaks usually last 10 minutes, but there is one longer breakfast break (15 minutes) and a lunch break (20 or 25 minutes) during the day. Remember to give your child a nutritious breakfast or sign up for school lunches.

**Textbooks (podręczniki):**

In primary school, you don't have to buy textbooks; the school loans them to students. It's important to take care of borrowed textbooks so they can be used by students in the next school year. If they get damaged, the school may ask you to pay for the damage or purchase new copies. In secondary schools, textbooks are bought by the students themselves. The list of textbooks is available on the school's website.

**Lunches (obiady):**

Most primary schools offer the option to purchase lunch for your child. The meal fee is paid monthly. If you want your child to have school meals but don't have enough money, ask the school secretariat about the possibility of financial assistance.

**School's Secretariat /Secretary's office (sekretariat):**

The school secretariat is the central administrative point of the school, responsible for the day-to-day handling of documents for students, teachers, and the management. Secretariat staff handle issuing school IDs and certificates, maintaining registers, managing correspondence, and handling information to ensure the smooth functioning of the institution. In an emergency, you can call your parents from here.

**Intercultural assistant (asystent międzykulturowy):**

In some schools, you might meet an intercultural assistant. This is a person who speaks Ukrainian, Russian, or English and is at the school for several hours a week. The assistant can help you during classes, with homework or with challenges that arise from insufficient knowledge of Polish language.

**Parent council (rada rodziców):**

A school body composed of parent representatives from each class. The council supports the school's activities and organises various events.

**Library (biblioteka):**

A place where a student can use the school's collection of books for free on-site. They can also borrow books to take home.

**After-school Club (świetlica szkolna):**

This is a place where a student can safely spend time after classes while waiting for their parents, or during classes they don't attend.

**School attire (strój szkolny):**

A student's clothing must be neat and appropriate for the situation. Always remember to choose clean clothes that are suitable for their age and the setting.

It is required to have specific attire for physical education classes. You should have separate sports shoes, sports shorts, and a T-shirt.



### **Formal attire (strój galowy):**

Formal attire is worn for all school ceremonies, such as the beginning and end of the school year, holidays, and assemblies.

Formal attire consists of dark (navy blue or black) trousers/skirt and a white shirt/blouse. Remember, sports-wear is not appropriate for such ceremonies.

### **Optional classes (lekcje nieobowiązkowe):**

Some subjects in Polish schools are optional (you can sign your child up for them). These include health education, religion, and ethics. Some schools may have other optional subjects as well.

Remember that regulations can change, and some of these subjects may become mandatory in the future.

### **Extracurricular activities (zajęcia dodatkowe):**

Activities that take place at school after classes. These can be remedial classes to help students catch up, or classes where they can develop their interests or learn something new.

### **Interest groups (koła zainteresowań):**

Additional classes organised at school to deepen and develop passions, such as a journalism or art club.

## **Terms related to psychological and pedagogical support**

### **School counsellor (pedagog szkolny):**

A school counsellor supports students, parents, and teachers in solving educational, social, and upbringing problems. They ensure the comprehensive development of the student, respond to crises, and cooperate with various institutions to guarantee safety and well-being in the school environment.

### **School psychologist (psycholog szkolny):**

A school psychologist focuses on students' mental and emotional health, diagnosing learning difficulties and developmental problems. They provide psychological support, conduct interventions, and advise teachers and parents to help students cope with challenges and build psychological resilience.

### **Speech therapist (logopeda):**

A speech therapist at school diagnoses and provides therapy for students with speech and communication disorders. They conduct individual or group sessions aimed at correcting speech defects, improving speech fluency, and developing vocabulary and communication skills. Their work supports the educational process, making it easier for students to learn to read and write and to function freely within their peer group.

Psychological and pedagogical counselling centre (poradnia psychologiczno-pedagogiczna or PPP):

This is a place where specialists examine children to assess their educational abilities. They assist children who have special educational needs.

### **Remedial classes (zajęcia wyrównawcze):**

These are a form of psychological and pedagogical support in schools, intended for students who are having difficulties in their studies and with mastering the core curriculum. The goal of these classes is to fill gaps in knowledge and skills, consolidate the knowledge I, and support students in overcoming academic difficulties.

### **Pedagogical therapy (terapia pedagogiczna):**

This is a long-term process aimed at helping children and adolescents overcome learning difficulties and developmental challenges. These are corrective-compensatory activities that focus on eliminating the causes and symptoms of academic failure, boosting self-esteem, and increasing motivation to continue learning. Pedagogical therapy also includes activities that stimulate psychoeducational development.

### **Rehabilitation (rewalidacja):**

This is a comprehensive process that aims to support students with disabilities and learning difficulties. It includes therapeutic, educational, and developmental activities designed to improve students' functioning, develop their skills, and prepare them for an independent life.

