

Press release: 13 480-246/24

# Number of pupils increased again in 2023/24

## Growth mainly due to immigration

Vienna, 2024-12-03 – According to Statistics Austria, there were around 13 800 or 1.2% more pupils in Austria’s schools at the start of the 2023/24 school year than in the previous school year. This increase is primarily due to the rise in the number of schoolchildren with non-Austrian citizenship – they accounted for 236 243 or 20.2 % of all pupils in the school year 2023/24.

“In the 2023/24 school year, 369 107 children attended primary school in Austria, around 9 100 more than in the previous year. In secondary schools, the number of pupils increased by around 2 900 compared to 2022/23. This overall growth is mainly due to the increased number of schoolchildren with non-Austrian citizenship. At around 125 000 pupils, attendance figures for the lower level of academic secondary schools again reached the previous year’s high”, says Statistics Austria Director General Tobias Thomas.

### **Pupil numbers in primary schools continue to rise due to immigration**

Attendance figures in **primary schools** have been in sharp decline since the turn of the millennium. An increase has been observed again since the 2016/17 school year. The increase is mainly due to migration from 2015 onwards. In the 2023/24 school year, a total of 369 107 pupils attended primary schools in Austria. This corresponds to an increase of 9 143 pupils (+2.5%) compared to the previous year and even an increase of 41 335 (+12.6%) in a ten-year comparison. The growth over the last ten years is only attributable to primary school pupils with non-Austrian citizenship. Their number has more than doubled in this period from 41 291 to 83 539.

Children without sufficient knowledge of the German language of instruction are categorised as extraordinary pupils and receive German language support. At the beginning of the 2023/24 school year, there were 39 651 such pupils in primary schools, which corresponds to 10.7% of the total number of primary school pupils (2022/23: 36 500, 10.1%). Broken down by federal province, the proportion of extraordinary primary school children in Vienna was by far the highest at 18.7%, followed by Upper Austria with 10.9% and Vorarlberg with 9.8%. In Burgenland, on the other hand, the proportion was only 5.6%. Across Austria, almost half (48.0%) of primary school pupils with a need for German support 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, stagnation in lower secondary schools**

Pupil numbers at **secondary schools**, including the former so-called Hauptschulen, show a similar trend. After many years of declining attendance figures, with a one-off slight increase in the 2016/17 school year, there was already a noticeable increase again in the 2022/23 school year (+7 250 or +3.5% compared to 2021/22). In the past school year 2023/24, there was another increase to a total of 215 944 pupils (+2 863 or +1.3% compared to 2022/23). An increase in children with non-Austrian nationality was also particularly noticeable at secondary schools. Measured against all secondary school pupils, their share was most recently 24.4%, which was over 10 percentage points more than ten years ago (2013/14: 13.6%).

At the beginning of the 2023/24 school year, 8 161 secondary school pupils were classified as **extraordinary pupils** due to insufficient German language skills (3.8%), slightly fewer than in the previous year (2022/23: 3.9%). Of these, over two thirds (67.5%) had inadequate knowledge of German and were taught in German support classes (2022/23: 82.0%).

The **academic secondary schools lower level** has recorded steady growth since the 2013/14 school year. With a total of 125 009 pupils, the school year 2023/24 once again reached a record high, although attendance figures stagnated compared to the previous year (2022/23: 125 005). In a ten-year comparison, the increase was 11.8%.

### Varying developments at upper secondary level

At 91 981, the number of pupils at **academic secondary schools upper level** in the 2023/24 school year was slightly down on the previous year (2022/23: 92 738, -0.8%). A ten-year comparison still shows an increase of 0.5%. **Colleges for higher vocational education (BHS)** have recorded slightly declining student numbers every year since their peak of 148 274 in the 2011/12 school year. There was only an increase in the 2020/21 school year as a result of the relaxed admission requirements in connection with the Covid pandemic. The number of pupils of 139 452 in the past school year 2023/24 represents a decrease of 5.3% compared to 2013/14. Looking at the individual types of BHS schools, only the higher colleges for early childhood resp. social pedagogy showed an increase in student numbers (+5.4%) in a ten-year comparison. Attendance figures fell by 5.5% at higher crafts, technical and arts colleges and higher colleges of business administration, and by as much as 10.0% at higher colleges of management and the service industries. A similar picture can be seen in a ten-year comparison of **schools for intermediate vocational education** (-8.3%) and **vocational schools for apprentices** (-8.2%).

For detailed results and further information please refer to our [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 % 2023/24 to ...	
	2023/24	2022/23	2013/14	2022/23	2013/14
<b>Total for all types of schools</b>	1 172 406	1 158 576	1 134 863	1,2	3,3
Primary schools	369 107	359 964	327 772	2,5	12,6
New secondary schools <sup>1</sup>	215 944	213 081	209 848	1,3	2,9
Special (SEN) schools <sup>2</sup>	15 050	14 610	14 170	3,0	6,2
Pre-vocational schools	14 616	14 613	16 367	0,0	-10,7
Academic secondary schools, lower level <sup>3</sup>	125 009	125 005	111 793	0,0	11,8
Academic secondary schools, upper level	91 981	92 738	91 485	-0,8	0,5
Other general schools (statutes) <sup>4</sup>	11 785	11 665	9 142	1,0	28,9
Vocational schools for apprentices	117 402	116 746	127 934	0,6	-8,2
Schools for intermediate vocational education	42 375	41 798	46 196	1,4	-8,3
Other technical and vocational schools (statutes)	8 486	7 913	7 932	7,2	7,0
Colleges for higher vocational education	139 452	140 526	147 316	-0,8	-5,3
Higher crafts, technical and arts colleges	60 210	60 999	63 731	-1,3	-5,5
Higher colleges of business administration	38 070	37 599	40 266	1,3	-5,5
Higher colleges of management and the service industries	24 825	25 345	27 592	-2,1	-10,0
Higher colleges of agriculture and forestry	3 920	3 820	3 935	2,6	-0,4
Higher colleges for early childhood resp. social pedagogy	12 427	12 763	11 792	-2,6	5,4
Federal sports academies	2 718	2 884	3 982	-5,8	-31,7
Schools and academies for the medical services	18 481	17 033	20 926	8,5	-11,7

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, School Statistics. Data at the beginning of the school year as of 1 October or, if classes are organised 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 organisational statute incl. schools with foreign curriculum.

**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 online version of the [School Organisation Act § 8h](#), available in German only). Pupils with insufficient 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.

**Statistics Austria** is the central organisation for official data and statistics on society, the economy, the state and the environment. As a national statistical institute, it is committed to the statutory principles of independence, impartiality and objectivity. Statistics Austria is headed by Tobias Thomas, Director General Statistics, and Franz Haslauer, Director General Finance.

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