



Joint messages by the Inclusion Working Group:

Information for Ukrainian refugee parents and other caregivers holding temporary protection status on enrollment in kindergarten and school for the academic year 2024/2025

March 2024

Guidance for refugee parents - Summary

- ✓ *Temporary protection status holders have the right to attend kindergarten (from the age of 3) and school (from the age of 6), like all Hungarian children.*
- ✓ *In Hungary, education is compulsory between the ages of 3 and 16.*
- ✓ *Compulsory education cannot be fulfilled through unregistered, community-led schools, or fully online schools in Hungary.*
- ✓ *Following the Ukrainian curriculum is possible in Hungary, and various distance learning forms are offered by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science.*
- ✓ *Before selecting any educational programs, please carefully evaluate the quality and official recognition of the educational institutions. This can help your child prevent the loss of school credentials and ensure continuous education.*

Question and answers

Can I enroll my child in a Hungarian school or kindergarten, and under what conditions?

- **Yes!** Holders of temporary protection status **have the right to attend kindergarten (from the age of 3) and school (from the age of 6)**, like Hungarian children.
- Every child, including those with temporary protection status, must attend accredited educational institutions in Hungary if they reside in the country for more than three months. **This requirement is due to education being compulsory for children between the ages of 3 and 16 in Hungary.**
- **Kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary education are obliged to offer access** to their institutions for all children **within their educational districts.**
- Kindergartens, primary, and secondary education are **free of charge** in Hungary at public institutions, which are mainly state or church-run. However, you have the option to choose private institutions, bearing in mind that they require fees.
- **Primary education is provided by primary schools** (Grades 1-8, for children aged 6-14), after which children can enter **secondary schools** (Grades 9-12, for those aged 15-18)¹, such as general secondary schools or vocational training institutions, including technical and vocational schools.

Why should I enroll my child in a Hungarian school?

School enrollment and attendance are required under Hungarian law. It is also essential for the development of your child and ensures their fundamental child rights.

¹ Note that some secondary schools accept students after Grade 4 or 6.

- It will help prepare children for all possible future developments, whether to return to Ukraine after a temporary period, or to develop long-term plans to stay in Hungary / the EU, if needed.
- Studying in a Hungarian school allows for a focus on ensuring quality education and makes it easier for children to interact with their peers, experience a sense of normalcy, and receive appropriate support services, regardless of the length of your intended stay in Hungary.
- Studying in a Hungarian school is sustainable. Experience has shown that enrollment in temporary or 'pop-up' schools using the Ukrainian curriculum may not have the resources to continue operating for a full academic year in Hungary, leading to further disruption of your children's education.
- Children, especially adolescents, who are not included in the host country's education system run a higher risk of leaving education and/or training early, seriously impeding their potential to progress in the labor market later.
- The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science recommends refugee parents familiarize themselves with the requirements for compulsory education and enroll children according to local rules. The Ministry also highlights the social benefits of enrolling in a host country's education system.

When does the enrollment period for the 2024/2025 school term start?

- The school term for 2024/2025 **begins on September 1, 2023**. Generally, enrollment for the school term opens on April 5, 2024, with a deadline of April 18-19, 2024. Kindergarten enrollment dates are determined by the municipality.
- We recommend verifying the specific dates with the selected schools/kindergarten, as there may be variations, especially regarding kindergarten enrollment.
- Children who turn 3 years old by August 31, 2024, are required to enroll in kindergarten for at least 4 hours per day. Children who turn 6 years old by August 31, 2024, must join the first grade of primary school. All other TP status children between 3 and 16 years residing in Hungary for more than 3 months are expected to enroll in kindergarten and school based on their age and/or academic achievement level.
- Adherence to the enrollment deadline is advised to ensure that your child can **begin kindergarten or school on the first day of the new term**.
- If you are unable to meet the deadline, you can still enroll your child but are urged to initiate the registration process **as soon as possible**.

KINDERGARTEN

How can I enroll my child in kindergarten?

- Kindergarten covers children aged between 3 and 6 years.
- You can find out which kindergarten is assigned to you based on your address by visiting this link: <https://kir2korzet3h.kir.hu/Pub/index>.
- However, parents have the freedom to choose a kindergarten for their child. You have the right to contact any kindergarten you wish, but they may not be able to accommodate your child.
- It is advisable to directly contact the kindergarten of your choice. However, you can also seek further information and support from the local municipality or the local Family Support and Child Welfare Services.
- If your district kindergarten/school operates at the maximum number of children it can accommodate and therefore cannot enroll your child, in these cases, the child should have access to a neighboring school.
- If you don't speak Hungarian, please ensure that you have someone accompany you to provide translation support.
- You can request a **translation service** from IOM by filling out this [FORM](#).

