

Schools in Kanton Aargau



Information for Parents (englisch)

**DEPARTEMENT
BILDUNG, KULTUR UND SPORT**
Abteilung Volksschule

Distributor

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Introduction

With the following brochure we would like to give you the most important information about the school system in Aargau. This knowledge should help you to support your child with his/her upcoming or recent school enrollment in Aargau.

Following an overview of the overall structure of the Aargau public schools, the most important components will be described. The various school levels and school types will be addressed. Included are additional support and advisory services as well as further options related to professional education and continuing education.

An important factor for school success is the successful cooperation between school and parents. This partnership is delegated a chapter of its own.

Internet links, telephone numbers and contact addresses are provided at the end of each segment. Further information is available to parents at information events. As soon as your child is assigned to a kindergarten or school, teachers and school administrators are available to answer individual questions on site.

We wish your child a good school start in Canton Aargau!

Department of Education, Culture and Sport
Section Public Schools

Overview of the Public School System (Volksschule) in Canton Aargau

All children and youth living in Aargau are required to attend school. There are 11 years of compulsory school attendance. Compulsory attendance begins just before the child turns 5, at the end of the child's 4th year. The school year begins on the second Monday in August.

Compulsory School Period

Die compulsory school period includes three stages.

- Kindergarten (**Kindergarten**), duration 2 years.
- Primary school (**Primarschule**), duration 6 years.
- Upper-level (**Oberstufe**) (Secondary Level I), duration 3 years. Its components are the school types; basic upper-level (Realschule), intermediary upper-level (Sekundarschule) and advanced upper-level (Bezirksschule).

There are additional school forms for children with special needs, such as special education classes (Kleinklasse) or the decelerated first grade (Einschulungsklasse). A detailed description can be found in the chapters, "Primarschule" and "Sekundarstufe 1".

