Single Structure Education (Integrated Primary and Lower Secondary Education)

Compulsory education is organised in a single structure system, i.e. primary and lower secondary education form part of the same school level and usually takes place in the same school. Education in Iceland has traditionally been organised within the public sector, and there are few private institutions within the school system. All private schools receive public funding.

Compulsory education in Iceland is organised in a single structure system which extends to primary and lower secondary levels and includes children from the age of six to sixteen. A child’s compulsory education normally starts at the outset of the school year on the calendar year in which the child turns six years old. Parents can request or consent to their child starting school attendance before that time. A head teacher may authorise this, given the reference of a specialist. Local authorities are responsible for the general organisation of school operations of compulsory schools in their respective municipalities.

A Compulsory School Act [1] was passed in June 2008. The Act [1] introduces a set of changes that are mostly a continuation of previous legislative developments. At the same time the Pre Primary School Act [2] and the Upper Secondary School Act [2] were passed, and one of the aim was to increase cohesion between all these school levels, increase cooperation between the levels with clear focus on the education and welfare of the pupils concerned in the whole system. The administration of the schools, which are run by the municipalities, is clarified and decentralised, and the role, rights and duties of parents and children outlined. Great emphasis is placed on the general welfare of pupils and the inclusion of all children in the school irrespective of their origin or disabilities. More weight is put on quality assurance and having the schools and municipalities live up to their accountability towards pupils, parents and society, developing internal quality processes and providing information about their activities and results. Nationally coordinated examinations will continue in grades 4, 7 and 9, with increased focus is put on their role as a guide for the pupils, parents and schools.

The main objectives of compulsory schooling as stated in the Compulsory School Act [1] of 2008 are the following:

- To encourage pupils’ general development and prepare them for active participation in a democratic society that is continuously developing. The organisation of the school
and the work that takes place there is thus to be guided by tolerance and affection, the Christian heritage of the Iceland’s culture, equality, democratic operation, responsibility, concern, forgiveness and respect for human values. Compulsory school are to endeavour to organise their activities to correspond fully with the position and needs of their pupils and encourage the overall development, well-being and education of every individual.

- To encourage broadmindedness in pupils, strengthen their skills in the Icelandic language and their understanding of Icelandic society, Icelandic history and characteristics, of people's living conditions and the individual's duties to the community, the environment and the world.
- To provide pupils with the opportunity to develop and use their creativity and to acquire knowledge and skills and the course of their development. School activities shall lay foundations for pupils' autonomy, imitative and independent thinking and train their cooperation skills.
- To encourage good cooperation between the school and the home, with the objective of ensuring successful school operation, general welfare and safety for pupils.

On basis of this Act, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture issues regulations and National Curriculum Guide. The National Curriculum Guide provides the details of how the law is to be implemented and define more clearly the educational role of compulsory schools and the main objectives of instruction in individual subjects in accordance with that role.

Pupils whose mother tongue is not Icelandic are entitled to learn Icelandic as a second language in compulsory schools. This subject has developed in this country in recent years. There are also provisions in the general curricula that students whose native language is not Icelandic may be exempted from learning a third language – the subject Danish is specifically mentioned. Such exemptions provided in compulsory schools also apply to upper secondary schools. Compulsory schools may recognize pupils’ skills in their mother language as part of the compulsory education. There are no specific central provisions on mother language education for students of foreign origin, but according to a survey conducted a few years ago almost half of the students of foreign origin received some mother tongue education at compulsory school level.

DID YOU FIND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?

YES

NO

Contact *

Message *

Leave this field blank
Source URL:

Links