



# Children's Education in Saskatchewan

## Table of Contents

1. About Saskatchewan Schools
2. Registering Your Child in a School
3. How Families and Schools Work Together
4. Other Programs and Services

## 1. About Saskatchewan Schools

### **Q: Does the law require children in Saskatchewan to attend school?**

Yes. In Saskatchewan, children who have reached seven years of age must attend school until they reach the age of 16. Most children start school when they are younger than seven. Youth may continue to attend school up to the age of 22.

### **Q: How is the education system organized in Saskatchewan?**

In Saskatchewan, schools are organized into school divisions. Each school division is managed by a school board. School board members are elected through public elections held every four years. School boards make decisions about education for students in their area.

A school division has a central office, with a Director, and may have one or more superintendents, educational consultants, teaching and administrative staff.

Each school division in Saskatchewan is responsible for:

- Delivering education
- Maintaining school buildings and other facilities
- Hiring and supervising all people employed by their school division - including teachers, support staff and administrators
- Creating policies and programs to meet the needs of students and parents

The administrative head of each school is the principal, who works with a staff of qualified teachers, educational assistants, consultants and others in carrying out day to day school activities.

School community councils make decisions, provide advice, and develop plans for their local schools. These councils are made up of parents, school staff and community members.

The school year is usually from late August to the end of June and there are approximately 200 days of school every year. Classes are usually held from Monday to Friday, with no classes on the weekend (Saturday and Sunday).

To find out more about Saskatchewan's school system, you can read [\*Your Child's Education in Saskatchewan: A Handbook for Recent Immigrants\*](#) prepared by the provincial Ministry of Education. It is also available and in [Ukrainian](#).

### **Q: Who pays for education in Saskatchewan?**

Education in Saskatchewan is publicly-funded. This means that the money for education comes from the province's tax system. Textbooks are provided to students, but you must supply other school items such as notebooks, pencils and gym shoes. Saskatchewan public school students do not wear school uniforms. But, schools do have "dress codes" – a set of rules that tell you what is appropriate and acceptable clothing to wear to school.

### **Q: What is the structure of schools in Saskatchewan?**

#### Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten

Some schools operate a Pre-kindergarten program for three to five year old children. This program is supported by the Ministry of Education and school divisions. There is no fee for the program and transportation may be provided. You must apply to the school division to have your child take part in this program. The school registers a maximum of 16 children for a minimum of 12 hours per week. Children whose home language is not English may be given preference in registering in these programs.

Most schools in Saskatchewan offer a Kindergarten program to five year old children. There is no cost for Kindergarten. Usually school divisions offer Kindergarten for half-days every day or full-days every other day of the week. Parents can choose whether or not to send their children to Kindergarten.

## Elementary, Middle and Secondary Levels

In Saskatchewan, the levels of education are referred to as “elementary level” (grades 1-5), “middle level” (grades 6-9), and “secondary level” (grades 10-12). Schools can be organized in different ways and may offer some or all of the levels. Secondary level education is often called high school.

Completing high school is an important step toward further education and training.

Schools teach a wide variety of subjects including literature, math, science, geography, history, social sciences, arts education (including drama and music), physical education, languages, and “practical and applied arts” (carpentry, mechanics, and drafting).

### **Q: What choices do I have for my child’s education?**

While your options vary depending on where you live, in many parts of Saskatchewan, you need to decide whether you want your child to go to a public school or separate school. Both types of schools are publicly-funded in Saskatchewan. Public schools provide education with no religious instruction and separate schools provide education with religious instruction. In Saskatchewan, separate schools are primarily Catholic. To find out about the public or separate school closest to you visit [SaskSchools](#).

Some independent schools provide Christian religious studies. There are also some independent schools that provide Muslim religious studies such as the Saskatoon Misbah School and the Regina Huda School. Parents usually pay tuition fees for their children to attend these independent schools. Saskatchewan’s Ministry of Education has a list of [independent schools](#) in Saskatchewan on their website.

[Distance education courses](#) at the secondary level are available from a number of Saskatchewan school divisions.

[Home schooling](#) is also an option for those parents who have sincerely-held religious or philosophical beliefs that cannot be met in a public school and who wish to take responsibility for their child’s education. Parents must register with their local school division and follow the regulations established by the Ministry of Education.