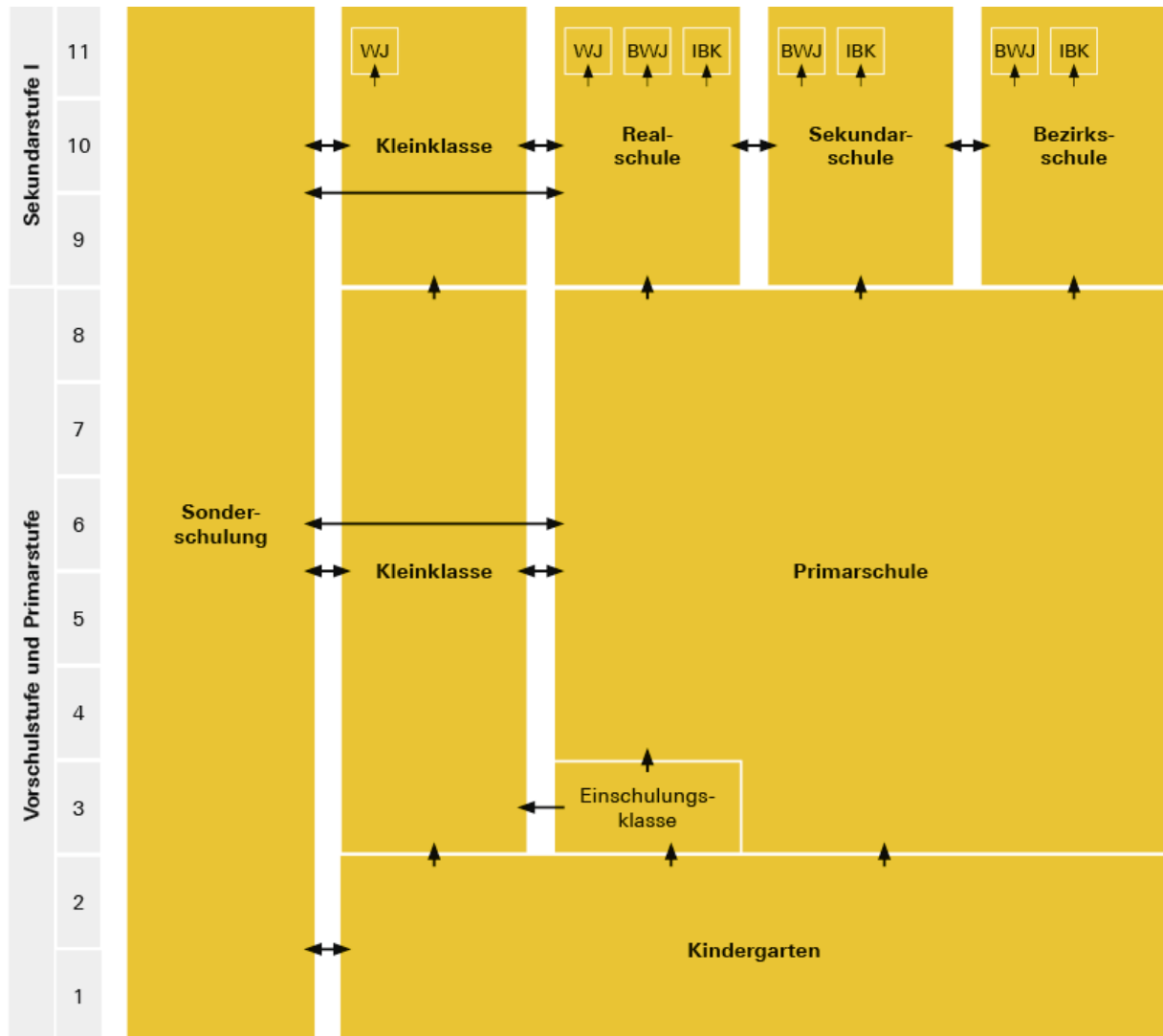
Special Education

Children and youth with disabilities are offered special means of support. Special education is integrative (within the regular classroom) or separate (in special education classes). There are also special education schools.

Federal System

The education system in Switzerland is federally structured. Each state has its own school system. The highest level of responsibility for the schools is held by the states (legal compliance) and the local communities (administration). The national government is responsible for career education.

The following model gives an overview of the structure of the compulsory public school in Canton Aargau. The graphic should be read from bottom (school entrance) to top (school graduation).



WJ: work year (Werkjahr) (option for youth from special education and the basic level school)

BWJ: career choice year (Berufswahljahr) (option for youth from the basic, intermediary and advanced levels as well as special education)

IBK: integration and career exploration class (Integrations- und Berufsfindungsklasse) (the 11th school year for youth who have been in Switzerland max. 2 years and completed, or partially completed, obligatory school in their country)

Important Information about the Public Schools

If you relocate...

Inquire at the community's administrative office where to register your children for school. You may also consult directly with the school administration office.

General Information

Public school instruction is free of charge for the obligatory school period. Communities provide school materials without cost.

The public school is secular. Public schools may not obstruct the constitutionally protected freedom of religion or the rights of parents.

Boys and girls are instructed together. They attend the same classes.

School Authorities

The Departement Bildung, Kultur und Sport (BKS), directs the school and education system.

The director of schools and the school board are responsible for the school's operation in every community. Community residents elect the school board. The school board selects the school director.

School Reports and Promotion

The parents of kindergarteners receive an evaluation of their child at the end of the school year. This provides information about the children's development.

Children receive a mid-term report in the first grade of primary school and the deceleration class. At the end of the school year, they receive a written evaluation of progress.

From the second grade of primary school until the third year of the upper level school, the students receive a mid-term report with orientation marks. At the end of the school year they receive a yearly report with marks. The highest mark is 6. The lowest is 1.

Detailed information regarding school evaluation reports can be found in the brochure, "Achievement Assessment and Promotion in the Aargau School System".

Further information is available at: www.ag.ch/leistungsbeurteilung-volksschule

Regular School Attendance

Parents or guardians are responsible for sending their children to school regularly. The responsible party can be fined if they don't send their child to school.



Unplanned Absences

Parents or guardians inform the teacher of the reason for a child's school absence. The teacher can require a written excuse. Valid excuses are in particular:

- Child's illness
- Death in the family

Unexcused absences while attending upper-level school (Oberstufe; Bezirks-, Sekundar- und Realschule) will be recorded in mid-term and year-end student reports.

Planned Absences

School law in Aargau permits children to take one half-day each quarter with their parent's permission (without declaring a special reason). They may take two half-days together, as a full day, each semester (permission through the school board).

For other foreseeable absences, authorization must be requested in advance and in writing from the school board (Schulpflege) or, if specified by the school board, from the school director or teacher. Possible reasons for an excused absence include: active participation in sports events, special religious holidays, internships or similar activities. An excused absence is also granted to enable the development of an exceptional talent, as long as it doesn't include an ongoing absence from a mandatory subject. Longer absences can only be permitted by the Department BKS.

