

# The school for learning disabilities is for your child





The compulsory school for learning disabilities shall offer pupils with learning disabilities a sound base for continued studies. It shall also enable them to take an active part in social and economic life. The education shall be flexible to ensure that each pupil, on the basis of his or her own prospects, shall develop as far as possible to meet the goals of the curriculum.

The education in compulsory schools for learning disabilities shall promote social companionship and develop the ability of pupils, both independently and jointly with others, to acquire, absorb and use knowledge of different kinds.



## How is the child's future affected?

To go to a school for learning disabilities implies obtaining an education which is adapted for pupils with disabilities and an education that is also adapted to each pupil's needs and preconditions. However, the compulsory school for learning disabilities implies certain limitations in respect of the ability to learn (educate oneself) and choosing an occupation. Consequently, it is very important that the municipality carries out a careful study to be in a position to assess whether the pupil really belongs to the target group for compulsory special needs education. Only after such an assessment, can one take the decision as to whether the pupil shall go to the compulsory school for learning disabilities. Compulsory education for learning disabilities shall only be offered to those pupils who really are in need of, and entitled to, this type of school.

The local municipality has an obligation to ensure that the parent(s) or guardian(s) are provided with correct information on the consequences for the child, in the short and long term, of going to a compulsory school for learning disabilities instead of the ordinary 9-year compulsory school.

## Steering documents for compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities

- Education Act
- The Compulsory School Ordinance (*Skolförordning*)
- Curriculum for compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities (2011) with associated curricula and knowledge requirements

### **COURSE SYLLABUSES AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIREMENTS**

The course syllabus in each subject and subject area describes why the subject or subject area is found in the school. Furthermore, it describes what the purpose of the education is and the abilities that the pupil shall be given the possibility of developing.

The key content of each course syllabus describes what the teachers shall cover in their teaching activities. For the compulsory education for learning disabilities, the content has been adapted in all the course syllabuses, above all where the theoretical elements are concerned. This means that, for example, mathematics and science-based subjects are, to a greater extent, adapted to the pupils in the compulsory school for learning disabilities whereas subjects such as music and art are more like those of the ordinary compulsory 9-year school. Language options/modern languages e.g. Spanish and German are not available as subjects in compulsory education for learning disabilities.

For each course syllabus there is also a knowledge standard or requirement that describes the knowledge needed by the pupils to achieve the different grading scales.

**COMPARISON BETWEEN TIMETABLES OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES AND COMPULSORY 9-YEAR SCHOOL IN SWEDEN**

	Special needs school	Compulsory 9-year school
Art	225	230
Home and consumer studies	525	118
Physical education and health	750	500
Music	395	230
Crafts	730	330
Swedish or Swedish as second language	1 300	1 490
English	180	480
Mathematics	1 005	1 020
Social subjects: geography, history, religion and civics	695	885
Science subjects: biology, physics, chemistry and technology	785	800
Language options		320
Pupil options	195	382
<b>Total guaranteed number of hours</b>	<b>6 785</b>	<b>6 785</b>
Of which, school options	1 800	600

The number of hours allocated to the subjects of home and consumer studies, physical education and health as well as handicraft is significantly more in the compulsory special needs school than in the compulsory 9-year school. The subject of English, in the compulsory school for learning disabilities, has significantly fewer hours than in the compulsory 9-year school.



## Training school

The compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities includes also the organisation of education for pupils with severe learning difficulties. This special education is for pupils, who it is adjudged, will not benefit wholly or partly from the study of those subjects available in the compulsory special needs school. Instead, these pupils study subject areas (disciplines) rather than subjects.

Where the school assesses that a pupil possesses suitable preconditions, the pupil can study a combination of compulsory 9-year subjects and subject areas.

### THE TRAINING SCHOOL INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING

- Aesthetic activity

Mainly areas within music, art and handicraft.

- Communication

Mainly areas within Swedish language and the pupil's first language (mother tongue).

- Motor skills

Mainly areas within physical education and health activities.



## Assessment

It is essential that the teachers continuously challenge and stimulate each pupil's learning ability; this is so that all pupils are given the possibility of achieving as much as possible in their knowledge acquisition and development. In order for the parent(s) or guardian(s) to be able to follow the child's development, the personal development dialogues should be both forward looking and retrospective in character. They must be forward looking in order to describe how the pupil can best be supported, and which initiatives may be needed in order for the pupil concerned to achieve the knowledge standards in those subjects or subject areas the pupil has been educated in. They must be retrospective, however, in order to evaluate the pupil's development towards satisfying the curriculum objectives and knowledge requirements.

For those pupils who study subjects in the compulsory school for learning disabilities, these assessments are made on the basis of the knowledge standards for years 6 and 9. For the training school, within the compulsory special needs school, there are two levels of knowledge standards at the end of year 9; basic knowledge and more advanced knowledge.

