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Englisch

MY CHILD COMES TO SCHOOL

Advice for parents to start school

Also available in the languages:

Arabic, English, Farsi, Greek, Italian, Kurdish Kurmanji, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Turkish

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Dear parents,

Not only for your children, but also for you as parents, the transition from kindergarten to school represents a special stage in your life.

Your child will get to know an unknown environment, make new friends and you will have a completely different daily routine together in your family.

For you as parents, this new phase of life is certainly a challenge and you may have many questions.

- How can I prepare my child for school?
- How do I find the right school for my child?
- Is my child mature enough for school?
- Who can I contact if I am uncertain?

I would like to present you with this guide in order to help you with your child's new phase in life so that you can give him/her a good start for the 1st school year.

It will answer your questions and give you tips and advice on how best to support your child in starting school.

I wish you and your child an exciting time until school enrollment and a successful transition into a new phase of life.

Your district administrator

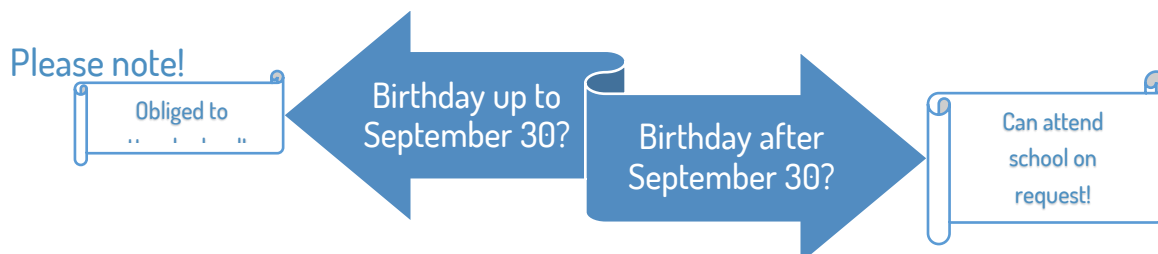
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andreas Coenen'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Andreas Coenen

The school system in North Rhine-Westphalia



Compulsory school attendance – all children who on 30 September have reached the age of 6, will become officially obliged to attend school (schulpflichtig) from 1 August of the same calendar year.
(§35 School Act – Beginning of compulsory education)



Types of primary school



The primary school:

- includes **years 1 to 4**.
- Choose between a:
 - **Community primary school**
 - **Denominational primary school** (Protestant or Catholic)
 - **PRIMUS School** (with years 1 - 10)

- School attendance is largely **free of charge** and simultaneously **obligatory**.

- As **parents** , you are free to choose the primary school at which you would like to register your child. The school accepts the children if it has enough free places.

- The lessons usually include the subjects German, mathematics, general studies, art, music, English and sports.

- The grades in Germany:
 - 1 - Excellent
 - 2 - Good
 - 3 - Satisfactory
 - 4 - Sufficient
 - 5 - Inadequate
 - 6 - Insufficient

i In the first two (sometimes three) school years, no grades are awarded.

All-day and childcare services offered by schools



Open all-day school (OGS)

- Your child will also be looked after in the afternoon.
- Normally **Monday to Friday from 8:00 to 16:00**, but at least until 15:00.
- Your child must stay **in school until 16:00** during the school year.
- You will only get a place if there is a place available at the school.
- Your child receives lunch. You have to pay **parental contributions** for this.
- The primary school will inform you whether your child can attend the open all-day school.

School from eight to one (8 - 1)

- Opening hours and assurance of supervision by the school:
8:00 to 13:00
- Your child may also go home earlier.
- You have to pay **parental contributions** for this.
- You will only get a place if there is a place available at the school.



Language of origin teaching (HSU)



- HSU (Herkunftssprachlicher Unterricht) is an offer for pupils who are growing up bilingually.
- In the district of Viersen, HSU is currently available in the following languages [Albanian](#), [Arabic](#), [Dari](#), [Farsi](#), [Greek](#), [Italian](#), [Polish](#), [Portuguese](#), [Russian](#), [Spanish](#), [Turkish](#).
- Lessons take place during the afternoons at various schools in the district of Viersen.

