

# Newly-arrived pupils in Västerviks schools

To parents or guardians with an educational  
background other than Swedish



VÄSTERVIKS  
KOMMUN

## **The Swedish education system**

Children begin in a preschool class from the autumn of year they turn 6 and in comprehensive school from the autumn of year they turn 7. Comprehensive school education is nine years long. Preschool class and comprehensive school is compulsory for all children. Most young people then attend upper secondary school for three years.

When school is over children aged 10 to 13 may attend recreation centres.

## **Welcome to a school in Västervik!**

In Västervik there are municipal schools and independent schools. All schools are free of charge to attend. You do not need to pay for your child's education. All schools follow the same syllabus and work towards the same required knowledge.

## **Which school will my child go to?**

From preschool until Year 6, students are placed in a school close to their registered address. Students in Years 7-9 are placed in a school located in the area the family belongs to.

You can apply to place your child in a school other than the one offered to you by the municipality of Västervik. In that case you should contact the headmaster of the school you want your child to attend. Students can only start at a school if there is a spot available for them. If your child is placed in a school that is a long way from your home, the school will pay for transport.

## **The fundamental values of Swedish schools**

Swedish schools are based on democratic values. Schools must work to promote equality between women and men, freedom of speech and everyone's equal value. This is stated in the Swedish Education Act.

Schools are required to provide children with knowledge on which they can rely now and in the future. The task of schools is to support all students in developing their abilities to the greatest possible extent. While at school, both girls and boys must participate in all subjects and attend all lessons.

Schools teach children how to behave towards one another and what it means to live in a democratic society. Lessons are secular. This means that the teacher must not attempt to sway a student in any religious direction and no individual religion is permitted to influence the content of studies.

## **Compulsory attendance**

It is compulsory for students who have begun at a Swedish compulsory school to attend. This means that, as long as your child is healthy, they must be in attendance every school day. There are specific rules regarding leave of absence. If your child needs to be absent other than during holidays, ask your school.

Students attending upper secondary school and who have a residence permit are entitled to a full-time study grant. If the student is absent too frequently, this grant may be stopped. This may also affect other allowances.

## **The cognitive approach in Swedish schools**

Different school systems praise different skills and knowledge. Swedish schools have gone from placing value on a student's ability to learn and recount facts in detail, to a cognitive approach in which the student's ability to use their factual knowledge is valued. This may take place through the student learning to compare, draw conclusions about and discuss things such as cause and effect.

Students are also permitted to develop their ability to formulate opinions and put forward arguments.

Students who do not meet the eligibility requirements to attend upper secondary school after completing Year 9 will be offered summer school. During holidays, these classes may be held at a school other than the student's own. Students who find it difficult to achieve set goals in one or more subjects in year 7 and 8 are also offered summer school.

The school offers all students help with homework during the school day. Contact your child's teacher if you have any questions about lessons, homework assistance or holiday school.

## **What does the school cost?**

While attending compulsory school, your child will receive the material required for lessons, such as pens and exercise books and digital tools.

Students can borrow text books while they are studying the subject in question. You do not need to buy any books for your child. In compulsory school, your child will have access to a computer/tablet as and when lessons require it. In upper secondary school, students can borrow a lap-top or tablet while they are registered at the school.

Your child will receive free lunch while attending compulsory and upper secondary school. A special diet can be served if your child has a medical condition such as an allergy. Special diets based on religious or ethical grounds will be offered as far as possible. For example, a special diet may be vegetarian or free of pork. Ask the school how you should apply for a special diet for your child.

Your child must have suitable clothing and shoes for running and movement during the subject sports and physical training. You are responsible for paying for these. After the sport, all students shower, girls and boys separately.

## **Can my child attend school even if they are over 16 years of age?**

After elementary school you can apply for upper secondary school. Upper secondary school is voluntary.

**Language introduction programmes** are arranged for students who have just arrived in Sweden and do not have a certificate in Swedish.

The purpose of language introduction is primarily for the student to read Swedish as a second language. Thereafter, the student may study other compulsory school subjects or other courses they may require for further studies or work.

Upper secondary schools offer both vocational programmes and programmes in preparation for higher education. In order to qualify for a vocational study programme, the student must have a passing grade in at least eight subjects from compulsory school. For programmes in preparation for higher education, a passing grade in 11 subjects is required. The student's mother tongue can be one of these subjects.

