

Korea 101: Education



Korean Education System

(1) Child Care Centers and Kindergartens

Established under the Child Care Act, child care centers are for pre-school infants and young children under six years of age in need of child care. The types of child care centers include national or public child care centers; child care centers of social welfare corporations; child care centers of corporations, organizations, etc.; workplace child care centers; cooperative child care centers; and private child care centers. Child care centers are open up to six days a week and more than 12 hours a day on weekdays.

They differ in fees and operations depending on their type.

As opposed to child care centers caring for infants and young children, kindergartens are schools run for young children. Kindergartens are divided into national kindergartens established and operated by the state: public kindergartens established and operated by local governments; and private kindergartens established and operated by corporations or individuals. Currently, three years of early childhood education is provided free of charge. As of 2019, parents are eligible for support for their children's kindergarten education, starting from 3-5 years of age, regardless of their income level. Apply for the support at a community service center in the Eup/Myeon/Dong administrative office or make an online application at the following address*:

*Bokjiro website: <http://www.bokjiro.go.kr> (language: English, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese)

(2) Elementary/Middle/High School Courses

School education in Korea consists of six years of elementary school, three years of middle school, three years of high school, and four years of university (2-3 years of college). The six years of elementary school and three years of middle school are mandatory and free. High school education is not compulsory, and parents have to pay for their children's tuition fees including entrance fee which differ according to region and school type. However, as the free high school education bill was recently passed, free high school education will be implemented in stages starting from seniors in the second semester of 2019. Starting in 2021, free high school education will expand nationwide. However, that is not the case for private schools, each of which charges differently.

Parents must send their children to an elementary school from March of the year following the year in which the date on which they reach six years of age falls. They must also send them to a middle school at the beginning of the school year following the school year in which they graduate from an elementary school and have them attend the middle school until they graduate therefrom. Students can be admitted to a high school when they have graduated from middle school, or have passed a test that grants them academic qualifications equivalent to those given to middle school graduates.

Elementary, middle and high schools divide a school year into two semesters. After the first semester, there is a summer vacation lasting for about a month. At the end of the second semester, there is a winter vacation and a spring vacation lasting for about a month and one to two weeks, respectively. Generally, the first semester begins in early March and the second semester starts in late August or early September.



Types of High Schools

<p>General High School</p>	<p>General high schools account for the most among high schools in Korea. Students are selected by computer draw or middle school grades depending on region.</p>
<p>Special-purpose High School</p>	<p>Special-purpose high schools serve special purposes in high school education. They include science high schools, foreign language high schools, international high schools, art high schools, physical education high schools, and meister schools. Students are selected based on their middle school grades, teachers' recommendations, interviews and skill tests.</p>
<p>Specialized High School</p>	<p>Specialized high schools are aimed at training competent people through experience-oriented education such as field training. In addition to general high school courses, students in these schools receive professional education in agricultural biotechnology, industry, commerce and information, and fisheries and shipping.</p>
<p>Autonomous High School</p>	<p>Compared to the other types of high schools, autonomous high schools are freer from authorities' control in school administration and curriculum management. They are divided into 'autonomous public high schools' and 'autonomous private high schools'.</p>

(3) Universities

College admissions are divided into two systems: Susi (nonstandardized admissions track) depends on records of school register and nonsul (essay) writing performance while Jeongsi (traditional admissions track) is based on the results of the College Scholastic Ability Test, or CSAT. Universities and colleges present different criteria and requirements for admission.

Types of Colleges

Four-year universities, industrial colleges, college of education, Korea National Open University, cyber colleges, 2-3 year junior colleges and technical colleges.



If you have further questions please contact



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or visit



www.investkorea.org