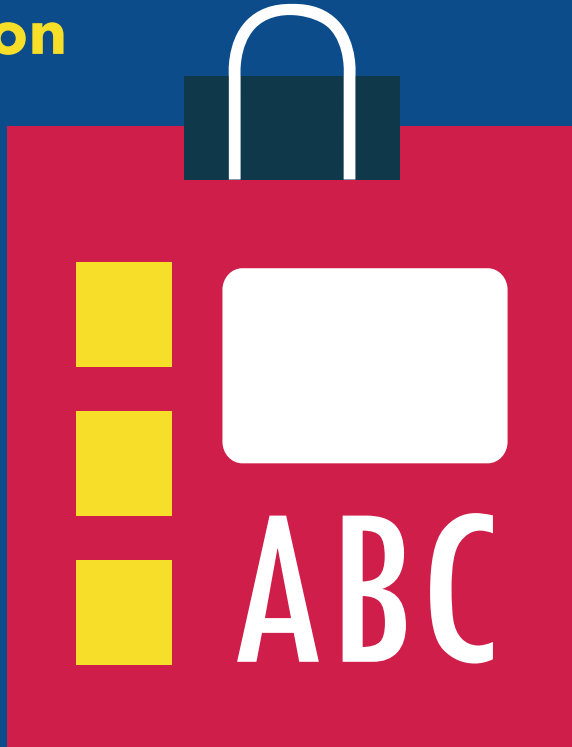


**2024/25**  
**version**



# STARTER PACK

Guide for parents and guardians

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[www.wielokultury.wroclaw.pl](http://www.wielokultury.wroclaw.pl)



WroMigrant is an urban information center for migrants and refugees. 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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Wrocław, 2024

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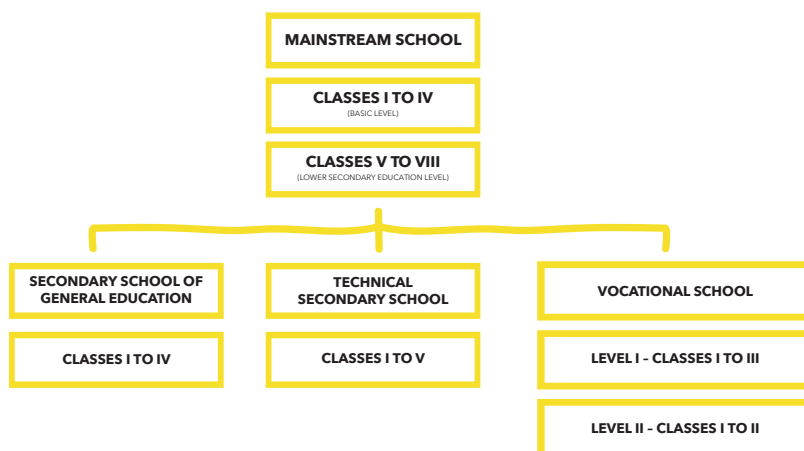


## **1. Introduction**

This guide is addressed to parents of pupils who start or continue their education in Poland and legal guardians come from abroad or return to Poland after migrating to other countries. It contains information about the Polish education system and recommendations how to get fast adaptation at school. Since we would like the children and their parents to easily adapt to the new conditions, we would like to explain how public schools in Poland function and how to deal with them. There are two parts in this guide - one for parents and one for pupils. There is also a section with parent-school document communication templates and at the end of the guide a very useful glossary including school vocabulary.

## 2. Diagram of the education system in Poland

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



### *Exams in polish schools*

In Polish schools, there are two exams that determine advancement to the next level of education: the eighth-grade exam, which influences which secondary school a student will attend, and the „matura” exam, which allows students to apply for higher education.

**Eighth-grade exam** - an exam that pupils take in spring, when they are in the 8th grade of primary school. The exam consists of three parts and includes: Polish language, mathematics and a modern foreign language. The eight-grade exam may be extended by one more, elective, subject in the future.

**Vocational qualification exams** - examinations conducted at the end of education in technical schools and vocational schools. They test the knowledge and skills in vocational subjects.