### **Q: In what languages can my child study?**

The majority of educational options in Saskatchewan are in English. However, depending on where you live, you may have various other options.

You may choose French-language education for your children. Francophone schools are available for students whose first language is French and in some other situations. French immersion programs are available for students who want to learn French as a

second language. Francophone schools are publicly funded. Most public schools and separate schools also offer French classes as part of the overall program of study.

In Saskatoon, Ukrainian-English education is offered to students from Kindergarten to Grade 8 at Bishop Filevich Ukrainian Bilingual School.

The Saskatoon Public School Division also offers Cree Immersion. Cree is the most widely spoken language of First Nations (indigenous people) in Saskatchewan. First Nations have schools located on reserves. These schools are administered by the bands and/or Tribal Councils.

## **2. Registering Your Child in a School**

### **Q: How do I find a school?**

Once you have made choices about the language of instruction you want for your child and whether religious instruction is important, you need to check whether there is a school in your local area that meets your needs. You can do this by calling the School Division office (look under "Schools" in the Yellow Pages of the local telephone book). Or you might walk or drive around your neighborhood to find the name of the local school, then call them to find out more about the school. Your [Regional Newcomer Gateway](#) can also help you with information about schools in your area.

Most students in Saskatchewan attend schools within their local area, but if the services you need are not offered, your child may be transported without charge by school bus or taxi to another school. Parents do not pay a transportation fee if the school is not able to provide certain services. If it is a personal choice for your child to attend another school, you may have to provide your own transportation.

### **Q: How do I register my child in school?**

You can register your child in school at any time during the school year by visiting the school. To learn more about a school, you can contact the school division office. It may also be possible to arrange a tour of the school.

To register your child in school, you need to provide the following documents:

- A birth certificate or other document (such as a passport) for proof of identity, citizenship and age
- A certified translation of school records
- If available, health and immunization records

Documents should be translated into English or French before registering your child in school. Your [Regional Newcomer Gateway](#) can help you find a translator.

### **3. How Families and Schools Work Together**

#### **Q: How are parents involved in their child's education?**

Parents or guardians of children who are new to Saskatchewan should always talk with their child's teacher or the school principal if they have questions about education.

Family involvement in education is important in Canada because it helps students complete their studies successfully. Parents are welcome to volunteer their time and talents to help the school or their child's teacher in the classroom in many ways. To find out what you can do, talk with your child's teacher or school principal.

Schools try to keep parents and guardians informed about activities at the school. Schools may publish a regular newsletter with important notices and reminders or put announcements on the school's website. Parents are encouraged to read the newsletter or check the website to be informed about events at their child's school.

School community councils make decisions, provide advice, and develop plans for their local schools. These councils are made up of parents, school staff and community members.

Schools communicate regularly with parents or guardians about student progress. This may be formal, such as written progress reports, or informally through telephone calls or visits. Parent-teacher interviews and conferences that include parents, the student, and the teacher are arranged by the school to discuss progress reports. This is a regular part of schooling in Saskatchewan. All parents are asked to come to the school to learn about their child's progress.

#### **Q: As a parent, what rights and responsibilities do I have?**

You have the right to keep your child at home for religious holy days, if the child has a medical or dental appointment, or if your child is sick. If there are school activities which are contrary to your religious beliefs or philosophy, you can ask that your child not take part in them.

It is your responsibility to make sure that your child arrives at school on time and attends regularly. If your child is absent, you must report it to the school on that day by contacting the school as soon as possible.

### **Q: What are the rights and responsibilities of a student?**

Guidelines are in place to promote respect and safety for children, teachers, staff and school property. Discrimination, racism, bullying, and harassment are not tolerated. Students and staff cannot be physically or verbally abused. Generally, Saskatchewan schools approach discipline through kindness and fairness. No physical discipline is used with students. Violence is not tolerated under any circumstances.

Schools in Saskatchewan are committed to gender equality, and student diversity is both valued and accepted. The school system is committed to respect students of all ethno-cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs. Saskatchewan schools teach First Nations and Métis (indigenous) subjects, perspectives and ways of knowing.