Registration for HSU

- You can register your child for HSU using a form.
- You will receive the form at your child's school.
- You also need to hand-in the filled in and signed form there.
 - Registration for the coming school year is open until the [end of March](#) .
 - The registration is valid for the entire period of school attendance at the primary school, but at least [for one school year](#).

 You can download the HSU form here:





Language development and language level assessment

Knowledge of German is an important prerequisite for a successful start to your child's school career. There are two ways to determine whether your child speaks sufficient German:

- [For children attending a Kita \(kindergarten\): Educational documentation](#)

The interests and progress in learning German are recorded for each child. The educational documentation belongs to your child and accompanies him or her throughout the entire time in the kindergarten.

If you wish, you can bring the current part of the educational documentation with you to the enrolment examination. It is then passed on to the primary school.

In this way you help the child and youth health service and the school to better support your child.

- [For children who do not attend kindergarten or who attend kindergarten and whose parents have not agreed to the educational documentation: Language test \(Delfin 4\)](#)

The parents of all 4-year-old children who are looked after at home receive an invitation to the language test. You will receive the invitation by post.

If your child does not speak sufficient German, he/she should attend a kindergarten until he/she starts school. There your child can - if necessary - also receive additional German lessons.

i If, as parents, you do not ensure that your child takes part in the language proficiency test (Delfin 4), you are liable to be fined.

2 years before school enrolment

Information event for parents



Who?

- School administration office.

For whom?

- Parents, whose children will start school in two years. (4-year-olds)

When?

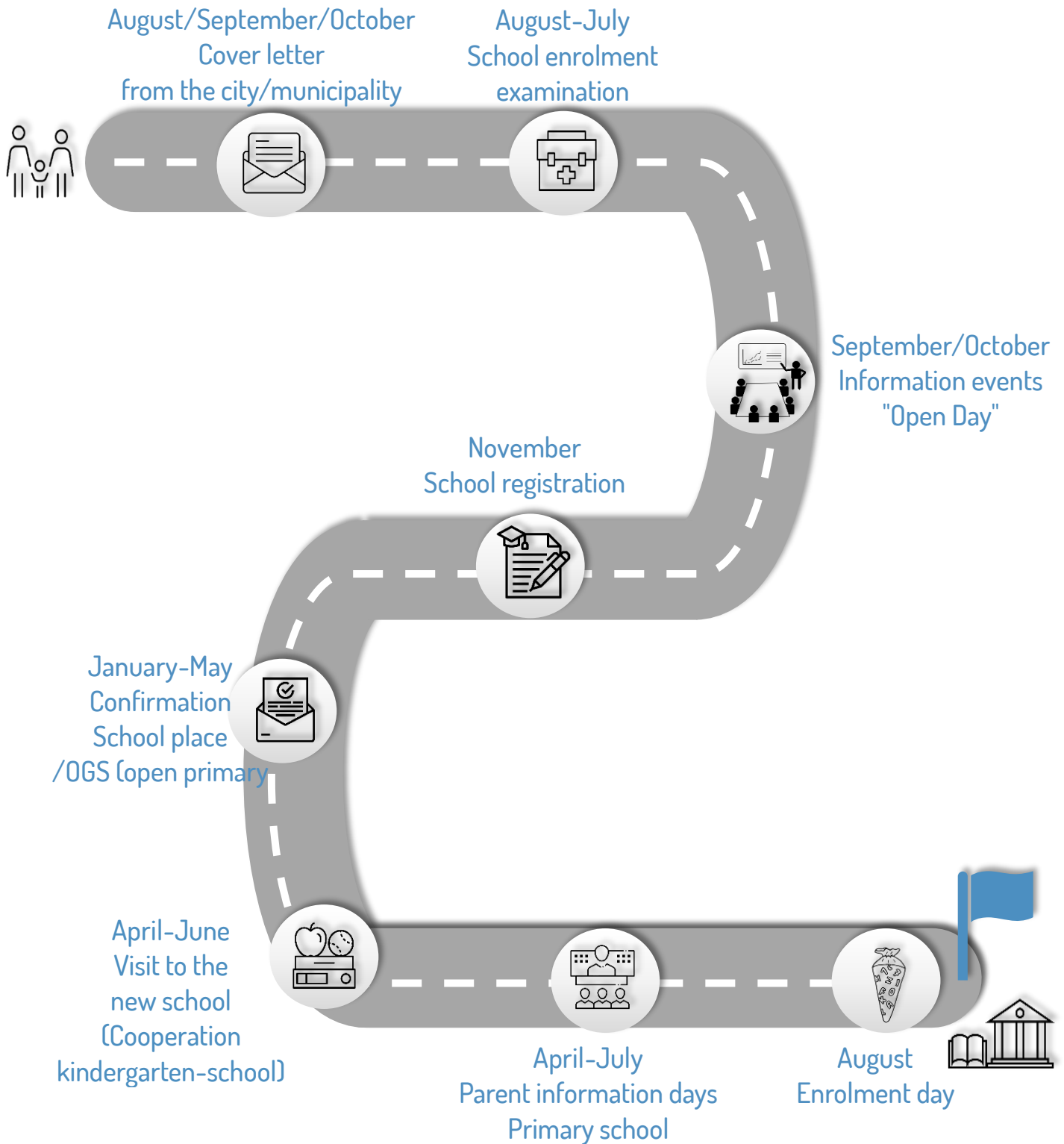
- After a written invitation by post.

