

The educational system in Greece:

Frequently asked questions

- **Why should I enroll my child in school?**
 - ✓ Regardless whether you are going to stay in Greece or you intend to move to another country, it is important for your child or children to become integrated in school.
 - ✓ Either your child is attending school for the first time or he/she has stopped school for some time, he/she will have the opportunity to enter a “normal life” framework that is appropriate for all children of his/her age.
 - ✓ School will help your child become integrated in a protected and organized learning environment with rules, rights and obligations. Your child will learn how to cooperate and create along with other children of the same age, assisted by the education experts in his/her class.
 - ✓ Your child will spend his/her time and energy creatively, acquiring the skills and knowledge that any child of his/her age needs for his/her future development.
 - ✓ Even if you find yourselves in another country with a different language after some time, it is very important that your children do not miss out on this period that is so important for their lives. Besides, as you will realize further on, they will have acquired knowledge which is necessary in any educational system: apart from the Greek language, they will have learned (or learned better) English, mathematics and computers.
 - ✓ Keep in mind that every year a child is left outside school is a loss of valuable time in his/her life. Whatever plans you might have for the future, do not hesitate to enroll your children in school today.
- **Is education in Greece compulsory?**

You should know that education in Greece is divided into **compulsory** for all children (from nursery school to junior high school) and **non-compulsory** (any form of education following junior high school). In practice, this means it is compulsory for every child **aged 5 to 15** to attend school. Also, education is mixed as far as gender is concerned, which means that boys and girls attend classes in the same classroom.

If you are staying at a Refugee Accommodation Center, there will be a special program available for your children during the 2016-2017 school year:

- Inside the Accommodation Center for children aged 4-5.
- At local schools in your area in the afternoon (14:00-18:00) or inside the Accommodation Center in the morning, for children aged 6-15.

These classes began in October and their aim is the integration of all children in schools. You will find more information further below.

- **Is there any form of education for children younger than 5 years old?**

There are daycare centers for infants and children from the age of 6 months, and nursery schools for children aged 2,5 years and older

These centers may be private (in this case the parents pay the fees), public (state-funded) or municipal (belonging to the municipality). For further information, you may contact your municipality of residence.

- **What does Primary Education include?**

Primary Education includes Kindergarten (Pre-primary school) and Primary school for children aged 5 to 12. Primary and secondary public schools are free of charge and mixed, meaning that boys and girls study together.



- **When does Primary Education begin?**

Kindergarten lasts two years, however only the second year is compulsory. Therefore, it is compulsory for you to enroll your child in Kindergarten if he/she will have completed 5 years of age by the 31st of this year. You may also enroll your child in Kindergarten if he/she has completed 4 years of age by the 31st of December, but this is not compulsory.

However, if you are staying in a Refugee Accommodation Center, there will be Kindergarten classes inside the Accommodation Center.

Children that have completed 6 years of age by December 31st of the year of enrollment are enrolled to attend the first grade of Primary school.

- **What should I do in order to enroll my child in Kindergarten?**

You should go to the closest Kindergarten in your area. Every Kindergarten has its own area of competence and the child must be enrolled in the appropriate Kindergarten of his/her area of residence.

Supporting documents for the enrollment should be submitted from **the 1st until the 15th of June** of the previous school year. Supporting documents submitted after this deadline will also be accepted, provided that the number of children in the corresponding class has not yet been completed.

- **What are the supporting documents required for enrollment in Kindergarten?**

Generally speaking, it is important to keep in mind that if you have lodged an asylum application or have been recognized as a refugee you have the right to enroll your child or children in school even if you do not have one or more of the documents required. Pursuant to article 72, Act3386/2005 (GG 212A): “By way of exception,

children of third-country nationals may enrol in public schools with insufficient documentation when: a. They are protected by the Greek State in the capacity of refugees or persons under the protection of the UN High Commission; b. They come from countries in which disorderly situations prevail; c. They have applied for asylum; d. They are third-country nationals residing in Greece, even if their legal residence therein has not been regulated.”

The documents required for enrollment in Kindergarten are:

- An application and a solemn declaration (which will be provided at the Kindergarten).
- The child's birth certificate. If the child continues to attend the same nursery school the following year, a new birth certificate will not be required.
- A health record card proving the child has received all required vaccinations.
- A dental examination certificate.
- Proof of residence (e.g. an electricity bill or a house contract with your name on it).

All required documents must be officially translated (by a state translation service or an official translator recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

- **My child is not enrolled in the Municipal Register so I cannot get a birth certificate. What should I do?**

You will need a registrar's birth certificate or a solemn declaration pursuant to act 1599/86 stating the true age of your child.

