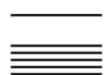




School system in the canton of Zug

Information about compulsory education



Kanton Zug

Amt für gemeindliche Schulen
Schulaufsicht

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Abteilung Schulaufsicht
www.zg.ch/schulaufsicht
[Informationsstelle bei Schuleintritten ausserkantonaler oder ausländischer Kinder](#)

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Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1. Swiss education system	4
1.2. Graphic of the school system in the canton of Zug	4
2. Pre-school, primary school, lower-secondary education	6
2.1. Pre-school	6
2.2. Primary school	7
2.3. Lower-secondary education	8
2.4. Assessment	9
2.5. Special needs schooling	10
3. Upper secondary education	11
3.1. Bridge-year programmes	11
3.2. Public baccalaureate schools	12
4. Private schools	12
4.1. Authorised private schools	12
5. Advice and services	13
5.1. School services	13
6. School holidays	14
6.1. Holiday calendar	14
7. Contacts	15
7.1. Adresses	15
7.2. School administrations of the municipal schools	15

1. Introduction

1.1. Swiss education system

Swiss pupils and students achieve above-average results in international comparisons. The success of the Swiss education system is built on strong public schools, a diversity of educational paths and numerous possibilities to switch track, as well as a curriculum also designed to meet the needs of the job market. The education system is geared to providing students with a large range of opportunities. This contributes greatly to the country's high level of social mobility ('Swiss Dream').

In Switzerland, it is the cantons that are primarily responsible for educational matters. The 26 cantonal ministers of education coordinate their work at national level through a political body called the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK). The following links on the [EDK's website](#) offer an overview of the Swiss education system.

1.2. Graphic of the school system in the canton of Zug

Children and adolescents in the Canton of Zug have access to high-quality public schools. Attendance at public schools for the years of compulsory education (up to lower secondary level) is free of charge. In terms of student numbers, private schools play only a minor role. However, such private schools represent an alternative and supplement the range of schools on offer.

Compulsory schooling in the Canton of Zug begins with a mandatory pre-school (kindergarten) year before a child reaches primary school age and lasts for 10 years in all. Primary school comprises six grades (six school years). At the end of primary school, on the threshold to lower secondary level (Sekundarstufe I), the educational path splits into different directions. Progression from primary to secondary level is effected by means of performance-based grouping, involving no admission or other exams, in a transition procedure called *Übertritt I*.

