

Elternbrief

Englisch

Dear parents,

During the 2018/19 school year the Ministry of Education established so-called “Remedial German Classes (Deutschförderklassen)“.

1. What’s new?

If your child speaks a language other than German at home, he or she will be invited to be tested before starting school. Your child’s German proficiency will be evaluated with the MIKA-D test.

If your child doesn’t pass the test, it means he or she will **not be allowed** into a grade one class and will have to join a “Remedial German Class (Deutschförderklasse)“.

2. What is a Remedial German Class?

Your child will join a class, along with the other children who didn’t pass the test, where he or she will learn German from a teacher.

3. What is the MIKA-D test?

The test should evaluate German proficiency. It lasts approximately 30 minutes. Your child sits alone in a room with a stranger and needs to speak to a paper lion. The test shows if your child can put words in the correct order in a sentence, when speaking.

4. What happens to your child afterwards?

Your child will be tested once a semester. At this stage a decision will be made as to whether he or she can join a regular class.

5. What happens if your child doesn’t pass the test again?

Your child may only go to grade 1 in a primary school if he or she passes the test, or when a period of two years has passed. Your child will only be allowed to move up to the next grade when he or she passes the test with ‘satisfactory’. It can also happen that your child is **seven, eight or even nine years old** and has to be in a class with **children that are six years old**. In this way your child would need **five or six years** for primary school instead of four years.

6. Why are Remedial German Classes being criticised?

The MIKA-D test, which is being used to test your child, does not comply with international quality standards. Your child only has the teacher as a language role model in the “Remedial German Class”. But, children learn best from other children and when they speak to each other. Your child loses life and learning time. He or she is older, but has to go to a grade one primary school class with six year olds. Your child will be stressed. You will be stressed.

7. How often does this happen?

According to Statistik Austria approximately 68% of the children **did not manage** to change into a regular class from the school year 2018/19 to 2019/20. In Vienna 69,4% of the children did **not** manage to change into a regular class. This means that many children have to spend more than one year in a “Remedial German Class”. Numerous children lose up to two school years through this.

8. What would the alternative be?

Before the introduction of “Remedial German Classes” children were enrolled in school together, regardless of the language they spoke at home. Additional teachers were allocated for those pupils where it was deemed necessary. Depending on the school, these children received additional support during ‘normal’ lessons, or attended remedial German lessons afterwards.

A big advantage was that the children wanted to speak with and amongst each other and language development took place along the way.

Many schools have worked together with academics and researchers and through this a lot of experience has been collected. These experiences could help to teach children together again and not divide them into separate categories.

Please sign the petition in order to discontinue “Remedial German Classes”. All children should go to school together. No child should lose school years unnecessarily.