



## Information for parents

# Education services for minority speaking pupils in Bergen



Foto: Trude Haugen

## Foreword

We would like to welcome all parents of pupils who will be attending school here in Bergen!

As Director of the Agency for Schools, I know the importance that the start of each child's education is, and our goal is to take the best care of each child in cooperation with parents. Children are to learn and develop at school as well as feel a part of the community and our democracy. Schools are therefore an important arena for every child in Bergen and our ambition is that your interactions with our schools will contribute to a net positive experience with our city and instill confidence in us.

This pamphlet contains information about the education services in Bergen and in Norway in general. I hope you will find it useful and enables you and your family to participate in constructive cooperation between home and school.

Best regards,  
Frode Nilsen  
Director, Agency for Schools  
Bergen municipality

### **Opplæringstilbud for minoritetsspråklige elever i Bergen**

Bergen kommune: Etat for skole

Tekst: Etat for skole

Foto: Nina Blågestad, Vibeke Linn Blich, Trude Haugen, Nina Johnsen, Diana Bennett



BERGEN  
KOMMUNE

# WELCOME



## **Welcome to Bergen**

Bergen is a city and municipality in Vestland county. It is beautifully situated surrounded by seven mountains and is referred to as "The capital of Western Norway". Bergen was founded by King Olav Kyrre in 1070 and was named Bjørgvin, which means "the green meadow between the mountains".

## **Norwegian school system**

All children have the right and the obligation to attend school in Norway, and they are entitled to 10 years of primary and lower secondary education in the state schools. These rights and obligations to attend school also apply to foreign children staying in Norway for more than three months. Pupils are given a place in the year corresponding to their year of birth as such their classmates are the same age. Education must be always adapted to the skills and ability of pupils. Children start Year 1 at primary school in the calendar year they turn six. Pupils attend primary school from Year 1 to Year 7. Children start lower secondary school in Year 8 the year they turn thirteen. Pupils attend lower secondary school from Years 8 -10. After lower secondary school pupils start upper secondary school for Years 11-13.

## **Free schools in Norway**

No fees are paid to attend school in Norway and all learning materials are free. If the school chooses to go on a trip, it is also free. This is called the principle of non-payment. Nevertheless, parents must still provide some school equipment. Pupils must take lunch and beverages to school every day. Parents must buy their child a backpack and clothes for Phys. Ed. and swimming lessons. They must also ensure their child has suitable clothes that are rainproof, windproof and sufficient for cold weather given the climate conditions in Bergen. These are essential since the children go outside during the school day.

## **How to apply for a school placement for your child**

In Bergen it is most common for children to attend their local primary or local secondary school. Your local school is the closest school to your home. Children who will be starting school must register at the local school. If the child will be attending Year 1 or 2 and cannot adequately speak Norwegian or not at all, the child will attend the local school and receive adapted education there. If the child will be starting in Year 3 up to Year 10 and cannot adequately speak Norwegian or not at all, the child may start by attending an introduction class. An introduction class aims to provide a linguistic and academic basis for joining an ordinary class. Pupils can attend the introduction class for up to two years. Bergen has introductory classes at eight primary level schools and at five local secondary level schools. The schools are spread throughout the boroughs of Bergen.



How to apply for a placement in an introduction class in the municipality of Bergen:

- 🌀 Contact the local school. This is where the pupil will be registered, and you will be invited for an initial meeting with the school's administration. An interpreter will also be present if this is necessary.
- 🌀 The agreed initial meeting is held at the local school.
- 🌀 The local school sends an application to the Agency for Schools which will pass an administrative decision regarding a place at an introduction school.
- 🌀 The introduction school contacts the home before the child starts the introduction class.
- 🌀 The pupil can attend the introduction class for up to two years.
- 🌀 The pupil is transferred to an ordinary class after finishing the introduction class.



Foto: Diana Bennett

## What do parents need to know about the Norwegian school system

In Norway, parents bear the main responsibility for stimulating their child's development and learning. As such parents are expected to contribute to this as much as possible.

A school is a learning institution tasked with the education of pupils. Schools also facilitate social learning and interaction between pupils as well as between teacher and pupil. For schools to reach this objective, good cooperation between the school and home is essential. However, both parties must be aware of their rights and obligations. Similarly, this applies to expectations each may have from the other.

