

Welcome to Primary School

2024 Edition - English version

Your child is starting at a public school in Geneva. This brochure explains how the school operates and provides you with practical information.

Primary school is the first step in shaping the citizens of tomorrow. Students develop knowledge and skills appropriate to their age in a welcoming and stimulating environment.

The last pages of this brochure, along with a video, deal specifically with the first year at primary school (1P).

You can find additional information by following this link:

edu.ge.ch/qr/bienvenue



Geneva's compulsory education

Geneva's primary schools welcome children residing in the canton who have reached the age of 4 by July 31 preceding the start of the school year.¹

It consists of two four-year cycles:

- The elementary cycle (1P to 4P) for students aged 4 to 8,
- The middle cycle (5P to 8P) for students aged 8 to 12.

According to Geneva law, education is compulsory until the age of 18. After completing the orientation cycle (*cycle d'orientation*), education continues in secondary education II.

School Life

Timetable

From 1P to 4P, students attend school four days a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday), from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.². In 1P and 2P, students can arrive in class until 8:45 a.m. in the morning and 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon. There are scheduled breaks in the morning and afternoon. **Starting from 5P**, there is also school on Wednesday mornings.

During school hours, students are under the responsibility of the teaching staff. Outside these hours, children remain under the responsibility of their parents.

Attendance at school is mandatory (including outings and activities organized during school hours). In case of unforeseen absence, please contact the school as soon as possible. For any other situation, you can refer to the procedures described on your child's school website.

Access to your child's school site: edu.ge.ch/primaire (Démarches parents - Absences)

After-School Care

Outside school hours, your child can be cared for by a professional after-school activities team:

- Between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., for meals and activities until their return to class,
- Between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., for snacks and activities.

After-school care is organized by the GIAP (Intercommunal Association for After-School Activities) and the municipalities. After-school activities are chargeable.

What does a typical day in after-school care look like? giap.ch/parascolaire

Registrations are made on the my.giap.ch platform (the official registration period and other information are available at giap.ch or by phone on 022 304 57 70).

Vacations

The school year starts on August 19, 2024, and ends on June 27, 2025. Students do not attend school on official public holidays and during school vacations. School calendar: ge.ch/vacances-scolaires-jours-feries

School Holidays

Geneva Fast
Thursday, September 5, 2024

Christmas and New Year Holidays
From Monday, December 23, 2024,
to Friday, January 3, 2025

Easter Holidays
From Friday, April 18,
to Friday, May 2, 2025

Pentecost
Monday, June 9, 2025

Autumn Holidays
From Monday, October 21,
to Friday, October 25, 2024

February Break
From Monday, February 24,
to Friday, February 28, 2025

Ascension Day Holiday
Thursday, May 29,
and Friday, May 30,
2025

Summer Holidays
From Monday, June 30,
2025

¹ This means the child's place of residence and that of at least one of their parents. Parents are considered to be individuals who hold parental authority, failing which, the legal representative (LIP, art.3).

² In 1P students may attend school part-time, in the morning. Parents must state this choice when registering their child.

Materials

Education is free. Your child will receive the necessary materials: textbooks, pencils, erasers, binders, notebooks, etc. This material must be respected and handled with care. Only personal effects are provided by parents (slippers, painting smock, sports clothes, etc.). Your child's teacher will provide detailed information.

Right to Image

The protection of students' image rights is guaranteed (a form will be submitted to you).

School Organization

Professional teams at the service of students

A professional team works together to support all the students in various aspects of school life.

The class is under the responsibility of a teacher whom you can contact for any questions or requests regarding your child's schooling.

For arts, sports, and educational support, other teachers also work with students.³

In addition, a multidisciplinary team (nurse, specialized teacher, educator, etc.) supports students and the teaching staff.

The school is led by a head teacher, assisted by a management team composed of deputy teachers and an educational coordinator, and by a secretary.

Additionally, health personnel occasionally intervene at the school as part of health promotion and prevention (eye and ear examinations, screening for oral health problems, health education).

Teaching

The activities at school are part of an overall training project determined by the *Plan d'Etudes Romand* (PER). Swiss teaching materials (MER) are available in all classes for teaching and learning. They are supplemented by other resources provided by teachers.

Activities outside the classroom (museum visits, field trips, camps, etc.) also contribute to student learning.

PER and MER website: per-mer.ch

Information document on PER: edu.ge.ch/qr/per-parents

Primary education teaching website: edu.ge.ch/enseignement/ep

Assessment in the service of learning

Academic learning is assessed throughout the year. Thus, the assessment provides indications about your child's academic situation.

Assessment methods evolve during schooling. In the elementary cycle (1P-4P), the student's progress is assessed by appraisals. Starting from the middle cycle (5P-8P), subjects are assessed through either an appraisal or a grade (on a scale ranging from 1 to 6).

The **school report** (*bulletin scolaire*) is the official document used to communicate your child's assessment summary. It is given to you at the end of each semester. As for the **mandatory school report** (*livret de scolarité obligatoire - LSO*), it is the official reference document for your child's career in Geneva's school system.

