

The junior classes (Juniorklasse) – an additional year at school for a better start

From the 2026/2027 school year, primary school remedial classes are being replaced by junior classes in Baden-Württemberg.

The junior classes come before Year 1, are part of primary school, involve 25 hours of teaching a week and have class sizes of 12 to 20 students. School is obligatory for children in the junior class.

This school year in the junior class is intended for children who still need support with their development – in language, thinking, movement or social behaviour, for example – to enable them to start school.

The decision on admission of a child to the junior class is taken by the school management of the school responsible for the child as a part of school registration. The decision is taken on the basis of an overall assessment. The observations of the preschool cooperation teacher, the language development teacher, if the child has received language development support before starting school, and the results of the school readiness assessment (Einschulungsuntersuchung – ESU) feed into this. The school can also invite the child to take part in a pedagogical assessment or request a report from the health authority.

It must be clear from this overall assessment that the child's language development level and/or developmental level in other areas is not yet in line with their age and it is therefore expected that the child would not be able to take part in Year 1 teaching successfully.

In the 2026/2027 and 2027/2028 school years, the school management can recommend attendance of the junior class. The parents then decide whether the child attends. From the 2028/2029 school year, the school management will take the decision about compulsory attendance of the junior class.

The aim of the junior class is to support students in a focused way so that they can start school and participate in primary school teaching successfully.

Children who have special needs have a right to special needs support. They do not attend the junior class but are either included in the teaching in a normal school or attend a school that can support the child appropriately (SBBZ).

If children have not been in Germany for long and have little knowledge of German if any, they can learn German in a preparatory class (Vorbereitungsklasse – (VKL).

The aim of the junior classes is to provide specific support to the children who need it and prepare them systematically for a successful start to their school careers.