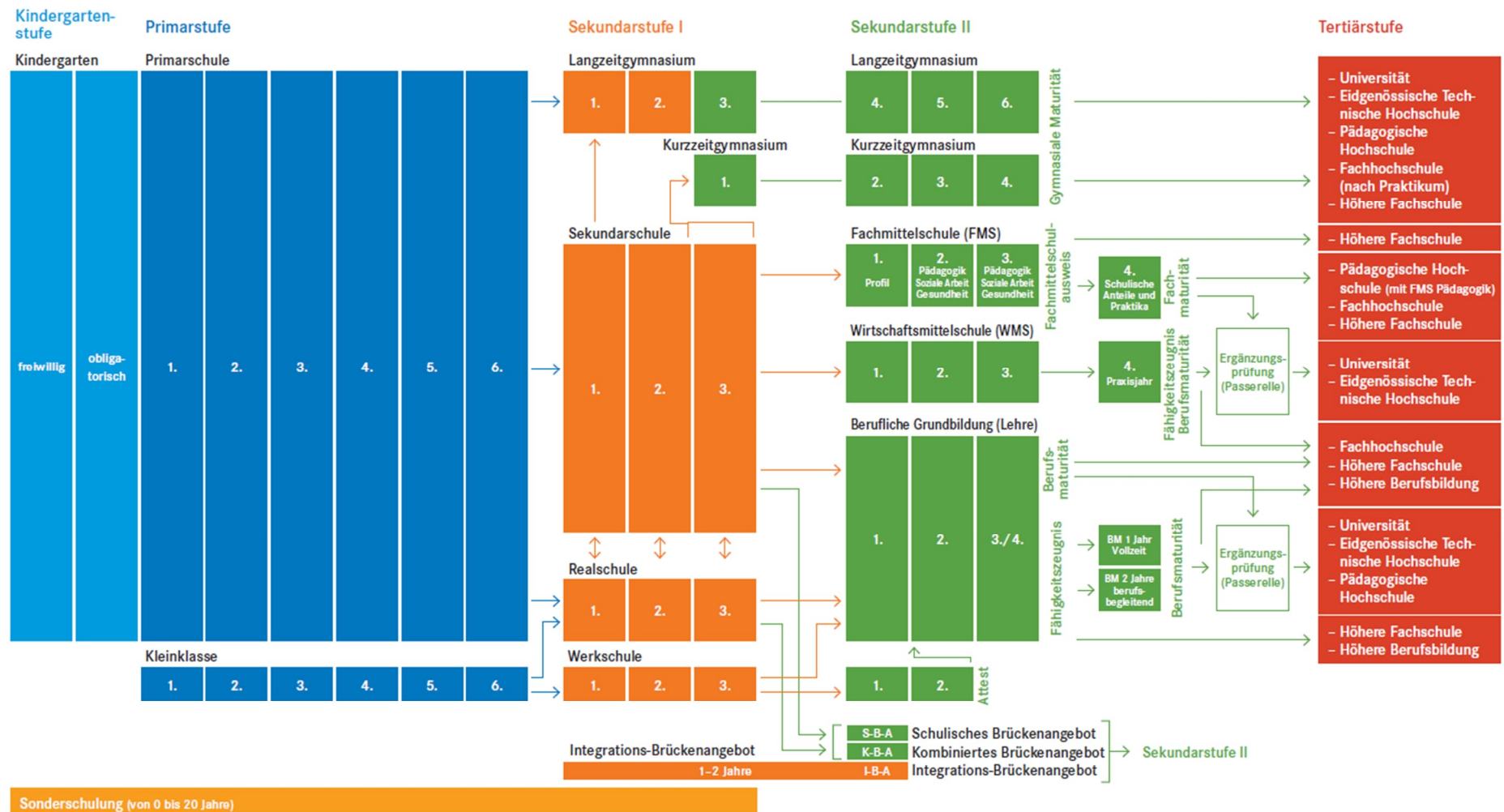
The lower secondary level is divided – with progressively higher intellectual demands on students – into Werkschule, Realschule and Sekundarschule, as well as Untergymnasium and Langzeitgymnasium, the latter two being geared to subsequent university studies. The end of the lower secondary years signifies the end of compulsory schooling. It is followed by upper secondary level (Sekundarstufe II).

At this stage, 65 % of the Canton of Zug's youngsters opt for vocational education and training, which combines on-the-job training with school education (dual-track education system). Sekundarschule students have the possibility of continuing their education at an upper-secondary baccalaureate school (Kantonale Mittelschule). This progression is organised and executed in a further transition procedure (*Übertritt II*). No exams are involved in this procedure, either.

At the end of the upper secondary period, students either take up a profession or continue their education at tertiary level. All educational paths at upper secondary level — including vocational education and training — leave students with the option of a baccalaureate (Matura), provided they have sufficient academic talent and willingness to work hard at school. Graduating with a baccalaureate opens the door to university level education.

Bildungssystematik

Das Zuger Schul- und Bildungssystem ist durchlässig und begabungsgerecht aufgebaut.



2. Pre-school, primary school, lower-secondary education

2.1. Pre-school



Kindergarten and lower grade (Year 1 and 2 of the primary school) are called «Zyklus 1».

The kindergarten broadens children's experiences and furthers their abilities. The kindergarten teachers work according to a set curriculum.

All municipalities in the Canton of Zug offer two years of kindergarten. The kindergarten year before compulsory kindergarten is voluntary.

School entry

Children must attend the compulsory kindergarten year before entering Year 1 of the primary school. [Entry to the compulsory kindergarten](#) is designated as school entry. The following age limits apply for this school entry: Children who turn five by the end of February are obliged to attend kindergarten in the upcoming school year. Children who turn five by the end of May have the right to attend the compulsory kindergarten in the upcoming school year.

The school principal may permit a child to enter school earlier or later on application. The decision is based on an application by the parents and consultation with the parents and the kindergarten teacher.

Class time, block times

The timetables of the compulsory kindergarten are organised in such a way that the children have at least four mornings of lessons lasting a minimum of three hours (excl. drop-off time).

The lesson times at the voluntary kindergarten are determined by the municipality.