During the first year of kindergarten the school board may allow a child's absence at the parent's request for up to one half day per week.

Holiday Schedule

The dates of the school holidays vary in each community. The school provides information regarding the school holiday schedule in your community. The dates of the holidays can also be found at the following internet address:

Further information is available at: www.schulen-aargau.ch > Schulen

School Doctor / School Dentist

The school doctor oversees the health conditions in the school. He conducts examinations of the children. These serve the early identification of health problems such as hearing, vision, speech, behaviour or motor disorders. In the event that a diagnosis is made, the school doctor will inform parents and a further course of action will be discussed.

From the first year of kindergarten through the third upper level class, students receive an annual coupon that entitles them to a dental examination with the dentist of your choice.

Further advice and information:

If you have question, it's best to consult your child's teacher.

You can find information regarding the various school levels and schools in the internet at the following address:
www.ag.ch/bks

Information regarding kindergarten, primary school and the upper school is also available here:

Departement Bildung, Kultur und Sport
E-Mail: volksschule@ag.ch, Tel. 062 835 21 00



Teamwork School – Parents

Responsibilities of the School

According to education law the school must do everything possible to ensure the child's healthy development during their school career. This includes ensuring that the children and young people remain unharmed. Good health is also a pre-requirement for school success.

The school is responsible for informing you regularly about what is happening in school and about your child's progress. For this reason, meetings with parents, informational evenings and events are scheduled. If you feel that you are lacking information, ask the teacher or school director.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parents

As parents you are responsible for your child's regular school attendance. It is also expected that you see that your child completes his or her homework and is sent to school well rested. By viewing your child's schoolwork and homework regularly, you show interest in his or her educational development and can support it.

Please be aware that you are required to respond to invitations from the school board or school (school director or teachers) to parent events and meetings.

Maintain contact with your daughter or son's teacher. Close cooperation between home and school can benefit children.

As parents you have the right to visit your child's class. Please contact the teacher in advance.

Prior to the point at which important decisions are made, you have the right to voice your opinion and to see records. The final decision will have to be open and justified in writing by the regional school board, "Bezirksschulrat". If you are not in agreement with this decision, in most cases you have the option to file a complaint with the district school board. Examples of important decisions with the right of appeal are:

- Entrance to kindergarten
- Entrance to the first class of primary school
- Assignment to therapeutic educational services, the decelerated first class or special education class
- Promotion into the upper level school
- Promotion, transfer within the upper level school types etc....
- Assignment to a special education school

Who can parents consult when they have questions or problems?

1. Talk with your child's teacher.
2. Consult with the school director.
3. Consult the school board.

As a forth step, if you are of the opinion that the school has not addressed your concerns correctly or thoroughly enough, you can consult with the School Commission (Sektion Schulaufsicht).

Contact the School Commission (Sektion Schulaufsicht). Tel 062 835 2105. Email sa.volksschule@ag.ch, www.ag.ch/schulaufsicht

Please also note the availability of advisory services for a wide range of needs (chapter, Advisory Services).

Kindergarten (2 years)

Kindergarten Entrance

Kindergarten attendance is obligatory.

Children who reach the age of four by July¹ 31st start kindergarten at the beginning of the next school year, i.e. August.

Subject Areas

Kindergarten attendance supports the development of the whole child. In kindergarten, children have the opportunity to further develop their interests and talents in a new environment. Learning takes place through play and builds the foundation for the development of language, math, motor, social and emotional skills in school.

Children who are interested in reading, writing and math will be supported. But there is no systematic instruction in reading, writing or math. If a child is especially talented he or she can be granted early entrance to primary school.

Children who do not speak German at home are supported in learning German in kindergarten.

A special education teacher will support children with developmental problems.

¹ Valid from July 31st 2018. Before which the community's administration may decide to incrementally move the date of enrollment from April 30th to July 31st.

Primary School (Primarschule) (1st to 6th Grade)

Primary School Mainstream Classes

Primary school includes the first through the fifth grades.

During the first school years children learn the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. As a class member, a child develops skills in teamwork, and his or her character is strengthened. The subjects music, art, sewing, physical fitness and sports are practiced and age-appropriate science topics are taught.