- **What should I do in order to enroll my child in Primary School?**

Children that have completed the age of 6 by December 31st of the year of enrollment are enrolled in the 1st (A²) grade of primary school. The parents must go to the primary school of their area of residence, as every primary school admits children from a single area. Enrollments should be made from June 1st to June 21st. A delayed enrollment may be accepted for serious reasons, providing a certificate issued by a medical-pedagogic service or a public hospital. If the parents wish so, the student may repeat attendance at Kindergarten.

- **When do classes start?**

In Primary School, classes start on September 11th and end on June 15th. If those dates happen to be on a Saturday or Sunday, the beginning and end of classes will be transferred to the Friday before or the Monday after.

- **Which documents are required for enrollment in Primary School?**

Enrollment in Primary School requires the following documents:

- Proof of residence (e.g. water, telephone or electricity bill, or a house contract with your name on it).
- A registrar's birth certificate or any other certificate showing the exact date of birth of the child.

- A health record card proving the child has received all required vaccinations, as well as a dental examination certificate
- A Kindergarten attendance certificate.

- **My child has attended the first grades of school in our country. Will he/she have to enroll in the first grade of Primary School again?**

If the child has attended certain grades in a school abroad which is equivalent to Greek Primary School, you must provide a document issued by the school where the child has completed the corresponding grades. This document must mention the number of grades completed and be officially translated into Greek. If you are a refugee and you cannot obtain this document from your country, you will need to provide a solemn declaration (Act 1599/86) stating the school and grade your child was attending and that you are unable to provide relevant documentation.

- **I have enrolled my child in school, but I am afraid he/she is going to have difficulties with the language. How is he/she going to attend classes?**

In schools welcoming students from abroad, “Reception Classes” are sometimes available for those who need help with the Greek language. In these classes, children spend most of their time learning the Greek language, as well as some of the rest of the courses. At the same time, they participate in the normal classes, mainly for courses that are not based on language. The aim of the Reception Classes is to help children become fully integrated in their normal classes; in some cases, they might be assisted by a second teacher in their normal classes. However, in no case do students remain in the Reception Class only. For a student to enroll in a reception class:

- The parents must declare that they want their child to attend a Reception Class.
- The child must take a test in order to attend the appropriate level.

The minimum number of students required for a Reception Class to be created is 9 and the maximum is 17. In case the number of students is below 9, a Tutoring Class may be created to help them for up to 10 hours per week outside the normal school schedule. The Tutoring Class may also be attended by students who have been to Reception Class but are still facing problems with the Greek language.

In emergency situations, Reception Facilities for the Education of Refugees within the framework of the Public-School System or Kindergarten Units may be created inside the accommodation centers. These Facilities may operate at the same time schedule as other school units, or at a different time schedule.

For the school year 2016-2017, the following arrangements apply for children staying in accommodation centers:

- Kindergarten classes inside the accommodation centers.
- Supporting Facilities for the Education of Refugees

A. In neighboring schools – afternoon hours: 14:00-18:00

B. Inside the accommodation centers – morning hours, 8:30-12:30. You will be informed accordingly by the Services of the accommodation center where you are staying.

These facilities will have specially trained teachers and secondary education teachers who will assist your child/children by teaching them the Greek language, as well as English, mathematics, informatics, physical education and aesthetic education.

- **My child is eleven years old, but has only attended one year of school. Is he/she going to attend the second or the fifth grade of Primary School?**

If you are staying in an accommodation center, your child will attend classes in the special Facilities for the Education of Refugees along with children who are about the same age as he/she is.

If your child has been enrolled in a school that operates on a morning schedule basis, the teachers are the ones who will decide what is best for his/her integration in school. If a Reception Class is available in the school, your child will attend the basic courses in that class with children of the same educational level, while at the same time attend certain courses in the “normal” class, according to his/her age.



- **What are Schools of Intercultural Education?**

They are schools where special programs are applied, emphasizing on intercultural communication and on the educational and cultural particularities of the students. Teachers in these schools are selected on the basis of their

knowledge on intercultural education, the mother tongues of the school’s students and teaching Greek language as a foreign language.

- **What are Extended Schedule Primary Schools?**

They are schools with an extended daily schedule, from 07:00 (or 08:00) to 16:00, including extra classes and activities (foreign languages, sports, music, theater, computers, etc.). Students also have time to study their homework.

- **What are Special Primary Schools?**

They are Primary Schools with specially trained staff and teachers oriented towards students with disabilities or mental deficiency, autism, Down Syndrome, etc. The competent bodies who decide whether a child should be enrolled in a Special School are the Centers for the Diagnosis, Assessment and Support of Individuals with Special Needs.

