

Press release: 13 226-254/23

Pupil numbers increased in 2022/23

Growth in compulsory education is due to immigration from Ukraine; proportion of pupils in German support classes increased

Vienna, 2023-12-19 – According to Statistics Austria, there were around 19 300 or 1.7% more pupils in Austria's schools at the start of the 2022/23 school year than in the previous school year. The increase is particularly evident in compulsory general education schools and is mainly due to the migration from Ukraine from spring 2022 onwards.

In primary schools the number of pupils in the 2022/23 school year was around 12 000 higher than in the previous school year, in new secondary schools around 7 300. The academic secondary schools lower level reached a new high with a total of over 125 000 pupils. At upper secondary level attendance figures were up in a ten-year comparison at academic secondary schools, upper level, but down at almost all types of vocational schools.

Rising pupil numbers in primary schools due to immigration

Following a sharp decline in attendance figures in the primary school sector from the turn of the millennium, a slight increase has been observed again since the 2016/17 school year. The increase is mainly due to migration from 2015 onwards. In the 2022/23 school year, a total of 359 964 pupils attended Austria's **primary schools**, around 12 000 (+3.5%) more than in the previous year. Due to the war in Ukraine, the number of primary school pupils with non-Austrian citizenship in particular increased again significantly (2022/23: 78 699, 2021/22: 70 553, +11.5%).

The number of children in primary schools without sufficient knowledge of the German language of instruction, who were therefore classified as extraordinary pupils, amounted to 36 500 at the beginning of the 2022/23 school year. Measured against the total number of primary school pupils, this corresponds to a share of 10.1% and an increase of 1.8 percentage points compared to the previous year (2021/22: 28 789 in absolute terms, share 8.3%). At 50.4%, just over half of these primary school pupils were taught in German support classes due to insufficient German language skills, while the rest attended a German support course due to inadequate German language skills (see info box).

Lower secondary level: Growth in middle schools, new high in academic secondary schools lower level

Pupil numbers at **new secondary schools**, including the former so-called Hauptschulen, show a similar trend. Attendance figures have been declining since 2004/05, with a one-off slight increase in the 2016/17 school year. In the past 2022/23 school year, there was then a noticeable increase of 7 250 pupils compared to the previous year, with a total of 213 081 pupils (+3,5%). The increase at secondary schools is also mainly due to the rise in the number of children with non-Austrian nationality, who accounted for 23.8% of all secondary school pupils (2021/22: 21.7%).

At the beginning of the 2022/23 school year, 8 209 new secondary school pupils were classified as exceptional pupils due to insufficient German language skills (3.9%), more than twice as many as in the previous year (2021/22: 1.6%). Of these, 82.0% had insufficient German language skills and were taught in German support classes or according to the German support class curriculum.

The **academic secondary schools lower level** has already recorded steady growth over the last ten years. With a total of 125 005 pupils, a new high was reached in the 2022/23 school year, representing an increase of 12.2% in a ten-year comparison.

Different developments at upper secondary level

At upper secondary level, the number of pupils at **academic secondary schools upper level** increased slightly, with the figure of 92 738 in the 2022/23 school year representing a year-on-year increase of 0.1% and a ten-year increase of 1.3%. Attendance figures at **colleges for higher vocational education (BHS)** have fallen slightly every year since the peak of 148 274 in the 2011/12 school year. There was only a brief interruption to this trend during the coronavirus years, partly as a result of the relaxed conditions for promotion to the next grade at that time. Looking at the individual types of BHS schools, only the higher colleges for early childhood resp. social pedagogy showed an increase in student numbers in a ten-year comparison (2022/23: 12 763, 2012/13 11 404, +11.9%). At 60 999, the number of pupils at higher crafts, technical and arts colleges fell by 3.8% compared to 2012/13, at higher colleges of business administration by 8.3% and at higher colleges of management and the service industries by as much as 9.8%. A similar picture can be seen in the same period for **schools for intermediate vocational education** (11.9%) and **vocational schools for apprentices** (10.9%).

For detailed results and further information please refer to [website](#).

Number of pupils in the 2022/23 school year in comparison to 2021/22 and 2012/13

Type of school	School Year			Change in % 2022/23 to ...	
	2022/23	2021/22	2012/13	2021/22	2012/13
Total for all types of schools	1 158 576	1 139 244	1 142 726	1,7	1,4
Primary schools	359 964	347 952	328 136	3,5	9,7
New secondary schools ¹	213 081	205 831	212 594	3,5	0,2
Special (SEN) schools ²	14 610	14 464	13 809	1,0	5,8
Pre-vocational schools	14 613	14 722	17 006	-0,7	-14,1
Academic secondary schools, lower level ³	125 005	123 925	111 461	0,9	12,2
Academic secondary schools, upper level	92 738	92 661	91 539	0,1	1,3
Other general schools (statutes) ⁴	11 665	11 021	9 165	5,8	27,3
Vocational schools for apprentices	116 746	115 802	130 975	0,8	-10,9
Schools for intermediate vocational education	41 798	41 746	47 442	0,1	-11,9
Other technical and vocational schools (statutes)	7 913	8 554	7 659	-7,5	3,3
Colleges for higher vocational education	140 526	143 424	147 796	-2,0	-4,9
Higher crafts, technical and arts colleges	60 999	62 673	63 383	-2,7	-3,8
Higher colleges of business administration	37 599	37 642	40 993	-0,1	-8,3
Higher colleges of management and the service industries	25 345	26 154	28 111	-3,1	-9,8
Higher colleges of agriculture and forestry	3 820	3 856	3 905	-0,9	-2,2
Higher colleges for early childhood resp. social pedagogy	12 763	13 099	11 404	-2,6	11,9
Federal sports academies	2 884	2 315	4 212	24,6	-31,5
Schools and academies for the medical services	17 033	16 827	20 932	1,2	-18,6

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, School Statistics. Data at the beginning of the school year as of 1 October or, if classes are organized during the year, on the second Monday after the start of the course.

1) New secondary schools at former general secondary school locations, excluding students of the pilot secondary school at academic secondary schools, lower level. – 2) Incl. pupils who are taught in other schools according to the special school curriculum. – 3) Including students of the pilot secondary school at academic secondary schools, lower level. – 4) Schools with organizational statute incl. schools with foreign curriculum.

Information and definitions:

Information on German support in German support classes and German support courses: The type of German support is regulated in § 8h of the School Organisation Act (see: [School Organisation Act](#)). Pupils with inadequate German language skills are taught either in pure German support classes or in their regular class in an integrative manner according to the curriculum of the German support class. Pupils with inadequate German language skills receive six hours of German language support per week in parallel to lessons in their mainstream class.

If you have any questions on this topic, please contact:

Harald Gumpoldsberger, phone: +43 1 711 28-7216 | e-mail: harald.gumpoldsberger@statistik.gv.at

Media owner, producer and publisher:

STATISTICS AUSTRIA | Federal Institution under Public Law | Guglgasse 13 | 1110 Vienna | www.statistik.at

Press: Phone: +43 1 711 28-7777 | E-mail: presse@statistik.gv.at

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