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Primary education falls under the responsibility of the State and its administration is carried out by the [Ministry of education](#) [1]. At local level, [municipalities](#) [2] are responsible for the organisation of premises and of services such as transports and canteen.

Primary education is compulsory and free of charge. It has an overall length of 5 years and is attended by pupils aged from 6 to 11 years. It is preceded by non-compulsory pre-primary education and followed by compulsory three-year lower secondary education. Primary and lower secondary education make up the first cycle of education which lasts a total of eight years; however, they are two different levels of education, each with its own specificities (DPR 89/2009).

The aim of primary education is to provide pupils with basic learning and basic tools of active citizenship. It helps pupils to understand the meaning of their own experiences. The National guidelines for the curriculum ([Indicazioni nazionali per il curricolo della scuola dell'infanzia e del primo ciclo di istruzione](#) [3]) describe the aim of primary school as well as the competences and skills children are expected to have acquired at the end of primary school.

The institution providing primary education is called 'primary school' (*scuola primaria*). State primary schools are organised into [comprehensive institutes](#) [4]. Comprehensive institutes are legal entities that group one or more pre-primary, primary and lower secondary schools managed by a single school manager.

Primary education is guaranteed also to children who are hospitalised or at home for health reasons and are unable to attend school for a long time. Pupils with disabilities and specific developmental/learning disorders attend primary schools with the provision from the State and local authorities of specific support measures.

Pupils can also attend compulsory primary education at independent private schools with parity ([paritarie](#) [5]). This type of school is considered equal to State schools. Under certain circumstances it is also possible to attend primary education at independent private schools without parity – that are not recognised as equal to State schools – or through home education.

[Teachers](#) [6] in primary schools must hold a Master degree (ISCED 7) in primary education sciences obtained after a five-year course of study that includes a qualifying traineeship.

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[3] <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2013/02/05/13G00034/sg>

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[5] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/organisation-private-education-39_en#Paritaria

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