

## Option 2: Special needs school

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### **What special needs schools are available in the district of Oberbergischer Kreis?**

Oberbergischer Kreis has a total of seven state special needs schools at secondary education level I. These cover the key support areas of learning (LE), emotional and social development (ES), physical and motor development (KME), language (SQ) and intellectual development (GG). The key support areas of sight (SE) and hearing and communication (HK) are only offered outside of Oberbergischer Kreis.

### **What school leaver's qualifications can my child obtain at a special needs school?**

Alongside learning and mental development programmes, special needs schools also offer standard education. Pupils can obtain all qualifications available to secondary leavers at education level I: the certificate of secondary education after year 9, the certificate of secondary education after year 10 (type 10A) and, if applicable, also the general certificate of secondary education (type 10B).

If you have specific questions, all special needs schools will be happy to provide parents with advice regarding school leaver's qualifications.

## Further questions

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### **I would like to change my original choice of educational setting. Is that possible?**

If, during the weeks after your consultation with the primary school, you decide that you would prefer a special needs school to a regular secondary school or vice versa, please get in touch with the inclusion office of the education authority as quickly as possible.

### **How do I find out where a school place is available for my child?**

You will receive written confirmation from the education authority from February onwards. This can take between two and three weeks, because the authority is required to send out an average of 270 letters. You can ask your child's primary school where a place is available for them from mid-January.

## The education authority for Oberbergischer Kreis

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In addition to your points of contact at your child's present primary school, the inclusion office of the education authority for the district of Oberbergischer Kreis shall also be happy to assist you with any questions you may have regarding the transition from year 4 to year 5.

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## Transition from year 4 to 5

### Information for parents regarding the transition to secondary school for children with special educational needs as of 01.08.2026

Dear Parent or  
Legal Guardian,

Your child is now in year 4 and is currently receiving special educational support.

At the start of the next school year, your child will transition to secondary school. It is therefore necessary at this stage to assess whether a requirement for continued support exists.

Almost a whole year remains until the transition is due to take place. However, you will soon need to make a decision in this regard. You will therefore be invited to attend a consultation with your child's primary school.

With this flyer, we wish to provide you with important information to answer a few questions in advance of this consultation.

## Your right to choose

If your child should require continued special educational support after year 4, you have the right to choose between two possible educational settings for your child.

(see §16 AO-SF [regulations governing special needs education])

### 1. Option 1

You wish your child to attend a **mainstream secondary school** (i.e. general secondary school, comprehensive school, junior high school)

*Your child will learn alongside children that do not have special educational needs.*

*Inclusive learning means that your child will continue to receive special educational support. Teachers at the secondary school and special needs teachers, as well as further specialist personnel, will be available to provide this support.*

### 2. Option 2

You wish your child to attend a **special needs school** (in accordance with the specific requirements of your child)

*Your child will generally be taught in smaller study groups together with other children that have similar special educational needs.*

*At special needs schools, teachers trained in special educational needs, as well as further specialists, will work with your child exclusively.*



## Frequently Asked Questions

When making this difficult decision, parents and legal guardians frequently ask the following questions:

### **How do I secure a school place for my child?**

The coordination of school placements takes place centrally via the inclusion office of the local education authority for Oberbergischen Kreis, in collaboration with the district government of Cologne.

### **Option 1: Mainstream learning (inclusion)**

#### **Can I choose a specific school?**

**No:** This is not possible because the right to choose only applies to the decision between the educational settings of a mainstream school or a special needs school.

**However:** During the consultation with your primary school of course you can and should express a preference if you have one! In this case, explain why you prefer a certain school.

Significant reasons might be: siblings already attend the school, you are a single parent, requisite childcare provision, school profile, etc.

**Note:** Independent schools make their own decisions regarding the admission of pupils with and without special educational needs.

#### **What criteria are used by the education authority when deciding how to allocate school places?**

All secondary schools in the district of Oberbergischer Kreis are mainstream schools. The only exceptions are grammar schools. However, decisions may also be made on an individual case basis here. Pupils who have special educational support needs can be admitted here under certain circumstances, within the framework of individual integration.

All mainstream secondary schools have a predefined number of school places available to

pupils with special educational support needs, although places are not available for all support focuses in every school. It is therefore possible that a specific school has fewer places than the number requested by parents. In this case, certain factors such as proximity to home, siblings, etc., are taken into special consideration in accordance with a set list of criteria. This may result in a school place being offered in a neighbouring municipality, or at a different type of school, which offers the recommended course of education.

#### **My child receives a standard education. Will he or she be given a school recommendation?**

**Yes:** The primary school will provide you with a school recommendation if your child is educated in accordance with the guidelines for general education. Your child will be offered a place at a general secondary school by the education authority in accordance with the recommendation provided by the primary school. If, for example, *a general secondary school is recommended*, this could be a general secondary school, comprehensive school or junior high school, because all of these schools offer general secondary education. Your child will have a place reserved at a school as near to your home as possible.

#### **My child receives differentiated support for special needs in learning or mental development. Will he or she also receive a school recommendation?**

**No:** Children with learning or mental development special needs can be supported at all types of schools (general secondary school, comprehensive school, junior high school). For these special needs areas, school places are primarily offered that are as close to the home as possible - irrespective of the type of school.