**Secondary school final examination (Matura** - this exam can be taken by pupils of secondary schools of general education, technical secondary schools and of the second level of vocational schools.

Matura exam is divided into oral and written examinations.

Compulsory examinations in the oral part:

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

Compulsory examinations in the written part:

Polish Language Examination (basic level)

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

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

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

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

These facilitations consist of:

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

If parents want their child to take advantage of the adjustments, they have to apply to the school's principal by the designated deadline.

A pupil who is in a difficult situation can take advantage of exam adjustments that will help him/her during important exams.

Examples of adjustments:

- extended exam writing time,
- adjustments to the place where the exam is taken (e.g. adjustments to the disability, a room with fewer pupils),
- providing specialist equipment and teaching aids,
- change of assessment rules

Who can take advantage of adjustments?

Any pupil who:

- has a decision on the need for special or individual education,
- has specific learning difficulties (stated in the opinion from a psychological and pedagogical counseling center),
- is ill or temporarily disabled,
- is struggling with chronic diseases,
- has impaired color vision.

In these cases, it is necessary to present a medical certificate or a



decision from a psychological and pedagogical counseling center. The documents should be submitted to the school principal at the deadline set by the Central Examination Board (CKE).

Sometimes, adjustments are available to pupils who have previously studied abroad, have insufficient knowledge of the Polish language, or have experienced a crisis or traumatic situation. The regulations may change each year. The rules for granting the possibility of using exam adjustments applicable in a given school year are available on the website of the Central Examination Board: <https://cke.gov.pl/en/>

**Note!** Remember to check the possible adjustments at the beginning of the new school year and to obtain the appropriate documents.

### **Grading scale**

In grades 1-3 of primary school, teachers use descriptive assessments. From the 4th grade of the primary school on, pupils are graded on a scale from 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest grade, and 1 being the lowest. A pupil is expected to have at least an acceptable level of mastery of the material - and a passing grade (2) reflects that. One can improve poor grades, after consulting it with the teacher.

### **Grades from subjects:**

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

Students behaviour is also being graded. These grades are being issued during the school year as partial grades and a main behavioral grade is issued at the end of the semester:

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

A ,reprehensible' behavior grade can be received for serious misconduct, while an ,exemplary' behavior grade is awarded for exceptional contributions to the school community and additional activities.

### 3. Organisation of the school year and school education

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

MONTH	PUBLIC HOLIDAYS/DAYS OFF
SEPTEMBER	<b>01.09</b> - Start of the school year
OCTOBER	<b>14.10</b> - National Education Day (Teacher's Day) - in some schools it is a day off

NOVEMBER	<b>01.11</b> - All Saints' Day (public holiday) <b>11.11</b> - Independence Day (public holiday)
DECEMBER	<b>23.12-01.01</b> - Christmas Break
JANUARY	<b>01.01</b> - New Year's Eve (public holiday) <b>06.01</b> - Epiphany Day (public holiday)
JANUARY/ FEBRU- ARY	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	<b>01.05</b> - Labour Day (public holiday) <b>03.05</b> - 3 May Constitution Day (public holiday)
JUNE	End of school year (last week of June)
JULY	<b>HOLIDAYS</b>
AUGUST	<b>HOLIDAYS</b>

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

Details of the current school year calendar are available on the websites of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Board of Education.

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

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

**Religion and ethics** – A parent may enroll the pupil in religion classes or ethics, or both at the same time. These classes are not mandatory and are not included in the student's grade point average at the end of the year.

**Family life education** – a subject for students of Polish elementary and secondary schools, the purpose of which is preparation for life in the family. It is an optional subject offered to students from the fourth grade of elementary school.

**Exemptions from physical education lessons (WF)** – if a child feels unwell or is indisposed, but still goes to school, a parent can write them a one-time exemption from physical education lessons. If the child has a chronic illness and an exemption is needed of the entire six months or a year, you must provide the school with a waiver issued by a specialist doctor (exemptions from family doctors are not accepted).

### ***Important documents of a pupil***

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

**IMPORTANT:** Find out at the school office what ID is valid at your school. The previously applicable paper IDs will be replaced with e-IDs (plastic version) and/or m-IDs (version in the mObywatel application on the phone).

