

Grundschule

- The Grundschule (known as primary or elementary school in English) is the **first school** that children in Germany attend **after their time at kindergarten** or daycare.
- In Germany the day when children start school for the first time is usually a day of celebration. It is known as the **Einschulungsfeier**. Usually **every child has a Schultüte (school cone)**. This is shaped like a large funnel and made from thick cardboard. It can be filled with pens and sweets for example. I ask what the plans are for starting school in my child's school.
- The children come with their Ranzen (school bag) on the **first school day**. Sometimes the children bring their school cone on the first day as well.
- The children usually attend the Grundschule for 4 years. All children must attend a school **from the age of six**. This is known as **Schulpflicht** in German. The Schulpflicht is part of the Education Act in Baden-Württemberg. Attending a KiTa is voluntary but attending school is not voluntary. It is compulsory to attend school.
- **All Grundschulen in Baden-Württemberg follow the same aims**. The teaching methods, topics, etc. can differ.
- When the children start school, they have different abilities and levels of knowledge. The aim is: **At the end of their time at Grundschule, all children should know the same amount and have the same abilities**.
- In the Grundschule, the pupils learn to **do arithmetic, read and write**. **Fundamental knowledge** is taught in the Grundschule. **Exercise, singing, painting, doing handcrafts and activities together** are important. The secondary schools can build upon these skills after the Grundschule period is over.
- **In the Grundschule, the pupils also learn how to learn**. They learn different ways of absorbing and processing information. In the Grundschule, children also learn **by themselves and in a group**.
- In the Grundschule it is also possible for children to have **religious education**. I make this decision for my child. I can ask in the school about the religions that are taught. If my child belongs to a religion and the school offers lessons in this religion, my child is obliged to attend the lessons.
- In some schools, classes are held only in the morning. At **Ganztagschulen** (all-day schools) the children are there until at least 3pm. Therefore, there is also a lunch there, which must be paid for by the parents. The number of lessons is the same compared to other schools. The rest of the time is spent doing homework, eating a meal together, doing sports etc.

- In some schools there is a **Grundschulförderklasse** (primary school support class). This class is attended by children who are at least 6 years old, but their attendance at the Grundschule has been postponed. They are prepared there for being accepted into the 1st class of the Grundschule.
- Children with a migration background have the opportunity to attend a **Vorbereitungsklasse (preparatory class) at the general education school**. It is known as the VKL for short. In the VKL, special emphasis is placed on learning the German language. The aim is to integrate these children into school life as quickly as possible.