2.2. Primary school



The primary school comprises six yearly courses and is organised into:

- Lower grade (Year 1 and 2): Zyklus 1
- Middle grade I/II (Year 3-6): Zyklus 2

Acceptance into Year 1

Children who have attended the compulsory kindergarten usually enter [Year 1 of the primary school](#) and attend lessons in the mainstream classes.

Class time, block times

In all the municipal schools, the [lessons](#) run from Monday to Friday. There are no classes on Wednesday afternoons. In special cases, the school commission may permit exceptions for Wednesday afternoon.

All primary school pupils must attend at least 4 consecutive lessons every morning (block time).

Transfer after Year 6

The [transfer after the 6th primary school class](#) to classes with additional support needs (Werkschule), intermediate secondary school (Realschule), secondary school (Sekundarschule) or the lower grades of the baccalaureate schools (Langzeitgymnasium) is not subject to an entrance test. The allocation decision is made after discussions between the teacher, the parents and the child.

The results of outer-cantonal allocation procedures are recognised.

The [brochure](#) «Übertrittsverfahren Primarstufe-Sekundarstufe I» (go to «Wichtige Downloads») contains information on the procedural steps and the assessment criteria. It can be obtained from the Year 5 and Year 6 teachers.

2.3. Lower-secondary education



Secondary level I is called «Zyklus 3» and is divided into 4 types of school:

- Baccalaureate school lower level (Gymnasium Unterstufe)
- Secondary school (Sekundarschule)
- Intermediate secondary school (Realschule)
- Class with additional support needs (Werkschule)

For the lower level baccalaureate school, secondary level I lasts two years; for the other three school types, it lasts three years. All three school types follow the same instructional goals in most cases. However, the educational demands on the students are different, and their dispositions and abilities are taken into consideration.

Baccalaureate school lower level (Gymnasium Unterstufe)

The lower level of a baccalaureate school comprises the first two years of the 6-year, long-term baccalaureate school. Based on a wide general education, the lower level baccalaureate school fulfils the requirements for the baccalaureate course. It is aimed at high-achieving students who fulfil all the above-average educational requirements in terms of talent and ability.

Secondary school (Sekundarschule)

The secondary school prepares students to attend either upper-level baccalaureate schools or schools of vocational education and training. It demands lateral thinking, independent work and the ability to think in abstract terms.

Intermediate secondary school (Realschule)

The intermediate secondary school consolidates the subject matter of the primary school and broadens it by drawing on the experiences of the students. Theoretical and scientific topics are studied in a less abstract way, with more connections made to daily life

Class with additional support needs (Werkschule)

The class with additional support needs is a small class which provides specific support at secondary level I. It consolidates and broadens basic education and encourages practical talents. It helps students to overcome personal and educational difficulties in a targeted

manner. The classes with additional support needs may be integrated into the intermediate secondary school.

Comprehensive secondary level I (Kooperative Oberstufe)

Secondary school (Sekundarschule) and intermediate secondary school (Realschule) work together in a comprehensive secondary level I system ([Kooperative Oberstufe](#)). Set level courses with differing educational demands are run across the schools in the subjects of Mathematics and English. The municipalities may also hold German and/or French as a set level course. Pupils with additional support needs may be integrated into the comprehensive secondary level I system.

Transfers from secondary school to cantonal or vocational baccalaureate schools or other upper secondary schools

A [transfer from secondary school to a cantonal baccalaureate school, e.g. the cantonal baccalaureate school Menzingen \(Kurzzeitgymnasium der Kantonsschule Menzingen\), or to an upper secondary specialised school \(Fachmittelschule\), an upper secondary business school \(Wirtschaftsmittelschule\) or a vocational baccalaureate school in combination with an apprenticeship \(lehrbegleitende Berufsmaturitätsschule\)](#) does not require an entrance test. The referral decision is made by the teacher, parents and student together in a discussion. The results of outer- cantonal allocation procedures are recognised.

The [brochure](#) «Übertrittsverfahren Sekundarschule - kantonale Mittelschulen und lehrbegleitende Berufsmaturitätsschulen» (go to «Wichtigstes im Überblick») contains information on the procedural steps and the assessment criteria. It can be obtained from secondary school teachers.