Why?

- Advice for parents about:
 - Support opportunities until the beginning of schooling
 - Educational support in daycare centres
 - School enrolment procedure
 - Primary schools and services
 - Language proficiency testing and language development
 - Cooperation of the partners involved

1 year before school enrolment

The path towards school



August/September/October:

Letter from parents/city/community

- from the school administration office (Schulverwaltungsamt).
- Mentions the dates for registration at the primary school and points out the registration procedure.
- Information about the Open Day at primary schools.
- Invitation to the information meeting for parents (1 year before school enrolment).



Information event
for parents

Information on:

- Types of schools and school types
- School registration
- Open Day at primary schools
- Admission procedure
- School enrolment examination
- Educational and care services offered by schools
- Involvement of parents

1 year before school enrolment

October/November:

Open Day at primary schools



- Getting to know the school, the teachers, the rooms and school routine.
- You can find the dates in the kindergarten, in the local newspaper, on the Internet or in your letter from the school administration office.
- Presentation of the school concepts and the educational and support services.

Tips for choosing a school



- Local proximity and walking route to school
- Need for an post-lunchtime or full-day offer
- Pedagogical concept
- Denomination/Religion
- Offers and focal points
- School choice of friends and playmates

1 year before school enrolment

November:

School registration



- **By November 15th**, all children must be enrolled who will be of school age the following year.
- **Registration dates** can be obtained from the primary school, can be found in the local newspaper or in your letter from the school administration office.
- **Registering your child** for primary school does **NOT mean that your child will actually be admitted**. The headmaster decides on the actual admission to the school after the end of the registration procedure.

School enrolment interview



- Bring your child to the registration as well.
- During the interview we will look at your child's general development and how well your child can speak German.

1 year before school enrolment

August-July:

School enrolment examination

When?

- Around your child's sixth birthday.

Who takes part?

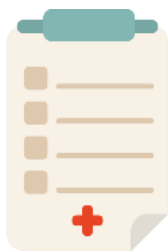
- All children who by 30 September of the school year will be 6 years old .

Where?

- At the health office (Gesundheitsamt) of the district of Viersen, Rathausmarkt 3, 41747 Viersen.

Why?

