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## Education and Training



The Australian school year runs from January to December, with four school terms. The longest holiday is over the Christmas period (the Australian summer). Most educational institutions close for at least six weeks over the Christmas holidays.

There are three other two-week school holidays during the year, in April (Easter), July and October.

The school day generally runs from 9.00am to 3.00pm.

### Public schools

Each Australian state runs and manages its own education system. Almost a third of NSW schools are privately run, including primary and high schools.

Public schools are free but parents are asked to pay fees for textbooks and the school library, plus extra amounts during the year for school excursions and special performances.

The NSW Government has recently changed fee structures for temporary visa holders. Guidelines are available by visiting the [Department of Education and Training](#) website.

### Private schools

Private schools are competitively priced when compared to schools in Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong.

In NSW, there are some 900 private schools, catering for all age groups from primary to high school. Many private schools are affiliated with church organisations. Boarding facilities are provided within many schools and fees range from around A\$2,000 to over A\$20,000 a year.

You can search for private schools at the [Private Schools of Australia](#) website for all non-government schools or on [CitySearch](#). You will usually have to phone the school in person to get an idea of fees and facilities.

### Pre-school

Long day care centres are available for babies and children up to school age and they generally operate from 7am to 6pm.

Children aged from two to five can attend a kindergarten or pre-school. Most of these are privately run and have shorter hours than daycare centres.

Day care centres and Education in NSW can start at a kindergarten or pre-school - the majority of pre-schools are privately run. Children from two to five years can attend these schools.

Fees vary but you may be able to claim some back from the Government if you work, depending on your income and visa status. Find out more from [Centrelink](#).

### Primary school

In NSW, children must turn five before July 31 in the year they start school and must start school by their sixth birthday.

The first year of primary school is called kindergarten and children complete another six years of primary school, Years One to Six, before going on to secondary or high school.

### Vaccinations

You may find that primary and pre-schools insist your children have been vaccinated against childhood illnesses such as polio, smallpox, measles and diphtheria. You will need to show a vaccination certificate and schools usually ask to see your child's birth certificate for proof of age.

### Secondary school

In NSW, students enter secondary school in Year Seven at age 11 or 12 and can legally leave school at age 15.

There are four kinds of government-run high schools in NSW:

- local comprehensive high schools
- central schools that service rural and isolated communities
- specialist high schools including sports, performing arts, technology and languages high schools and entry requirements can include extra tests or auditions
- selective high schools that accept students who attain the highest results in the Selective High School Test, held in June each year.

To find a primary or high school in your area visit the [Department of Education website](#).

Students are examined for their School Certificate in year 10 and Higher School Certificate (HSC) in year 12.

The HSC mark determines which courses the student is eligible for admission to at universities and colleges in NSW.

### International schools

In Sydney, the [American International School](#) offers an American based curriculum, Australian content and the International Baccalaureate exam.

The [French School of Sydney](#) or Lycee Condorcet also offers the International Baccalaureate, as does the [German International School](#).

You can find a number of private secondary schools in Sydney that also offer the exam on the [International Baccalaureate Organisation website](#).

Sydney is also home to [Rudolf Steiner](http://www.steiner-australia.org/alphabet.html) [http://www.steiner-australia.org/alphabet.html] and [Montessori schools](#).

#### Universities and colleges

Almost one in six of the NSW population in the 15-64 age bracket has a bachelors degree or higher and almost half have post-school qualifications.

For information on the entry requirements for universities and colleges visit the [Universities Admissions Centre website](#). This site also provides a course search facility and details of admission requirements for overseas students.

A full list of Australia's universities and colleges is available from [The Good Guides website](#). The site lists courses and campuses and rates their facilities. It also has sections on courses for international students and corporate executives.

Colleges of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) are located around NSW and offer a wide range of diploma courses that are usually shorter than university degree courses. Diplomas also tend to have more of a commercial or practical focus such as car mechanics, hairdressing and plumbing.

The [TAFE website](#) lists courses, college locations, and visitor and entry requirements for NSW residents and overseas students.

Adult Education courses are available around NSW and cover a wide range of topics. Courses in instructional topics usually last for a term and classes are generally held in the evenings. To see what is available go to the [Adult and Community Education website](#).