During instruction the varied skills and needs of individual students are taken into consideration. An important goal of primary school is supporting the development of independence, self-discipline and social skills.

Decelerated First Grade (Einschulungsklasse)

Children who haven't yet developed the skills for first grade can visit a decelerated first grade in which the first grade curriculum is taught over two years. At the end of the decelerated first grade, children generally enter the second grade of the primary school.

Integrated Special Education / Special Education Classes (Integrierte Heilpädagogik / Kleinklasse) Primary School

At most schools there is integrated special education. This means that children with learning disabilities attend mainstream classes in which trained special education teachers support them. If necessary they receive an individualized learning program with specific goals.

At a few schools there are special education classes to support children with learning disabilities. At these schools a trained special education teacher supports students' learning. The number of students per class is smaller than in mainstream classes. The learning objectives are based on the curriculum of the mainstream class.

Upper-Level (Oberstufe) / Secondary Level I (7th to 9th Class)

The secondary level 1 is divided into the three school types; basic upper-level (Realschule), intermediate upper-level (Sekundarschule) and advanced upper-level (Bezirksschule). The three schools differ in the varying levels of academic challenge required of students. Each school type is a three-year program.

Promotion from Primary School to the Upper-Level / Transfer within the Upper-Level School Types

The referral of students to one of the three school types is based on the recommendation of the sixth grade teacher in consultation with the parents. When the parents and the teacher are not in agreement, the school board makes the decision.

Competent and motivated students can also transfer later from one secondary level school type to another. To transfer teacher recommendation and the approval of the school board are required. The transfer is usually made at the end of the school year.



Upper-Level Basic

Upper-level basic is the upper-level school type with the lowest level of academic challenge. At the basic level students achieve a broad general education with a basic level of challenge. After completion of the basic level the majority of young people begin training for a trade or industry.

Good performance during an apprenticeship and vocational school provides young people with many educational and career opportunities in the professional world.

Upper-Level Intermediate

Upper-level intermediate offers a moderate level of academic challenge. It includes a broad general education and prepares students for professional training. A small number of students will attend the school of professional education (Fachmittelschule), business education (Wirtschaftsmittelschule) or computer science (Informatikmittelschule) on completion of the intermediate school.

For information regarding the entrance requirements of the schools of professional education, business education and computer science see chapter "Mittelschulen (Sekundarstufe II)" Upper-Level Advanced School

Upper-level advanced is the most academically demanding of the upper-level schools. It prepares students for a challenging apprenticeship as well as for middle school (university preparatory, professional or business middle school). Approximately half of the graduates begin an apprenticeship in the trades, industry or service. The rest attend a middle school.

For information regarding the entrance requirements of the university preparatory middle school, professional middle school, business or computer science middle school, see chapter "Mittelschulen (Sekundarstufe II)"

Upper-Level Integrated Special Education / Special Education

At most schools there is integrated special education. This means that young people with learning disabilities attend mainstream classes in which trained special education teachers support them. If necessary they receive a personal learning program with individual goals.

At a few schools there are special education classes to support young people with learning disabilities. The number of students per class is smaller than in mainstream classes. They receive a good general education and are prepared for work appropriate to their capability.

Special Classes for the last Upper-Level School Year

Career Choice Year (Berufswahljahr BWJ)

The career choice year is appropriate for students who need intensive support in choosing a profession and finding an apprenticeship. It is available to students in all three upper-level school types.

Trade Advisement Year (Werkjahr WJ)

The trade advisement year selects practically talented boys and girls from special education or the basic school. They are supported to find appropriate job training or employment.

Integration and Career Exploration Class (Integrations- und Berufsfindungsklasse IBK)

The integration and career exploration class is developed for young immigrants who have been in Switzerland a maximum of two years. Its goal is to facilitate the professional and social integration of these young people. In IKB, students are able to improve their German and deepen their knowledge of the general school subject areas. They are intensively prepared for job selection and employment.



Additional Supportive Measures

Support for children whose first language is not German

German as a Second Language Instruction (Deutsch als Zweitsprache DaZ) (kindergarten, primary school, upper level)

Children whose first language is not German learn German with other children and the teacher in kindergarten through daily participation in classroom life. When there are a number of children speaking a foreign language they will be supported with additional lessons in German as a second language. Children arriving in Switzerland in the second year of kindergarten will receive intensive instruction in German in the first class.

Foreign language speaking children, arriving during the primary school or the upper level school receive one year of intensive German instruction.