Students are expected to arrive at school on time and attend regularly. It is the student's responsibility to maintain proper behaviour in speech and actions while in school, and to study diligently, including completing any homework assigned by the teacher.

## **4. Other Programs and Services**

### **Q: Do the schools offer more than academic training?**

Classes sometimes visit the community on field trips and take part in outdoor education with the help of parent volunteers. At the high school level, driver education is provided, including classroom and in-car training. Work-based experience programs are also available in high schools to give students the opportunity to gain experience in the workplace while they complete their studies.

Schools offer extra programs called "extra-curricular" activities which include school clubs, music groups or sports teams.

### **Q: How can my child get help learning the English or French they need for school?**

Many schools throughout Saskatchewan offer English classes called "English as an Additional Language (EAL)". The students attend regular classes, but receive additional language instruction according to their individual needs. Students over the age of 18 who need English language instruction should contact their local high school or regional college in order to find out what types of programs are available. For a list of regional colleges in Saskatchewan, please visit [Saskatchewan Regional Colleges](#).

Support at school is also available for students whose language of instruction is French.

**Q: Is help provided for children with special physical, learning or emotional needs?**

Yes. If a child experiences or is at risk for developmental delays, the Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP) can help. ECIP staff are located throughout Saskatchewan. They link families of special needs children with professional help, such as medical specialists, speech pathologists, nurses, and psychologists. This program is free. At school, students with special needs receive the services and professional staff support they need for free. Sometimes they receive special equipment. For example, children in wheelchairs may need special work tables and children who are blind may need Braille materials. There is more information about [Student Support Services](#) on the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's website.

**Q: Are there any special programs for children who are academically talented?**

School divisions in Saskatchewan accommodate academically talented students in a number of ways, such as providing:

- Enriched academic programs within the regular classroom
- Instructional methods which extend academic abilities
- Individualized or group instruction in "advanced" courses

**Q: How can my child study his or her language and culture?**

Check to see if there is a community organization in your area that offers heritage or international language training. Usually these classes are offered in the evenings or on the weekends for a small fee. You or your child might also be able to join an ethno-cultural choir, dance group or drama club. For more information, visit the website of the [Saskatchewan Organization for Heritage Languages](#).

**Q: Is care available for children before and after school hours?**

Most child care centres provide care for school-aged children before and after school hours and on days when schools are closed. Some schools also offer before and after-school childcare programs to meet the needs of working parents with school-aged children. Special camps and activities are sometimes offered by schools or community organizations for full days during holiday and vacation time. To find out about before and after-school care programs, call your local school division office or [Regional Newcomer Gateway](#).

## **Q. What programs are available for children who are not yet in school?**

### Child Care and Preschool/Playschool

Programs offered for very young children in Saskatchewan include child care, preschool, and playschool. These programs usually focus on learning through play, stories and songs, and promote language development through interaction with other children their age. Families can choose whether or not to send their children to these programs.

- **Child Care** – Licensed child care is offered in child care centres and in private homes. It is for children from six weeks to 12 years of age. Licensed child care is regulated and partially funded by the province. Child care centers are usually operated by non-profit corporations or co-operatives whose members are the parents of the children who are registered. Parents pay a fee set by the child care provider. It might be difficult to find licensed child care since there are not enough people offering this service. So it is important to reserve a place as far in advance of the date you want your child to attend as possible. More information is available from Saskatchewan's [Ministry of Education](#).
- **Preschool/Playschool** – Most communities in Saskatchewan have preschool or playschool programs for children who are three or four years old. Some programs are focused on things like providing education in specific languages. There are no provincial regulations in Saskatchewan guiding the operation of preschools, and no provincial funding is available. The majority of programs charge a fee and fees vary widely across the province. To find out about local preschool/playschool programs ask your school or school division, or your local child care centres. Your village, town or city municipal office or your [Regional Newcomer Gateway](#) may also be able to assist you.

**This document contains links and is best viewed online.  
This document, along with information on other topics,  
is available in various languages at:**

[www.saskimmigrationcanada.ca/information-in-various-languages](http://www.saskimmigrationcanada.ca/information-in-various-languages)

### **Questions?**

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Tel: (Canada 001) 306-798-7467

Website: [www.saskimmigrationcanada.ca](http://www.saskimmigrationcanada.ca)