

School in Baden-Württemberg

- Every young person in Germany attends school. **In school young people learn** about their responsibilities and their rights and obligations in German society. School should prepare young people to lead an independent life.
- School normally begins with the **Grundschule** (primary or elementary school). The children usually attend the Grundschule for 4 years. From the 5th year, the children normally attend a **weiterführende Schule** (secondary school) in Baden-Württemberg.
- Certain **structures and rules** are the same or similar in all primary and secondary schools in Baden-Württemberg. It is important that you are aware of them.
- In the school, **children of different nationalities** as well as **girls and boys are taught together**. The children must learn to **deal with one another respectfully** and find their way in society.
- **Children who have special pedagogic needs** can attend special schools (SBBZ). But they can also attend general educational schools. This is known as inclusion.
- **SBBZ** is the abbreviation for **Sonderpädagogischen Bildungs- und Beratungszentren** (special pedagogic educational and advice centres). They offer a comprehensive special pedagogic educational programme for pupils. This is tailored to the support that the pupil needs. The individual needs of the pupils are defined with the help of special pedagogic diagnostics.
- Some **SBBZ focus on offering specific areas of support**. For example: learning, emotional and social development, sight, hearing and motoric development, etc.
- **Inclusion** means that children with and without entitlement to special pedagogic support can learn together in one class or school.
- **All children must attend the Grundschule from the age of 6**. There is a legal requirement to attend school known as **Schulpflicht**. It is the law in Baden-Württemberg that all children and adolescents must attend school. This also applies to children and adolescents who are staying in Baden-Württemberg owing to an application for asylum or who have tolerated status ("Duldung"). Paragraph 72 of the Education Act of Baden-Württemberg regulates this.
- The pupils are lent textbooks by the school and usually have to give them back at the end of the school year in July. Parents **do not have to pay any money** to attend a **state school**. But parents often have to pay for certain materials such as exercise books, pens, a school bag (Ranzen), etc. **Parents also have to organise**

and pay for transport to the school. But there are also exceptions. As a parent, you can ask in the Sekretariat of your child's school for more information about this.

- The pupils are divided into classes. Each class has a **class teacher**. This **teacher** is the **contact person for the children in the class and the parents**.
- The **school year** starts in September and ends in July of the following year. Children in the Grundschule or weiterführende Schule normally have **school holidays** approximately every 6 weeks. There are no lessons during these times.
- All pupils receive a **timetable** with the lesson subjects. The times vary depending on what year of school your child is in.
- In the **lessons**, knowledge and abilities in a specific subject are taught in different ways. The lessons are given by the teachers.
- One **school lesson** usually lasts 45 minutes. In the timetable there are also double lessons (2 x 45 minutes).
- Between two school lessons there is sometimes a 5-minute **break**. There are also longer breaks. There is usually one break every morning with time for the children to eat, drink, exercise and play. This break usually takes place in the school playground, known as the Pausenhof.
- Often the children get **homework** to do either in school or after the lessons have finished. In the homework, the children practice and repeat what they have learned in the lessons by themselves.
- In many cases, it is possible for your child to attend **additional lessons in their native language** at the child's own school or another school nearby. These lessons promote abilities and knowledge in the child's native language. Attending additional lessons in the child's native language can also be credited in your child's school report known as the Zeugnis. The school is not responsible for these lessons, but the respective foreign consulate.
- In the school, the pupils show what they know and what their abilities are. They also need to behave well. **Knowledge and ability** determine their performance. Their performance is evaluated. Their **behaviour** is also evaluated.
- The **performance can be evaluated either in writing or verbally**. For example through: Class tests known as a Klassenarbeit, examinations, homework, presentations, solving of tasks in front of the class, participation in the lesson, etc.

- The performance, behaviour and participation are evaluated: in **writing** and in the form of **grades in words and grades in numbers**. Pupils in years 11, 12 and 13 receive **points**.
- **Grades** are given in words and numbers: excellent (grade 1), good (grade 2), satisfactory (grade 3), adequate (grade 4), unsatisfactory (grade 5), inadequate (Grade 6). The **grades for behaviour and participation** are given in words: sehr gut, gut, befriedigend, unbefriedigend (excellent, good, satisfactory, inadequate). Pupils in years 11, 12 and 13 receive **points** from 0 to 15. 15 points is the highest result. At some schools (Gemeinschaftsschulen), the child's performance is described exclusively in text form.
- Pupils receive two written assessments of their overall performance per school year: a **Halbjahresinformation** or a **Halbjahreszeugnis at the beginning of February** and a **Jahreszeugnis** or **Abschlusszeugnis** in July. At the Gemeinschaftsschulen, the pupils receive a learning development report known as a **Lernentwicklungsbericht**. The reports are written documents which the parents sign and then give back to the school. In the second and third year, the Halbjahresinformation report can be replaced by a discussion with the teacher, the parents and the child.
- At many schools, the assessments in the annual report known as the Jahreszeugnis or Abschlusszeugnis are the basis for deciding if the child can move to the next higher class. If a child has great problems in learning, it can or sometimes it has to **repeat the year**, or if the child needs special pedagogic support, it can be **supported by an SBBZ**.
- The pupils are expected to keep the **school rules**: for example, to arrive on time, actively participate in lessons, have the necessary school materials with them, keep to the school regulations, keep appointments or cancel them in good time, etc.
- **If the pupils do not keep to the rules, it has consequences for them**. The teachers can give them extra tasks to do, or sit them in a different place in the class, etc. Serious rule-breaking can result in the following actions: Entry into the class book, detention or even being excluded from lessons. Physical punishment such as beatings are **not** allowed.
- **If your child is ill** and cannot come to school, **it needs to be excused**. You can give this information to the school by telephone, letter or email, depending on the school.
- **Parents can do a great deal for their children** to ensure that their schooldays are successful. Children develop well if they are supported by their parents. For example, parents can encourage their children to do as they are told.