Ministerium für
Schule und Bildung
des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen

The school system in Nordrhein-Westfalen
Explained quickly and easily

BILDUNGSLAND NRW
Hier wachsen Talente.

Information and guidance

The school programme in North Rhine-Westphalia covers a broad spectrum. It offers all children and young people very good educational opportunities, according to their abilities and preferences. This flyer gives you an overview. You can obtain more detailed information at schools, local education authorities and district councils. People with a migrant background can also contact the municipal integration centres. The integration centres advise in particular on the transitions between the educational levels – from kindergarten to primary school, right through to the transition from school to work.

You can find the contact persons for your municipality here:
www.mkffi.nrw/kommunale-integrationszentren
Comprehensive information about the school system in Nordrhein-Westfalen is available at: **www.schulministerium.nrw**

Compulsory school age

In Nordrhein-Westfalen, the Education Act requires children to start school in the year in which they reach the age of six by 30 September. The new school year always starts in the summer. Children and young people attend school for at least ten years. Firstly, from year 1 to year 4, they attend primary school (Grundschule). They then attend school from year 5 to the end of secondary level I. Young people must attend either a vocational college or the sixth-form style 'gymnasiale Oberstufe' until the end of the school year in which they reach 18 or graduate from a full-time secondary education programme at secondary level II. Those starting a vocational training programme before reaching the age of 21 must continue to attend until it finishes.

Grundschule

A child's school education begins in Grundschule. It comprises grades 1 to 4. The children are individually supported from the very beginning, taking into account their personal requirements and interests. Basic knowledge, abilities, skills and values are taught.