



# Key questions and answers on inclusive schooling

- In easy English -



Niedersachsen

Dear parents, guardians and pupils,

**Inclusion at school means:**

All children can learn together.  
Schools are removing obstacles to this.  
Every single child receives support.  
Some children need a bit more help at school.  
Some children need a bit less help.

Some children have something they can do especially well.  
And some children learn especially quickly.

Since the 2013/2014 school year, there has been inclusion at all schools.

The parents can decide:

Should my child go to an inclusive school?

Or should my child go to a special school?

This publication answers many questions about inclusion.

You will also find information online.

The Internet address is: [www.mk.niedersachsen.de](http://www.mk.niedersachsen.de)

(information in German)

With best wishes,

Grant Hendrik Tonne

Lower Saxony's Minister for Education



## What does inclusion mean?

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Inclusion means:

People with disabilities have the same rights as people without disabilities.

They should take part in public life.

They should not have to face obstacles.

They also have a right to go to school.

At all schools, pupils should be able to learn together.

Schools are trying hard to make this happen.

A school for everyone needs (for example):

- Experts to support pupils in their learning.
- Toilets and lifts for pupils who use wheelchairs.

## Why has inclusion been introduced in schools?

There are many different laws.

One of these laws is called 'The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'.

All regions and countries have to keep to the law.

Including the state of Lower Saxony.

Lower Saxony wants to help all people with disabilities.

With this help, they can be involved in public life.

The government needs to assist with this.

Schools care about this and play a part too.

## What are the benefits of a school where there is inclusion?

Pupils who live in the same place can learn together at the same school.

They can learn from each other.

They can experience things together.

The teachers also work together.

They help children with disabilities and children without disabilities.

## Are pupils who learn more quickly held back by pupils who learn more slowly?

No.

They all learn as well as they can.

And some children get special help.

Our experience of inclusion has been positive.

The children learn with each other and they learn from each other.

They all help one another.

## **How are the teachers prepared for inclusion at school?**

Since the year 2011, there has been special training for teachers on the subject of inclusion.

Many teachers have already taken part.

They are preparing well for inclusion.

These training courses are regularly reviewed.

And they are being improved.

## **What help are schools getting for inclusion?**

Each school receives help and advice from special-school teachers.

They work together with other teachers in the different classes.

There are also other education professionals.

The schools receive guidance and support from special 'mobile services' (called Mobile Dienste in German).

They can also get help from the regional state agency for schooling and education (called RLSB in German).

## **What has changed at primary schools?**

Since the 2016/2017 school year, inclusion has been in place from Year 1 to Year 4.

Special-school teachers now also work at all primary schools.

The phrase used for this is 'basic service provision in special-needs education'.

This is for pupils who need special help especially with learning, language, and emotional and social development.

For children with other disabilities, there is more support as well as this.

## **What has changed at secondary schools?**

Inclusion in Year 5 began in the 2013/2014 school year. Starting with the 2021/2022 school year, all school years at secondary schools are now inclusive. Secondary schools now receive additional teacher hours for each pupil who needs special educational support.

Inclusion has also been introduced at vocational training schools (called berufsbildende Schulen in German).



## **Where can pupils get a special-school-leaving certificate?**

Pupils who need special help with learning in particular can obtain a school-leaving certificate from a special school with a learning focus (called Abschluss der Förder-Schule Lernen in German) at the end of Year 9.

This is possible at a special school.

And at a mainstream (ordinary) school as well.

Pupils can also get other qualifications after gaining their special-school-leaving certificate.

## **What are inclusive schools with a particular special-needs focus?**

Towns and local authorities may have an inclusive school with a particular special-needs focus (called a Schwerpunkt-Schule in German). These belong to the mainstream group of schools and are not special schools. Children who need special help with one certain thing in particular can go there straight away.

For such children, these Schwerpunkt-Schulen are already free of obstacles.

A Schwerpunkt-Schule must not be too far away from where the children live.

## **Who decides what help a child needs?**

The teachers say when a child at a school needs more help.

They write a report saying what they think, and talk with the parents.

The RLSB agency then decides what special help a child needs.

## **Which school is the right one?**

Pupils with disabilities can pursue any educational track.

Their parents decide which school their child with disabilities should go to.

This could be a primary school.

Or it could be a secondary school.

Or a special school.

The teachers guide the parents with this decision.

And the parents can also get advice from the RZI centre (see next page).

## **What about private schools?**

The same applies to these schools as to state schools.

There is inclusion at private schools as well.

However, private schools do not belong to the federal state of Lower Saxony.

## Where can I find out about nearby schools where there is inclusion?

You can go to a regional advice and support centre for inclusive schooling. These are called RZI for short in German.

The state of Lower Saxony has set up an RZI centre in almost every district. A contact person there will be able to answer many questions about inclusion. He or she will also help to find a suitable school nearby.

A list of RZI centres can be found on the website of the regional agency for schooling and education (called RLSB in German):

**[www.rlsb.de](http://www.rlsb.de) > Organisation > Dezernate (Departments) > RZI**

## Where can I find out more?

If you have further questions, you can contact the following people at the regional state agency for schooling and education (RLSB):

Braunschweig:

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Detailed rules for schools where there is inclusion can be found online:  
[www.mk.niedersachsen.de](http://www.mk.niedersachsen.de) > Schule (School) > Inklusive Schule (Inclusive school)

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