### **CERTIFICATE, PROGRESS REPORT AND GRADES**

Once a pupil has completed his or her education in the school for learning disabilities, he or she will receive a certificate in respect of the education completed. If a pupil or parent(s) or guardian(s) so requests, the certificate shall be supplemented with a general progress report. The progress report shall describe the pupil's ability to carry out studies but include no certificate.

For the subject areas in the training school, no grades are awarded and the assessment shall be made taking into account each pupil's individual prerequisites.

In the compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, grades are awarded based on the knowledge standards of the education for children with special needs. These marks cannot be compared with grades from the 9-year compulsory school.

In order for a pupil to obtain a grade, the pupil or the pupil's parent(s) or guardian(s) must request it. A pupil who mainly studies the subject areas taught in the training school, but who also studies one or more subject areas belonging



to the compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, may request grades in the particular subject or subjects that the pupil has studied.

After leaving the compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, the pupil can then apply to – and continue his or her studies in – the special needs education at Upper Secondary School. It is important to understand that grades in the compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities do not meet the eligibility requirements for the national programmes in the Upper Secondary School. On the other hand, pupils of the compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities have access to the introductory programmes at Upper Secondary School level i.e. vocational introduction and individual options.

One or other of the grading scales A, B, C, D or E are used for grades. The knowledge standards are detailed for the grading scales A, C and E. The grading scale E corresponds to Pass and A is the very highest grade. If the parent(s) or guardian(s) themselves request grades in one, several or all subjects that the pupil has studied then the grade/s shall be awarded in the subject in the compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities at the end of each semester, with effect from Year 6 up to and including the autumn semester in Year 9 (end of semester report), and when a subject has been concluded.

Where a pupil has studied a subject in accordance with the course syllabus of the compulsory 9-year school, then the pupil shall be assessed in accordance with the knowledge standards based on the course syllabus and the grade, in this case, shall be a compulsory 9-year school grade. This means that a pupil may obtain two report cards (betygsdokument): one report card for the compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, including the grades for the subjects the pupil has studied in accordance with the course syllabuses of the compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, and a compulsory 9-year school grade where the subjects are included which the pupil has studied in accordance with the course syllabuses of the compulsory school.

If you wish, you can read more about the curricula, course syllabuses and knowledge standards on the National Agency for Education website: [www.skolverket.se](http://www.skolverket.se)

## Integration into the 9-year compulsory school

To attend a class at the compulsory school for learning disabilities together with the other pupils with similar needs and preconditions may, for some pupils, imply increased opportunities for mutual relations and fellowship. Other pupils find their feet socially in the compulsory 9-year school and there is then an opportunity for integration. This means that all or parts of the education is carried out in a compulsory school class but the pupil studies, and is assessed on the basis of, course syllabuses of the compulsory school for learning disabilities.

The parent(s) or guardian(s) may request that the child be integrated in a compulsory 9-year school class, but it is the responsible authority of the compulsory 9-year school and the compulsory school for learning disabilities who decide if this is possible. Where, instead, it is the case that the school or responsible authority desires to integrate a pupil then this is only possible if the parent(s) or guardian(s) agree to this.



## Acceptance in the compulsory school for learning disabilities – the process

The pupil, the pupil's parent(s) or guardian(s) and the personnel in preschool class or compulsory 9-year school can raise the question as to whether the pupil can attend the compulsory school. When the question has been raised concerning the alternative of the compulsory special needs school for learning disabilities, it is the pupil's local municipality (the municipality where the pupil is nationally registered) which is responsible for carrying out an enquiry.

The enquiry shall give an answer to whether the pupil belongs to the target group for the compulsory school for learning disabilities. To belong to the target group means, on the one hand, that the pupil has a learning disability, on the other that the pupil is deemed not to be able to achieve the knowledge standards of the 9-year compulsory school.



## WHAT FORM DOES AN ENQUIRY TAKE?

An enquiry is normally carried out when the pupil starts preschool class or later when the pupil already attends the compulsory 9-year school. Starting an enquiry must take place in consultation with the parent(s) or guardian(s). Besides the pupil, the parent(s) or guardian(s) constitute a vital source of knowledge in the enquiry.

An enquiry comprises four independent assessments: a pedagogical, a psychological, a medical and a social assessment. It is essential that all the different elements are included in order to achieve as comprehensive a picture as possible.

- The pedagogical assessment

The pedagogical assessment should be carried out by personnel with special pedagogical competence. The object is to describe the pupil's preconditions for achieving the knowledge standards in all the subjects of the compulsory 9-year school. The assessment should also describe what the preschool class or school has already done to adapt the work to the pupil's needs and the results this has yielded.

- The psychological assessment

The psychological assessment is carried out by a registered psychologist. The object is to show if the pupil has an intellectual disability and, if such is the case, to what extent. In order to be able to commence a psychological assessment the parent(s) or guardian(s) first need to approve it.