At the end of kindergarten, or the year of intensive German instruction, students receive an additional 2 – 3 years of supplemental German instruction. This course is offered at all school levels.

Course in Language and Culture of Origin HSK (as of 2nd school year)

Consulates, embassies and parent organizations offer courses in native language and culture. Attendance is highly recommended. It is important that children are supported in the development of their first language and in their knowledge about their parents' country of origin.

The courses in a child's native language and culture are only available to children upon registration by their parents. Information about the courses is available through coordinating offices at embassies, consulates and parent's organizations.

Information: Sektion Entwicklung, Themenbereich Sprache und Migration, Tel. 062 835 21 18

Addresses of coordinating offices: www.ag.ch/bildung > Unterricht & Schulbetrieb > Schule & Interkulturelles

Speech Therapy

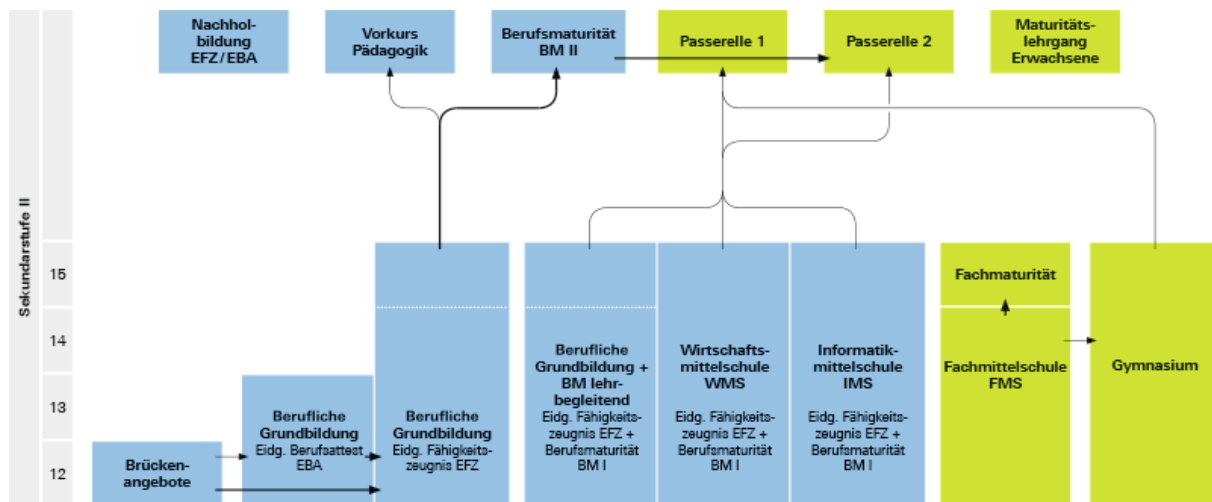
Speech therapy is offered for children with speech and language disorders. The service is free for parents.

Information is available for parents through the school administration or at www.ag.ch/bildung > Sonderpädagogik & Förderangebote > Logopädie & Legasthenietherapie

Overview of the Secondary Level II

The secondary level II includes vocational education, university preparatory education, the professional middle school and business middle school as well as the information technology middle school.

The following diagram gives an overview of the organization of the secondary level II in Aargau. The chart should be read from bottom to top.



Transitional Options Following Public School Education

Having completed the mandatory eleven years of public school, the majority of young people move on to professional or other continuing education. Yet some young people are in need of further support in entering the professional world. There are transitional options for these students, such as the bridge programs offered by the cantonal school for professional education (ksb), or motivational semesters (SEMO), offered by the regional employment services (RAV).

Brückenangebote offered by the cantonal school for professional education

Young people who have completed the final year of upper-level school, who are willing to learn, invest and prepare themselves in depth for their basic professional education have the option of a bridge program offered by the cantonal school for professional education (ksb). The courses, which generally last one year, are dedicated to enhancing the individual student's general education, as well as supporting personal development with regard to both the career interests and sociocultural integration. The students are also offered guidance in finding appropriate job training.

Motivation Semester

The motivational semester (SEMO) assists young people without employment in finding a training position or other access to the professional world. Here young people are able to gain their first experiences with professional life and develop new perspectives. A motivational semester consists of education, work and job application training. The regional employment services (RAV) provide the work assignments. Foundations or non-profit organizations usually conduct the motivational semesters.

