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State Schools  
*Information for Parents*

*Die Volksschule – Elterninformation*  
*Englisch*



# The State Schools in Canton Lucerne – Advancement for Everyone

Every child and young person may attend a state school in canton Lucerne. All get the same chance in their working lives. Schooling normally lasts 10 to 11 years. Attendance is compulsory; text books etc. are free of charge. Schools place great value on close co-operation with the parents.

## 1. Structure

Kindergarten	Primary School	Secondary School
Kindergarten 2 years  1 year compulsory	Primary school 6 years	Secondary school 3 years  Stream A Stream B Stream C
Elementary 3 – 5 years		

### School Start

#### Age and Requirements

Children whose 5<sup>th</sup> birthday falls before the 1<sup>st</sup> November must start at either kindergarten or elementary school in the preceding August.

> Parents may send younger children if certain conditions are fulfilled:- if they can manage the way to school independently, keep the school times and can dress themselves.

> If a child is not capable of attending school, parents may postpone entry by a maximum of 1 year after agreement with the school direction.

#### Kindergarten or Elementary Level

Communities offer either 2 years at kindergarten or an elementary schooling. The elementary schooling consists of 2 years kindergarten and the first 2 years in the primary school. The classes contain children of all ages, i.e. the younger and older children are in the same class and have the same teachers for 4 years. Children who are quick learners can leave the elementary level after 3 years; those that need more time may remain in it for 5 years.

#### Lesson Times

Lessons in kindergarten and in the elementary school take place on 5 mornings in block times e.g. 8 to 11.30 with a break of about 30 minutes.

#### Progression into the Primary School

Parents and teachers decide together when the child should move from

the kindergarten or elementary level to the primary school.

**Primary School** The primary school lasts 6 years. Children that have been in kindergarten go into the first class, whilst those who were in elementary school go into the third class. Lessons are given on 5 mornings in block times. In the fifth class, the process of progressing to the secondary level I begins. Before this process starts, the parents will be informed by the teacher.

**Progression Process** In the progression process, the next step is chosen. Depending on the child's ability, the parents and teacher decide which type of schooling after the sixth class is best for the child. This is either the secondary school, streams A to C or the gymnasium.

**Secondary School** Secondary school lasts for 3 years. The process entails assigning the child to a stream appropriate to its ability:

- stream A, the most demanding
- stream B, less demanding
- stream C, basic demands

Depending on its performance, the child can change stream.

In the secondary school, the young persons explore the possibilities for their working occupation. They are assisted to choose their occupations. They select a craft apprenticeship, occupational training school or going to the gymnasium.

## 2. Assessment

**Kindergarten, Elementary, 1./2. Classes** Children are assessed according to the concept of „complete assessment and progress “ (CAP) . Review discussions are part of this. The teacher, parents (mother and father) and the child take part in these discussions.

**3. – 9. Classes** Marks are given from the third class. The parent/teacher/child review discussions take place as before, at least once a year.

### 3. Advancement

#### **Integrated Advancement**

Integrated advancement concerns the whole class. Sometimes, children and young persons have special needs when they receive special support. The main possibilities are:-

- learning difficulties and weaknesses
- special talents
- foreign language background
- behavioural difficulties

Because the advancement takes place in the class, it is called integrated advancement (IA).

Information about IA is available to parents in various languages.

: [www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch/if\\_eltern](http://www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch/if_eltern)

#### **German as Second Language (GASL)**

GASL is short for „German as a second language“. Children and young persons who are not at home in German get special lessons. These are either individual or group classes or can take place in the school class as part of integrated advancement. The school management assigns the children accordingly.

#### **School Services**

The school services help the children, young persons and parents when they have problems. This support is free of charge.

Those responsible:

- school psychological service – for those with learning or behavioural problems
- logopaedics (speech therapy) – for those with language and speech problems
- psychomotor therapy – for those with minor or major disorders
- school social work – for advice on social and educational topics.

Information about individual school services is available to parents in various languages.