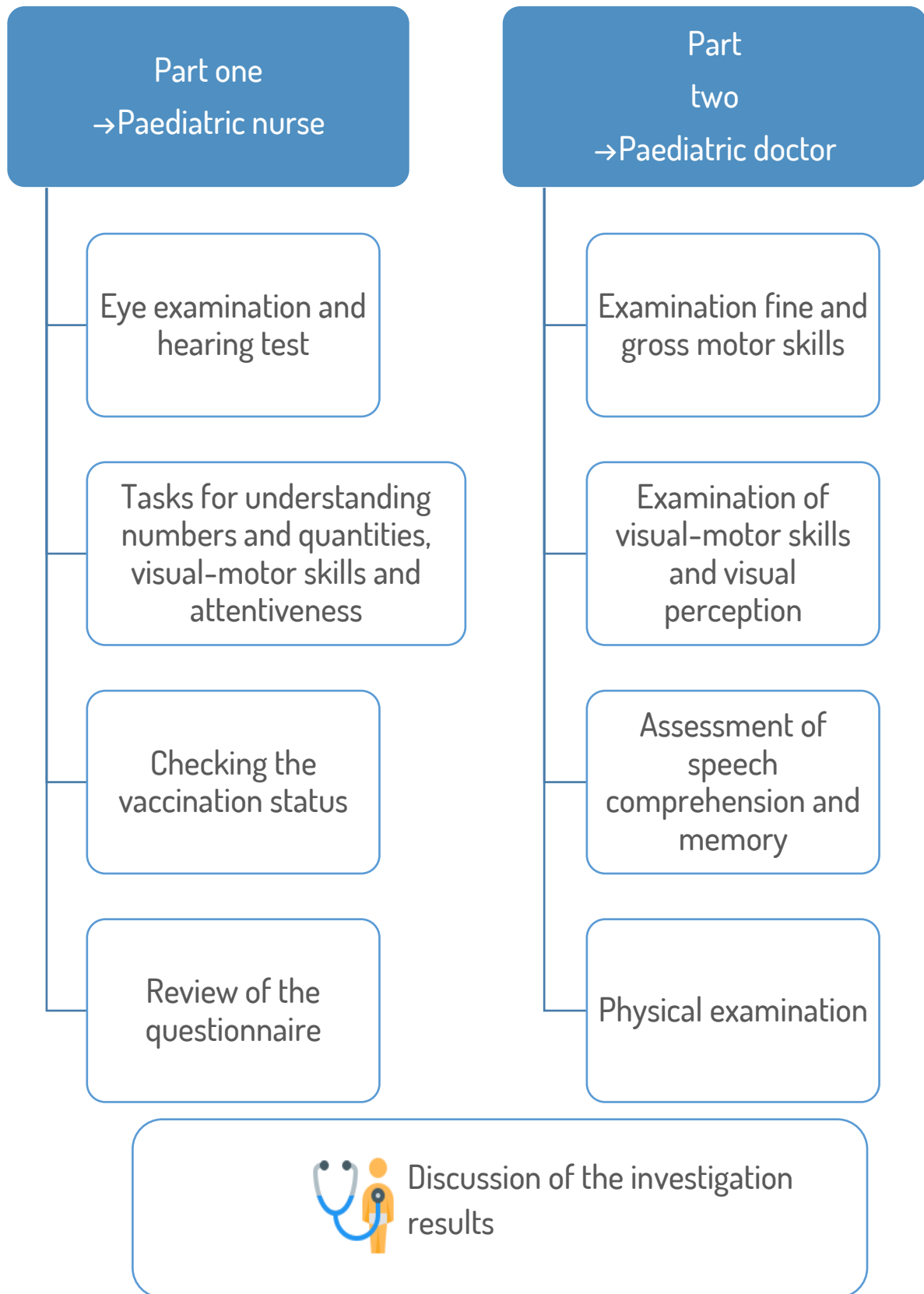
- To see if your child is healthy enough to go to school or still needs support.



Please bring to the examination:

- Letter about the enrolment examination
- Completed questionnaire (the information is voluntary)
- Yellow child examination booklet
- Vaccination record (Impfpass)
- Educational documentation of the kindergarten, if available.

Procedure of the school enrolment examination



Delay in starting school



- School-age children may only wait a year longer before starting school for serious health reasons.
- The decision is made by the school management on the basis of the school doctor's report.



School enrolment at the request of the parents

- The school entrance examination also applies to children born after the deadline and who are to be sent to school early at the request of their parents.
- Please register your child at the desired primary school first. The examination at the health office of the district of Viersen only takes place after you have registered.
- The final decision on the admission of the child always lies with the respective primary school.