## **Terms for eighth graders**

### **Open days (drzwi otwarte):**

These are events during which upper secondary schools (general secondary schools, technical secondary schools, and vocational schools) invite eighth-grade students from primary schools and their parents to visit the institution, learn about its educational offerings, facilities, and atmosphere. It is an opportunity to ask questions, talk with teachers and students, and make an informed decision about choosing a school.

### **Recruitment minimums (minima rekrutacyjne):**

This is the minimum number of points a candidate must obtain to qualify for a particular school or class. It is a threshold that determines whether a student has a chance of being admitted to a given institution. These points are the sum of the eighth-grade exam results, grades on the primary school report card, and any additional achievements.

### **Comprehensive recruitment system (kompleksowy system rekrutacji):**

This is a process that allows for the electronic submission of applications for admission to a chosen upper secondary school and for tracking the recruitment progress. The goal of this system is to streamline and standardise the admission process for upper secondary schools, ensuring greater transparency and efficiency for candidates.

### **Recruitment procedure deadlines (terminy postępowania rekrutacyjnego):**

These are the time frames within which candidates for general secondary schools, technical secondary schools, and vocational schools can submit applications for admission, supplement documents, check results, and confirm their intention to attend a chosen institution. They are crucial for not missing any stage of the recruitment process.

### **Secondary school final examination (Matura):**

This is an exam taken after completing secondary school (general or technical secondary school). Passing it is a condition for obtaining a maturity certificate and allows for enrollment in higher education. Students are required to take Polish language (basic level), mathematics (basic level), and a modern foreign language (basic level). Additionally, a student must choose one subject at an advanced level from a wide list of available subjects, according to their preferences and plans for higher education.

### **Vocational qualification exam (egzamin potwierdzający kwalifikacje zawodowe):**

This is a state exam taken in vocational and technical secondary schools that verifies the practical and theoretical skills of students in a given profession. After passing it, the graduate receives a diploma confirming their vocational qualifications, which allows them to work in their trained profession or continue their education.

## 12. What you can do to stay well in a crisis

**Emergencies can bring many difficult emotions.** You may feel stressed and overwhelmed by everything that is happening around you. It can be difficult to deal with these feelings, to communicate them to others, and to ask for help. Remember, it is normal to feel intense emotions during a crisis.

You might experience feelings like:

- fear
- anger
- grief
- sadness
- deep concern for others
- guilt and shame
- frustration with authority
- wanting to take more risks than usual
- aggression
- loss of meaning and purpose
- hopelessness

It is completely normal to have strong emotions like these. Emotions help us in some way. For example, fear in dangerous situations tells us to run away; sadness helps us rest up so that we can mourn for what was lost before we move forward.

**These emotions do not need** to be avoided and will often naturally decrease. Even when strong emotions do stick around for a longer period of time, you will notice that they may be uncomfortable, but are not dangerous. It is important to recognize and accept the emotions we are experiencing, and to take time to think about how to manage and respond to them.

Here are some ideas to help you cope:

- **Look after your body and your mind** – try to stay physically active, to eat well, and to get a healthy amount of sleep.
- **As much as you can**, try to keep your usual routines, such as regular meal times and sleep times.
- **Write your feelings down** – writing your feelings down can help you to feel less overwhelmed. Try writing ,I feel .... right now' or keeping a diary to help you think through what you are experiencing.
- **Problem solve** – When you are going through a difficult time, it can be helpful to divide problems into two categories: ,Things I can do something about', and ,Things I can not do anything about'. In an emergency, there will be a lot of things you cannot control, but you might also find that there are some problems you can address. Remember, you do not need to solve all your problems at once.
- **Be kind to yourself** – there are no ,right' or ,wrong' emotions. Try to be patient with how you are feeling. Putting pressure on yourself to always ,be happy' or ,stay positive' can actually make you feel worse. If you notice you are experiencing difficult emotions, try telling yourself: ,I feel worried and scared, but that does not mean I am not coping', ,I am having a tough time, it's okay to be upset'.
- **Talk to an adult you trust** – let someone know how you are feeling. Sometimes just connecting with someone else can make you feel better and less alone.

- **Connect with friends and loved ones** – Find new ways to connect with your friends and loved ones. If you can contact your friends online using social media, for example, work out a screen-time schedule with your caregivers.
- **Keep busy and help others** – Staying active and finding new ways to spend your time can help you cope with strong emotions. If it is safe to do so, you can do volunteer work. Helping other people cope with the emergency can also help you to feel better.
- **Control how much time you spend looking at news and social media** – social media can be a great way to stay connected to friends and family. However, constant news and images from the emergency can increase your stress, make you feel overwhelmed, and distract you from positive things you can do offline. Try not to look at social media right before you go to bed, as this can make it more difficult to sleep. Turning off notifications from certain apps can also help.

You can also use relaxation exercises when you are feeling stressed or anxious. Here are some movement, breathing and visualization exercises you can do. Your breathing affects your whole body. When you are worried and anxious, your body may become tense and your breathing may speed up. You can use breathing techniques to help you calm down when you are feeling stressed or worried.