**Bicycle card** - a person under 18 years of age is required to have a document authorizing them to ride a bicycle, electric scooter and other electric devices in order to use them on the public roads. A bicycle card can be such a document. Every child who is at least 10 years old can apply for the card.

#### **It can be issued by 3 authorities:**

- The school principal - in case a child is a student of a primary school and has the consent of a parent or guardian.
- The director of the provincial traffic center (WORD) - if a child has completed elementary school.
- The entrepreneur in charge of the drivers' training center, which has satisfied particular requirements confirmed by a certificate - if a child has completed elementary school.

**School statute** - is the most important document that regulates internally the life of the institution, as well as defines its goals and tasks and the manner of their implementation. The statute also includes the principles of the school's grading system, the tasks of

teacher teams, forms of assistance and care for students who need it, forms of cooperation with institutions providing specialized assistance and guidance for children (including psychological and pedagogical counseling centers), as well as the principles of cooperation of authorities such as the headmaster, school council, pedagogical council, parents' council and student government.

## 4. Before enrolling for school

In Poland child is obliged to attend school until he or she reaches 18 years of age. Children before the age of 18 are subject to parental authority. This means that they cannot make decisions, attend medical appointments and travel on their own. In these kind of situations, the child should be accompanied by a legal guardian.

**Remember!** Your child has exactly the same rights as Polish children. In accordance with the Polish law, children who are not Polish citizens and who due to their age are subject to compulsory education are entitled to education and care in public primary schools, public art schools, institutions and secondary schools under conditions identical to those of Polish citizens.

### *How to choose school?*

#### **PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Primary schools have catchment areas.** It means that in order to be eligible to attend a certain school, one should reside within a school's catchment area. Pupils attending grades from I to VIII of primary school are enrolled for catchment area schools ex officio and on the basis of documents. When enrolling for a district school, you should present a document confirming that you live in the district. It could be:

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

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

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

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

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

If you are concerned that your child may have some difficulties adapting in a Polish school, you may enrol them in a preparation class. The offer is directed at children speaking language other than Polish as their main language, including children returning to Poland after migrating to other countries. In a preparation classes children have more Polish language classes. They learn daily communication, but also words and phrases used in mathematics, science, history and

other school subjects. They get to know Polish culture, take part in special-theme lessons and integrational activities, they also get to know the city. At the same time the child does not 'lose a year', because they do realise the programme for their school year.

**<https://wielokultury.wroclaw.pl/projekty/edukacja-miedzykulturowa/>**



Wrocław, dn .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
(nazwa szkoły)

## PODANIE O PRZYJĘCIE DO SZKOŁY PODSTAWOWEJ

Proszę o przyjęcie do Szkoły Podstawowej

.....  
(imię i nazwisko kandydata)

do klasy .....

### DANE UCZNIĄ

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 matki .....

Tel. kontaktowy ojca .....

.....  
(podpis rodzica/opiekuna)

## SECONDARY SCHOOL

In order to be enrolled in a secondary school, a pupil must meet certain criteria. The required documents are:

- Certificate of Completion of Education in Primary School;
- in case of candidates who would like to enroll for a vocational school – a medical certificate stating there are no medical counterindications to undertake practical vocational training.

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

**[www.rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl](http://www.rekrutacje.edu.wroclaw.pl)**

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

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

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

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

### **Document from the psychological and pedagogical centre**

If the pupil has a certificate from the psychological and pedagogical counselling centre, it should be delivered to the school. This will help teachers to adjust their teaching methods and curriculum to the pupil's needs. It can be the basis of assigning additional (compensatory) classes in subjects with which the help is needed. Such document will also help to assess whether the possible school difficulties are caused just by a language barrier or whether there are other issues to be addressed.

If you think that your child should be diagnosed, please visit Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre in Wrocław.

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

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

**Disability certificate of a child** - if a child is a person with disability, the parent or legal guardian can get such a document issued. It allows the child to benefit from a range of discounts and privileges.