New in Germany and your child is of school age?

- Please register your child at your desired primary school. The primary school registers the child with the public health department.
- You will be given an appointment for the school entrance examination by the health office.

Special educational support

- If you believe that your child needs special educational support, talk to the nursery and/or other carers who know your child (paediatrician, etc.).
- You can submit an application to the primary school where you enrol your child for a review of special educational support needs (e.g. learning, hearing/sight or physical disability).
- Special educational support can be provided at the primary school or at a special school.

Enrolment year

Spring:

Acceptance/refusal of school place and OGS



- The school will inform the parents in the spring whether the child has received a school place and an OGS place.
- Criteria for acceptance are, for example, whether brothers and/or sisters are at school or how far the journey to school is.
- In case of a refusal, the school management will advise you on how to proceed.

- Please register your child in time!



Enrolment year

Spring:



Parent information evenings at primary schools

- Take the opportunity to get to know the school and the teachers.

- Here you can find out:
 - How your child can be individually supported.
 - How the school works.

- You can ask any questions you may have.



Primary school visit

- The children already visit their new primary school in the last year of kindergarten.
 - Taster day in year 1. The children experience different school situations and get to know their future classmates.

Education and participation package (Bildungs- und Teilhabepaket)



"Making participation possible"

If you receive:

- Hartz IV,
- Housing benefit (Wohngeld)
- Child supplement (Kinderzuschlag)
- Benefits according to the Asylum-seeker Benefits Act
- Social welfare

and have at least one child?



Then you can apply for the new benefits for children and teenagers.



How to apply

- Recipients of unemployment benefit II or social security benefits → Jobcenter Kreis Viersen
- Recipients of social welfare, housing benefit, child supplement or according to the Asylum-seeker Benefits Act → Kreisverwaltung Viersen
- Forms are available at the Jobcenter or from the district administration (Kreisverwaltung).

- **Excursions and school trips**
The costs of excursions and school trips for children in schools can be covered. You must pay your child's pocket money.
- **School supplies**
For your personal school supplies (satchel, sports equipment and writing, calculating and drawing materials), you will receive a grant of 100 EUR on 1 August and 50 EUR on 1 February.
- **School transport ("Schokoticket")**
Students who have to travel by bus or train to the nearest school will be covered.
- **Learning support ("tutoring")**
If the achievement of the school year goal, e.g. a transfer to the next school year level, is at risk, extra tuition outside of school is possible in exceptional cases. Priority is always given to the free offers of the school. To qualify for paid tutoring, you need a certificate from the school.
- **Subsidy for lunch in schools, kindergartens, after-school care**
The costs for the common lunch at the school are covered. The subsidy is paid directly to the supplier.
- **Social and cultural participation**
To enable your child to attend clubs and take advantage of leisure activities together with other children, you can receive a grant of up to 15 EUR per month. It is usually paid to the club/association directly.

The walking route to school



With the beginning of their school careers, children move outside gradually more independently and participate more in road traffic.

- Walk the school route together with your child even before he or she starts school.
- Discuss hazards as well as typical situations in road traffic, such as how to behave at traffic lights, zebra crossings and important traffic signs.
- Especially in the first few weeks of school, you should support your child on the way to school and, if necessary, accompany him or her even if your child comes to school by school bus.
- The school trains your child to deal with road traffic so that he or she can independently and safely make their own way to school.
- In addition to coping with the route to school, cycling training is another focus in grades 1 to 3.
 - The cycling test takes place in the 4th year.





The day of school enrolment

- The school beginners are welcomed on the first day of school in the primary school.
- For your child and you as parents, this first day at school is an exceptional day.
- Each primary school organises this day and the enrolment ceremony individually.



The school cone

- The custom of giving school bags to new schoolchildren for their first day at school has been practised in Germany since the 19th century.
- The school bags are usually filled with sweets and small gifts such as crayons or other school materials.
- The school bags can be bought or made in cooperation with the kindergarten.

School equipment



For a good start, your child needs certain school equipment.

- You will receive a detailed list of materials at the parents' evening of your school, to which you will be invited before the summer holidays.
- Try to buy exactly what is on the list and your child will have everything he or she needs.

