



Education in Krakow

guide for
foreigners



In the capital of Małopolska, children can attend **municipal schools**, as well as schools run by private individuals, associations and religious organisations. There are more than **400 municipal schools alone**, with **over 140,000 students enrolled**.

This means that if the students of these schools decided to form a separate city, **in terms of population it would be the second-largest city in the entire Małopolska region, after Kraków.**

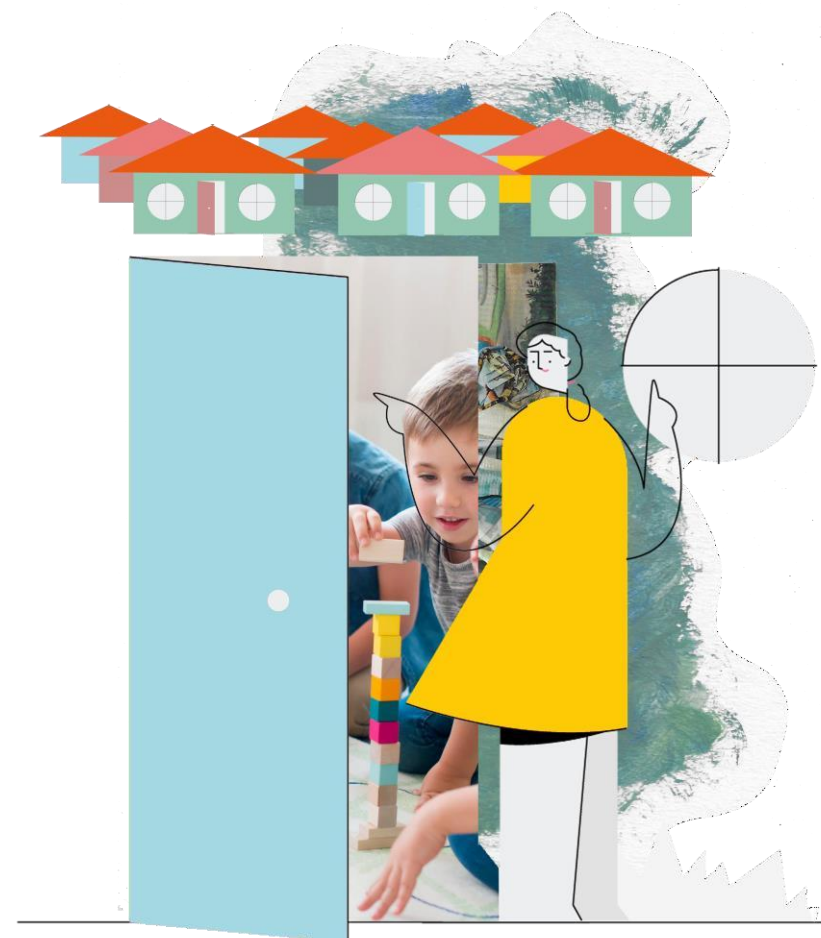
Many of them are students who have **come to Kraków from different countries around the world**, some of them quite recently.

That is why the authorities of Kraków are taking an increasing number of measures to ensure that these students **feel more and more comfortable** in our city.



Many of these initiatives focus on **education**, to **which all children and young people have free access**, as guaranteed by the most important source of law in our country, the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. These issues are also regulated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other national and international legal instruments.

The right to knowledge and education is, after all, a fundamental human right. Therefore, children born in Poland and those coming from abroad have an equal right to education.



It is worth emphasising that foreign students – just like the Polish ones – have access to free education and care in public kindergartens and primary schools (including art schools) until they **reach the age of 18 or complete upper-secondary education** (general secondary school, technical secondary school or stage I vocational school).

