



Welcome to Germany

A guide for unaccompanied minors

Hello!

You arrived here alone and sure you have a lot of questions. This booklet should help answer your questions and it should explain to you who to ask. We want to help you understand what happens to you here and what possibilities and rights you have. We are a group of young people who have made similar experiences as you. Here, there are many people that are there for you and support you, that's why we say: You are not alone!

This booklet has six parts, an overview of the topics can be found on the next page. On the next pages, we explain to you what happens during your starting time in Germany, which possibilities and rights you have and with which people and departments you have to deal with. Complicated phrases and words will be printed in a different color and will be explained briefly in part 6.

If you want to know who we are, you'll find pictures and information about us in the booklet. We hope that you find all the information that you need, and wish you all the best for your future!

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Welcome to Germany
nice that you are there!

Arriving

When you newly come to Germany, then you may not know what to do. And maybe you need help. You need to introduce yourself to different departments (**Behörde**) and people that can help you, such as the youth office and the police. And you need to introduce yourself to everyone in the hostel. In the hostel you receive a supervisor (**Betreuer**). He or she will help you with your problems and everyday life. For example, he/she will accompany you to appointments or when you want to go to the doctor or go shopping. And the guardian helps you to go to school, to learn, and with homework. Sometime later, they will explain to you the city and give you information about what you may and may not do. For example, you may not take the bus or the train without a ticket. And the most important advice is that you may not steal or work without a registration.

In Germany, everything is regulated lawfully. To this there are different law texts (eg. criminal law, asylum law, children and juvenile assistance law and so on): Germany is a democratic country in which every citizen must adhere to duties and rights – one has many rights, but there are also many rules.

Here's some more information about Germany:

The complete name of Germany is Federal Republic of Germany. The word “federal”, as in “federation”, means that Germany is a union of several federal states such as Bavaria, North Rhine–Westphalia or Berlin. Next to the federal government, which is responsible for all of Germany, each of the 16 federal states has its own government (= state government). The government is the political direction of the country. In many things, the state government is independent of the federal government, for example in the question, how and where refugees should live, or with schools. Therefore there are big differences with the housing of refugees or with the possibility of who can visit which school at which time. And that's why young refugees make very different experiences in their starting time in Germany, depending in which city and which state (**Bundesland**) they live in.

What are my rights?

A person's dignity is untouchable and protected in Germany. Everyone has the right to an own opinion, religion and a political opinion and to express it freely.

In Germany, you can request asylum (*Asyl*). All people who have to flee from war in their country can ask for protection here. But there are also other reasons for fleeing that Germany acknowledges. For example: Sexual exploitation of young women, homosexuality, forced marriage, religious reasons.

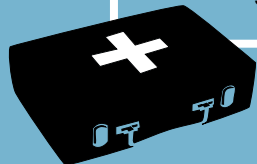
You have the right to be informed about everything that happens with you. You have, in many situations, the right for an translator (*Dolmetscher*) to translate for you what is being said and what you say. You also have the right to say what you need to live and what you do not want to have. Your visions and wishes must be considered.

These are your rights as a child and adolescent in Germany:

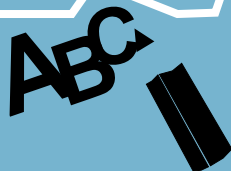
You have the right for special protection by the state and its departments if you do not live with your parents and fled to Germany.

You have the right to go to school.

You have the right for medical support.



You have the right for peace and leisure. You may not be forced to work.



You have the right to receive custody (*Inobhutnahme*) by the youth office if you arrive without your parents. The youth office is required to take over all the responsibilities of the parents.

You have the right to receive a guardian, who is a lawful representative (*Vormund/Vormundin*) for your personal interests.

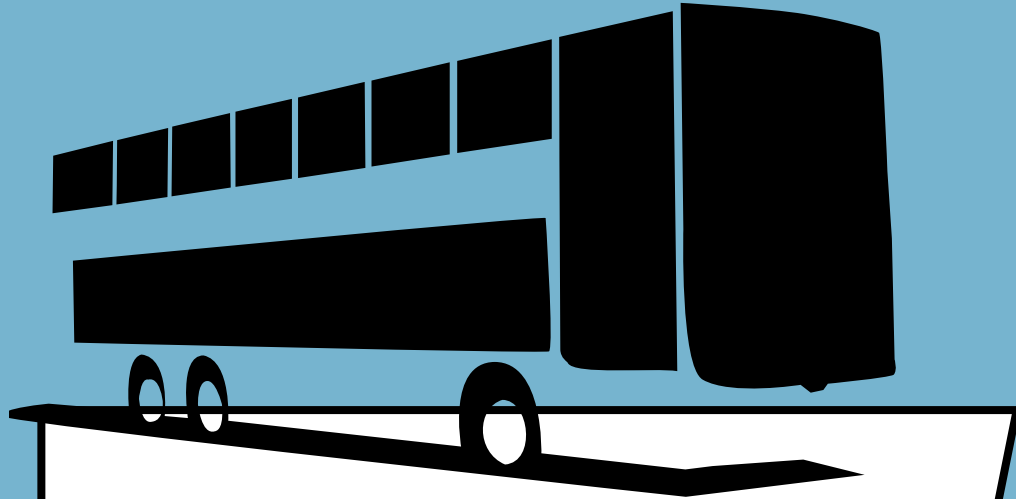
You have the right for accommodation in a facility for children and adolescents with supervision in order to become safe and be able to orientate yourself in your new situation.