[www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch/schuldienste\\_eltern](http://www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch/schuldienste_eltern)

#### **Special Schooling**

Children and young persons who suffer severely from mental, physical, speech, hearing, sight or behavioural handicaps may need special schooling. They will be diagnosed by specialists from:

- the school psychologist or
- the special service for extra schooling investigations centre for state schools.

If the experts recommend special schooling, this can be done either in the normal school or a special one. The special services of the state schooling system decide what is appropriate.

## 4. Voluntary Subjects

### **Courses in the Native Language and Culture**

The courses in the native language and culture are aimed at bi- or multilingual children and young persons.

The objectives are:-

- improve their fluency in their mother tongue
- learn more about the native culture, e.g. history, geography, celebrations, music and traditions

These courses are organised and carried out by the consulate or private organisations. Application is made direct to the organisation responsible for the language. The courses are voluntary.

Information for parents and registration forms can be found in the internet:

[www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch\\_HSK](http://www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch_HSK)

### **Supervision**

Schools offer various possibilities for supervision outside the school time. If the parents so wish, children can be looked after in the school from 7 a.m., during the lunch break and in the afternoon until 6 p.m. Parents must pay for this service, the amount depending on their income. More detailed information is available from the school management.

### **Music School**

The communities offer a music school with the following:-

- music & movement (basic music course)
- instrumental and singing classes
- ensembles and choirs

Parents pay for the music school. Applications should be made direct to the music school management of the community.

## 5. Holidays

### **School Holidays**

There are 14 weeks school holiday every year.

- autumn: 2 or 3 weeks
- Christmas: 2 weeks
- carnival (Fasnacht): 2 weeks together or divided into 1 week carnival and 1 week sports holiday.
- spring: 2 weeks
- summer: 5 or 6 weeks

The exact dates are set by the communities:-

[www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch/schulferien\\_eltern](http://www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch/schulferien_eltern)

### **Free Days**

There are no school lessons on the day immediately following the religious holidays, Ascension Day and Corpus Christi.

### **Dispensation**

Parents must make a special application for extra free days outside the

school holidays and official holidays:- for up to 3 days to the teacher, for more to the school management.

## 6. Rights and Obligations of Parents

Lessons in state schools are free of charge. Going to school is compulsory for all children and young persons; parents are responsible for their children attending school. They ensure that the child goes to school having had sufficient rest and care. They work with the teachers and school management together.

<b>Review Meetings</b>	Teachers invite parents and the child to a review meeting at least once a year. The teacher explains the child's progress. The child relates its work and the parents make their observations. The review meetings are compulsory.
<b>School Activities</b>	Excursions, school outings, sports days, class camps, project weeks etc. are compulsory school activities. Parents are informed of them in plenty of time by the teacher.
<b>Homework</b>	Children get homework that they can do by themselves. However, it is helpful if parents show interest in the child's homework and so see what it is learning. If the children are being cared for externally after school, they will be supervised by those responsible.
<b>Way to School</b>	The way to school is the route taken by the child from home to school. Parents are responsible for this. They decide how the child goes to school:- on foot, by bicycle or by bus. Parents are also responsible for supervising the route taken to voluntary lessons outside the school curriculum.
<b>Religious Instruction</b>	Lessons in state schools are religiously neutral. Parents decide whether the child should go to religious lessons. These are organised by the religious authorities. Youngsters can decide for themselves after their 16 <sup>th</sup> birthday whether they wish to go to religious lessons or not.

## 7. Further Information for Parents

<b>Website</b>	Information for parents in German <i><a href="http://www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch/schulsystem">www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch/schulsystem</a></i>  Translated documents for parents, summary <i><a href="http://www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch/uebersetzungen_eltern">www.volksschulbildung.lu.ch/uebersetzungen_eltern</a></i>
<b>Contact Persons for Parents</b>	The contact persons for parents are the class teacher and the school management.
<b>FABIA</b>	The Special Centre for Advising and Integrating Foreigners (FABIA) is an independent organisation. It is available to foreign-language parents for questions, difficulties and conflict situations, free of charge. <i><a href="http://www.fabialuzern.ch">www.fabialuzern.ch</a></i>



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