



Education in Kraków

Guide
for
foreigners



The capital of Małopolska offers learning opportunities **in municipal schools** and schools run by private persons as well as religious and other associations. The number of **municipal schools exceeds 400**, with **more than 140,000 pupils** attending them.

This means that if pupils of these schools wanted to create a separate city, it would be **the second largest city of Małopolska after Kraków in terms of population**.

Many of these pupils **have arrived in Kraków**, also recently, **from various states of the world**.

Therefore, the authorities of Kraków undertake an increasing number of initiatives to make these pupils feel **more comfortable** in our city.



Many of these initiatives concern **education, which is available for free to all children and young people** – this right is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland as the most important source of law in our country. These issues are also regulated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other documents with a nationwide and international reach.

The right to knowledge and education is a **fundamental human right**; therefore, children born in Poland and those arriving in Kraków from abroad are equally entitled to it.

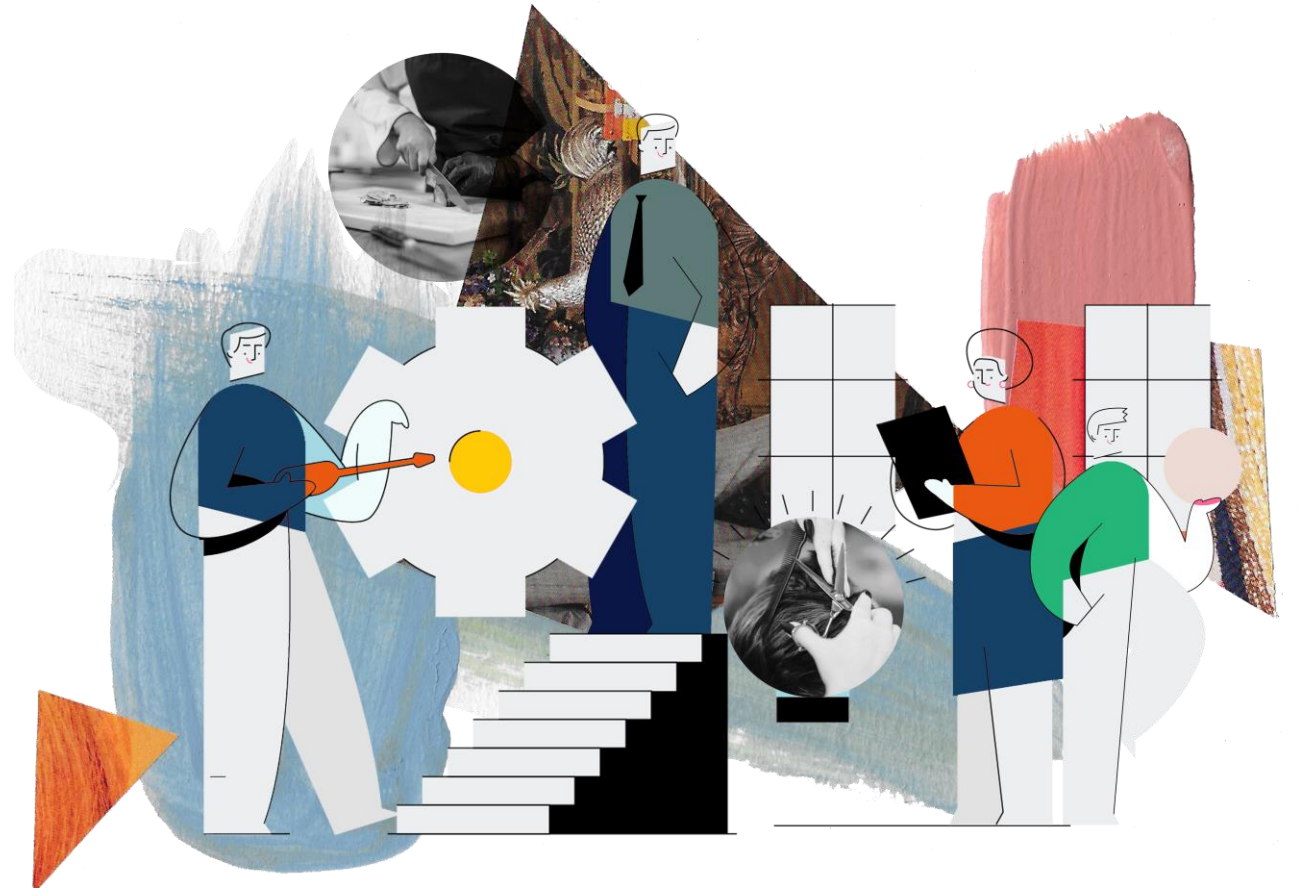


It is worth stressing that pupils coming from abroad, just like Polish pupils, are entitled to free education and care in public kindergartens and primary schools (including art schools) **until the age of 18 or graduation from a secondary school** (general secondary school, technical school, Level 1 trade school).

Education and care services and recruitment for public schools and kindergartens **are subject to the same requirements as for Polish citizens.**



If foreigners continue their education in **public schools for adults and Level 2 trade schools**, postsecondary schools, art schools, colleges of social service employees or attend professional qualification courses as a form of continuous training, such education is available against payment, and the amount of the fee and the method of payment is determined by the principal of the school in question.



Free education applies to:

- citizens of EU Member States, a member state of the EFTA or the Swiss Confederation, as well as members of their families having the right of stay or the right of permanent stay,