**[https://bit.ly/orzeczenie\\_niepelnosprawnosc](https://bit.ly/orzeczenie_niepelnosprawnosc)**

A student who is in a difficult situation can benefit from exam accommodations that will help them during important exams. What might these accommodations include? For example:

- Extended time for writing the exam,
- Adjustments to the exam location (e.g., accommodations for disabilities, a room with fewer students),
- Provision of specialized equipment and educational materials,
- Changes in the rules for evaluating the student.

Who can benefit from accommodations?

Any student who:

- Has a certificate of special or individual educational needs,
- Has specific learning difficulties (with an opinion from a psychological-pedagogical counseling center),
- Is ill or temporarily impaired,
- Suffers from chronic illnesses,
- Has color vision deficiencies.

In these cases, it is necessary to present a medical certificate or an opinion from a psychological-pedagogical counseling center. The documents must be submitted to the school principal within the time frame designated by the Central Examination Commission (CKE).

Sometimes, accommodations are available for individuals who have previously studied abroad, have insufficient knowledge of the Polish language, or have experienced a crisis or traumatic situation. Regulations may change each year. The rules for obtaining exam accommodations for a given school year are available on the Central Examination Commission's website: <https://cke.gov.pl>.

**Note:** Remember to check the availability of accommodations at the beginning of the new school year and ensure you obtain the necessary documents.

## 5. School-Parent Communication

### *Routine meetings and communication*

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

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

### *If you have questions or difficulties*

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

**Issue with a specific subject:** subject teacher › class teacher › counsellor › principal

**Behaviour issue related to our child or other pupils:** class teacher › counsellor › principal

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

**Problem with documentation, formalities:** school secretary's office › deputy principa › principal

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

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

Please note that if a pupil commits the above acts, they will not be expelled from school, but their behaviour may be graded as „reprehensible“ or they may be subject to suspension of pupil rights.

If a pupil makes an unauthorized departure from school, the school is not responsible for their safety.

**Counsellor support** - a counsellor is a person who supports pupils in their psychophysical development and helps pupils who display behavioural difficulties at school. This person helps to solve conflicts, and can also help to gain financial support for children who are in a difficult economic situation.

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

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

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

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

**Compensatory classes for pupils from other countries** - if the curriculum of the previous school differed significantly from the current one, your child may attend compensatory classes for a given subject. Each pupil is entitled to 3 hour per week. Ask the school secretary's office for catch-up courses.

**Intercultural assistant** - some schools in Wrocław employ intercultural assistants. The intercultural assistant acts as an intermediary between the school and parents/guardians and pupils coming from another country. An intercultural assistant usually knows foreign languages e.g. Ukrainian, Russian or English and works at school for several hours a week. The assistant helps pupils over-

come difficulties that arise as a result of lack of knowledge of the Polish language and cultural differences. The assistant explains to the parents/guardians of a foreign pupil the specifics of the Polish education system, answers their questions, and informs about offers that the pupil can take advantage of (e.g. workshops). His/her presence makes both the pupil and his parents feel confident and safe at the Polish school.

In exceptional cases (e.g. situations related to visa problems and their impact on the pupil's life or in cases of discrimination based on the pupil's origin), as a parent / guardian, you can contact directly the Education Board (<https://www.kuratorium.wroclaw.pl/>).

## **6. Everyday school life**

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

- check the electronic class register regularly (the link can be found on the school's website),
- check the notebooks (not all teachers put homework assignments in the electronic class register, some ask students to write them down),
- make sure your child is not hungry at school: you can sign them up for a paid cafeteria lunches or make sure they have sandwiches or other snacks with them,
- if you want your child to leave school early (during classes) you must report this to the school secretary's office and inform the class teacher,
- younger children (in grades 1-3) cannot go home alone, they must be picked up by an authorised guardian,
- younger children (in grades 1-3) can stay in the after school club where they will be cared for,



- children are obliged to attend school and all their absences must be justified.