Registration

Access to the bridge programs and the motivational semesters is gained through the service "Wegweiser". Young people who have not found a solution following public school education sign up for the service "Wegweiser" and are directed to the offer that best matches their needs.

Departement Bildung, Kultur und Sport
Abteilung Berufsbildung und Mittelschule
Anlaufstelle Wegweiser
Kasinostrasse 29, Postfach 2254, 5001 Aarau
www.ag.ch/wegweiser
E-Mail: wegweiser@ag.ch, Tel. 062 835 41 40

Career Training (Sekundarstufe II)

Basic Vocational Education (Berufliche Grundbildung)

Vocational education is the most important first training in Switzerland. It enables young people to enter the world of work and provides them with a solid professional basis. Besides practical training in a company, the trainees attend a vocational school one to two days per week. The training lasts two to four years depending on the field of work.

- A three or four year vocational education program leads to a national certificate (eidgenössischen Fähigkeitszeugnis EFZ),
- A two-year vocational education program to a national certificate (eidgenössischem Berufsattest EBA).

The completed apprenticeship is an important prerequisite for permanently maintaining a place in the workplace. It opens up many career prospects and attractive training opportunities.

With the recognized qualifications, access to higher vocational education (based on EFZ) or to a further basic education (based on EBA) is opened.

Further information is available at: www.ag.ch/berufsbildung



Vocational Middle School (Berufsmittelschule)

Talented and motivated youth who have completed vocational education can attend a specialized vocational school in addition to mandatory courses and complete their training with a vocational diploma (Berufsmaturität).

Graduates with a vocational diploma hold a double qualification: On the one hand they are trained specialists. On the other hand the professional degree entitles them to entrance to study at a technical college. (Fachhochschule).

Admittance to a vocational middle school occurs without an exam, on the basis of grade average in the last year of the advanced or intermediate upper school, or on the basis of an examination.

Further Information regarding the entrance requirements of a vocational middle school: www.ag.ch/mitelschulen

Information regarding professional training and counseling is available through Counseling Services for Job Training and Employment and their information centers.



Middle Schools (Secondary Level II)

Middle schools are schools that follow completion of the eleven obligatory school years. They lead to various diplomas depending on school type and enable entrance to higher specialized training schools, technical colleges or universities.

Professional Middle School (Fachmittelschule FMS) und Professional Diploma (Fachmaturität FM)

The professional middle school FMS prepares students for a challenging education in specialized professions. In Aargau training in the following four fields of employment is offered: education and design, health, social work and communication. The FMS is a three-year program that awards a nationally recognized, professional, middle school certificate. At completion it is possible to earn a professional diploma that enables entrance to higher institutions of education for specific careers.

Business Middle School (Wirtschaftsmittelschule WMS)

The business middle school prepares students for careers in business. After three years of training and a successfully completed, yearlong internship in a company, one earns a national certificate in business (das Eidgenössische Fähigkeitszeugnis EFZ Kaufmann/Kauffrau) and a business diploma (kaufmännischen Berufsmaturität). This enables promotion to a technical college and to the gateway option (see "Gateway Option").

Computer Science Middle School (Informatikmittelschule IMS)

The computer science middle school combines general education, computer education and business training. After three years of school and a fourth-year internship at a company, one earns a national competence certificate in computer science (Eidgenössische Fähigkeitszeugnis EFZ Informatiker / Informatikerin) in the area of application development as well as a business diploma. This enables entrance to a technical college and the gateway option (see "Gateway Option").

Acceptance Requirements FMS WMS / IMS

Admittance to the professional middle school, business middle school and computer science middle school occurs without an exam, on the basis of grade average in the last year of the advanced or intermediate upper-level school, or on the basis of an examination.

Further Information regarding the entrance requirements of a professional middle school, middle school of business or computer science: www.ag.ch/mitelschulen

University Preparatory School (Gymnasium)

An education in one of the six state university preparatory schools takes four years and leads to a nationally recognized diploma (Maturität). This diploma entitles the student to examination-free entrance to a Swiss university. A qualifying exam is required to study medicine.

Admittance to a university preparatory middle school occurs without an exam, on the basis of grade average in the last year of the advanced upper-level school. Students, who can document successful completion of an equivalent education, have the additional option, during the following year, of entrance on the basis of an examination.