- persons of Polish descent within the meaning of the repatriation laws,
- persons allowed to stay permanently in the Republic of Poland,
- persons having a valid Pole's Card,
- persons holding such right under international agreements,
- persons to whom the status of a refugee has been granted and members of their families,
- persons having a consent to tolerated stay,
- persons who have been granted the right of stay for humanitarian reasons and members of these families,
- persons provided with supplementary protection and members of their families,
- persons entitled to temporary protection in the Republic of Poland,
- persons allowed to stay in the Republic of Poland as a long-term EU resident,
- persons who have been granted the right of temporary stay in the Republic of Poland (in connection with the fact referred to in Art. 127, Art. 159 par. 1, Art. 176 or Art. 186 par. 1 pt 3 or 4 of the Act on Foreigners of 12 December 2013),
- persons applying for international protection and members of their families,
- persons having a residence card with an annotation "access to the labour market", a Schengen visa or a national visa issued for the purpose of work in the Republic of Poland.



Holders of scholarships granted by the Ministry of Education and Science and holders of scholarships granted by the authority in charge of the school in question or the principal of the school or facility may also be exempt from this obligation.



What other kinds of free support are available to pupils from other states?

In order to help children from other states to become accustomed to the school reality, the City of Kraków not only offers various **initiatives run, e.g., by school principals and teachers**, but also **guarantees support under national laws**.

Schools can open, for example, **special preparatory departments for pupils from other states** – both for foreigners and citizens of Poland returning from abroad. The period of education in such a department is adapted to the pupil's progress and abilities. It may be shortened or prolonged if the pupil is not ready to start attending school with his friends from Poland. Children and young people in the department receive support from experts, who help them not only to learn Polish, but also to become accustomed to the school reality.