Both access to education and care, as well as admission to public schools and kindergartens, take place **under the same conditions as for Polish citizens.**

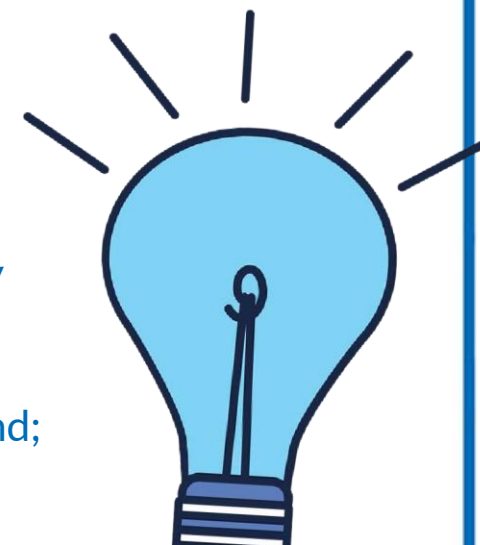


However, when continuing education in **public schools for adults, as well as stage II vocational schools**, post-secondary schools, art schools, colleges for social services workers, or through continuing education offered in the form of vocational qualification courses, foreigners generally pay for the studies. The amount of the fees and the method of payment are determined by the principals of the individual schools.



Free education nevertheless applies to:

- citizens of EU Member States, EFTA Member States or the Swiss Confederation, as well as their family members who have a right of residence or permanent residence;
- persons of Polish origin within the meaning of the provisions on repatriation;
- persons who have been granted a permanent residence permit in the territory of the Republic of Poland;
- persons holding a valid Pole's Card;
- persons whose entitlement to free education results from international agreements;
- persons who have been granted refugee status, as well as their family members;
- persons holding a tolerated stay permit;
- persons who have been granted consent for stay on humanitarian grounds, as well as their family members;
- persons who have been granted subsidiary protection, as well as their family members;
- persons benefiting from temporary protection in the territory of the Republic of Poland;
- persons who have been granted an EU long-term resident residence permit in the territory of the Republic of Poland;
- persons who have been granted a temporary residence permit in the territory of the Republic of Poland in connection with one of the circumstances referred to in Article 127, Article 159(1), Article 176 or Article 186(1)(3) or (4) of the Act of 12 December 2013 on Foreigners;
- persons applying for international protection, as well as their family members;
- persons holding a residence card bearing the annotation "access to the labour market", or a Schengen visa or national visa issued for the purpose of performing work in the territory of the Republic of Poland.



Exemption from this obligation might also **apply to scholarship holders receiving scholarships awarded by the minister responsible for education, or scholarships awarded by the authority responsible for running the school or by the head of the school or educational institution.**



What other free support is available to students from other countries?

To help children from other countries adapt to the school environment, the City of Kraków, in addition to various **initiatives implemented, for example, by school principals and teachers,** also provides support based on national legislation.

Schools may establish **special preparatory classes for students from other countries** – both foreign nationals and Polish citizens returning from abroad. The length of time spent in such a class is adapted to the student's progress and individual abilities. It may be shortened or extended if the student is not yet ready to begin studying at school together with their Polish classmates.

In these classes, children and young people receive support from specialists who help them not only learn Polish but also adapt to and navigate the school environment.



