

Which school for my child?

Information for parents
in the school year 2026/27

Dear Sir or Madam,

as parents of children in grade four of primary school you are now facing an important decision: Which secondary school is the right one for my child? Where are its potentials best recognised and supported? Where will it be and feel most comfortable? Where does it have the best chance for a successful school career?

With this brochure we would like to inform you about the time schedule and the procedures of moving to a new school and the two types of secondary school between which you can choose in Schleswig-Holstein.

The secondary school types

In Schleswig-Holstein we have two secondary school types to which the children after primary school change: The grammar schools called **Gymnasium** and community schools called **Gemeinschaftsschule**. The two types of school are equivalent, but have different educational missions and different pedagogical concepts.

The target of the **Gymnasium**, the grammar schools, is the preparation for a scientific education or comparable vocational training. At the end of the programme, pupils are awarded the general higher education entrance qualification, i.e. the Abitur. The Abitur examination contains key tasks, which are based on the educational standards of the Conference of Ministers of Education. The Fachhochschulreife, which is the entrance qualification for studies at universities of applied sciences, can also be acquired at the Gymnasium in the course of upper secondary school called Oberstufe.

Since the school year 2019/20, the duration of schooling at grammar schools in Schleswig-Holstein has again been extended to nine years, to give the children more time to learn and to deepen their knowledge. Extending the school period also provides the possibility to intensify subjects and topics.

The School Conference only decided on one grammar school in Schleswig-Holstein to continue the eight-year education, whereas three grammar schools offer both type of education period at registration. Whether it is an eight or nine-year education at these so-called Y-Gymnasium grammar schools, depends on the registration behaviour of the parents. Please inform yourself during the registration of your child about the procedure.

By attending a **Gemeinschaftsschule**, the community school, the pupils can achieve all types of graduations: The first and general school leaving certificate (ESA), the intermediate school leaving certificate (MSA), the Fachhochschulreife and also the Allgemeine Hochschulreife, the so-called Abitur, which is the general higher education entrance qualification. They acquire the ESA after grade 9 when they are transferred

to grade 10 or by successfully passing an examination at the end of grade 9. The key tasks for this examination are based on the educational standards to which the ministers of education of all federal states have agreed. The examination for the intermediate school leaving certificate MSA, which is taken after grade 10, also contains such key tasks. At 44 Gemeinschaftsschule with upper secondary school, pupils can also achieve the general higher education entrance qualification (Abitur) in nine school years. In these community schools, the upper secondary school begins in grade 11 with the introductory phase.

Many community schools without upper secondary school cooperate with schools that have an upper secondary school - often with vocational grammar schools - and open their pupils the way to higher educational qualifications.

Beside general schools, **vocational education and training** is the second pillar of the Schleswig-Holstein education system. After attending a Gemeinschaftsschule or the Gymnasium, pupils can obtain not only the basic and/or specialised training required for a particular occupation or field of work. At the same time your children may also acquire all school qualifications at the 34 public vocational schools and regional vocational training centres - including the Abitur at vocational grammar schools.

Let us advise you

Schools and teachers will support you at your decision: Together with the half-year report in grade 4, all parents receive a written recommendation for the transition to a Gemeinschaftsschule or to a Gemeinschaftsschule and Gymnasium. On the basis of the transition recommendation, a detailed and compulsory counselling interview is then held at the primary school. During this consultation, the teachers will talk to you about your child's further school career and explain why a recommendation for a particular type of school was made. If parents, against the advice of the primary school to register their child exclusively at a community school, still wish to register their child at a Gymnasium, they are obliged to seek advice at the receiving Gymnasium.

At the end of the first half term of grade 4, parents of children with special educational needs are informed by the **Förderzentrum** called support centres about the regulations concerning the forthcoming change of school and about the schools or new support centres. The parents express a first, second and third wish for a school that their child should attend in the future to the responsible support centre. Parents can make use of the information services offered by the secondary schools, but it is not necessary to register in before.

Information services and advisory appointments at secondary schools as well as detailed information on the state government's website and the schools' websites will also help you find the right school for your child. This will give you a good overview of what schools offer in your region as well as of special profiles and special projects of each individual school.

Timetable for the transition

School reports and recommendation for school transition.

At the end of the first half of the school year, parents receive a recommendation for the transition to the new school together with the report. At the beginning of the second half of the school year, the class teachers invite the parents together with their child to a compulsory individual counselling meeting and discuss the recommendation for transition to a certain school type with them.

Information offered by secondary schools

Information events will be held in the secondary schools until 20 February 2026. Here the schools present themselves with their specific goals, requirements and working methods.

Personal consultation at secondary schools

The secondary schools offer parents individual counselling on request until **20 February 2026**. Grammar schools offer compulsory counselling interviews with parents who wish to register their child at a Gymnasium despite recommendations for another type of secondary school.

Registration

In the period from **23 February to 04 March 2026**, parents will register their child at the secondary school. When they register their child at the secondary school, they submit the half-year report of grade 4. If a learning plan has been prepared at the primary school, this is also to be included in the registration documents.

Contact person

Orientation level at the Gymnasium

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Information on the Internet

Website of the state government:

www.bildung.schleswig-holstein.de

Overview of school qualifications and transition possibilities

Grade	Gymnasium ¹	Grade	Gemeinschaftsschule with or without upper secondary school	Transition possibility after
13	General higher education entrance qualification (Abitur)	13	General higher education entrance qualification (Abitur)	
12	Entrance qualification for studies at universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulreife) (school part) Upper secondary school with special school profile: Qualification phase 12/13	12	Entrance qualification for studies at universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulreife) (school part) Upper secondary school with special school profile: Qualification phase 12/13	Abitur: -Access to universities or universities of applied sciences or - Vocational education
11	Upper secondary school with special school profile: Introductory phase	11	Upper secondary school with special school profile: Introductory phase	
		8-10	Intermediate school leaving certificate (MSA) after grade 10	MSA: - With appropriate performance: transition to the upper secondary school with special profile at a community school, a Gymnasium or a vocational Gymnasium -Transition to an educational programme at vocational school -Transition to vocational training
			First and general school leaving certificate (ESA) after grade 9	ESA: -With appropriate performance: continue school - Transition to an educational programme at vocational school - Transition to vocational training
7-10	Subject-oriented lessons in natural and social sciences in physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, economy/politics		- Forecast for leaving certificate beginning at grade 8 - Joint learning even with different educational objectives	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer of a third foreign language - Start of second foreign language in grade 7 - Pupils who leave the Gymnasium receive the ESA certificate upon successful transfer to grade 10, for transfers to grade 11 they receive the MSA certificate. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of performance-differentiated groups possible beginning at grade 7 	
5 + 6	Orientation Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -If necessary, transition to the community school at the end of grade 6 - Grade reports 	5-7	Grade 5 to 7: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint learning on different levels of requirements - Integrated subject courses in natural sciences (biology, physics, chemistry) and world sciences (history, geography, WiPo if applicable) - Grade reports in principle 	More information on school-leaving qualifications after dual and vocational training in Schleswig-Holstein can be found on the Internet at www.bildung.schleswig-holstein.de

This brochure is also available on the internet in Turkish, Russian and Arabic translation:

https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Fachinhalte/S/schulsystem/anmeldung_weiterfuehrende_schule.html

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www.schleswig-holstein.de

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