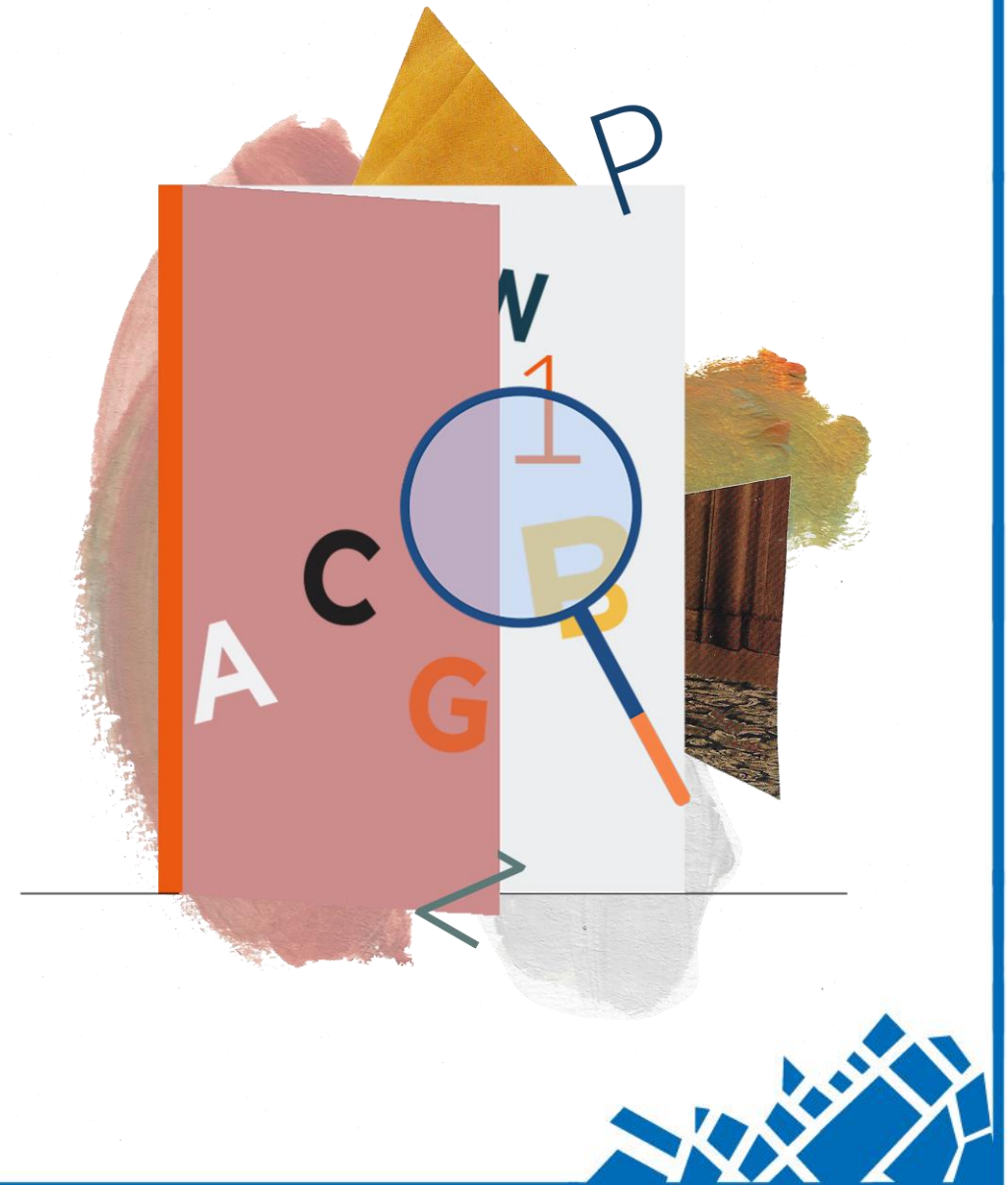
If, upon completion of education in the preparatory department, a child or a young person still finds it difficult to become accustomed to the school reality or simply to life in a new city, he/she **receives regular support also from school counsellors and psychologists.**

Support is available in local authorities' psychological and pedagogical counselling centres (there are eight of them in Kraków).