You have the right to live together with your parents. You have the right to travel to another EU-country if your parents, your grown siblings or close relatives live there.

You have the right to issue a lawsuit (*Klage*) or objection (*Widerspruch*) if you are not satisfied with the decisions from departments (*Behörden*) that affect you. Employees in departments and organizations (*Organisationen*) must inform you about that.

All of this sounds complicated. But you have the right to understand what happens to you and the right to take part in decisions. With a legal problem, you can consult a lawyer, but that can cost a lot of money. For people to who only little money is available, there are free advice centers in Germany that can help you further.





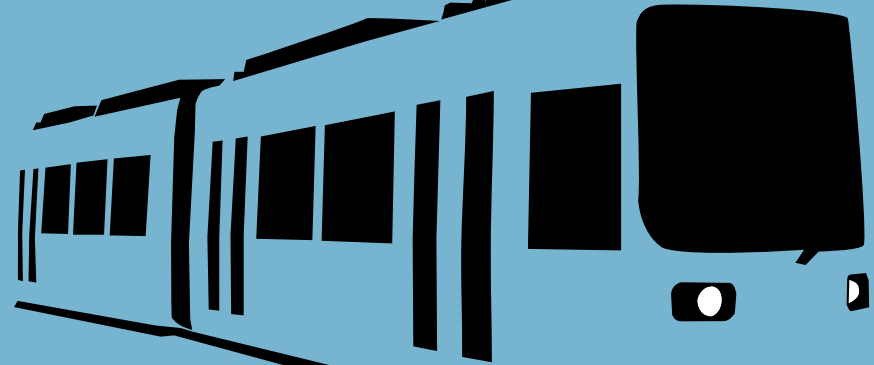
What rules are there here?

In Germany there are a lot of rules, everything is regulated. If you are under 18 years old, your parents or the youth office must decide for you. You may not smoke if you are under 18 years old. Even the drivers license may only be done when you're 18. Additionally you must always have identification with you. When you ride with the bus, the street train, the overground train or the underground train, you always need a ticket. You have to buy the ticket. But you must do that immediately when you enter. When you come to Germany for the first time as a refugee, you will be registered. After that it is decided, where you may live. In the offices, one must always wait. You need to pull a number and wait until your number is up. Still, you have to be punctual. If you do not know if you may do something, you can always ask your supervisor (**Betreuer** **deine Betreuerin**) or your guardian.

Germany is a bureaucracy, meaning everything is regulated precisely. For all important processes in the state there are employees responsible for them and set work procedures that are documented precisely. Papers, signatures and stamps are very important there.

It is important that you keep all documents such as your report cards (**Zeugnisse**) or your papers from the immigration authority. The documents are very valuable. That's why you should also always make multiple copies.

"Patience is always difficult, but we have to be patient"



What is the youth office and what does it do?

When an adolescent under 18 years of age without parents or caretakers (**Sorgeberechtigte**) come to Germany, the youth office is responsible, so also for you. It has to make sure that you are doing well. The youth office is a department (**Behörde**) that you can find in every city and every county.

It has to make sure that you reach a safe place where you can receive meals, clothing and medical support. One calls this custody.

Additionally there are supervisors for you. Every 6 months there will be a "help plan conversation" (**Hilfeplangespräch**) between you and the youth office, in which you talk about how you are doing and how to proceed.

If you do not yet have a guardian, the youth office can request asylum if it thinks that you need protection. To do that, they must know if you want it.

The youth office has to get a supervisor and a guardian for you. The guardian will take care of you from a legal standpoint, the supervisor will take care of you in your everyday life.

As long as you are not yet 18 years old, the youth office pays for you. They pay for your accommodations, food and all essential things. For things that you want for yourself, you receive an allowance.

Everything that the youth office does at the beginning to clear up your perspective is called "clearing point".

Maybe you are staying at a so-called "clearing point" at the beginning. But that is very varied.



First steps

What happens in the beginning?

Do I stay in the city in which I arrived?

It is possible that the youth office at which you arrive no longer has any room, but there is still room in another city or village. Then it is possible that you have to move. This is called redistribution.

But first it has to be determined where room is. Until then, you stay in the first youth office. This is then called "temporary custody" and should last maximum 1 month. In this time the youth office checks if you must or want to go somewhere else. You have the right, to discuss this with them. For example, you can mention if you have relatives in Germany or elsewhere in Europe, to who you want to go. You can also say with whom you want to stay, i.e. if you were travelling with other siblings or adolescents. If you do not feel good and have the feeling that you cannot continue traveling, it is possible that you do not end up in another city. You can talk to your supervisors (**Betreuer**) about what you want. The decision is ultimately made by the youth office.



Why is my age so important and what is an age estimation?

Age is very important in Germany. When you newly arrive in Germany, then the youth office, the guardian, the immigration authority and the “Bundesamt fuer Migration und Fluechtlinge” (BAMF) – (Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees) – have to know your age. This is important for your placement and your asylum procedure (Asylverfahren).

However, if you did not have any (identification) documents with you upon fleeing, then it is difficult to clear. And sometimes it occurs that your age is not believed. If you cannot receive your document from your home country or the document is not available, then sometimes medical examination is used to help estimate your age.

In some states they will recommend that you get yourself examined by a doctor. The doctor examines e.g. the body, the bones, the arms and the teeth, and then he or she decides how old you are.