2.4. Assessment

Assessment of the learning process and performance

A yearly orientation discussion is carried out on the threshold from the 1st to the 2nd class of secondary level I. The teacher, the parents and the student are involved in the orientation discussion. The teacher informs about the educational requirements, how well the student has fulfilled these, and about the student's learning progress and developments in his or her subject-related, [personal and social skills](#). As a basis serve these documents: [Beobachtungs- und Beurteilungsunterlagen](#) .

The students receive a report at the end of each school year and, from Year 2 (primary school) onwards, at the end of January, too. The report contains the assessment of each student's personal and social skills. From Year 2 onwards, the subject-related skills are also assessed with grades.

2.5. Special needs schooling



Additional support needs

Additional Support needs education is one of the responsibilities of the municipal schools. The municipalities ensure that children who are only partly school-ready, learning-disabled or have behavioural problems, and children with insufficient knowledge of German, as well as children with a specific talent receive particular support. Municipalities have the possibility of setting up small classes, in cooperation with other municipalities if need be.

Integrative forms of schooling

Students with learning, performance or behavioural problems are supported together with students of normal ability and particularly talented students in mainstream lessons. A remedial education teacher (schulische Heilpädagogin oder schulischer Heilpädagoge) provides added support in the lessons. In the integrative lessons, the learning requirements are organised in such a way that the different learning and support needs of the students are met, enabling them to learn successfully. Differentiated teaching and learning forms are used.

Separate schooling forms

Children who are only partly ready for school and children of normal ability who are behind in their development complete the Year 1 material in two school years in a small class so as to manage the transition into Year 2 more easily. Those requiring particular educational support can be taught separately in small classes providing such support.

Children with insufficient knowledge of German

Children with insufficient knowledge of German attend lessons in German as a second language (Deutsch als Zweitsprache, DaZ) in addition to the mainstream lessons. In the beginner-level DaZ lessons or post-beginner DaZ lessons, the students are supported integratively or separately, with the goal of making them increasingly capable of following lessons in the mainstream class. For students who have just moved to the area, DaZ classes may be run in the first year.

Classes with additional support needs (Werkschule)

Small classes providing special support at secondary school level I are known as classes with additional support needs.

3. Upper secondary education

3.1. Bridge-year programmes

Schools at lower secondary level (*Sekundarstufe I*) prepare students for the transition from compulsory schooling either to vocational education and training or to a higher school of general education. Seamless transition is not always possible, which is why the canton offers bridge year programmes.

School bridge year programme (S-B-A)

In the school bridge year programme (Schulisches Brückenangebot), adolescents are provided with education and support in a school environment. The programme is aimed at those who are motivated and willing to learn, and who have realistic ideas about their professional future but have not yet been able to realise them, as well as for young people who are still in the process of choosing their professional track.

Combined bridge year programme (K-B-A)

In the combined bridge year programme (Kombiniertes Brückenangebot), adolescents are provided education and support in an occupational environment. They undergo practical training at a firm or institution for three days a week and go to school for general education and lessons preparing them for the working world for two days a week.

Integrational bridge year programme (I-B-A)

The integrational bridge year programme (Integrations-Brückenangebot) is aimed at adolescents who can't or can hardly speak German. Lessons in German as a second language and mathematics, as well as support in choosing a profession and in the integration process in Switzerland help prepare students for vocational education and training or for another form of further education.

Amt für Brückenangebote

Das [Amt für Brückenangebote](#) is responsible for the management, coordination, quality assurance and further development of the cantonal bridge programs with the profiles:

S-B-A | K-B-A | I-B-A.

3.2. Public baccalaureate schools



The Canton of Zug has two baccalaureate schools (Kantonsschule) which entitle graduates to enter university. The baccalaureate certificate (Maturitätsausweis) is recognised throughout Switzerland. Holders are entitled to study at a [university](#), an [ETH](#), a [university of applied sciences](#) (after internship) or a [teacher training college](#) (Pädagogische Hochschule).

There is also a specialised upper secondary school (Fachmittelschule) and an upper secondary business school (Wirtschaftsmittelschule) in the Canton of Zug. Upper Secondary Specialised School Certificate entitles the holder to attend a college of higher education. The specialised baccalaureate entitles the holder to study at a university of teacher education or a university of applied sciences. The vocational baccalaureate entitles the holder to study at a university of applied sciences. With the transition (Passerelle), a supplementary examination, the specialised baccalaureate or the vocational baccalaureate also entitles the holder to study at a university or a Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH). Preparation for the supplementary examination is voluntary. It can be done autodidactically or within the framework of preparatory courses, usually lasting two semesters.