PRIMARY SCHOOL

How can I enroll my child in a primary school?

- Primary School covers Grades 1 – 8.
- On this link <https://kir2korzet3h.kir.hu/Pub/index> you can find which school is assigned to you based on your address.
- However, there is a free choice of school for parents, so you have the right to contact any school you wish, but they might not be able to accept your child.
- It is advised to directly reach out to the school of your choice, but you can seek further information and assistance in finding a place for your child from the relevant [educational district center](#).
- If your district kindergarten/school operates at the maximum number of children it can accommodate and therefore cannot enroll your child, in these cases, the child should have access to a neighboring school.
- In case you don't speak Hungarian, please make sure to have someone accompany you and support you with translation.
- You can also request a translation service from IOM by filling this [FORM](#).

SECONDARY SCHOOL

How can I enroll my child in a secondary school?

- Secondary School covers Grades 9 – 12.
- You are advised to contact the secondary schools directly to discuss the enrollment procedures.
- There is free choice of school in the case of secondary schools as well, but schools are free to decide on entry criteria.
- In case there are challenges in finding a suitable school that is able to enroll your child, please reach out to the [educational district center](#) in your district for support.
- You can also request a translation service from IOM by filling this [FORM](#).

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Where should I enroll my child if they have special educational needs?

- It is the right of the child with developmental delays and disabilities to receive **developmental pedagogical or special educational services** according to their needs. These needs are established by the expert committee based on their assessment.
- In Hungary, your child can be educated in different forms depending on his/her needs. There are designated educational institutions which can host special needs children in an integrated school setting or in special classes, depending on the needs of the child. The form of education is defined by the Pedagogical Assistance Services; therefore, as a first step, we recommend getting in contact with the Pedagogical Assistant Service of your district.
- Further information about the available services and assessment process is available on the webpage of UNHCR: <https://help.unhcr.org/hungary/education-with-disabilities/>

ALL EDUCATION LEVELS: REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

What documents do I need to enroll my child in school?

Schools may request certain documents for enrollment, which may include the following:

- ❖ Filled-in application document, usually accessible from the selected educational institution
- ❖ Birth certificate of your child
- ❖ Document indicating the ID of your child (e.g., passport, ID card)
- ❖ Health insurance number of the child (Temporary Protection card number may be sufficient)
- ❖ Document indicating your ID (e.g., passport, ID card)
- ❖ Temporary Protection card or other residency card
- ❖ Vaccination documents
- ❖ Certificate of the last finished school year
- ❖ Document indicating your address

If you do not have these documents, please do not be discouraged and explain your situation to the school management. Commonly, forcibly displaced persons face challenges in providing full sets of documents.

Does my child need to be vaccinated in order to attend school?

- There are different mandatory vaccines for every child in Hungary, depending on their age.
- It is advised to contact a pediatrician to discuss the vaccination plan for your child.
- You might be requested to show proof of vaccination during the kindergarten or school enrollment process.
- If your child has been vaccinated in Ukraine but you don't have proof, please ask the pediatrician for advice.

What grade will my child attend?

- The school director, together with the parents, will decide on the grade in which the child will be enrolled.
- This decision should be made in consultation with the parents, although the child may also be asked to take some tests.

I am still uncertain where in Hungary I will stay – what shall I do?

- We advise you to enroll your child at your current place of residence. If you later move to another part of Hungary, you should register your child there.
- It is essential that your child continues their education and does not miss school.

What happens if I decide to return to Ukraine or move to another country?

- If you decide to return to Ukraine, you can cancel the enrollment in Hungary.
- Please inform the school of your departure date and request confirmation of your child's school attendance.

If we return to Ukraine, will the educational progress of my child within the Hungarian education system be accepted in the Ukrainian education system?

- Based on a bilateral agreement between Hungary and Ukraine, studies conducted in state-accredited educational institutions are recognized by both countries. It means that students can generally continue their studies in the next grade after returning to Ukraine from Hungary, if they meet the requirements set out in the Ukrainian legislation. Please follow this [LINK](#) to check the agreement (in Ukrainian).
- Certificates proving the completion of different stages of education are recognized as equivalent in each country.
- It is critical that parents keep records of the previous learning of their children in Ukraine and in Hungary (i.e. report cards, evaluations, grades, diplomas, certificates). These will in most cases be taken into account when a child is assessed and placed in school.

- Refugee children and youth who have studied in foreign countries other than Hungary can also have their learning validated within the Ukrainian education system upon their return. The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science has issued methodological guidance for educational authorities, explaining how children returning from abroad can validate their educational history in secondary schools abroad within Ukrainian schools. The guidance is available here: [LINK](#).

Can I keep my child enrolled in the Ukrainian education system online?