For every appointment your supervisor or your guardian should accompany you. You must be informed in a language you understand about what other possibilities for age estimation (Alterseinschätzung) are available. You have the right to ensure that the doctor has the same gender as you. A girl must therefore be examined by a woman, a boy must be examined by a man.



“The beginning appears to be difficult, but you’ll manage.”

Sometimes an age estimation happens without you noticing. When you sign something, then you always have to pay attention that your age is correctly listed.

If you are, according to the examination, estimated to be 18 or older, you can talk about it with your lawyer or receive advice from an expert (i.e. from advice centers or the refugee council). After all, you have the possibility of going to court (Gericht) over it.

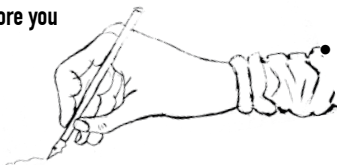
If, in one area, you were not believed that you are underage, and you are then moved to another city, you can then turn to the youth office there again. You can say there that you are under 18 – it occasionally happens that a different youth office decides differently and believes that you are under 18.

17? 18? 14?

What does my guardian do for me?

As long as you are not 18 years old yet, there must be someone who takes responsibility for you and makes sure that you are doing well. Because when you are under 18, you may not sign anything and there are a lot of things you may not decide on your own. Therefore you

must have a guardian that helps you with your decisions and signs for you.



A guardian must be there for you and must ask you what you want. He/She must take note that your rights are being respected, e.g. school, education or apprenticeship, a good accommodation and many more. Here are a few examples:

- If you want to post an asylum application, then your guardian has to post your asylum application (**Asylantrag**) and prepare you for the interview in the asylum procedure (**Interview im Asylverfahren**).
- And when you want to make a contract at McFit, your guardian has to sign it.

- If you need surgery, your guardian has to know and he/she decides if the surgery is good or not.
 - Your guardian also has to find a school or if you want to change schools, you need to tell your guardian.
 - And if you want to go on a class trip with your school, your guardian has to decide over it and then sign it.
- If you have problems with the police and have to go to court, then your guardian has to know and represent you.
- Your guardian additionally has Abidance determination authority, which means that he/she decides where you live or if you may visit friends in another city overnight.

When do I receive a guardian?

If you are under 18 years old and live alone without your parents in Germany, you receive a guardian. After a few weeks, a guardian will be summoned for you. Sometimes it can take several months. It can take some time until you meet him or her. If no guardian has yet been summoned for you, the youth office is responsible for you.

There is the possibility that someone from your family or relatives can take over the guardianship for you. But he/she must know about asylum procedures, youth assistance (**Jugendhilfe**), the German laws and many more.

If you have problems with your family, you can ask the youth office for support and a guardian. Usually you have a guardian in Germany until you are 18 years old (**volljährig**). But if you come from a country where you are considered an adult at age 20, you can also have a guardian for that long in Germany.

There are many types of guardianship, the 2 most common are:

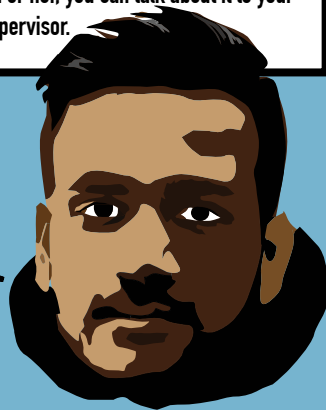
- **Department Guardian**
A department guardian works in the youth department. He/She supervises many adolescents and therefore sometimes has little time for single adolescents.
- **Honorary Guardian**
An honorary guardian does it voluntarily and most of the times has more time. Some honorary guardians meet with the adolescents on the weekends and do something nice with them

If you are not satisfied with your guardian because you have complications or not enough contact to him/her, you can talk about it with your supervisor or the youth office. Then you'll maybe receive a new guardian that takes more care of you.

What does my supervisor do for me?

At the beginning, you live with other unaccompanied underage refugees (**nbegleiteten minderjährigen Flüchtlingen**) in an apartment, a house, or sometimes even a hostel. There, every adolescent has a supervisor. They help you in your day-to-day life, i.e. with your doctor's appointment or with shopping and also, if you want, with your homework. You cannot choose your supervisor. But if you have major difficulties with him or her, you can talk about it to your guardian or the youth office. Then it is possible that you will receive a new supervisor.

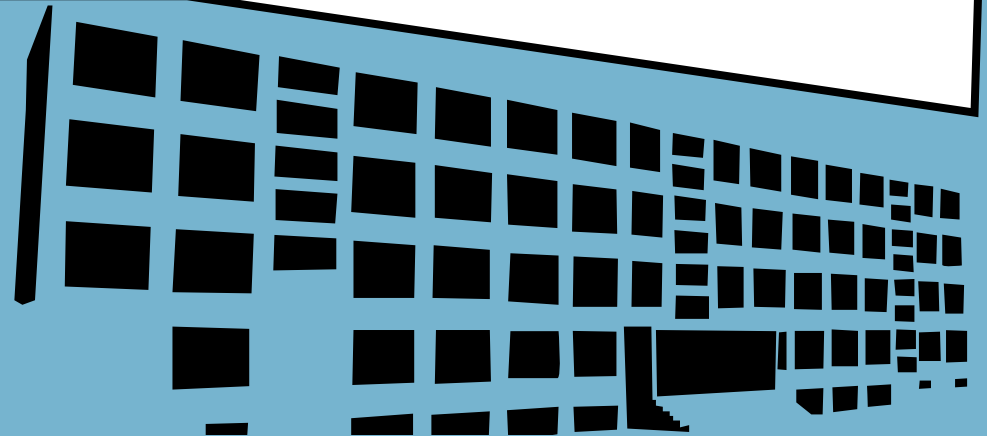
"In Germany, there are many different nationalities. That's why it is our responsibility to show tolerance and patience, and give each other personal luck."