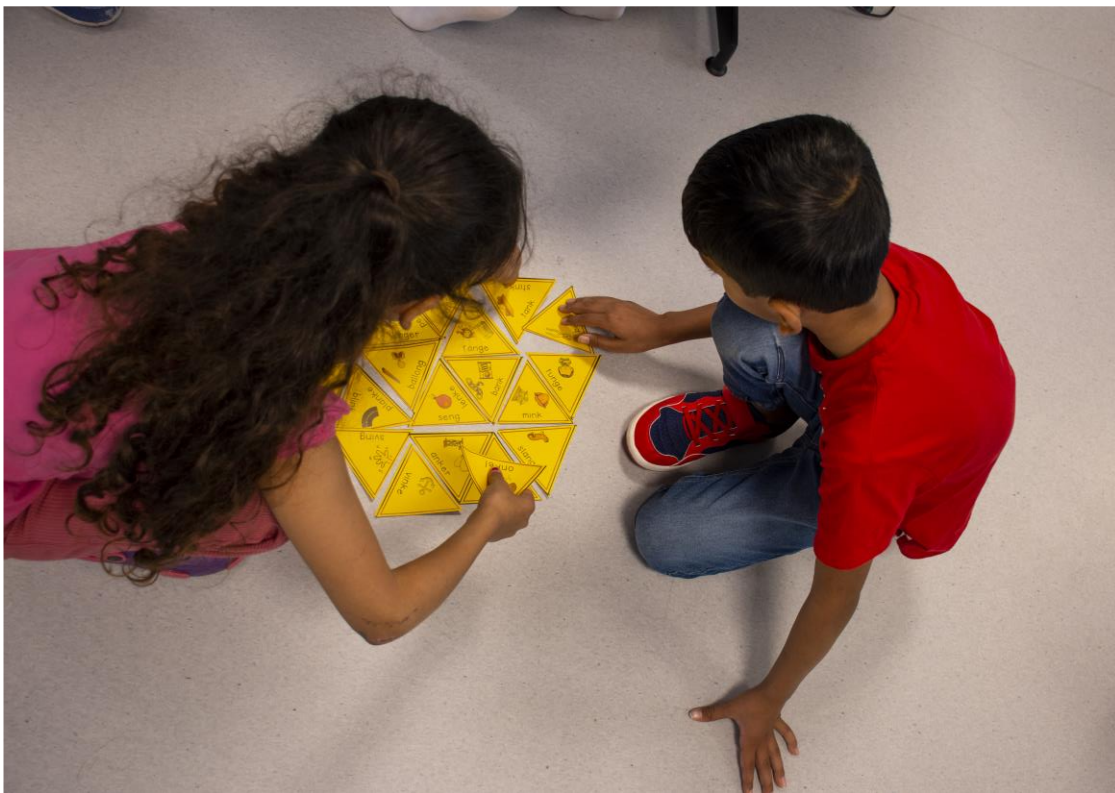


Foto: Vibeke Linn Blich

## What is expected of parents in schools in Norway?

- 🌀 Information - parents and schools exchange information.
- 🌀 Dialogue - parents and schools communicate and discuss important matters.
- 🌀 Involvement - parents and schools make joint decisions.

## Meetings that parents are expected to attend during their child's primary and local secondary education

- 🌀 Development meetings - at least one meeting every six months
- 🌀 Parents meetings - at least one meeting per academic school year

As parents, you will also be invited to various social events organized by the school.

## How can you support and motivate your child's education and help with the practical things the school requires your child to have?

- 🌀 Ensure that your child arrives safely and punctually at school.
- 🌀 Make your child school lunch.
- 🌀 Help your child pack his/her rucksack.
- 🌀 Help your child pack his/her gym and swimming gear.
- 🌀 Hang up weekly timetables at home to make it easier for children and parents to keep up with homework and what will be happening at school.
- 🌀 Talk positively about the school at home.
- 🌀 Encourage and help your child with homework.
- 🌀 Invite classmates and school friends to your home.
- 🌀 Practice social skills with your child and how to wait when taking turns, make friends, be polite, etc.
- 🌀 Talk to your child about the importance of respect despite differences.
- 🌀 Help your child to handle adversity



Foto: Nina Johnsen

## **Pupils have the right to mother tongue or bilingual subject instruction**

Pupils who have come to Bergen and do not have adequate Norwegian skills are entitled to mother tongue instruction or bilingual subject instruction if necessary. The purpose of mother tongue instruction is to strengthen the pupil's ability to command the Norwegian language. Bilingual subject instruction is intended to facilitate the pupil's understanding of the knowledge content of the subject. Mother tongue and bilingual subject instruction are embedded in the right to special language training set out in the Norwegian Education Act.

## **Pupils have the right to free transport to and from school when necessary**

- 🌀 If the pupil is in Year 1 and lives at least two kilometers away from the school
- 🌀 If the pupil is in Year 2 -10 and lives at least four kilometers away from the school
- 🌀 If the route to school is especially dangerous or difficult, regardless of how long the school route is

## **All pupils have the right to a good school environment**

All pupils have the right to a good physical and psychosocial school environment. The school shall actively and systematically work toward the development of a good school environment, in which each pupil feels safe and has a sense of social belonging. If a pupil is unhappy at school, the child's parents can ask the school to do something about it.