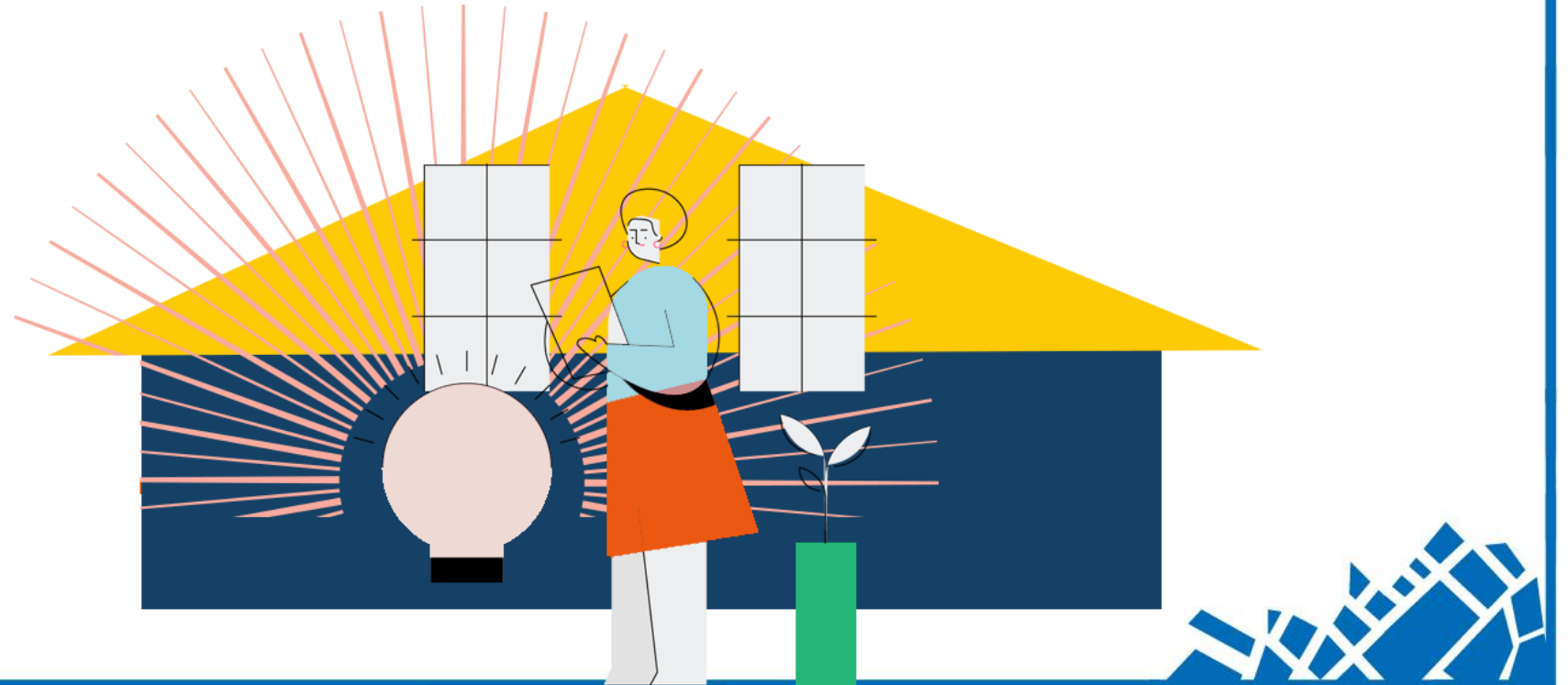


Pupils who have not attended the preparatory department or who have attended it but still feel that **their command of Polish is not adequate** may take **additional free courses in this language**. They are held with a frequency of a minimum of two lesson hours per week. Such courses should be held by the authority in charge of the school, and additional information in this respect is provided by school principals.

Pupils may also attend **additional compensatory classes** in the form of one lesson hour per week in the subject concerned. According to the applicable law, the total number of hours of additional Polish classes and compensatory classes must not exceed five hours a week for the pupil concerned.



In addition, also for a period of 12 months, foreigners subject to compulsory school attendance or compulsory education may be supported by a **‘cultural assistant’** – a person having a command of the language of the foreigner’s home country and employed as the teacher’s assistant by the school principal.



Teachers willing to improve their competence in **multicultural education**, which is regarded as a priority field by the City of Kraków, may attend postgraduate studies or skill improvement courses with **as much as 95% of financial aid from the city!**

In order to obtain additional information, call the Education Department of the Municipality of Kraków at (12) 616-5252.



Support is granted also to pupils who will take **external examinations, such as the eighth grader's examination or matriculation examination.**

Additional facilities are available to pupils whose level of Polish language knowledge makes it difficult for them to understand written texts. They are allowed to take both examinations in a way adapted to their individual needs, e.g., by using separate examination sheets (in the case of the eighth grader's examination).

In the case of the eighth grader's or matriculation examination, the time of examination may be prolonged for a pupil having an insufficient command of Polish.