Where will I live?

After two to four months, once you have learned a little of the language and have grown accustomed to the country, the youth office decides along with your guardian about your further placement. There are different possibilities: If you want to continue living with other adolescents and supervisors, you can live in a juvenile center or living group (**Wohngruppe**). If you rather want to be on your own, then ask how you can receive your own apartment that you could perhaps share with other adolescents. There is also the possibility of living together with a family. Those can be relatives of yours or another family. One calls this foster family or guest family.

Do you not feel well? Does no one take care of you? Or are you missing a person of confidence? You can always talk to the youth office. You can tell the youth center that you want to be placed elsewhere. The youth office must show you other facilities that are better for you. You do not have to live together with adults.



What can I do if I am sick?

Within the first days in Germany you will be examined by a doctor for contagious sicknesses. If you have sicknesses, they will be treated.

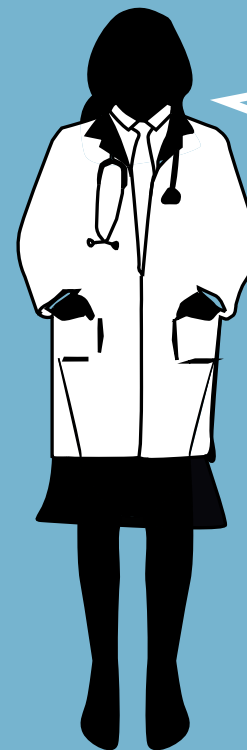
What can you do if you, later, somewhere, have physical or spiritual problems?
You have the right to talk to a doctor about your problem and to be treated.

- Are you scared?
- Do you have bad thoughts?
- Do you have a headache?
- Are you tired often?
- Do you have problems sleeping?
- Do you have a fever?
- Do you have a toothache?
- Do you have a broken leg?

Speak with your supervisor, your guardian or with the youth office. They must help you and arrange a doctor's appointment for you.

Can you not yet speak German well?
You have the right to be escorted by a translator.

Who pays the doctor?
Most treatments are paid by the state. In some cities one receives a health certificate, in others one receives an extra note from the youth office. If you want treatment and it isn't being paid for you, then you must enforce this (with help from your guardian) at the youth office.



And then some information only for girls and young women:

*In Germany, girls and women go to the gynecologist (**Frauenarzt**) at least once a year, even if they are not sick. There are preventative examinations to check if everything is ok. These doctors are also there for women if they become pregnant. They can also provide information about protection and contraception. And they can examine you, if something bad happened.*



We are a group of young people that worked on this booklet together. We are between 16 and 30 years old and live in Berlin, Brandenburg and North Rhine-Westphalia. More details about us you will find at the end of this booklet.

Hava about the group:

“It was a fun time with you. Some of us couldn’t speak german that well yet, but we had the same goal: meeting, because together we are more. After the workshops we used to eat and have a lot of fun. We wanted that we were doing good and to help others, because we also had problems here. We are still there for each other. The workshop is over, but we still have contact to one another. How nice the time was with you cannot even be put in words. We were like a family.”

Stay

May I stay in Germany?

Unfortunately, most people in the world may not choose where they want to live. If you want to stay in Germany (or keep traveling to another country in Europe and live there), you need permission for that. Whether you receive this permission, that is decided by a state department.

If you are underage and are in Germany all alone, there are specifically two possibilities:

- 1) You can post an asylum application.
- 2) You can request a stay (**Aufenthalt**) without asylum procedure.

Important: The application to be able to stay in Germany comes from your guardian. If there is no guardian, the youth office can also post it.

What departments are important?

“The BAMF”

The Bundesamt fuer Migration und Fluechtlinge” (**BAMF**) – (Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees) – is a state department.

Once you post an asylum application in Germany, an employee from the BAMF will have an interview with you.

The BAMF decides if you receive asylum, the refugee status or subsidiary protection. Additionally, it always checks if it is unsafe in your home country so then you can live in Germany for the time being. The BAMF shares its decision with you as well as the immigration authority.

“The immigration authority”

The immigration authority is in every city and county. If you have not posted an asylum Application, then you request an acquiescence (**Duldung**) or a residence title (**Aufenthaltstitel**) at the immigration authority.

If you did post an asylum application with the BAMF, the immigration authority gives you a residence Concession (**Aufenthalts-gestattung**).