## 7. Language

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

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

**IMPORTANT:** In case there is a language barrier, your child is entitled to compensatory classes.

## 8. What does school expect from a parent?

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

## 9. Support for families in difficult situations

School in Poland has an educational and upbringing function. Specialists working at the school - psychologists, teachers, educators, and school principals - monitor whether pupils attend classes regularly and how they behave during lessons and breaks. This allows for early detection of difficult and crisis situations, and implementation of appropriate procedures and assistance to the pupil and his/her family.

Every educational institution (e.g. nurseries, kindergartens, schools, non-governmental organisations and institutions working for children and youth) is obliged to approve and comply with the Standards for the Protection of Minors (in Poland a minor is a person under 18 years of age). It is a document that describes potential abuse or harm that children may face from adults and peers, as well as a clear path of action that will help solve the problem and support a child in a difficult situation.

We encourage you to read the Standards for the Protection of Minors at your child's school. This will allow you to understand all the procedures and actions that the school will take in the event of a violent situation.

What actions can the school take in a threat situation?

### **Emergency telephone**

In the event of a direct threat to a child's life, every school employee and bystander is obliged by law to provide help and call services (medical emergency, police, fire brigade).

Notification made via the general emergency number (112) usually speeds up the process of assignment by the appropriate services.

## **Blue Card Procedure**

The Blue Card is a procedure that consists of activities undertaken by representatives of various institutions and entities that are obliged to respond to suspected domestic violence. Its aim is to ensure the safety of potential victims of violence from members of the closest environment. The Blue Card can be initiated by e.g. a policeman, a social worker, a doctor, a school teacher, or a school nurse. The completed document is sent to the Municipal Social Welfare Center (in Wrocław - Miejski Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej - MOPS), which carries out further activities, it can be e.g. community interview. If acts of violence are identified threat to the child's health and life, the case may be transferred to a family court by MOPS, which could result in the termination of the person using domestic violence's parental rights.

Assignment of a Blue Card is not equivalent to reporting a crime, nor is it a basis for initiating criminal proceedings. However, if a notification is submitted and proceedings are initiated, it may be used as procedural evidence.

## **Legal definition of domestic violence**

Domestic violence is understood as a single or repeated, intentional act or abandonment that violates the personal rights or interests of the closest relatives and other persons living together, in particular exposing these persons to the risk of loss of life or health, violating their dignity, bodily integrity, freedom (incl. sexual), causing damage to their physical or mental health, as well as causing suffering and moral harm to people affected by violence.

What actions can be taken as a result of the Blue Card procedure?:

- Providing a person affected by domestic violence with comprehensive assistance (free of charge), in particular in the form of medical, psychological, legal, social, professional and family counseling.

- Protection against further harm: by preventing people using violence from sharing same accommodation with other family members and by prohibiting them from contacting or approaching the harmed person.
- Providing a medical examination to determine the causes and type of bodily injury related to domestic violence and issuing a medical certificate.
- Developing an individual family support plan. The team developing the plan also includes school employees (e.g. school counsellor) who are to provide the child with support in the school environment.

### **Application to the family court for insight into the child's situation**

In case if alarming issues related to the pupil are identified, and when all other methods of action have been exhausted (e.g. meetings with parents, providing the child with psychological and pedagogical assistance), the school staff is obliged to submit an application to the family court for insight into the child's situation.

### **The school may submit a request for insight into the child's situation when it observes:**

- poor attendance - the child often misses class and activities
- poor psychological and/or physical condition of the child
- the child engages in risky behaviors (e.g. drinking alcohol, using drugs, self-harm, suicide attempts, premature sexual activity)
- violent behavior undertaken by a child towards other pupils, e.g. cyberbullying (harassment, defamation on the Internet, dissemination of pornography), minor crimes, hooligan acts, vandalism,
- suspicion that the parent is not fulfilling the educational role (e.g. the child neglects his studies, misses classes, runs away from home).

The application is then considered by the family court. If the family court states irregularities such as violence or neglect, it may limit or terminate the guardian's parental rights. During this time, the school is obliged to provide the child with psychological and pedagogical assistance and support from school staff.

## 10. Document templates

### 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

## ZWOLNIENIE Z LEKCJI WF

Proszę o zwolnienie mojej córki/ mojego syna\*

.....  
(imię i nazwisko)

z lekcji wychowania fizycznego w dniu .....