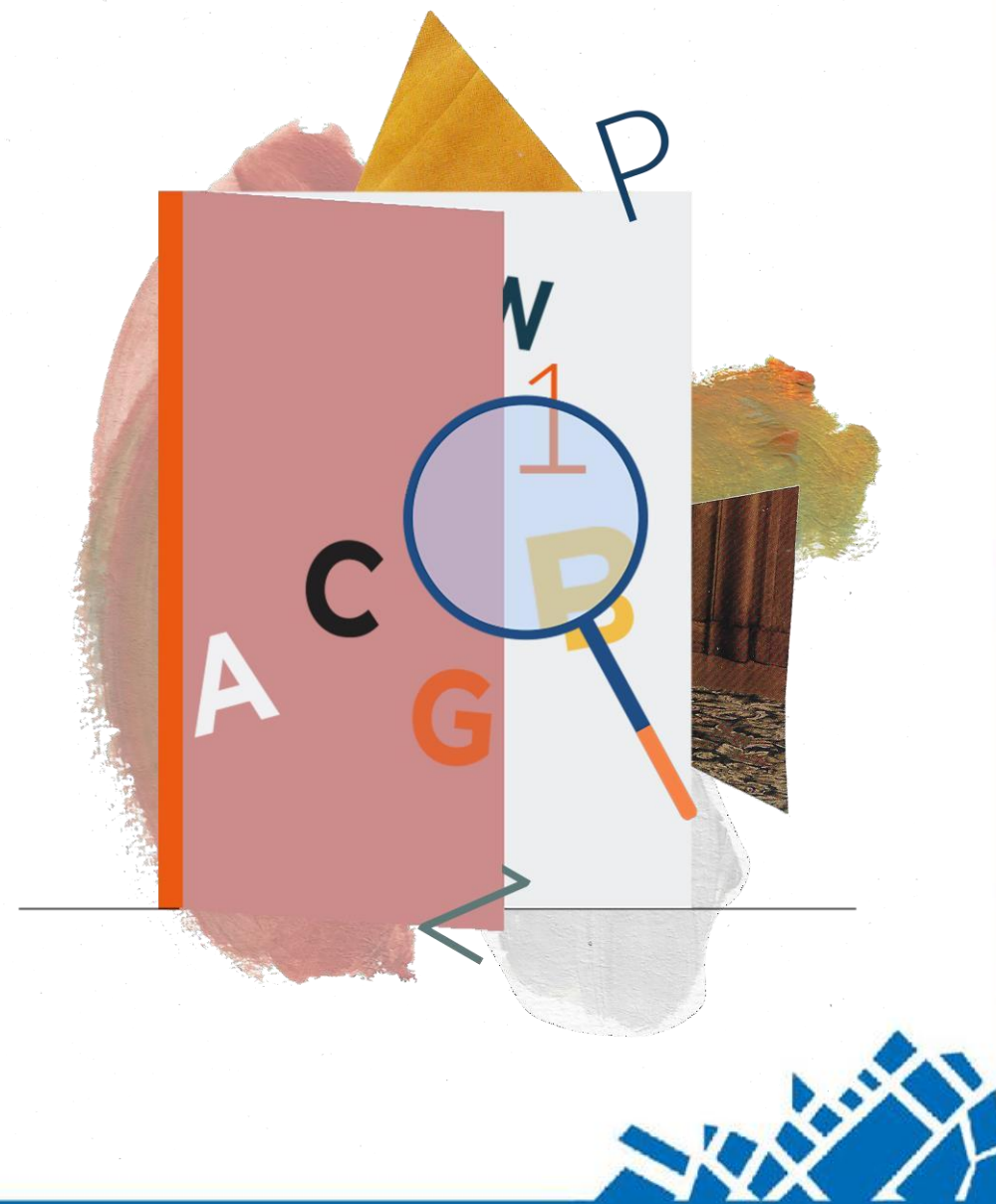
After completing their education in a preparatory class, if they continue to experience difficulties adapting to the school environment or simply to their new city, students can also receive regular support from school counsellors and psychologists.

Support is available at municipal psychological and pedagogical counselling centres, of which there are as many as eight operating in our city.