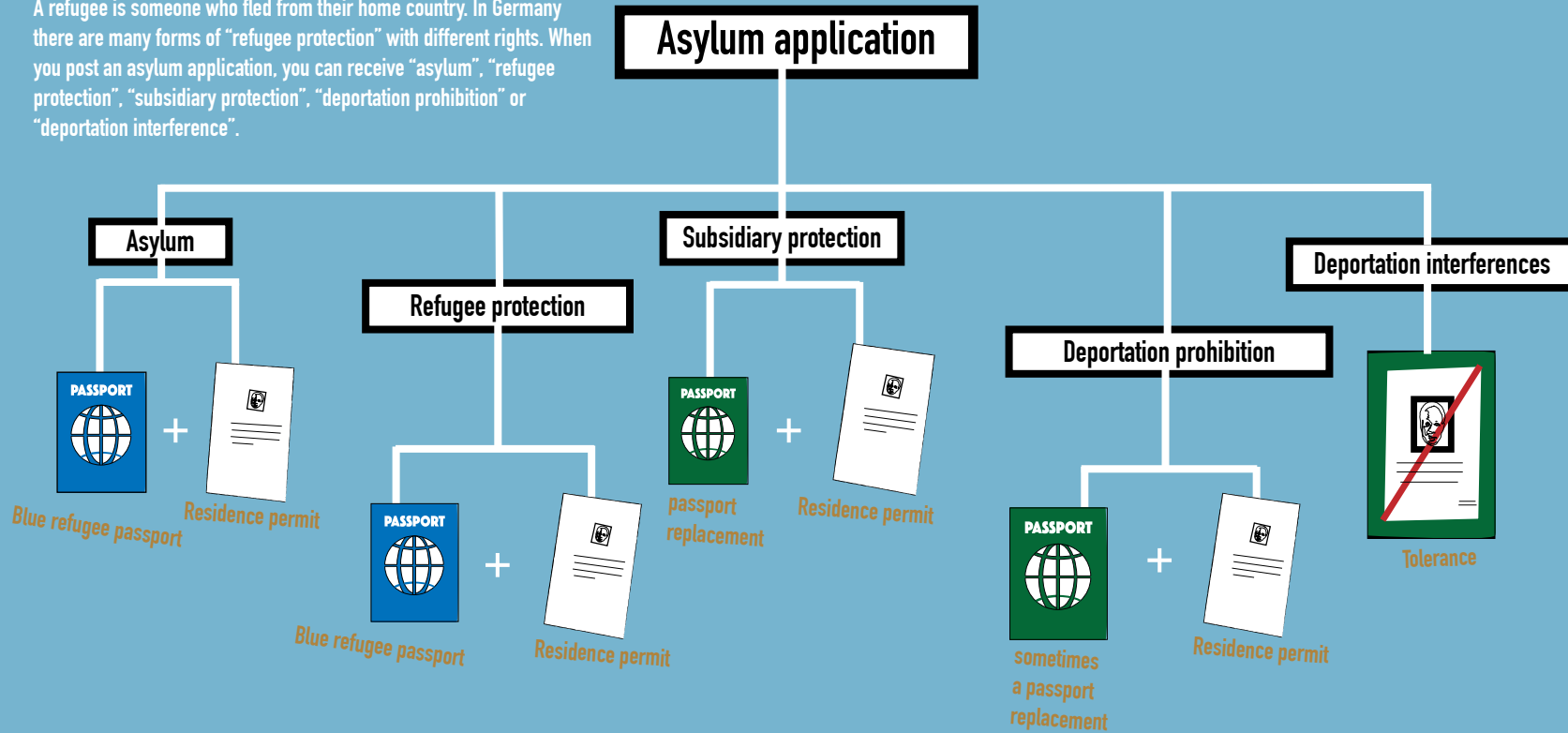
Once a decision about your asylum application was made, the immigration authority gives you a residence title after they have received The information from the BAMF. The immigration authority also enters the work permit into your acquiescence Or residence concession and decides about travels into other states (“Residential obligation”) (**Residenzpflicht**). Appointments with the immigration authority are important, but sometimes strenuous. You have the right to be accompanied by a person of confidence.

Possibility 1:

You have the right to an asylum application!

What does “receiving asylum” mean?

A refugee is someone who fled from their home country. In Germany there are many forms of “refugee protection” with different rights. When you post an asylum application, you can receive “asylum”, “refugee protection”, “subsidiary protection”, “deportation prohibition” or “deportation interference”.



“Receiving asylum” “Asyl bekommen”, “receiving refuge protection” “Flüchtlingsschutz bekommen” and “receiving subsidiary protection” “Subsidiären Schutz bekommen” means that you receive permission to stay in Germany for the time being. After that it is decided if you may stay longer. For now you receive residence for one year or three years.

“Deportation prohibition” “Abschiebeverbot” means that it is too dangerous for you in your home country, i.e. because you are underage or because you have a sickness that cannot be treated there. Here you also receive residence for one year, then it is decided whether you may stay longer. More to this under “Possibility 2”.

“Deportation interference” “Abschiebehindernis” means that you cannot travel out of Germany, i.e. because you are missing the relevant travel documents or are too sick for a travel. As long as the deportation interference exists, you receive an acquiescence. More to this under “Possibility 2”.

Should I request asylum?

If you want to request asylum in Germany, take enough time. Consider together with your guardian, your supervisor as well as the youth office if you want to request asylum. Seek consultation, and only once you understand the procedure well and are in agreement with the conditions, then request asylum. You do not have to request asylum, that is your own free choice. The asylum procedure can take a long time and once you have started it, you must see it through to the end.

There are different reasons for which one can receive asylum in Germany. Here are just a few examples:

- If you were forced to marry against your will (forced marriage)
- If you were forced to work or fight for the military or other militaristic groups (child soldier)
- If you were forced to transport or sell drugs or prostitute yourself (human trafficking)
- For girls: When your genitals were to be cut (genital mutilation)

What must I do?