(data)

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

.....  
(Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna)

\* właściwe wziąć w 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 DODATKOWCH

Nie wyrażam zgody mojej córki/ mojego syna\*

.....  
(imię i nazwisko)

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

(inne) .....

(nazwa zajęć)

.....  
(Data i podpis rodzica/ opiekuna)

\* właściwe wziąć w 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)  
\* właściwie wziąć w kółko

## ZGODA NA UDZIAŁ W WYCIECZCE KLASOWEJ WIELODNIOWEJ

Wyrażam zgodę na udział mojej córki/ mojego syna\*

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

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

## **11. Glossary of school terms**

(for parents and pupils)

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

This is a person appointed to take care of the life needs and property of another person who requires such care. In practice, a legal guardian is appointed for children and for persons who are completely incapacitated.

### ***Class register / electronic class register (dziennik)***

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

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

This is a place on the Internet that is used by teachers to interact with students, conduct online classes in remote teaching or to add variety to classes or homework assignments.

### ***School ID***

Find out at the school office what ID is valid at your school. The previously applicable paper IDs will be replaced with e-IDs (plastic version) and/or m-IDs (version in the mObywatel application on the phone).

### ***Parent-teacher meetings (zebranie/wywiadówka)***

Those are the parents' meeting with the class teacher. The aim is to discuss children's progress at school and other important issues concerning school life. Attendance is not obligatory, but it is worth to attend the meetings, and sign documents on a regular basis. This is also the best way to get information about your child.

### ***Consultation (konsultacje)***

Meetings with subject teachers. Parents can meet with them and talk about their children's performance.

### ***Grading scale (skala ocen)***

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

### ***Grade's weight (waga oceny)***

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

### ***Proposed grade (ocena proponowana)***

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

### ***Final grade (ocena końcowa)***

You will receive a final grade for each subject. This is a summary of the semester's work.

### ***Textbooks (podręczniki szkolne)***

The primary schools provide pupils with textbooks (on a rental basis). Pupils should take care of the textbooks throughout the year, so that they can be offered to other students in the following school year. If they are damaged, the school may ask you to pay for the damage or buy new copies. In secondary schools, pupils need to purchase textbooks on their own. The list of textbooks is usually available on the school's website.

### ***Test (sprawdzian)***

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

### ***Class essay (praca klasowa)***

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

### ***Short quiz (kartkówka)***

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

### ***Homework (zadanie domowe)***

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

### ***Assembly (apel)***

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

### ***Festival (festyn)***

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

### ***Overnight school trip (zielona szkoła)***

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

### ***School trip (wycieczka szkoła)***

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

### ***Absence (nieobecności)***

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

### ***Semester/half year (półrocze)***

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

### ***Semester break (ferie zimowe)***

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

### ***Holidays (wakacje)***

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

### ***Class teacher (wychowawca klasy)***

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

### ***School principal (dyrektor szkoły)***

The person who runs the school.

### ***Deputy principal (wicedyrektor szkoły)***

Deputy of the school principal.

### ***Secretary's office (sekretariat)***

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

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

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

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

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

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

A specialist who helps pupils with speech impairments.

### ***Psychological and pedagogical counselling centre (poradnia psychologiczno-pedagogiczna)***

It is a place where specialists examine children's capacity and needs related to education and offer help to those who need particular assistance.

### ***Parents' council (rada rodziców)***

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

### ***Library (biblioteka)***

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

### ***After school club (światlica szkolna)***

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

### ***School outfit (strój szkolny)***

Your outfit must be neat and appropriate to the occasion. Remember to always choose clean clothes that are appropriate for your age and place. Outfit for physical education classes is important as well. You should have sport shoes (ones you're not using outside!), as well as sports shorts and t-shirts.

### ***Formal outfit (strój galowy)***

Formal dress is worn to all ceremonies school events, such as the beginning and end of the school year, holidays and assemblies. Formal dress consists of dark (navy blue or black) pants/skirt and a white shirt/blouse.

Remember, sports attire is not appropriate for such celebrations.