A school concerned about all students

The school offers various support procedures for students to contribute to their academic success according to their needs and potential: educational support, supervised homework, reception classes, support measures and school arrangements, educational adaptations, specialized education, sports and art studies program, age dispensation.

You can find more information on your child's school website: edu.ge.ch/primaire (Enseignement - Corps enseignant and Soutiens et aménagements scolaires) and in the brochure *Comment l'école soutient votre enfant ?* ge.ch/document/comment-ecole-soutient-votre-enfant

³ Art and sports teachers (MDAS), educational support teachers (ESCP). In the middle cycle other subjects are taught by teachers other than the class teacher.

Collaboration between the school and families

The school's mission is to complement the family's educational efforts. Together, we can support your child's development and balance and positively influence their schooling.

The class teacher is your main contact person, who regularly informs you about your child's academic situation and with whom you can discuss many aspects of their schooling.⁴

At least three meetings are planned during the school year:

- A collective parents meeting before the end of September,
- An individual meeting between late October and early December,
- A meeting during the second semester, the details of which may vary depending on the school.

You can request a meeting at any time, and so can the teacher, for example, through your child's student handbook received at the beginning of the school year. The school can provide interpreters if necessary.

The student handbook and, depending on local procedures, a communication folder, are regularly brought home to facilitate exchanges between the family and the school.

Parents' Associations

In many schools, there is a Parents' Association (APE) that promotes dialogue between families and the school. You can contact or join your child's APE if you want to meet other parents and get information about organized activities.

Federation of Mandatory Education Parent Associations (FAPEO): fapeo.ch

Participatory Bodies

To facilitate exchanges between the school and its partners, each institution sets up a participatory body. Chaired by the school's management, it includes representatives from the local Parents' Association (APE), the municipality, the Intercommunal Association for After-School Activities (GIAP), and the teaching staff.

Meetings held during the school year provide a space for information, consultation, and proposals regarding the school and its environment.

Information on your child's school website: edu.ge.ch/primaire (Vie & Règles de l'école – Instances participatives)

Language and Culture of Origin (LCO) courses

Several consulates and associations offer Language and Culture of Origin (LCO) courses upon registration to promote language practice and contact with the culture of origin.

The list of organizations collaborating with the DIP is available on the *Enseignement* website: edu.ge.ch/qr/lco

⁴ Furthermore, parents may give their view before any significant decision regarding their child's educational journey.

Discovering 1P

These pages complement the video "A Day in a 1P Classroom"
edu.ge.ch/qr/bienvenue



Your child's entry into primary school is an important step that brings changes for the whole family. Together, we can encourage them to come to class curious to learn.

The objective of the first two years (1P and 2P) is to welcome and support each student, develop oral language (comprehension and expression), and gradually engage in learning through play, solving simple problems, exercise, memorization, etc.

There are no prerequisites for academic learning, and families are not expected to train children in specific skills before starting school.

With the help of the teaching staff and interaction with classmates, your child will:

- discover a new environment and adapt to how it works,
- open up to others and interact in their class and school,
- learn to share the teacher's attention with other students,
- develop new knowledge and skills through various activities and experiences.

To help them enter school confidently, you can encourage your child to become more and more autonomous in everyday tasks.

Throughout their schooling, your child will be supported by their teachers, with whom you will closely collaborate. A professional team will also be available if necessary (in particular the head teacher, teachers responsible for educational support, specialized teachers, educators, nurses).

During the first two years, learning is primarily organized around:

- **Socialization for learning in groups:** your child will learn to follow the class and school rules (respecting playground limits, considering others, waiting their turn, etc.).
- **Building up knowledge for understanding the world** through topics and activities involving several subjects from the Plan d'Etudes Romand (PER).
- **Implementation of learning tools** to open the door to knowledge, skills, and attitudes (listening, cooperating, giving opinions, concentrating, memorizing, planning, choosing the right strategy to solve a problem, etc.).

Different learning methods are offered throughout the day, such as:

- Playtimes that allow learning and developing creativity, cooperation, communication, and adapting behavior to the situation.
- Exchanges to develop language, provide explanations, resolve conflicts, learn to listen to others, and consider their opinions.
- Discovery activities to build new knowledge, in interaction with the teacher and classmates.
- Training activities to consolidate learning and develop autonomy (individually following simple instructions, in small groups, etc.).

The day is spent in the classroom and in other places in the school, or even outside (including playrooms, gymnasiums, swimming pools, libraries, playgrounds, theaters, museums, parks).

Next steps before the start of the school year:

- Registration for after-school activities offered by the GIAP via the my.giap.ch platform (the official registration period and other information are available at giap.ch or by phone on 022 304 57 70)
- In several municipalities: support for children and parents (for example: Soon at school! Office of Integration and Citizenship: bientotalecole.ge.ch)
- Information sessions, class visits, etc. (depending on each school's procedures)
- In the course of July: letter giving information on the start of the school year (practical information)

If you relocate before the start of the school year, you must inform the management of the school where you have enrolled your child.