- **Are students graded in Primary School?**

Students are not graded during the first two grades of Primary School; their performance is assessed only through descriptive evaluation. In 3rd and 4th grades (C and D), apart from the descriptive evaluation card, there is also the following grading scale: Excellent (A), Very Good (B), Good (C), Almost Good (D). “Almost Good (D)” is applied to students facing serious difficulties. For these students, and for 1st and 2nd-grade students facing similar difficulties, extra tutoring programs are applied. In 5th and 6th grade (E and F), apart from a descriptive evaluation, a grading scale is used as follows: Excellent (9-10), Very Good (7-8), Good (5-6), Almost Good (1-4).

- **What does Secondary Education include?**

Secondary Education comes after Primary School and includes two levels:

1. Junior High School (Gymnasium) which lasts three years and is compulsory.
2. General High School (Lyceum), Vocational High School and Vocational Schools, which are not compulsory.

- **What is needed to enroll my child in Junior High School?**

Enrollment in Junior High Schools is automatically performed for children who have completed Primary School. However, if your place of residence has changed, you will need:

- A Primary School Graduation Certificate.
- Proof of residence (for example, an electricity bill or a house contract with your name on it).

If your child has attended a school equivalent to Primary School or a certain number of years in Junior High School in another country, then he/she can enroll in the next grade. If, for example, he/she has completed the first year (Grade A) of Junior High School, he/she can enroll in the 2nd grade (B) of Junior High School. In such cases, enrollment will require the following:

- A relevant certificate of attendance or a certificate of graduation from the school that is located in the foreign country and is equivalent to the Greek School
- A certificate issued by the Ministry of Education attesting to the equivalence of the foreign school or the foreign grade with the Greek School or grade.

- **What are Evening Junior High Schools?**

Evening Junior High Schools are intended for students who work in the morning (or are unemployed and seeking employment) and are aged 14 or more. The courses last for three years and there are four to five hours of classes every day during evening hours.

- **Are there any other types of Junior High Schools?**

Yes. There are **Evening Junior High Schools** for working students, **Music Junior High Schools**, **Special Junior High Schools** oriented towards students with disabilities or mental deficiency, autism, Down Syndrome, etc., **Sports Junior High Schools**, **Religious Junior High Schools** and **Second Chance Junior High Schools** for adults who have not completed compulsory education.

- **What is the School Report Card and the Junior High School Graduation Certificate?**

Every trimester the teachers in Junior High School fill in a report card stating the student's grades for every course, issued to inform the parents. Grades in Junior High School are on a 1 to 20 scale and the passing grade is 10. Students who complete Junior High School receive a Graduation Certificate which allows them to continue to High School. Also, Junior High School graduates aged 18 or more may be accepted to Vocational Training Institute courses.

- **What is needed to enroll my child in High School (Lyceum)?**

The Junior High School where your child graduated will send his/her Graduation Certificate to the corresponding High School of your area of residence. However, if you wish to select another type of High School other than General High School (such as Vocational High School) or you have changed your place of residence, you will need a copy of the Junior High School Graduation Certificate.

If your child has attended a school equivalent to Junior High School or a certain number of years in a school equivalent to High School in another country, then he/she can enroll in the 1st grade of High School or in the grade directly following the last grade completed. In that case, enrollment will require the following:

- A relevant certificate of attendance or a certificate of studies or a Graduation Certificate from the school that is located in the foreign country and is equivalent to the Greek School.
- A certificate issued by the Ministry of Education attesting to the equivalence of the foreign school or the foreign grade with the Greek School or grade.

- **What are General High Schools (GEL) and Vocational High Schools (EPAL)?**

These are the two main types of High School existing today: General High Schools (General Lyceum, acronym in Greek: GEL) and Vocational High Schools (Vocational Lyceum, acronym in Greek: EPAL). Studies in General and Vocational High Schools last for three years, and in evening Vocational High Schools four years. Apart from general education courses, Vocational High Schools also provide technical and vocational courses as well as laboratory sessions, while students who have successfully completed the 1st grade of Vocational High School may enroll in the second year of General High School.

- **Are there any other types of High School?**

In a similar manner to Junior High School (see above), there are also **Evening High Schools** for working students, **Music, Religious, Sports High Schools** and **Vocational Training Schools** (acronym in Greek: EPAS).