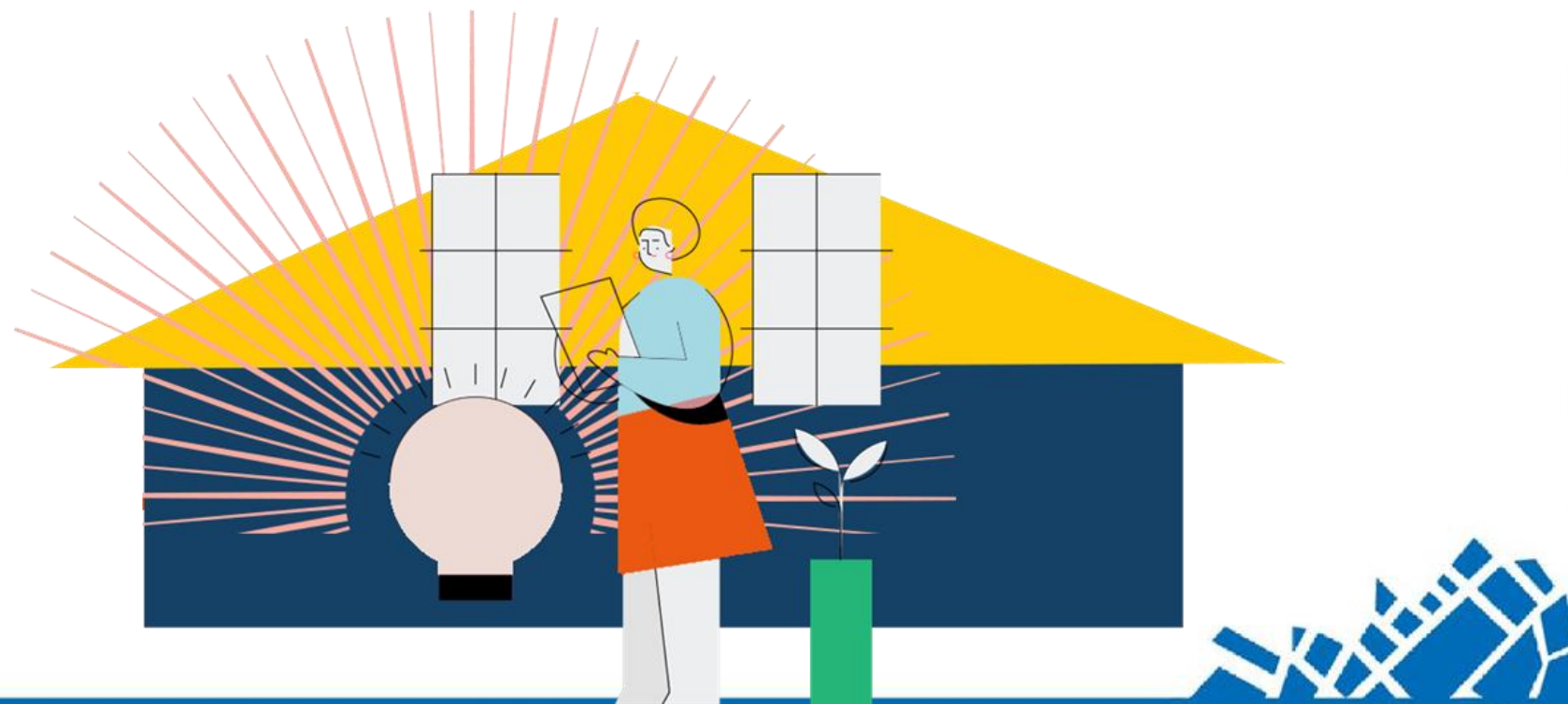


Students who have not attended a preparatory class, or who have attended one but **still do not have a sufficient level of Polish**, may take **additional, free Polish language classes**. These classes are held for a minimum of two lessons per week. They are organised by the authority responsible for running the school, while school principals can provide further information on this matter.

Students may also **take part in additional remedial classes**. This is possible for a period of twelve months, with one lesson per week for a particular subject. Under the applicable regulations, the total number of hours of additional Polish language classes and remedial classes may not exceed five hours per week per student.



Additionally, for a period of **12 months**, foreigners subject to compulsory schooling or compulsory education may **receive support from a person who speaks the foreigner's native language, employed by the school principal as a teacher's assistant**. Schools also employ **intercultural assistants**. They support students who do not have a sufficient command of Polish in their interactions with the school community and work together with their parents and the school.



Teachers who wish to develop their skills in **multicultural education** – which the City of Kraków recognises as a priority area – can take part in postgraduate studies or professional development courses, receiving up to **95% of funding from the city budget!**

For further information, please contact the Department of Education and Educational Projects of the Kraków Municipal Office at (12) 616 52 52.



Support is also available to students who will be taking **external examinations, such as the eighth-grader exam or the matura examination.**

For students whose level of Polish makes it difficult to understand written texts, various accommodations are available. Both examinations can be taken in a way adapted to the individual student's needs. The support available includes, for example, separate examination papers (in the case of the eighth-grader exam).

In the case of the eighth-grader exam and the matura examination, students who do not have a sufficient command of Polish may be granted additional time to complete the examination.