- Enrolment in Hungarian schools does not, per se, hinder or exclude refugee children from Ukraine from remaining enrolled in online education according to the curriculum of Ukraine. In fact, community feedback has shown this form of learning remains popular: In Hungary, 37% were also following the Ukrainian curriculum online while attending Hungarian schools, while 16% were exclusively following the Ukrainian curriculum online.
- Studies have revealed benefits from continuing to follow parts of the Ukrainian curriculum for subjects that are not taught in the host country, such as Ukrainian language, history, and culture, as they maintain linkages with the linguistic and cultural aspects of the country of origin.
- The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science allows children to continue following online lessons as distance learning students, externships, home education, or in an individual educational trajectory. Exams and evaluations are normally organized online for certain grades. Further information can be found on their webpage: <https://refugee-ed.sqe.gov.ua/to-the-parents-of-children-who-were-forced-to-leave-ukraine/#general>
- When it comes to online education, you need to consider that enrolling your child in Ukrainian distance learning should not mean that you do not enroll your child in a certified educational institution in Hungary. Compulsory education cannot be fulfilled through unregistered, community-led schools, or fully online schools.
- Also, you should consider the workload of children if they are in education in Hungary and studying the Ukrainian curriculum at the same time. Subjects that are taught in both the host country and the Ukrainian education system — such as mathematics and sciences — should be followed only in the host country school where the child is enrolled.

If my child is solely enrolled in Ukrainian distance schooling and/or afterschool programs, is it fulfilling his/her educational obligations in Hungary?

- No, informal educational programs² and online learning are not accepted and do not interchange with mandatory schooling in Hungary.
- Some organizations offer face-to-face education in line with the Ukrainian curriculum, taught by Ukrainian teachers. It is important to check if these educational programs are recognized by the Hungarian authorities as well as by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science. Additionally, funding for some of these schools is limited in certain cases, or funding may be discontinued, forcing them to cease their activities sooner or later.
- You should evaluate the quality and continuity of these education options before considering them for your children. When complementary forms of education are considered in addition to education in the national school system, you should ensure that any learning that takes place is recognized and rewarded with official grades or certificates to protect against their children losing out on credentials and to avoid a lack of documentation on academic achievement and skills.

² Educational programs happening outside of the school-based learning system such as afterschool programs, catch-up classes or other educational programs offered by organizations, non-recognized as educational institutions.

What happens if I have temporary protection in Hungary, but decide not to enrol my child to the Hungarian education system?

In the event that a child between 3 and 16 years of age is not enrolled in a Hungarian kindergarten or school, the parent or legal guardian of the child may be subject to a fine (ranging from HUF 5,000 to 150,000) for committing a minor offense.³

If the child is enrolled in a Hungarian school but has more than 10 hours of uncertified absence, the school will notify the Family and Child Welfare Service. If the absence exceeds 50 hours, the Guardianship authority will be involved. In such cases, the authorities will inquire with the family about the reasons for the absence and the potential support the family could receive.

What happens, if I decide to withdraw my temporary protection status to avoid the compulsory school enrolment of my child?

It is not advised to renounce your and/or your child's temporary protection status in order to avoid mandatory school attendance. **If you plan to stay in Hungary for a longer period, it is important that you and your child have a legal title to stay in Hungary.** Temporary protection gives you the right to reside in Hungary, and **access to important services** such as medical treatment and financial support.

Where do I find more information?

- **UNHCR Hungary Help website:** <https://help.unhcr.org/hungary/help/education/>
- **Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science:** <https://refugee-ed.sqe.gov.ua/to-the-parents-of-children-who-were-forced-to-leave-ukraine/#general>
- **“Safe in Hungary” website:** <https://safeinhungary.gov.hu/en/stay/education>

Who can help me with interpretation?

You can request a in person and telephone interpretation **service** of IOM by filling in this [FORM](#). Th service can be booked for maximum 1 hour. Personal interpretation services should be ordered in justified cases. When booking, please indicate the reason for requesting a personal interpretation.

Tipp: Use your browser to auto-translate websites from Hungarian to Ukraine and google translation application or other voice translator phone applications to interpret your voice or text.

Where can I get further support or assistance with the enrolment process?

Please try first to enrol your child by yourself, or with the help of a trusted community member or friend. If you continue to face difficulties, are your questions were not answered, you may flag this to the Inclusion Working Group focal point, who will review your case and follow up. To start this process, please reach out to the UNHCR Helpline available in Hungarian, Ukrainian and English, toll free, from 8 – 17 hrs (Monday-Friday).

³ Reference to Section 247 (1) of Act II of 2012 on Minor Offences

Refugee helpline number: **+36 80 984 583**

Email contact: hunbucontact@unhcr.org