

1 Compulsory education and registration with the school

In Lower Saxony, school is compulsory for each child who has reached the age of 6. Compulsory education lasts for 12 years. **Each child of school age is entitled to a school place.** Parents need to register their child with the school.

Which is the 'right' school?

Education authority areas (i.e. school districts) are established for primary school (Years 1 to 4). The child is registered with the school in whose district he/she lives. About 18 months before their child starts school, the parents are invited to register with the relevant school. They also find out how long the registration period is. At secondary school (from Year 5), parents can choose between different educational tracks and, in some cases, between different schools providing the same track.

When they have decided, they take the child to register with the school chosen. If this school has no free places, it can arrange education on the same track at a different school. But the child's entitlement to a place still remains and this must be satisfied at a local school.

There is an **official deadline** – shortly before the summer holidays – **for registration** in time for the school year. If the intention is to register the child during the school year, a date must be agreed with the school administration through the school office. Registration involves the parents completing a form by providing information about themselves and their child.

Here is an extract from the registration form for a primary school:

Child's surname:	
Child's first name:	Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> Girl <input type="checkbox"/> Boy
Date of birth:	
Place of birth:	
Country of birth:	
Nationality:	<input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Religious affiliation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Protestant <input type="checkbox"/> Catholic <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Parent/guardian:	Father: Mother:
Full address:	
Telephone:	

Forms used by other schools contain further questions; for example, they ask for information about siblings at the school, health problems and special requirements.

SCHOOL



For children who have recently arrived from other countries, additional information is often requested so that specific support can be provided to them.

Here is an extract from an extended application form:

Religious affiliation:		
Native language:		
Written language skills:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Familiarity with the Roman (i.e. Western) alphabet:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other languages:		
School attendance in country of origin:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Number of years spent in school:		
English tuition in the country of origin:		
Years, number of lessons/week:		
German-language skills:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

The registration interview not only involves the school asking questions to the parents. Parents can also ask questions of the school's head teacher so they can understand better what their child can expect at this school.

Regular school attendance

When the child is registered with the school, he/she must, from the beginning of the school year or from the date of enrollment, attend school every day and remain there until the end of the school day.

The parents must ensure that the child does not miss any lessons.

