



The School Day

What to Expect in Washington Schools For Ukrainian Families

School usually starts at the same time each day, though some schools start later or end earlier on certain days.

Students should arrive on time. If a student will be late or stay home, call or message the school office.

Most students attend several classes each day. In older grades, a bell or an announcement tells students when one class ends and the next begins. These students move from one classroom to another. In younger grades, students usually stay with one teacher in the same room for most of the day.

Schools understand that this school day might be new for your child. Don't hesitate to ask school staff for help as you adjust.



What your student is expected to do

While every school has its own rules, students are generally expected to:

- **Be ready to learn:** Come to class on time with the materials they need, like notebooks and pencils.
- **Be respectful:** Treat school staff and other students with kindness and take care of school property.
- **Be active:** Work quietly, join in group activities, and ask the teacher questions.
- **Be safe:** Follow the rules in the student handbook, which includes no fighting or bullying.
- **Use technology:** Use computers for classwork or homework as requested by their teacher.
- **Ask for support:** Speak with a trusted adult at school like a teacher or counselor if they need help or feel worried.

For more guidance, look at the school's student handbook, or ask a teacher, school counselor, or principal.



Subjects and Electives

In Washington, high schools teach many different subjects rather than training students for one career path.

In middle and high school, most students in Washington take two types of classes: required subjects and electives. They usually take six to eight classes at a time.

Required subjects are classes that all students must take, such as English, math, science and social studies.

Electives are classes students choose based on their interests and what's available, such as music, art, or technology.

To graduate, students must complete a specific number of electives and required classes.

Many schools also offer:

- **English language learning:** classes for students still learning English.
- **College credit programs:** advanced classes that give both high school and college credit. These classes are optional. Ask your school counselor if your child is interested.

Grades

Grading looks different across grade levels and districts.

- **Elementary school:** Numbers 1 to 4 or skill levels (Below Expectations to Exceeds Expectations).
- **Middle school:** Numbers, letter grades (A to F, where A is the highest and F is the lowest), or percentages (0-100%).
- **High school:** Letter or percentage grades convert to a number scale called a Grade Point Average (GPA). The highest score is a 4.0. The lowest passing grade is typically a 1.0. This scale is used on official school transcripts for graduation and college applications.

A failing grade means your child does not earn credit for that class and may need to repeat it.

You can see your child's grades and attendance through a secure school website. Ask the school how to set up your account.



School Meals

Most students have access to breakfast and lunch at school each day.

Your family may qualify for free or low-cost meals based on your income. You can submit an application any time during the school year through the school or district.

Students eat in a large room called a cafeteria. Ask the school for a menu to see what food choices are being served each day.



Where to Get Help

Your school is there to support your student's success and help your family settle in. If you have questions, you can reach out to:

The teacher:

Talk to them about what your child is learning in class.



A school counselor:

Get help with your child's schedule, or if they are feeling worried.



The front office:

Call if your child will be late or if you need to update your contact information.

SCHOOL HOURS
8:30-3:30



The Student Handbook:

Look here for specific rules and guidance for your child's school, including the school dress code.



Resources

- Federal Way Public Schools. (n.d.). *Calculating grades: Standards based grading*. <https://www.fwps.org/academics/curriculum/standards-based-grading/calculating-grades>
- Seattle Public Schools. (n.d.). *High school grade and credit marking (Policy No. 2420)*. <https://www.seattleschools.org/about/school-board/policies/2420-high-school-grade-and-credit-marking/>
- Tacoma Public Schools. (n.d.). *Grades and report cards*. <https://www.tacomaschools.org/departments/ci/grades>
- Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2006). *Grade reporting and calculation system* (WAC 392 415 050). Washington State Legislature. <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=392-415-050>
- Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2024). *High school transcript frequently asked questions* (2024–25 school year). <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2025-08/high-school-transcript-faq-2024-25-school-year.pdf>
- Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (n.d.). *Graduation credit requirements*. OSPI. <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/graduation/credit-requirements>
- Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (n.d.). *Learning standards & instructional materials*. OSPI. <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/learning-standards-instructional-materials>
- Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (n.d.). *Meal application and verification information*. OSPI. <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/child-nutrition/school-meals/national-school-lunch-program/meal-application-and-verification-information>

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