One or more aptitude tests are carried out in order to show the pupil's development level. In the psychological assessment it should also be clear how the pupil functions in social situations (so-called adaptive skills). Both these elements are of equal importance in being able to state if the pupil has an intellectual disability or not. The psychologist can sometimes find other reasons than intellectual disability for the pupil's problems at school. In that case this needs to be clear from the assessment.

- The medical assessment

The medical assessment is carried out by a registered physician, or some other healthcare professional with adequate training. The object is to ascertain if there are medical reasons for the pupil's learning difficulties and whether these indicate that the child has an intellectual disability. In order to be able to initiate a medical assessment the parent(s) and guardian(s) first need to approve this.

The physician may sometimes find other reasons than intellectual disability for the pupil's difficulties at school. This then needs to appear in the assessment.

- The social assessment

The social assessment is carried out by the school counsellor or someone else with appropriate training. Its purpose is to describe if there are social factors, in or outside the school, which may contribute to the pupil's learning difficulties. Where there are none this should appear in the assessment.



### **IS THE PUPIL ENTITLED TO ATTEND COMPULSORY SCHOOL FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES?**

It is only when all assessments have been made and the enquiry is complete that one can take a decision on the pupil's right to attend the compulsory school for learning disabilities i.e. whether he or she belongs to the appropriate target group. Such a decision is taken by the local municipality.

## **RIGHT OF THE PARENT(S) OR GUARDIAN(S) TO ACCEPT OR DECLINE A PLACE**

Before the municipality can decide if a pupil shall be accepted in the compulsory school for learning disabilities both parent(s) or guardian(s) must accept this in writing. Where only one of these accepts, it is not possible for the child to attend the special needs school.

The parent(s) or guardian(s) are also entitled to decline a place in the compulsory school for learning disabilities, despite the enquiry showing that the child is entitled to a place. In that case, the municipality is obliged to accept the pupil in the compulsory 9-year school and ensure that the pupil is given support in the manner, and to the extent, that is required to have the possibility of achieving the minimum knowledge standards that must be achieved.

The parent(s) or guardian(s) may, at any time during the pupil's time in the compulsory school for learning disabilities, request that the child shall transfer to the compulsory 9-year school.

## **COMPULSORY SCHOOL FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES ON TRIAL BASIS**

Where a pupil has been offered a place in the compulsory school for learning disabilities but the parent(s) or guardian(s) are doubtful whether this is a good solution there exists the possibility of allowing the pupil to attend the compulsory school for learning disabilities on a trial basis during a maximum period of six months.

## **DECISION ON ACCEPTANCE**

Once the parent(s) or guardian(s) have agreed to this, the local municipality decides whether the pupil shall be accepted in the compulsory school for learning disabilities. It is also necessary to take a decision whether the pupil shall mainly study subjects or subject areas (education for children with severe learning difficulties). The decision is taken by the responsible authority for the education and should be based on what emerged in the enquiry undertaken.

Following this, the pupil shall immediately start studying in accordance with the course syllabuses for the subject or subject areas respectively. Where the decision that a pupil shall be accepted in the compulsory special needs school also implies that the pupil must change class or school, the reception in the compulsory school for learning disabilities may in fact start at any time during the school year; one does not need to wait for a new semester to begin.

### **WHERE THE PUPIL IS NOT OFFERED A PLACE IN THE COMPULSORY SCHOOL FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES**

An enquiry may show that a pupil is not entitled to the compulsory school for learning disabilities. If the local municipality has decided that the pupil should not be offered the compulsory school for learning disabilities, despite the parent(s) or guardian(s) desiring this, then these can appeal the decision to the Board of Appeal for Education. Where there are two parents or guardians then both must be in agreement about appealing the decision.

### **EXCEPTIONAL REASONS**

Situations may arise, on occasions, when the parent(s) or guardian(s) and the local municipality are not in agreement concerning the type of school which is best for the child. The municipality can then decide that the pupil shall be allocated a place in the compulsory school for children with learning disabilities against the wishes of the parent(s) or guardian(s). This may arise in those cases where it is assessed that exceptional circumstances exist in respect of the child's best interests. It is not common for a municipality to take a decision against the wishes of the parent(s) or guardian(s). Should this occur, however, the decision must be clearly explained showing the reasons that lie behind it. It is possible to appeal the decision to the Board of Appeal for Education.

### **WRONGLY PLACED PUPIL**

Should it happen that a pupil who has been accepted does not belong to the appropriate target group it is important for the local municipality to ensure that the pupil changes the type of school and instead is educated in accordance with the compulsory school regulations.





## Do you wish to read the entire curriculum?

You can order or download the curriculum on the National  
Agency for Education website [www.skolverket.se](http://www.skolverket.se)

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