

Compulsory Education

Compulsory Education offers children a basic education which enables them access to further education. Public schools are free of charge.

Registering a Child

Communities are responsible for the public schools. To register a child for public school one must contact the community of residence or the school administration.

School Levels

Compulsory Education consists of three consecutive levels:

The first stage includes kindergarten and the first two years of primary. Kindergarten usually lasts 2 years. There is also the basic level model (Basisstufe | Cycle élémentaire). Here, children of different ages are taught together.

- The middle school comprises the 3rd to 6th primary grades. The school informs the children and parents in the 5th school year about the promotion procedure to the upper school.
- The upper school (secondary level I) lasts 3 years. In the upper school there are three different types of schools (Realschule, Sekundarschule and in some municipalities the special secondary school). They have different performance requirements.

Children who do not speak German or French receive special support at all levels. Detailed information on compulsory schooling can be found in the various cantonal brochures.

Public School / Private School

Public school is free of charge. Boys and girls are taught together. The curriculum is confessionally neutral. Most children and young people attend public school (95%). There are private schools. In general, parents who wish to send their children to private school must pay for school themselves.



Parents' Rights and Duties

Schools are obligated to inform parents of everyday school life and of their child's performance at school. For this reason schools conduct progress reports (between teachers and parents), parents' evenings (school information for parents), and information events. Most of these events are compulsory for parents. If both parents cannot attend, they must excuse themselves. The parents must also find out how they will still receive the information. Important decisions (e.g. transfer to lower secondary school) are discussed with the parents and the child. Parents are responsible for their child's attendance at school. If a child cannot attend (e.g. illness) parents must inform the school. They should also make sure that their children who do homework have a quiet place at home in case the children need to do homework or prepare for a test. By taking a regular interest in homework and school projects they can support their child. For persons who are not yet familiar with the Swiss education system there are special information events which are often held in languages other than German or French.

Questions / Support

Questions regarding school should always be directed to the teacher first. The teacher can also help when parents are in need of support. The teacher will also contact the parent first if they feel the child needs something or there are questions. In general, it is important that parents communicate and work closely with teachers. Mental or social difficulties can be handled by the school counselling service (Erziehungsberatung | Service psychologique pour enfants et adolescents) which offers free support for children and their parents.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-bern.ch/en/school-and-education/compulsory-education