



Sekundarschule

A Sekundarschule gives students of different learning abilities the opportunity to be taught together for longer. It works to prepare students for vocational education as well as the transition to the Oberstufe. From the outset, classes offer Gymnasium-standards and cover Years 5 – 10. Every Sekundarschule has a binding cooperation agreement in place with at least one sixth-form institution.

Förderschule

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities can, on parents' request, visit special schools. There are seven focal areas:

- ▶ Learning
- ▶ Language
- ▶ Emotional and social development
- ▶ Seeing
- ▶ Hearing
- ▶ Mental development
- ▶ Physical and motor skill development.

Sekundarstufe II

This is the continuation and augmentation of education received during the lower secondary track, the Sekundarstufe I. There is a general education (sixth-form style) and a vocational (vocational college) pathway.

Senior Years of Gymnasium (Gymnasiale Oberstufe)

Here, students continue their general education. In North Rhine Westphalia, this pathway can be completed at a Gymnasium, a Gesamtschule or a Vocational high school (Berufliches Gymnasium). Those who pass the Abitur exam at the end of this track receive a university-entrance certificate and the option to enrol at an institute of higher education. Vocational high school graduates can obtain this certificate in combination with a vocational degree.

Berufskolleg

These provide students with

- ▶ career orientation,
- ▶ preparation for work or academic studies,
- ▶ vocational degrees,
- ▶ further education.

In each of the educational pathways, the Berufskolleg enables students to attain school-leavers certificates including the university-entrance Abitur degree.

Further information

You can get more details from schools, education authorities and State Government regional offices (Bezirksregierungen), or online by visiting: www.schulministerium.nrw.de



Information on local points of contact can be obtained at: www.kommunale-integrationszentren-nrw.de

Published by

Ministerium für Schule und Weiterbildung
des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen
Völklinger Straße 49 • 40221 Düsseldorf
Telephone 0211 5867-40 • Fax 0211 5867-3220
poststelle@msw.nrw.de • www.schulministerium.nrw.de
Photo: Picture-Factory, Fotolia.com
MSW 1/2015

Printed on 100 % recycled paper

School in North Rhine Westphalia

A quick and easy guide



Information and Guidance

North Rhine Westphalia's (NRW) school system offers a vast array of options for children and young people of all abilities and talents. This brochure is designed to give a general overview. More detailed information can be obtained from schools, education authorities and the state government offices for the regions.

Migrants can contact the 'Municipal Integration Centres' for extra advice on the transition between the various educational stages, from day care to primary school or later from school to work.

Click here to find the local integration centre for your area: www.kommunale-integrationszentren-nrw.de or here for more on school education in North Rhine Westphalia: www.schulministerium.nrw.de



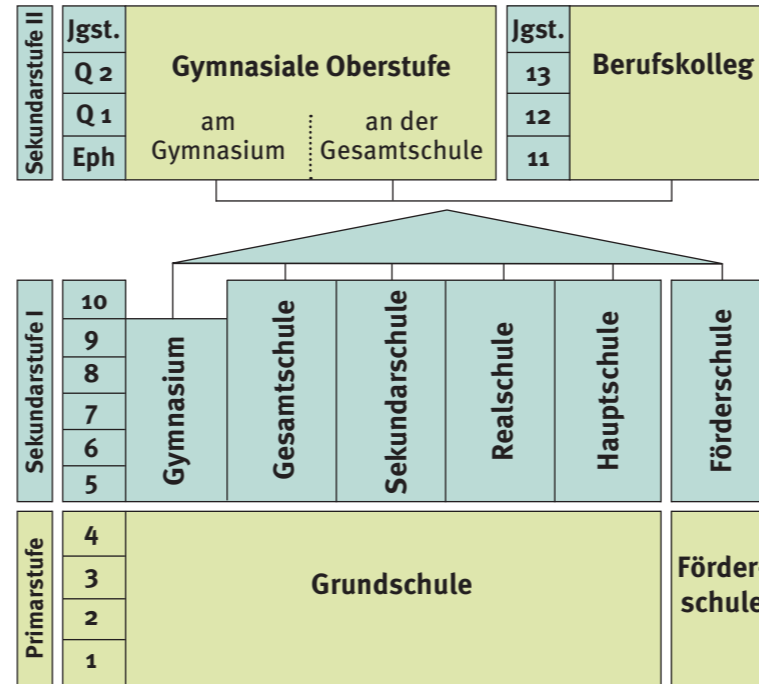
Compulsory School Age

Under the Education Act for NRW, children must begin to attend school in the year in which they reach the age of six prior to 1 October. The new term always starts in the summer. Children and young people must attend school for a minimum of ten years. Primary school (Grundschule) runs from Year 1 to 4, before students move on to secondary school, Year 5 to 10. Up to the end of the term during which they turn 18, or until graduation from a full-time secondary education programme, students must either follow the sixth-form style gymnasiale Oberstufe or attend a vocational college.

Special Needs

Some pupils require extra attention because of learning difficulties and/or disability. Those students are entitled to what is termed special educational needs support, provided at either specialised schools of general education or special schools. As a rule, it is up to parents to decide which institution their child should attend.

School system in NRW



Grundschule

This is where children start out in their school career. Primary education runs from Year 1 to 4 and takes into account the pupil's individual situation and personal talents. Grundschule works to provide children with key competences, basic proficiencies and a straightforward set of values.

Sekundarstufe I

Lower secondary education, Sekundarstufe I, builds upon the learning outcomes from Grundschule. In North Rhine Westphalia, lower secondary education is provided at these school types:

- ▶ **Hauptschule** (Year 5 – 10)
- ▶ **Realschule** (Year 5 – 10)
- ▶ **Gymnasium** (Year 5 – 9)
- ▶ **Gesamtschule** (Year 5 – 10)
- ▶ **Sekundarschule** (Year 5 – 10).

Hauptschule

Here, pupils receive a basic general education. Hauptschulen favour a hands-on approach to learning and work to prepare students for vocational training. During work-experience placements, students are made familiar with the requirements of the working world and receive some guidance on career choice and planning.

Realschule

Realschulen provide a wider range of general education and lay the groundwork for continued education at schools or vocational training institutions. Classes focus in equal parts on theory and practical skills, resulting in a hands-on approach to learning, interspersed with scientific aspects.

Gymnasium

A Gymnasium offers a more profound and in-depth level of general education. Students attain proficiencies and aptitudes required for university studies or high-end vocational programmes. A full Gymnasium career consists of the Unterstufe (Year 5 – 9) and a subsequent Oberstufe (Year 10 – 12).

Gesamtschule

Gesamtschulen offer a differentiated tuition structure designed to prepare students for vocational training and university studies. Students of different levels of learning ability are taught together and, unlike Hauptschule, Realschule oder Gymnasium, the Gesamtschule does not allocate students to particular educational tracks. With a view to taking into account the diverse abilities and talents, classes in a number of subjects are held at two different levels (basic and extended). Gesamtschule comprises the Unterstufe (Year 5 – 10) and a subsequent Oberstufe (Year 11 – 13).