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Primary education in Serbia provides all pupils with equal opportunities and accessibility of high quality education, adapted to pupils' age and personal needs. Primary school **is compulsory** and it **lasts 8 years**. It consists of 8 school grades, divided into two cycles:

- Cycle 1: 1st to 4th grade;
- Cycle 2: 5th to 8th grade.

Pupils start primary school at the age of 7, which is the only admission criterion. Schools are mainly public and free, although there are private schools too. The language of instruction is Serbian, but other languages of instruction for national minorities are also available where necessary (e.g. Hungarian, Romanian, Albanian etc.). Pupils complete primary education when they pass the final exam at the end of the 8th grade, after which they are awarded the Primary School Certificate.

The [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#) ^[1] in cooperation with the local authorities supervises primary education. The [Law on the Education System Foundations](#) ^[2] and [Law on Primary Education](#) ^[2] are the legal basis for primary education implementation, along with all bylaws and regulations. In compliance with these legal documents, each school is required to issue a development plan, a school programme and an annual plan. These documents regulate the organisation of all school affairs, according to the national law. Some aspects of primary education lie within the competence of other public institutions that are responsible for education quality assurance, textbook standards and other aspects important for the functioning of the education system ([Institute for the Improvement of Education](#) ^[1], [National Education Council](#) ^[1] etc.)

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