Your child will definitely need the following things:

School satchel (school bag)



- In order to protect your child's back, your child should be present at the purchase to test the correct fit of the school bag.
- The school bag should be as light as possible, made of durable material and adapted to the age and height of your child.
- If it has reflectors this means your child can be easily seen, even in the dark.
- Your child also needs a sufficiently large bag for sports equipment.

Drink bottle and lunch box



- A healthy breakfast and drinks are important for the development of your child.
- Both should close securely and be easy to open.



School materials

- For the work in school, children need school books and other materials.
- The school provides some of the textbooks free of charge, usually on loan. A smaller part you have to buy yourself.
- You need to purchase materials such as folders, exercise books, paper, coloured pencils and pencils yourself.

Everyday life in primary school

The class teacher



- A large part of the lessons are given by the class teacher.
- He or she is the first point of contact for your child and an important reference person.



The lessons and timetable

- One school lesson lasts 45 minutes. In the initial phase of school, lessons are often playful.
- Small "movement breaks" ensure that your child can relax in between.

Homework



- Children need regular work and practice phases to better retain and deepen all learning content.
- The time for homework should not exceed 30 minutes per day in the 1st and 2nd years, and about 45 minutes per day in the 3rd and 4th years.

- It is important that your child is responsible for completing homework himself/herself and that he or she completes the tasks as independently as possible.
- Your child needs you as a reliable contact person. Your interest in what your child is learning and your praise for what he or she already masters will do him or her good and will motivate him or her further.

Work at home

- When your child starts school, he or she should have his or her own permanent workplace.
- This should enable the child to do his/her homework regularly and without disturbances.
- Table and chair should be appropriate for the size of the child.

Certificates



- In the school entry phase, children automatically move from year 1 to year 2.
- At the end of the first year you will receive a certificate without grades.
- At the end of the 2nd year, there are grades for the first time.
- The grade 1 (very good) stands for the best performance, the grade 6 (insufficient) for the worst performance.

Involvement of parents



As in the kindergarten, you also have a wide range of opportunities to participate at school.

There are regular parents' evenings at the school where you can get important information such as:

- Information on teaching content and methods.
- Information about individual subjects and learning areas.
- You will have the opportunity to talk to the class teacher and the other parents about everything concerning teaching and school life.

i You have the option of being elected as a parent representative. In this way you can strengthen the interests of the parents in the school and bring your ideas and wishes to various committees of the school.

At the beginning of the school year, a “parents’ representative spokesperson” and a deputy are elected: parents’ representative chairperson(s).

Contacts and addresses

School enrolment examination

Gesundheitsamt des Kreises Viersen
Kinder- und Jugendärztlicher Dienst
Rathausmarkt 3
41747 Viersen
Fax 02162 39-1837

Medical director

Dipl. Med. Gabriele Meyer
Tel. 02162 39-1947
E-Mail gabriele.meyer@kreis-viersen.de

- If you have any questions regarding scheduling, please contact the respective nurse or paediatric nurse.
- If they are not available during the examination hours, please send an e-mail to the respective nurse or paediatric nurse.
- If you need advice about school enrolment or during your child's school career, you can also contact the team by telephone or email.

Contact persons:

Nettetal, Niederkrüchten, Brüggen, Grefrath

- Brigita Tanzhaus, children's nurse
Tel. 02162 39-1515
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E-mail doerte.kus@kreis-viersen.de

Education and participation package (Bildungs- und Teilhabepaket)

Kreis Viersen
Sozialamt
Rathausmarkt 3
41747 Viersen

Your contact for general enquiries:

- Mathias Gey
Phone 02162 39-1656
Fax 02162 39-1726
E-mail but@kreis-viersen.de

Jobcenter District of Viersen
Office Education and Participation (Bildung und Teilhabe)
Remigiusstr. 1
41747 Viersen

- Tel. 02162 266-1111
Fax 02162 2661-17111
E-Mail jobcenter-kreis-viersen.7135-but@jobcenter-ge.de

Office for schools, youth and family

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Herr Mathias Gey

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 www.kreis-viersen.de

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