Further Information regarding the entrance requirements of a vocational middle school: www.ag.ch/mitelschulen

Gateway (Passerelle)

The gateway option is available to good students who have earned a career diploma and allows them entrance, through an examination, to a Swiss university. The completion of the gateway option does, however, not equal a legal university preparatory school diploma and does not necessarily entitle a student to study at a foreign university.

Aargau Diploma School for Adults AME

The diploma apprenticeship at the AME is a work compatible, three and one half year educational program that leads to a nationally recognized university preparatory diploma. The prerequisite for AME is a completed apprenticeship or three years of employment. The minimum age is 20. School is attended alongside two days per week of work.

Further information is available at www.ame.ch



Advisory Services

School Psychologist

The services offered by the school psychologist are designed for children and youth from kindergarten until the end of secondary level 1 and their guardians.

Reasons for consulting the school psychologist include:

- The student is academically overwhelmed or under-challenged.
- The student has a problem with his or her school performance.
- The student exhibits unusual or disruptive behaviour.
- A decision is made to transfer children with special needs to a special school or integrated setting.
- Parents, teachers and a child are in conflict with one another,
- Parents have questions about their child's development (for example: fear, aggression, lack of concentration).
- A child experiences violence at home.

The services of the school psychologist are available free of charge.

Parents, guardians and young people 14-years-old and older, who have questions or problems, can make contact by phone or directly via a registration formula at the offices of school psychological services.

Teachers and other third parties may enroll students only with the written agreement of parents.

Further information is available at: www.ag.ch/schulpsychologie
E-Mail: sp.volksschule@ag.ch

Regionalstellen des Schulpsychologischen Dienstes:

Aarau: E-Mail: spd.aarau@ag.ch, Tel. 062 835 40 00

Bad Zurzach: E-Mail: spd.zurzach@ag.ch, Tel. 062 835 41 00

Baden: E-Mail: spd.baden@ag.ch, Tel. 062 835 40 20

Rheinfelden: E-Mail: spd.rheinfelden@ag.ch, Tel. 062 835 40 40

Wohlen: E-Mail: spd.wohlen@ag.ch, Tel. 062 835 40 60

Zofingen: E-Mail: spd.zofingen@ag.ch, Tel. 062 835 40 90

Children and Youth Psychiatric Services

A doctor directs the children and youth psychiatric services. They examine and treat emotionally troubled children of preschool and school age, as well as teenagers. Registration is possible through parents, by the youth themselves or youth protective services. Other professionals need parental permission.

Regional clinics are available in Aarau, Baden, Rheinfelden and Wohlen.

Information and registration:

Monday through Friday, 8–12.00 and 13.30–17.30, emergency: 24 hours and 365 days

Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrischer Dienst

Zentrales Ambulatorium für Kinder und Jugendliche ZAKJ

Postfach 432, 5201 Brugg

www.pdag.ch

E-Mail: kipd.zakj@pdag.ch, Tel. 056 462 21 20



ask! – Aargau Advisory Services for Career and Education

The advisory services for career and education (Beratungsdienste Aargau (BDAG) support, help and guide people in their personal development. The services are offered essentially free of charge for residents and students in Aargau.

Career, school choice, job training, middle school, continuing education, professional life, job market – there is information pertaining to all of these topics available at the six information centers or online.

In addition to personal coaching there are numerous information events for young people and parents. Information events are offered in many languages for parents speaking a language other than German.

For information regarding all services: www.bdag.ch

To contact the information centers:

Aarau: E-Mail: blb@bdag.ch, Tel. 062 832 64 10

Baden: E-Mail: baden@bdag.ch, Tel. 062 832 65 10

Bad Zurzach: E-Mail: zurzach@bdag.ch, Tel. 062 832 65 60

Rheinfelden: E-Mail: rheinfelden@bdag.ch, Tel. 062 832 65 50

Wohlen: E-Mail: wohlen@bdag.ch, Tel. 062 832 65 70

Zofingen: E-Mail: zofingen@bdag.ch, Tel. 062 832 64 80

Center Team (Fachstelle Team 1155)

The Center Team 1155 supports young people who have difficulty with their apprenticeship from the start, throughout the training and until its completion. The service is free of charge and confidential.

Information regarding this service: www.1155.ch

E-Mail: 1155@ag.ch, Tel. 0800 1155 00 (cost-free number)

**Departement
Bildung, Kultur und Sport**

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