## **Before and after school clubs (SFO) are offered from Years 1 - 4**

SFO offers safe childcare outside school hours. The staff take care of the children, supervise them, and arrange play, cultural, and spare time activities. One must pay for the SFO scheme, but if you have a low income you can apply for reduced fees. If you would like help with an application for SFO, please visit Innbyggjerservice at Kaigaten 4. They can also arrange for an interpreter to be present.

You can apply for a place at SFO here:

[Bergen kommune - Skolefritidsordning - SFO](#)





Foto: Nina Blågestad

## Homework help

The schools in Bergen often offer homework help for pupils in Years 5-7. Homework help is given after school and participation is voluntary. It is also free.

## Lessons and school subjects in Norwegian schools

The education of pupils must comply with the joint national curriculum. At primary school level, children are taught Norwegian, mathematics, natural science, English, social studies, arts and crafts, music, food and health, physical education, CREE (Christian and other religious and ethical education).

At lower secondary level, the following subjects are taught: Norwegian, mathematics, natural science, English, social studies, arts and crafts, music, food and health, physical education, a selection of subject electives, foreign languages, CREE.

If a pupil chooses to attend an introduction class, they will not follow the same number of subjects as in an ordinary class. The number of subjects increases during the pupil's expanding command of the Norwegian language. It is worth noting, however, that pupils attend the same number of hours per week regardless of whether the pupil is placed in an introduction or ordinary class.

If parents believe that some of the school's lessons or activities go against their religion or beliefs, pupils can be given an exemption to these specifically. Should this be the case, you must notify the school in writing. However, pupils cannot be exempted from the whole subject, only certain associated activities.

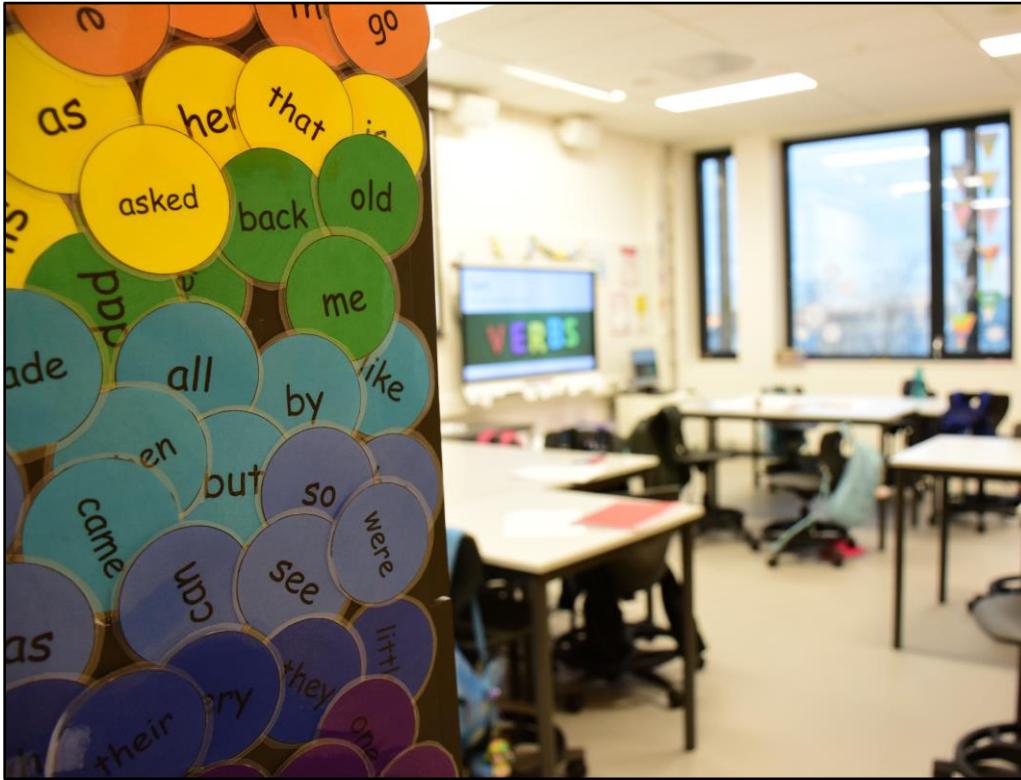


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### **Web sites**

Ny i Bergen: [Bergen kommune - New in Bergen](#)

Informasjon om foreldrerollen finner du på flere språk på FUG.no:  
<http://www.fug.no/materiell-paa-andre-spraak.155836.no.html>

Læringsressurser:

[Alle artikler på engelsk – morsmål.no \(morsmal.no\)](#)

[morsmål.no - Nasjonalt senter for flerkulturell opplæring \(morsmal.no\)](#)

[zmekk | Tospråklig fagopplæring](#)

Bergen kommune innbyggerhjelpen:

[Bergen kommune - Særskilt språkopplæring for språklige minoriteter](#)

