

## How compulsory school attendance works if your child is going abroad

Sometimes there are occasions when you want your child to go abroad. It could, for example, be for a long vacation, or that you as a guardian are working abroad. In other cases, you and your family may want to visit your home country for a longer period. In this document you can read about the possibilities for a child with compulsory school attendance to go abroad.

### Compulsory school attendance

All children who live in Sweden (those in the population register) have compulsory school attendance beginning in the autumn semester of the year they turn six years old. To have compulsory school attendance means, among other things, that you as a guardian have to make sure that your child goes to school.

### The right to education

All children who have compulsory school attendance also have the right to education. To have the right to education means that your child has the right to free education in the Swedish school (pre-school, compulsory school, and compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities). The right to education is a protected right under Swedish law and the compulsory school administration (grundskoleförvaltningen) is responsible for making sure that children with compulsory school attendance living in Gothenburg receive the education they are entitled to.

### Compulsory attendance

All children attending school have a so-called compulsory attendance. That means your child has to attend school and participate in the classes, if there are no valid reasons for your child not to attend school. Examples of valid reasons for not attending school is if your child is sick or if they have been granted leave of absence.

### Rules for leave of absence do not apply to longer stays abroad

It is not a right for children with compulsory school attendance to take leave of absence from school. The general rule is that children should attend school. Read more about leave of absence on the [website of the Swedish National Agency for Education](#).

Headmasters, or someone appointed by the headmasters, may in certain circumstances grant leave of absence for your child. Headmasters can only grant a leave of absence of more than ten days if they determine that there are exceptional reasons for this.

Exceptional reasons means that there has to be a very compelling reason for the child to take leave of absence from the school. To go on vacation with the family is as a rule not an exceptional reason to be granted leave of absence.

Head teachers cannot grant leave of absence for several months. That is why the rules for leave of absence do not apply to longer stays abroad.

### **This is how you can apply for leave of absence**

Ask about an application form in your child's school or go to [goteborg.se](http://goteborg.se), fill in the application form and hand it in to a member of staff at the school.

### **Compulsory school attendance and extended stay abroad**

If you want your child to stay abroad for a longer period, during certain circumstances their compulsory school attendance can end, and your child will not continue in their current school.

#### **No compulsory school attendance if the child is abroad more than seven months**

In the City of Gothenburg, your child does not usually have compulsory school attendance if they are staying abroad for more than seven months. It is important that you send a notification to us three months before they are planned to leave the Swedish school, for us to determine if the child will continue to have compulsory school attendance or not. If we do not receive your notification, we will be required to contact you until we receive a notification.

If your child is abroad for an extended or indeterminate amount of time the primary school administration will notify the Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket) and the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan) which can affect any benefit payments.

Notify the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan) before you go abroad. Otherwise you risk having to repay benefits you were not entitled to.

If your child is going to stay abroad for more than one year, you are obligated to notify the Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket). [You can find a form for this at the Swedish Tax Agency \(Skatteverket\) website.](#)

#### **If your child no longer has compulsory school attendance**

If your child no longer has compulsory school attendance in Sweden, the child will not be allowed to continue their studies at their current school. If your child returns to Sweden, they will have compulsory school attendance again.

As a legal guardian you need to contact the primary school administration when the child returns to get them enrolled. We cannot guarantee that it will be in the same school or the same age group.

#### **If your child continues to have compulsory school attendance**

If we determine that your child's compulsory school attendance will continue, you as a guardian are obligated to make sure that your child gets to the school and continues their school attendance in Sweden.

If you do not make sure that your child is following the compulsory school attendance, the City of Gothenburg has the right to order you as a guardian to do so. If you still do not make sure your child goes to school, you may have to pay "vite" which is a kind of fine.

### **This is how you can notify us about an extended stay abroad**

Ask about an application form in your child's school or go to [goteborg.se](http://goteborg.se), fill in the application form and send it to [grundskola@grundskola.goteborg.se](mailto:grundskola@grundskola.goteborg.se) or to Grundskoleförvaltningen, Box 1015, 405 21 Göteborg. Please remember to notify us

before the stay abroad. The form is called: *Notification of extended stay abroad (Anmälan om längre vistelse utomlands)*.

## **If you want your child to do their compulsory attendance abroad**

The general rule is that children that have compulsory attendance should attend school in Sweden. Sometimes it may be necessary for the child to go to school abroad for a time. We can grant your child, in special circumstances, to fulfil their compulsory school attendance at a school abroad. If so, you need to apply for your child to fulfil their compulsory school attendance abroad. It is the heads of education (the superiors of the headmasters) who determine if your child can fulfil their compulsory school attendance abroad or not. For us to have time to decide your application, you need to submit it to us at least three months before starting the school abroad.

### **This is what is required for your child to do their compulsory school attendance abroad**

The requirements are high for your child to be granted permission to do their compulsory school attendance abroad. It is very rare that a child is allowed to fulfil their compulsory school attendance abroad. In order for us to grant your child to fulfil their compulsory school attendance abroad, three things are required:

#### **1. The school is an adequate alternative to the education in the Swedish compulsory school**

We always evaluate every school individually, and we make decisions about whether the school is an adequate alternative to the education in the Swedish compulsory school based on the following factors:

- The school follows the Swedish curriculum
- The school has the Swedish compulsory school curriculums as a base for the education

Examples of schools abroad that the compulsory school administration considers adequate alternatives include Swedish schools abroad (read more on the [website of the Swedish National Agency for Education](#)), distance learning through [Sofia Distans](#) and certain international schools aimed at children who are attending school in the country temporarily.

It is usually not enough for you, the guardian, to teach the child yourself with the support of your child's previous school in Sweden.

#### **2. The possibility of gaining insight into the child's school attendance**

The possibility of gaining insight into the child's school attendance abroad means that the compulsory school administration should be able to follow up on your child's progress at school. We would also need information showing that your child's school is following a curriculum for the education. It is also important for us to know if your child is present and attending classes.

#### **3. There are exceptional reasons to have continued compulsory school attendance abroad**

We always make an individual assessment to determine if there are any exceptional reasons. Exceptional reasons means that there must be a strong reason that your child is not able to stay in Sweden to attend school.

An example of an exceptional reason is if it is necessary for you as a guardian to work abroad and that the child has to live with you. You need to remember then that the work or the studies must be on behalf of the employer, and that you have to be able to prove this by, for example, an employer's certificate. It is not considered an exceptional reason if you decide for yourself to work abroad, for example, by working remotely.

### **This is how you apply for your child to do their compulsory school attendance abroad**

Ask about an application form in your child's school or go to [goteborg.se](http://goteborg.se), fill in the application form and send it to [grundskola@grundskola.goteborg.se](mailto:grundskola@grundskola.goteborg.se) or to Grundskoleförvaltningen, Box 1015, 405 21 Göteborg.

Remember that you need to submit the application to us at least three months before starting the school abroad. The form is called *Application for compulsory school attendance abroad* (*Ansökan om skolplikt på annat sätt*).