Cantonal baccalaureate schools: [Kantonsschule Zug KSZ](#) [Kantonsschule Menzingen KSM](#)

Cantonal grammar schools: [Fachmittelschule FMS](#) [Wirtschaftsmittelschule WMS](#)

4. Private schools

4.1. Authorised private schools

The [private schools](#) are recognised in the field of compulsory school (Kindergarten, primary school, lower-Secondary level I) by the canton Zug. The contact details and the different offers of the private schools are available in the overview.

5. Advice and services

5.1. School services



School psychology services

The cantonal school psychology service (Kantonaler Schulpsychologischer Dienst SPD) advises teachers, school officials and parents in school and education related matters. In school related matters, it is usually the teacher who refers students to the school psychology service via the principal's office and in consultation with the parents. Parents may also directly contact the school psychology service: [Schulpsychologischer Dienst](#).

Speech and language therapy

Speech and language therapy measures are aimed at children and adolescents whose language communication skills are impaired or delayed to such an extent that their personal, social and academic development is threatened as a consequence. The skills in question include both spoken and written language. The speech and language therapy service (Logopädischer Dienst) is responsible for prevention, identification, diagnosis, advisory services and therapy. Application for a logopaedic evaluation requires the consent of the parents concerned and can be made by the parents themselves, the cantonal therapeutic education service, the cantonal school psychology service, the form teacher responsible after consultation with the school's therapeutic education specialist, the physician or dentist responsible.

Psychomotor therapy

Psychomotor therapy is aimed at kindergarten and school children as well as adolescents who are impaired in their motor skills and/or their relational skills to such an extent that their personal, motor, graphomotor and academic development is threatened as a consequence. Application for psychomotor therapy is effected, in consultation with the parents, by a physician, school psychologist or the cantonal outpatient psychiatric service for children and adolescents. Responsibility for prevention, diagnosis, advisory services and therapy lie with the cantonal psychomotor therapy service (Psychomotorischer Dienst).

For further information contact the principal's office at public schools ([Rektorate](#)).

The services are free of charge.

6. School holidays

6.1. Holiday calendar



The same [school holiday dates](#) apply to all public schools in the canton of Zug.

The school year always begins on the first Monday after August 15 and lasts at least 38 weeks for the pupils.

The rules for determining the school vacations are laid down in § 8a of the regulations to the school law (Reglement zum Schulgesetz, [BGS 412.112](#)). The Board of Education (Bildungsrat) delegates the operational determination of school vacations to the Office of Community Schools (Amt für gemeindliche Schulen). The vacations are determined and communicated five years in advance.

7. Contacts

7.1. Adresses

Supervisory school authority (Schulaufsicht)

The supervisory school authority ([Schulaufsicht](#)) offers information and advice on the school system in the Canton of Zug in order to ensure the best possible school integration for children and adolescents who have recently moved to the Canton of Zug. The supervisory school authority provides initial counselling and shows the various possibilities open to a child or adolescent depending on his or her educational and linguistic background. It explains the procedures required and provides contact details.

Office for Baccalaureate Schools, Upper Secondary Specialised Schools and University of Teacher Education


The Office for Baccalaureate Schools, Upper Secondary Specialised Schools and University of Teacher Education ([Amt für Mittelschulen und Pädagogische Hochschule](#)) is responsible for the transfer of pupils from the 2nd or 3rd secondary school and for the entry of pupils from a secondary school (cantonal, extra-cantonal, foreign) into a cantonal middle school.

Fachstelle Migration Zug (FMZ)

[FMZ](#) is the first point of contact for both newcomers to Zug and its existing residents. It advises on every aspect of life, living, working and studying in Canton Zug. FMZ is also responsible for providing information about schooling, apprenticeships and the Swiss education system. Consultations are free of charge and available in 12 languages.

7.2. School administrations of the municipal schools

The link will take you to the addresses and telephone numbers of the [school rectorates](#) of the municipalities in the canton of Zug.

A group of four students are gathered around a tablet, looking at the screen with interest and joy. One student is holding a yellow pencil. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

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