- **Deep breathing:** If possible, sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Now, breathe in through your nose. Let your belly fill with air. Breathe out slowly through slightly pursed lips. Place one hand on your belly. Place the other hand on your chest. As you breathe in, feel your belly rise. As you breathe out, feel your belly lower. The hand on your belly should move more than the one that's on your chest. Take three more full, deep breaths. Breathe fully into your belly as it rises and falls with your breath.
- **Quick muscle relaxation.** If possible, sit comfortably. Close your eyes and concentrate on your breathing. Slowly breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Make a fist, squeezing your hand tightly. Hold this for a few seconds, noticing the tension. Slowly open your fingers and feel the difference – notice the tension leaving. Your hand is much lighter and relaxed. You can relieve tension in any part of your body just by tensing and relaxing each muscle in turn.
- **Imagining a safe place.** Try to imagine a safe place, a place where you feel calm, peaceful and safe. Perhaps it is a place you have been to before, somewhere you've dreamed about going to or perhaps it is a place you create in your imagination. If possible, start by getting comfortable in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed, and take a couple of minutes to focus on your breathing, close your eyes, become aware of any tension in your body, and let that tension go with each out-breath. Enjoy the feeling of your worries drifting away as you slowly explore your safe place.
- **Using your senses.** Sit quietly and breathe slowly in and out. You can also do this exercise while walking. Look around you and notice: five things that you can see; four things that you can hear – keep breathing slowly in and out; three physical sensations; two things that you can smell; one thing that you can taste – breathe slowly in and out. This exercise helps you shift your focus to your surroundings in the present moment and away from what is causing you to feel anxious.

It is essential to get some extra help if you are finding it hard to cope. Get help from a professional if you experience any of these warning signs:

- You are unable to carry out your usual activities because of
- how you are feeling,
- there are extreme or long-lasting changes to your usual eating
- and sleeping habits,

- you often feel panicked, for example, feeling like you can't breathe or that your heart is pounding, and being unable to calm down,
- you are using alcohol or drugs to cope,
- you feel that life is no longer worth living,
- you have thoughts about hurting others, yourself or ending your life,
- you are experiencing violence or abuse,

If you are worried that it will be difficult to talk about how you are feeling, remember, you don't have to talk about everything you are experiencing at once. You can start by just sharing a little bit of information or letting someone know that you would like some support.

If you feel something is wrong with you or a loved one, respond. Your mental health is very important. Consulting a specialist or using a helpline can help you recover from a crisis. Asking for help is a sign of responsibility, strength and courage.

## Helplines

### **Child and Youth Helpline - Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę Foundation: 116 111**

The Children's Helpline - Children's Rights Ombudsman (Rzecznik Praw Dziecka): 800 12 12 12  
(consultations | English: every Monday from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM)

### **National Psychological Support Line for Children and Youth in Mental Crisis**

#### **- Society of Friends of Children (Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci):**

-phone: 800 119 119

-trusted chat: [www.800119119.pl/czat-zaufania/](http://www.800119119.pl/czat-zaufania/) (open daily from 2 PM to 10 PM)

A chat conversation is free and anonymous—you don't have to provide personal information to talk. It is also a log-free chat, meaning that when you close it, your conversation disappears permanently.

### **Youth Trust Helpline**

- ITAKA Foundation: 22 484 88 04

### **National Emergency Service for Victims of Domestic Violence „Blue Line”:**

800 120 002

### **Helpline for LGBTQIAP+ Individuals, their Families, and Loved Ones**

#### **- Lambda Warszawa Association:**

22 628 52 22

### **Sexual Educators Helpline - „Ponton” Group:**

22 635 93 92

You can find more information about forms of support and development for young residents of Wrocław here: [www.wroclaw.pl/informator-wsparcia](http://www.wroclaw.pl/informator-wsparcia)

Published by:  
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Third edition

Cooperation: Departament Edukacji Urzędu Miejskiego Wrocławia

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The brochure is available in Polish, English, and Ukrainian on the website: [www.wielokultury.wroclaw.pl](http://www.wielokultury.wroclaw.pl)

WroMigrant is a municipal information point for migrants and refugees operated by the Wrocław Centre for Social Development. The consultants at WroMigrant provide informational support to individuals who are either already residing in Wrocław or are just arriving in the city.  
<https://www.facebook.com/wromigrant/>

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Starter pack ENG - 978-83-959527-8-4

Wrocław, 2025



Urząd Miejski  
Wrocławia



Fundusze Europejskie  
dla Dolnego Śląska



Rzeczpospolita  
Polska

Dofinansowane przez  
Unię Europejską



**DOLNY  
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Task 5: Activities supporting the integration of children in schools – School starter pack. | The project “From adaptation to integration – support for third-country nationals in the process of intercultural integration in Wrocław” receives co-financing from the European Union, the European Social Fund Plus under the European Funds for Lower Silesia Programme 2021-2027, and the state budget, based on the co-financing agreement no. FEDS.07.06-IP.02-0050/24-00 dated February 14, 2025. Project beneficiary: Municipality of Wrocław.