If you requested asylum, you definitely must have an interview with a person from the Bundesamt fuer Migration und Fluechtlinge" (BAMF) – (Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees), for which you should prepare yourself. There you will be asked where you come from and how you got to Germany. You will also be asked why you posted an asylum application, what reasons you have for that and if you have brought proof and documents from your home country or can hand them in later.

You have the right to have your guardian or your supervisor explain the procedure to you in detail. He or she can make many things clear for you, and will be there for you when you need help. You have the right to have your guardian with you during the interview. You also have the right to a translator who translates for you during important appointments. In the interview with the BAMF there is always a translator who speaks your mother tongue. If you do not understand the translation, you can ask for a different translator.

If you as girl would rather have a woman do the interview and a woman translate as translator, you can also say this during the interview. Just the same, you as boy have the right to a male interviewer and translator. You have the right to take a person with you to the interview that will listen to you and can support you. It's best if the person that accompanies you is the one with who you prepared for the interview.

If you are not yet 14 years old, you can ask not to go to the interview, but have the guardian write down everything that you tell him/her. Then the BAMF can decide if they forgo an interview.

After the interview, you receive a protocol (**Protokoll**), that contains everything that you said. It can take a very long time until you receive the protocol. Check with your translator if everything has been translated and written down properly. If you are unsatisfied with something, you have the right to hand in additions and corrections later.

After that, you have to wait for the decision from the BAMF. In there, it will say whether you receive asylum, refugee protection, subsidiary protection or a deportation prohibition (**Abschiebeverbot**) or not. This can take many weeks and months. If the decision is positive, you receive a residence status. If the decision is negative, talk about it immediately with your guardian and your supervisor and with them, contact a lawyer. With the lawyer, you can file a lawsuit against the decision in court.

What is a "residence concession"?

The residence concession is the status that you have during the asylum procedure. The residence concession is given by the immigration authority.



What are “safe origin countries”?

Germany has declared some countries as “safe origin countries”. With people from these countries, Germany assumes that there is usually no reason for them to request asylum. The German state dictates that people from these countries can return to their countries, are safe there and don't have to fear persecution. This is a political decision and does not mean that all of the people there are really safe. Often, there are minorities that are oppressed, discriminated against, or persecuted.

Important: You can have individual reasons for requesting asylum, even if you are from a “safe origin country”. Talk to your guardian or your supervisor about if your country is part of the “safe origin country” and let yourself be counseled in an advice center for refugees about the asylum procedure!



Possibility 2:

Your rights to a stay without asylum procedure!

If you are alone in Germany, the youth office has to care for you until your 18th birthday. For that, it is irrelevant what type of application you post or even if you posted an application at all. As long as you are an “unaccompanied underage refugee” in Germany, you will at least be “tolerated”. Since you are still underage and alone in Germany, the youth office has to take care of you and you may not be deported back to your home country.

Important: The deportation obstruction for unaccompanied underage refugees does not apply if your parents, another care-eligible person, or a child protection organization in your country has, in writing, assured the immigration authority in Germany that they will care for you!

If you cannot return to your home country because you seek refuge in Germany, then discuss with your guardian or your supervisor if you should post an application for asylum.

What is a “Stay for humanitarian reasons” (**humanitäre Gründe**)?

Instead of the asylum application there is the possibility to request a stay for humanitarian reasons. For this title you have to name “humanitarian reasons”, i.e. your parents are no longer alive, or you face danger upon return to your home country, that you have a sickness that cannot be properly treated in your home country, or likewise. The application can be posted by your guardian or the youth office to the immigration authority. But speak about this to your guardian and your supervisor first.

What is an “acquiescence” (“suspension of deportation”)?

For the time up until your 18th birthday, your guardian or the youth office can request an acquiescence at the immigration authority. This you can receive because you are underage or because you are doing a work-based or school-based apprenticeship (**Ausbildung**). An acquiescence can always be extended until the reason (school/ apprenticeship/age) falls away or you have a residence permit (**Aufenthaltsurlaubnis**), i.e. because you are already here so long or have found a work place.


What is an “apprenticeship acquiescence”?

If you have found an apprenticeship in a business, your guardian can request an acquiescence for the duration of the apprenticeship from the immigration authority. Sometimes this is also possible for a school-based apprenticeship — you have to request this with your guardian, at the advice center, or also directly at the immigration authority. Restrictions exist for people from “safe origin countries” and if the immigration authority, for other reasons, does not allow the employment (“Sanctions”). Speak to your guardian and your supervisor about your rights and possibilities.

Why do I receive sanctions?

In certain situations, the immigration authority makes demands, i.e. that you obtain a passport. If you do not meet these demands, the immigration authority can issue certain “sanctions”, such as not allowing the employment, so then you cannot do a work-based apprenticeship.

Speak quickly with your guardian and your supervisor if the immigration authority wants something from you. They can advise and support you if the immigration authority issues sanctions against you.



“No matter what happens, never give up & always think positive!”

Possibilities upon Denial, departure notice and deportation

A negative note from BAMF or the immigration authority is not a deportation notice, but instead the first negative decision about your application. Even agencies and departments make mistakes and you can take the decision to court (*klagen*). The deadline for the lawsuit is very short, sometimes only a few days. You immediately need good legal residential advice and a lawyer.

Important: If you receive a denial (*Ablehnung*) in the asylum procedure from BAMF or your application for stay because of humanitarian reasons is denied by the immigration authority, speak urgently with your guardian and your supervisor. Speak immediately with them, if your acquiescence or your residence permission with the immigration authority is not extended. And if you receive a “prompt for voluntary departure” or are afraid of being deported, approach them as well. They will support you in finding an advice center and a lawyer.