Learn more about upper secondary study programmes and admissions at: [www.utbildningsinfo.se](http://www.utbildningsinfo.se)

## What is study guidance and mother tongue tuition?

In order to ensure that your child has good opportunities to learn and develop in school, she or he has the right to **study guidance** if so required. Study guidance in a mother tongue means that your child will receive support in a school subject from a study guide who speaks the student's mother tongue or previous teaching language. Research into multilingual students shows that study guidance is a success factor for the student's development, both in the Swedish language and other subjects.

The purpose of teaching the **mother tongue** as a subject is to develop the students knowledge in and about their mother tongue. Research shows that when a student has the opportunity to develop their verbal and writing skills in their mother tongue, this will also improve learning in Swedish and other subjects. This is a support for your child to succeed in school. Based on this research, it is recommended that parents accept the offer of mother tongue tuition.

Grades are awarded for the subject mother tongue. This grade counts towards any application to upper secondary school or higher education.

You can apply to the school for mother tongue tuition.

## **What does the school's study and career advisor do?**

Both compulsory and upper secondary schools employ a study and career advisor. They have knowledge of possible educational choices, professions and the job market.

When your child continues their studies after compulsory or upper secondary school, it can be difficult to know what opportunities exist and which admission requirements apply for different study courses and programmes. It is important that the student can gain as much knowledge as possible before making a choice.

The study and career advisor helps your child to navigate the various study alternatives and pair these with their own interests, needs and resources.



## **How can you and the school cooperate to ensure the best for your child?**

It is important for your child's education that the school does everything it can to maintain good communication with you. You will be invited to attend parent-teacher conferences and personal development meetings. At **parent-teacher conferences**, you can meet your child's teacher. Among other things, parent-teacher conferences are an opportunity for you to find out what students are learning and how your child's class is functioning.

You will also be invited to attend **personal development meetings**. These meetings are about your child. You and your child will meet their teacher to discuss your child's development in the various school subjects. You will also discuss your child's social development.

You are welcome to contact your child's school if you have any questions or concerns about your child's education. The school will provide you with information about how best to contact staff.

## **Why should you have an interpreter at school meetings?**

As a parent, it is important that you attend the meetings the school invites you to. In order to offer your child the greatest possible support, it is vital that everyone at the meeting understands everything that is said. You therefore have the right to an interpreter. It is not appropriate for a relative or older sibling to attend in your place or to act as an interpreter. The school will arrange an interpreter who speaks your language.

In a family where everyone is required to learn a new language, it is often the children who most quickly develop the new language because they go to school. This leads to many adults relying on children as interpreters in a variety of situations.

Research shows that this often has negative consequences for both the child and parents. The child is given responsibility for conveying information about themselves, which can be hard to deal with. Parents risk finding themselves dependent on their children. It may also mean that the school and parents choose not to discuss important issues regarding the child. If both parents attend a meeting and one of you speaks good Swedish while the other does not, you should still order an interpreter.

The task of the interpreter is to impartially convey information between the participants in the conversation. You do not pay anything to have an interpreter present.

## **The foundation of a successful education for every student**

All students shall feel secure at school and be provided with the best conditions for learning and developing.

### **The school must**

- offer your child the opportunity to acquire good knowledge and good social skills
- help your child to understand learning goals for each subject in every year, so that your child can take responsibility for their own learning
- help your child to understand the specific areas they need to develop in order to achieve learning goals
- educate children in democratic attitudes
- work actively to promote equality by treating girls and boys as equals
- work to ensure that your child is not subjected to, and does not subject any other student to, bullying, harassment or discrimination
  - and, if this does occur, take the necessary measures to ensure that this ceases immediately
- provide you with regular information about activities at the school and contact you if there are any concerns regarding your child's development or situation at the school.

## Parent/guardian/contact person

The student's chances of doing well in school increase when cooperation between school and home works well. Examples of what you should do:

- participate in meetings at the school when summoned to do so
- read any information provided by the school, such as weekly newsletters or class blogs
- if your child is sick, report this in accordance with the school's procedures
- contact the school if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child
- ensure that your child is well rested, full and arrives at school on time every day
- ensure that your child has the necessary schoolbooks and sportswear for the school day
- familiarise yourself with the school's rules and regulations and help your child to understand and comply with them
- show interest in your child's school work by asking questions, such as
  - What are you working on in maths at the moment?
  - Tell me three things you learnt today.
  - What was most fun at school today and what was so great about it?
  - Tell me what your homework is about.
  - How can I help you?

**We warmly welcome you and your child to school!**

**Barn- och utbildningsförvaltningen**

Fabriksgatan 21, 593 80 Västervik, Växel 0490-25 40 00,  
Barn.utbildning@vastervik.se, www.vastervik.se