

# Compulsory schools

## Information for foreign parents



**Welcome to Reykjavik Compulsory schools!**  
We would like to extend a warm welcome to your child in the primary school in Reykjavik. We aim to make its education an experience as best suited to its individual needs and talents.

In Reykjavik, the Education Council and the Department of Education are responsible for compulsory schools. The main office of the Department of Education is at Borgartún 12-14, tel. 411-1111 email: [menntasvid@reykjavik.is](mailto:menntasvid@reykjavik.is), homepage: [www.grunnskolar.is](http://www.grunnskolar.is).

The City of Reykjavik has issued a human rights policy as well as a policy on the issue of children who have Icelandic as a second language. Emphasis is laid on multicultural teaching methods and the value of cultural diversity.

### Where do I enroll my child for school?

In Iceland, all children between the ages of 6 and 16 are required to attend school. Compulsory schools are governed by the municipalities. In Reykjavik, there are 43 compulsory schools, including 6 private schools. Two schools are for children with special needs. Parents do not pay for school attendance in normal compulsory schools or special schools, but a fee is charged for private schools.

Children of foreign origin have the right to attend their neighbourhood school, but can also apply to attend a different school.

You can enroll at the City of Reykjavik's homepage [www.reykjavik.is](http://www.reykjavik.is), in the schools or at one of the six Social Service Centres, two of which are special knowledge centres for the reception and teaching of foreign children: The Downtown og Hlíðar area Centre, Skúlagata 21, and the Breiðholt Centre, Álfabakki 12.



It is desirable that your child already has an ID.-No. before it is enrolled at primary school.

The first step in your child's school experience is an introductory meeting at the school. The child's supervising teacher stays in regular communication with parents and advises them on how to best assist their child in their studies.

### Our mission

- The role of the compulsory school is to prepare students for life and work in an ever-changing democratic society. Emphasis is placed on initiative, independence and self-discipline of students.
- Compulsory schools aim to ensure an environment suited to the individual needs and talents of each student.
- The City of Reykjavik's policy is that schools be flexible to the individual's needs and that each student will together with parents and teacher set up an individual learning goal.
- Emphasis is placed on the well-being and safety of students and a non-discrimination policy regarding origin, sex, residence, class, religion or handicaps.

## The role of compulsory schools

- Children are in compulsory school 180 days a year. The school year lasts from late August to early June. Schools calendars are issued with information on school holidays and events.
- Your child will spend approx. 6 hours in school each day, depending on age. Most schools require children to spend their breaks outdoor and it is expected that they are dressed according to the weather.
- Younger students (6-9 years) are offered after-school care. Parents have to pay a fee for this service.
- All children have their own supervisory teacher, who keeps track of the child's welfare and conveys information to parents. If a problem arises, parents should first turn to supervisory teacher, but may also turn to the head of department, the vice-principal or the principal. If necessary, the school will provide an interpreter.
- It is possible to buy a light lunch meal in school, however, children may have to come with morning and afternoon refreshments. In some schools, it is possible to buy drinks, bread and fruit.
- Students are meant to remain in class with other students of their age group. In case of study problems, the school will support the child with a variety of measures.

## Social Service Centres in Reykjavik

In Reykjavik, there are six Social Service Centres offering a.o. psychological and teaching counsel in connection with compulsory schools as well as social counselling for individuals and families.

Parents can ask for further information on enrollment, school services, leisure activities and special support at these centres. Compulsory schools also employ psychologists to assist children if problems, such as anxieties or learning difficulties arise, though never without the approval of parents. For more information, turn to [www.rvk.is](http://www.rvk.is) or tel. 411 1111.

- Social Service Centre **Árbær and Grafarholt** Bæjarháls 1, Email: [arbaer@reykjavik.is](mailto:arbaer@reykjavik.is), tel. 411-1200
- Social Service Centre **Breiðholt**, Álfabakki 12, Email: [breidholt@reykjavik.is](mailto:breidholt@reykjavik.is), tel. 411-1300.
- Social Service Centre **Laugardalur and Háaleiti**, Síðumúli 39, Email: [laugadalur.haaleiti@reykjavik.is](mailto:laugadalur.haaleiti@reykjavik.is), tel. 411-1500
- Social Service Centre **Miðborgar and Hlíðar Area**, Skúlagata 21, Email: [midborg.hlidar@reykjavik.is](mailto:midborg.hlidar@reykjavik.is), tel. 411-1600
- Social Service Centre **Grafarvogur and Kjalarnes**, Miðgarður, Langarimi 21, Email: [midgardur@reykjavik.is](mailto:midgardur@reykjavik.is), tel. 411-1400
- Social Service Centre **Vesturbær**, Vesturgarður, Hjarðarhagi 45 – 47, Email: [vesturgardur@reykjavik.is](mailto:vesturgardur@reykjavik.is), tel. 411-1700



## What is required of parents?

In order to ensure your child a successful integration in the new country, parents and schools need to work closely together. Every school has an active parents' association and within every class, parents elect class representatives. Foreign parents are particularly encouraged to participate in this work.

The responsibility of parents is:

- that the child comes to school every day and attends all lessons
- to report in the morning to the school office if the child is sick
- that the child comes to school with healthy refreshments and is dressed according to the weather
- to keep track of homework
- to attend parents-teacher meetings and other information meetings on school matters
- to respect rules on times when children are allowed to be outdoor at night
- to formally apply for additional days off if necessary.

In Reykjavik, there is a variety of sports and leisure activities. It is important that parents support their child in these activities which help them develop their language abilities, cultural understanding and social integration. For more information, turn to the Department of Sports and Leisure in Reykjavik (ÍTR) [www.itr.is](http://www.itr.is) or the Social Service Centres.