



## **Welcome to school!**

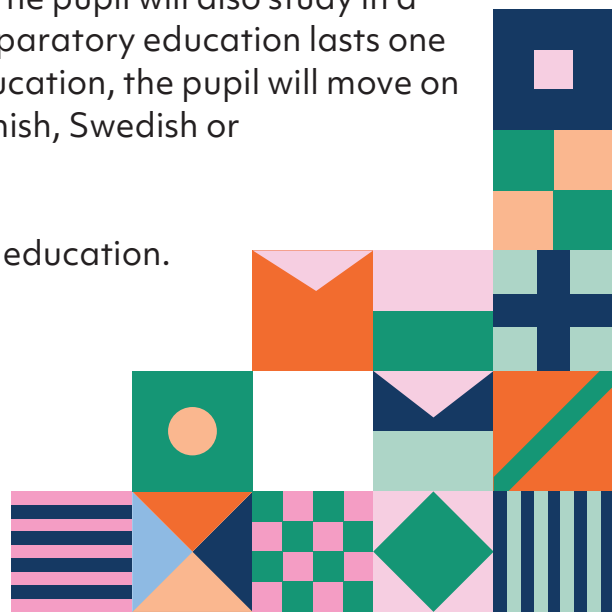
With a new home comes a new school. The continuation of the child's school path is important from the family's perspective. But there may also be a number of concerns: How will my child start school? How will my child cope with a new language? Will my child's needs be acknowledged in the new school?

In Kokkola, children can attend a Finnish or Swedish-language school. The classes are held in Finnish or Swedish, but it is also possible, in a varying degree, to receive support in one's first language in the different schools. Pupils who move to Finland mainly attend a Finnish-language school, since it is not always possible to use Swedish in all parts of Finland. In Finland, the official languages are Finnish and Swedish. About 6 percent of Finns speak Swedish as their first language. The City of Kokkola is a bilingual city, and therefore both languages are needed. In Finnish-language schools, studies in Swedish start in the 6th grade at the latest.

### ***The school path starts in preparatory education.***

Moving to a new country is a major change and it's important that the child's school path is planned in consideration of the child's wellbeing. The pupils start in preparatory education where the focus lies on learning Finnish. The pupils also study other subjects and contents. Preparatory education is provided in group form in some of the Finnish-language schools in Kokkola (Hollihaka, Koivuhaka, Torkinmäki and Kiviniitty). Group-form preparatory education means that newly arrived pupils start school in smaller groups with the support of their own teacher. This will ensure a good start for their school path as well as sufficient support along the school path.

A personal study plan is drawn up for the pupil in cooperation with the pupil and the guardians. The aim of the plan is to clarify the pupil's goals for learning by considering the pupil's needs and earlier school background. The pupil will also study in a Finnish or Swedish speaking class with their peers. Preparatory education lasts one school year, and after completing the preparatory education, the pupil will move on to general basic education. Pupils, who don't have Finnish, Swedish or Sami as their first language or home language, will study Finnish or Swedish as a second language. Language support is provided as needed during basic education.





Preparatory education is provided for younger pupils in an inclusive way. This means that pupils in 1st grade start their school path in a Finnish or Swedish speaking group where they're offered language support. Children in pre-primary education, i.e. 6-years-olds, attend a Finnish or Swedish-language preschool.

### ***First language education***

First language education is provided in different languages in Kokkola. The classes are typically in the morning before other classes or in the afternoon after other classes. The development of one's first language into an academic language of learning is important for all learning.

### ***How will the child start school?***

It is advised that you are in touch with Kokkola educational services as soon as you know your new address and when you're moving. We will decide on a time and date for a meeting where we'll decide and discuss details concerning the start of school. The child is welcome to attend the meeting and ask questions that are on his or her mind. Interpretation will be provided at the meeting. Welcome to Kokkola and welcome to school!

### ***Contact***

Coordinators for teaching different language and cultural groups

**Annika Liiti**, phone: 050 465 5693, [annika.liiti@edu.kokkola.fi](mailto:annika.liiti@edu.kokkola.fi) (7–17-year-olds)

**Sanni Tajakka**, phone: 050 467 1300, [sanni.tajakka@edu.kokkola.fi](mailto:sanni.tajakka@edu.kokkola.fi) (7–17-year-olds)

**Kaisa Wacklin**, phone: 044 80 9908, [kaisa.wacklin@edu.kokkola.fi](mailto:kaisa.wacklin@edu.kokkola.fi)  
(pre-primary education)