Upon negative decisions there are still more possibilities: there is e.g. a “petition procedure”, the “hard case committee”, the “church asylum” and one can turn to the media. Seek advice, and talk to others about your situation. Try to concentrate on your day-to-day activities. That is strenuous and difficult, but if you don’t give in, you can, with the support of your friends, school, supervisors, guardians, associations, and more, find a way!

Can I bring my family to Germany?

Up to your 18th birthday, you have the right to live with your parents. This also means that your parents have the right to come to you in Germany, if they do not live here. If they come to Germany, your underage siblings can come together with your parents to Germany, if your siblings would otherwise not survive. This is called "family reunification".

Unfortunately, there are laws that make it complicated for your family to come to Germany. How complicated this is, depends on your residence status and your age.

Which requirements must be met?

The first is that you have received refugee protection. With subsidiary protection (**Flüchtlingsschutz**) you can try it in the worst case. There are always special rules, therefore you must inform yourself if it is possible with your residence status.

The second requirement is that, at the time of application filing and entry of your parents, you are not 18 years old yet and neither your mother nor your father live with you in Germany.

If these requirements have been met, then your parents can, with your siblings, file an application for family reunification with the German embassy. They usually have to do this in the country where they live. But even here, there are exceptions.

The procedure is very complicated. It's best if a lawyer or an procedure advice center explains to you exactly how it works.

Another possibility of family reunification is if you have parents, grown siblings or other relatives in the EU. Then you can travel onwards there, and do your asylum procedure in this country. That will then be organized from Germany, but that can take some time and the German authorities have to agree.



What is a Dublin Procedure?

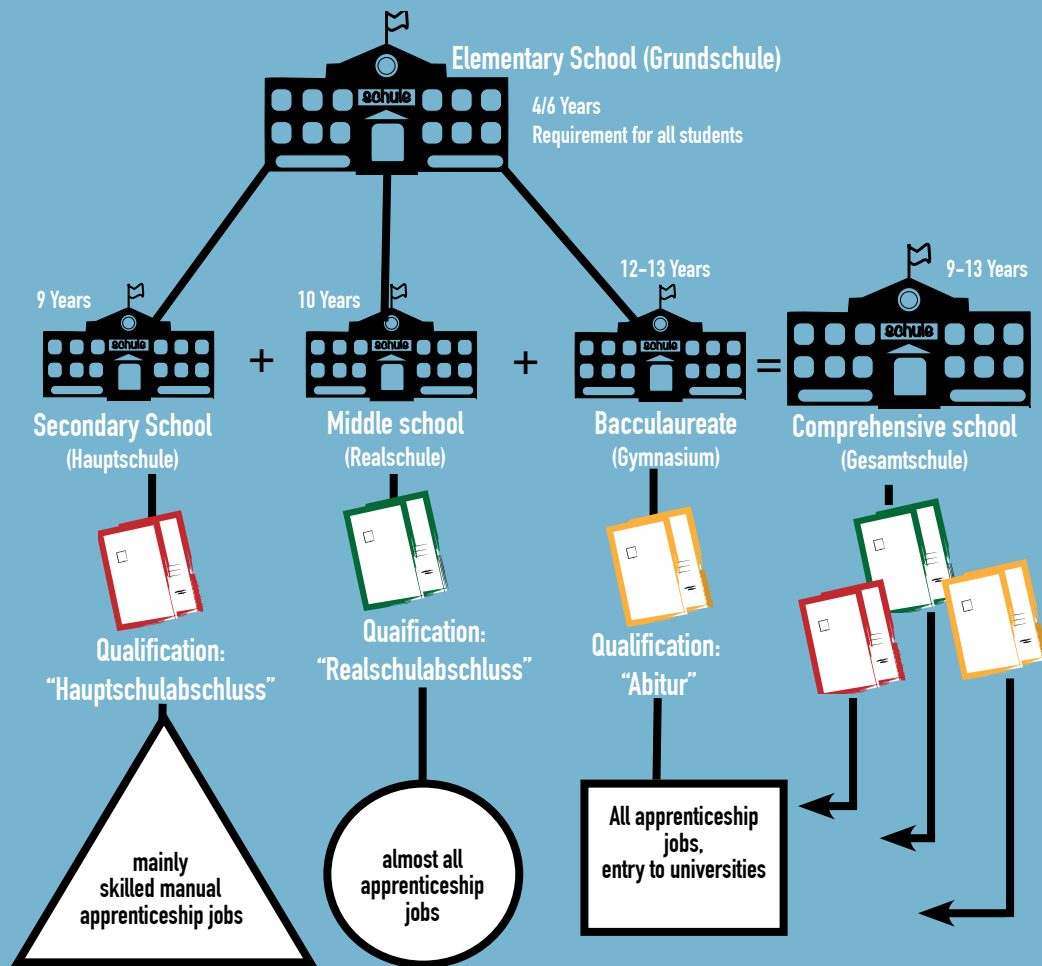
Were you already in another country of the European Union (EU) (**Europäischen Union, EU**)?

Did you have to give your fingerprints there?

Have you posted an asylum application in another country?

When you come to Germany, multiple departments may take your fingerprints. They will be compared with the prints in the computer file that holds all the fingerprints from refugees. Based on the fingerprints one can see if you have already been to another country and if you have posted an asylum application there.