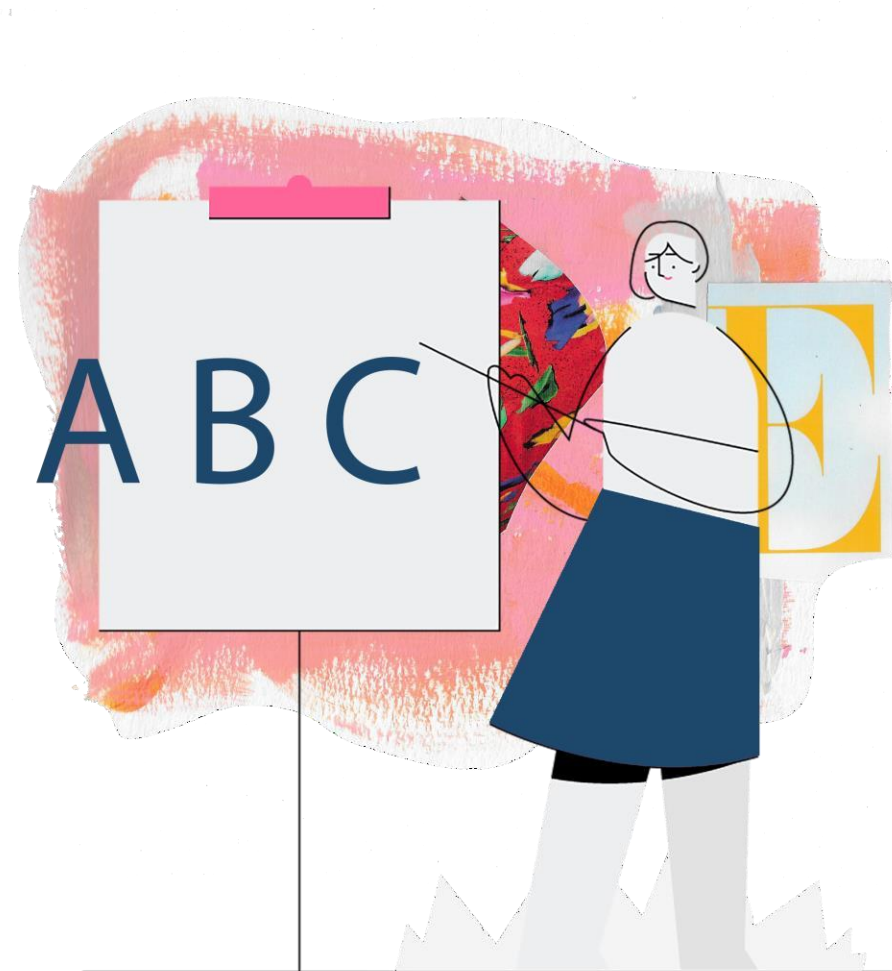
However, it should be remembered that a positive opinion from the school's pedagogical council must be obtained in advance. The school principal can also provide detailed information on this matter.



It is also pretty natural that after arriving in a new country, people miss not only their family home but also the **culture of their home country**.

For this reason, diplomatic missions, consulates as well as cultural and educational associations, may organise special classes in language and culture.

However, at least seven people must register for such classes, which are held for five lessons per week.



A wide range of initiatives aimed at **students belonging to the Ukrainian national minority** are carried out, among others, by Primary School Integration Sections No. 12 in Kraków.

This school, located on al. Kijowska, is home to an inter-school team providing instruction in Ukrainian as a minority language. Its aim is to foster and preserve students' national, ethnic and linguistic identity, with a particular focus on learning the Ukrainian language, as well as their own history and culture.



In public kindergartens and schools, **religion/ethics** classes are also provided in accordance with the applicable regulations. However, if fewer than seven students enrol to study a particular religion or religions taught jointly, religious education is organised, in consultation with the relevant church or religious association, in an inter-school group or an out-of-school catechetical centre.

Students who would like to study their own religion at a catechetical centre can obtain further information from the Department of Education and Educational Projects of the Kraków Municipal Office at (12) 616 52 47 or from their school principal.



Additional information about the City of Kraków's services and initiatives for foreigners can be found on the otwarty.krakow.pl website, which is available in four languages: [Polish](#), [English](#), [Russian](#), [Ukrainian](#).

We also encourage you use the services provided by the **Information Point for Foreigners in Kraków**, where you can access, among other things, free legal assistance, psychological support, as well as interpretation and foreigner assistant services. More information can be found [here](#).

Foreign children and students, as well as their parents or guardians, can obtain comprehensive information about the educational opportunities available in Kraków and support with adapting to the Polish education system at the Educational Information Centre for Children with Migration Experience, operating within the Specialist Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centre for Children with Educational Difficulties in Kraków.

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