### ***Optional classes (zajęcia nieobowiązkowe)***

Religion, ethics and family education classes are not compulsory. A parent can enroll their child to take part.

Please note that the regulation may change in the

future and some of these subjects may become part of the obligatory curriculum.

### ***Extra-curricular activities (zajęcia dodatkowe)***

They take place at school after classes. These can be compensatory classes or classes where you can develop your interests or learn something new.

### ***Special interest clubs (koło zainteresowań)***

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

### ***Psychological and Pedagogical Centre***

This is a place where specialists examine children for their opportunities to benefit from education. They help children who have special educational needs. Psychological and Pedagogical Centre No. 1 (address: Poradnia Psychologiczno-Pedagogiczna nr 1, ul. Kościuszki 31/1 in Wrocław) provides support to students with migration experience (languages: English, Ukrainian, Russian).







# STARTER PACK

Information for pupils

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Wrocław, 2024

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## **1. Introduction**

This guide is addressed to pupils who start or continue their education in Poland and come from abroad or return to Poland after migrating to other countries. It contains information about the Polish education system and tips on how to find their feet at school. Since we would like the children and their parents to easily adapt to the new conditions, therefore we would like to explain how public schools in Poland function and how to deal with them. There are two sections in this guide - one for parents and one for pupils. There is also a very useful glossary at the end of the guide, which includes school vocabulary and parentschool communication templates.

## **2. How long does compulsory education last in Poland?**

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

## **3. Who is secondary school of general education for?**

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

## **4. Who is technical secondary school for?**

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

## 5. Who is vocational school for?

If you want to have a profession as soon as possible and start working right after school, you should consider vocational school. It consists of two levels (3 and 2 years). You gain there practical skills in workplaces and in practical training centres. At the end of the school, you must pass an exam confirming your professional qualifications.

## 6. What you should know before applying for school

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

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

**Information about your health** - together with your parents share with school all information about your health.

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

## 7. When you're already attending a Polish school

Beginnings in unknown places are always difficult. Below you will find some important information about the Polish school and its rules.

In order to feel comfortable at school and to cope with all the challenges, remember the following:

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

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

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

**Breaks** - School is not only about classes, but also about breaks! Breaks usually last 10 minutes, but during the day there is one breakfast break (15 minutes) and one lunch break (20 or 25 minutes).

During that time you can have your breakfast brought from home or bought in the school shop.

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

**IMPORTANT:** The school ID card must be stamped at the secretary's office at the beginning of school in order to make it valid. Remember to sign it in the designated place.

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

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

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

**Thanking the teachers** - if you want to thank your favourite teachers for their work, you can give them flowers or a small gift to celebrate the Teacher's Day (October 14th) or at the end of the school year. Remember that the nicest gifts come straight from the heart! Maybe it's a good idea to DIY such gift?



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

## 8. Who can support you when needed?

### *Who should you report concerns and difficulties to?*

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

**Problem with a specific subject:** subject teacher › class teacher › counsellor › principal

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

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

**Problem with documentation, formalities:** secretary's office › deputy principal › principal

**Counsellor's support** – a school counsellor helps you to solve conflicts with other pupils and teachers. It is a person you can fully trust – they are at school to help you!

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

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

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

If you don't feel confident because you don't speak the Polish language fluently yet - do a placement test - it will help you see where you are on a proficiency scale.

**If you have troubles with learning in a foreign language**, teachers can decide that you need to repeat the year - it's a great opportunity to improve your language skills.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Remember!** If you leave school during classes without permission, the school does not take responsibility for you.

## 9. 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.

Helpline for children and adolescents of the  
Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę Foundation  
**116 111**

Children's Ombudsman Helpline  
**800 12 12 12**

Youth Helpline of the ITAKA Foundation  
**22 484 88 04**

National Helpline for Victims of Domestic Violence in the Family  
„Niebieska Linia”  
**800 120 002**

Helpline for LGBTQIAP+ people, their families and loved ones of  
the Lambda Warszawa Association  
**22 628 52 22**

Sexual Educators Helpline of the Group „Ponton”  
**22 635 93 92**