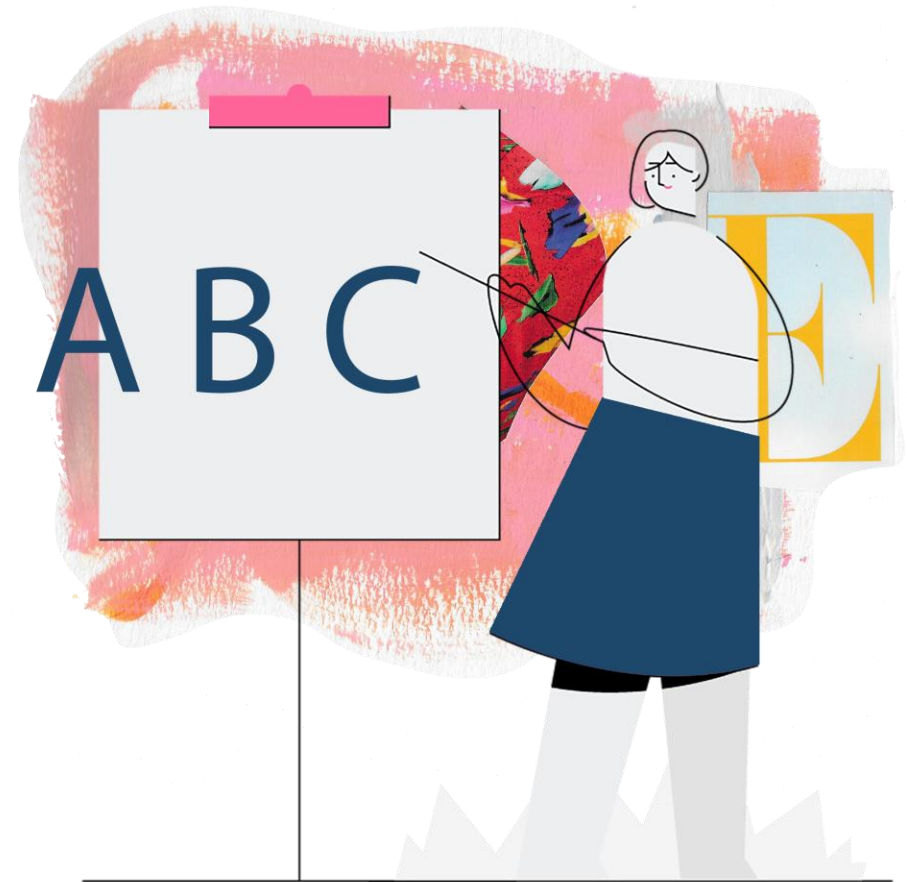


Remember, however, that **a positive opinion** has to be obtained **from the school board** beforehand, and detailed information in this respect is also available from the school principal.



It almost goes without saying that everyone who arrives in a new country misses not only his home, but also the **culture of the home country**.

Therefore, diplomatic and consular posts or cultural & educational societies may organise special classes in language and culture. However, at least seven persons should register for such classes, which are held with a frequency of five lesson hours per week.



Wide-range activities addressed to **pupils belonging to the Ukrainian national minority** are conducted, e.g., by the Primary School with Integration Divisions no. 12 in Kraków.

Located at Al. Kijowska, this school is the place where an interschool team for the teaching of Ukrainian language as a national minority language functions. Its goal is to maintain the pupils' sense of national, ethnic and linguistic identity, particularly by teaching Ukrainian language, history and culture.



Pursuant to applicable laws, **religion/ethics is also taught** in kindergartens and schools. If fewer than seven pupils are willing to attend lessons on the denomination in question or two denominations teaching similar beliefs, religion lessons are held in an interschool group or in a catechetic point outside school premises.

There are **ten such points** functioning in Kraków during this school year:

1. Evangelical-Augsburg Church,
2. Baptist Church in Poland, Church in Bielsko-Biała,
3. 'Bethlehem' Pentecostal Church,
4. Church of Christ the King in Kraków,
5. Orthodox Church,
6. Seventh-Day Adventist Church,
7. Greek Catholic Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Kraków
8. Evangelical-Methodist Church in the Republic of Poland,
9. Church of Christian Baptists,
10. Church of God in Poland – Church of Jesus Christ in Kraków.



Pupils who would like to learn their own religion in a catechetic point may obtain more information from the Education Department of the Municipality of Kraków, phone number (12) 616 52 47, or from the school principal.

Further information about the offer of the City of Kraków addressed to foreigners is available on: otwarty.krakow.pl – a website run in four languages: [Polish](#), [English](#), [Russian](#) and [Ukrainian](#).

We also recommend services of the **Information Point for Foreigners in Kraków**, which offers free legal assistance, psychological support and translation and foreign assistance services. To learn more, click [here](#).