- **What about after High School?**

Those who have obtained a High School Graduation Certificate and wish to continue their studies have the following options:

- They can take the admission exams for the country's **Higher Education Institutes** (acronym in Greek: A.E.I.) or **Higher Technological Education Institutions** (acronym in Greek: A.T.E.I.). The Higher Education Institutes include Universities, National Polytechnic Universities and the Athens School of Fine Arts.
- They can pursue admission in a **Vocational Training Institute** (acronym in Greek: I.E.K.) providing training in fields that are job oriented and a certificate of vocational training. This certificate allows the graduates of Vocational Training Centers to participate in exams for the Vocational Training Diploma. Vocational Training Centers may also admit Junior High School graduates, depending on the fields of specialization they offer.

- **Are there any education programs for adults?**

There are various education programs for adults, organized by public or private entities and non-governmental or other organizations. The General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning in the Ministry of Education is responsible for some of the most well-known adult education programs and structures. These structures and programs are provided free of charge, and refugees or asylum applicants have the right to enroll in them even if they do not have all the required documents (article 70 of Act 4375/2016).

- **Second-Chance Schools** are schools for adults who have not completed compulsory education. The courses last for two years and take place in the evening; upon completion, students receive a certificate equivalent to the Junior High School Graduation Certificate.
- **Lifelong Learning Centers** operate in the country's municipalities and offer various training programs in foreign languages, new technologies, etc.
- **Parenting Schools** are intended for parents and aim at supporting them in their role and helping them to improve communication within the family and solve existing problems.
- **Greek language classes for immigrants**, intended for adults who wish to learn Greek at a beginner's and basic level and get to know more about the Greek history and culture.

Programs teaching the Greek language as a second or foreign language also operate within other entities, sometimes requiring study fees, such as certain Universities (Modern Greek Language Teaching Center of the University of Athens, Modern Greek Language School of the University of Thessaloniki, etc.) and sometimes free of charge, such as certain programs provided by Vocational Training Centers, Non-Governmental Organizations, or Volunteer and Anti-racist Organizations.

- **What is Continuing Vocational Training (CVT)?**

CVT includes training programs of a relatively short duration (a few weeks to a few months) for people working, unemployed, or belonging to vulnerable social groups. They are usually carried out by Vocational Training Centers (acronym in Greek: K.E.K.) and may include an internship in a company.

- **How can I accredit education received in another country?**

If you or your children have completed some school years and/or school and/or higher education studies abroad, you should have accreditation of this education in order to continue your education or enjoy the professional benefits that your diploma or degree might provide. The entities responsible for the recognition of foreign academic qualifications are the following:

1. The Department of Studies, Programs, Organization and Student Affairs of the Ministry of Education for the recognition of Primary and Secondary Education certificates. More information at:

<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/g-grammateia-paideias/2015-03-10-10-47-12/2015-03-10-10-48-36>

2. The National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (Greek acronym: E.O.P.P.E.P.) for the recognition of technical and vocational training certificates. More information at:

<http://www.eoppep.gr/index.php/el/qualification-certificate/equivalences>

3. The Hellenic National Academic Recognition Information Center (Hellenic NARIC, Greek acronym: DOATAP) for the recognition of university or technological degrees that are awarded by foreign Higher Education Institutes. More information at:

<http://www.doatap.gr/gr/index.php>

BRIEF DICTIONARY

Entry	Pronunciation	Translation
Αίθουσα	Aethousa	Classroom
Αίτηση	Aeteesee	Application
Ανακοίνωση	Anakeenosee	Announcement
Αναλυτικό πρόγραμμα	Analeetiko programa	Curriculum
Απεργία	Apergeea	Strike
Αποβολή	Apovolee	Expulsion
Απολυτήριο	Apoleeteerio	Graduation Certificate
Απουσία	Arouseea	Absence
Αργία	Argeea	Holiday
Άρρωστος / άρρωστη	Arrostos (male)/Arrostea (female)	Sick
Άσκηση	Askeesee	Exercise
Αυλή	Avlee	Schoolyard
Βαθμός	Vathmos	Grade
Βεβαίωση	Veveesee	Certificate
Βιβλιάριο υγείας	Veevleareeo eegeeas	HealthRecord Card
Βιβλίο	Veevleeo	Book
Βιβλιοθήκη	Veevleetheekee	Library/bookcase
Βραβείο	Vraveeo	Award
Γιατρός	Geeatros	Doctor
Γόμα	Goma	Eraser
Γραφείο	Grafeeo	Office
Γράφω	Grafo	Write
Γυμνασιάρχης	Gymnaseearxees	Junior high school principle
Γυμνάσιο	Gymnaseeo	Junior High School
Γυμναστική	Gymnasteekee	Gymnastics/ Physical Education (P.E.)
Γυμναστής / γυμνάστρια	Gymnastees (male)/gymnastreea (female)	Gymnastics teacher/ P.E. Teacher
Δάσκαλος / δασκάλα	Daskalos (male) daskala (female)	Teacher
Δεκαπενταμελές μαθητικό συμβούλιο	Dekapentameles matheeteeko seemvouleeo	Fifteen-member student board
Δημοτικό Σχολείο	Deemoteeko sholeeo	Primary School
Δήλωση	Deelosee	Declaration
Διαγωγή	Deeagogee	Conduct
Διαγώνισμα	Deeagoneesma	Test
Διακοπές	Deeakopes	Holidays
Διάλειμμα	Deealeema	Break
Διευθυντής / διευθύντρια	Diefthyntees (male) diefthyntreea (female)	Principle
Δικαιολογητικό	Deekeologeeteeko	Supporting document
Δραστηριότητα	Drasteereoteeta	Activity

