



### **COMPULSORY EDUCATION: PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION**

#### **Structure and duration**

In Greece compulsory education lasts for nine years (from the year in which the child reaches six years of age until s/he reaches 15), of which the first six years are spent at primary school (Dimotiko Skholio) and the last three years at lower secondary school (Gymnasio).

Primary education is intended for pupils aged 6 to 12 years and includes six grades (classes). Gymnasio is intended for pupils aged 12 to 15 and it is divided into three grades or classes. It provides a general education in all classes and it can be day or evening school.

Also in Greece, there are experimental Kindergartens (see below) offering specific types of education.

#### **School year**

The school year runs from 1st or mid-September until mid-June for primary education and until the end of June for lower secondary education. It is divided into two semesters.

Lessons run from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

#### **Entry requirements**

When the child reaches the age of six s/he is admitted to primary education in the school nearest to her/his place of residence. A birth certificate is required as proof of age.

Primary school leavers are automatically admitted to the first class of Gymnasio without examination. The only document required is the school-leaving certificate from elementary school.

#### **Tuition fees**

Primary schools can be either State schools or private institutions. In State schools education, all compulsory schooling is provided free of charge. Books and transportation are also provided free of charge.

#### **Languages**

The compulsory teaching of English starts in the fourth class of primary school (three hours per week). Foreign languages are also taught in the Gymnasio (English/French and German).

**Promotion**

## a) Primary school:

At the end of the school year, pupils in classes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are awarded a "progress certificate" in which the word "promoted" (or released in the event of failure) is written. Pupils are automatically promoted to the next class. A pupil must repeat a class only when s/he has attended school for less than half the school year.

## b) Lower secondary school:

At the end of each year pupils sit an examination. The final mark of each pupil is based on her/his average mark for oral assessment and the mark in the written examinations at the end of the year. Pupils are promoted to the next class if their final mark in all the subjects is on average at least 10 out of a possible 20. If this mark is not achieved in one to four subjects, the pupil is entered to resit the examinations in September. If the mark is below 10 in more than four subjects, the pupil repeats the class. Pupils also remain in the same class if they have exceeded the stipulated limit for absences.

**Certification**

## a) Primary school

At the end of class 6, pupils are given a study certificate for use when enrolling at a Gymnasio. It contains the final mark average for the year.

## b) Lower secondary school

At the end of Gymnasio, pupils receive the leaving-certificate (Apolytirio Gymnasiou). To be awarded such a certificate, a pupil must as a rule have an average of 10 out of a possible 20 in all subjects and must not have exceeded the permitted number of absences from school.

**Financial assistance**

There is state financial assistance, in the form of scholarships and loans for pupils. Under certain circumstances free meals and housing are provided. Social assistance is limited and consists of a small number of scholarships, donations and financial support for all levels of education from both public and private sources. Two kinds of family allowance are also available: an allowance for children of students and an allowance for families with many children.