Εγγραφή	Egrafee	Enrollment
Εθνική εορτή	Ethneek ee eortee	National Holiday
Εικαστικά	Eekasteeka	Art
Έλεγχος	Elenhos	School report card
Εμβόλιο	Emvoleeo	Vaccine
Ενισχυτική διδασκαλία	Eneesheeteekee deedaskaleea	Tutoring
Ενημέρωση	Eneemerosee	Briefing
Εξέταση	Eksetasee	Examination
Εργασία	Ergaseea	Assignment
Εργαστήριο	Ergasteerio	Laboratory
Ζωγραφίζω	Zografeezo	Draw
Ημιαργία	Eemeeargeea	Half-holiday
Θρανίο	Thraneeo	Desk
Καθηγητής / καθηγήτρια	Katheegeetees (male) / Katheegeetria (female)	High school teacher
Καρέκλα	Karekla	Chair
Κενό	Keno	Vacant teaching period
Κηδεμόνας	Keedemonas	Guardian
Κιμωλία	Keemoleea	Chalk
Κουδούνι	Koodooni	Bell
Κυλικείο	Keeleekoo	Canteen
Ληξιαρχική πράξη γέννησης	Leekseearhikee praksee geneesees	Registrar's birth certificate
Λυκειάρχης	Leekeearhees	High school principal
Λύκειο	Leekeeo	High School (Lyceum)
Λύνω	Leeno	Solve
Μαρκαδόρος	Markadoros	Marker
Μεσημεριανό	Meseemereeano	Lunch
Μετεγγραφή	Metegrafee	Transfer
Μολύβι	Moleevee	Pencil
Μουσική	Mousekee	Music
Νηπιαγωγείο	Neepeeagogeoo	Kindergarten
Νηπιαγωγός	Neepeeagogos	Kindergarten teacher
Ξένη γλώσσα	Ksenee glosa	Foreign language
Ξύστρα	Kseestra	Pencil Sharpener
Ομάδα	Omada	Team
Ονοματεπώνυμο	Onomateponeemo	Full name
Παιχνίδι	Pehneede	Game / toy
Παρέλαση	Parelasee	Parade
Περίπατος	Pereepatos	Walk
Πιστοποιητικό γέννησης	Peestopeeteeko geneesees	Birth certificate
Προαύλιο	Proavleeo	Schoolyard
Πρόεδρος	Proedros	President
Προσπάθεια	Prospatheea	Effort
Πρωινό	Proino	Breakfast

Στάση εργασίας	Stasee ergaseeas	Strike/ stoppage
Σύλλογος γονέων και κηδεμόνων	Selogos goneon ke keedemonon	Parents' Association
Συμμαθητής / συμμαθήτρια	Seematheetees (male) seematheetreea (female)	Fellow student
Συμφωνώ	Seemfono	I agree
Συνάντηση	Seenanteesee	Meeting
Σχολάω	Sholao	Finish school for the day
Σχολείο	Sholeeo	School
Σχολικός σύμβουλος	Sholeekos seemvoulos	School counselor
Τάξη	Taksee	Class
Τάξη υποδοχής	Taksee eepodohees	Reception class
Τετράδιο	Tetradeeo	Notebook
Τηλέφωνο	Teelefono	Telephone
Τιμωρία	Teemoreea	Punishment
Τρίμηνο	treemeeno	Trimester/ term
Τσάντα	Tsanta	Bag
Υπεύθυνη δήλωση	Eepeftheenee deelosee	Solemn declaration (signed statement)
Υπογραφή	Eepografee	Signature
Φαγητό	Fageeto	Food
Φάρμακο	Farmako	Medicine
Χάρτης	Hartees	Map
Ψείρες	Pseeres	Lice
Ωρα	Ora	Hour/time
Ωράριο	Orareeo	Time schedule