Germany is a member of the European Union (EU). In the entire EU there is a law, the Dublin Act. It determines in which country a refugee may stay. Adults mostly have to return to the country through which they entered the EU. But this does not apply to unaccompanied underage refugees (**unbegleitete minderjährige Flüchtlinge**), if you posted your asylum application in Germany.



Education

And now to learn something!

School and apprenticeship are the most important steps for a good and secure future in Germany. The German school system is a little complicated, because every state has its own laws in addition to that. Therefore you should inform yourself about the possibilities and chances with different people, especially with your teachers and your guardian. Together with them, you can find out what is best for you.

There is a school requirement (**Schulpflicht**) in Germany for all children and youths, which means that they have the right and the duty to go to school. The school visit is free of charge. There are different forms of school. First all children go to elementary school. Then all come into the further schools. Depending on the state, they are split into: Secondary school, middle school, high school, integrated secondary school, and comprehensive school.

The decision on which further schools can be visited, depends on your school-based performance and grades. The decision can be made together with teachers, the youth office and your guardian.

In order to do an apprenticeship, you must almost always have a GED (General Educational Development) or high school diploma, that varies from job to job. In order to study at a university, you need a baccalaureate. There is also a vocational baccalaureate diploma, with that you can study at a college. During school you can also do an internship. Internships are super to get to know a job better.

For school-based internships you never need approval. There are in Germany, however, many different forms of internships. For some you need approval from the immigration authority and the employment agency.

Can I immediately visit a school?

Before you can do anything else, you have to learn German. If you are under 18 years old, you will be moved into a special prep class for refugee youths in a school in your vicinity. The classes all have different names, e.g. welcome class, integration class, refugee class. Once you speak German well enough, you can switch into the regular school class. In some schools you get into a regular class and have additional German lessons.

What is an apprenticeship? Can I do that?

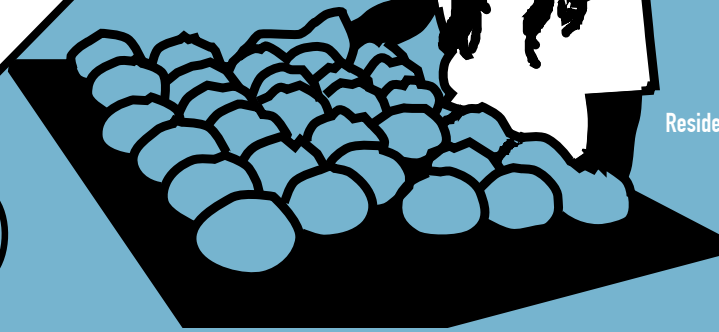
Are you tired of school? Then do a job apprenticeship in order to work physically and later be able to earn well! Without an apprenticeship it will be very difficult to find a job. Apprenticeships exist for almost every profession.

In order to learn a profession properly, one needs to learn the theoretical and the practical contents. After two or three years one needs to take a test in order to show that in theory, as well as practice, one knows everything in the profession.



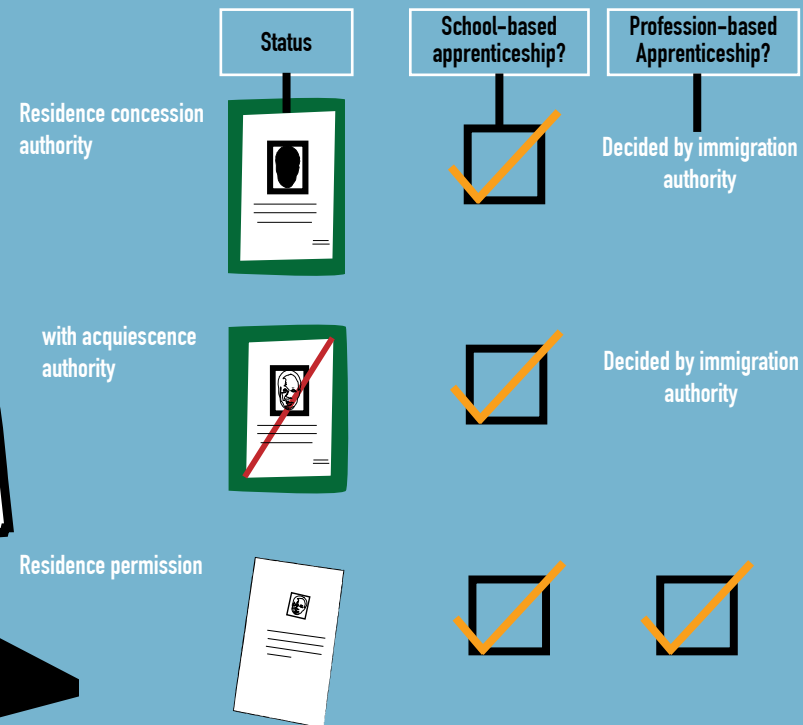
With your youth office, your guardian and your supervisor, you can plan your apprenticeship and talk about your possibilities. There are also many free advice centers that will help you find a fitting apprenticeship.

There are school-based and profession-based apprenticeships. You may do the school-based apprenticeship, no matter where you come from, how long you are in Germany and what residence status you have!



The profession-based apprenticeship has a higher practical workload and you always need a work permit from the immigration authority ("gainful employment allowed").

Caution: If your home country is considered "safe home country" and you posted an asylum application or the asylum application was denied, then you normally may not start a profession-based apprenticeship.

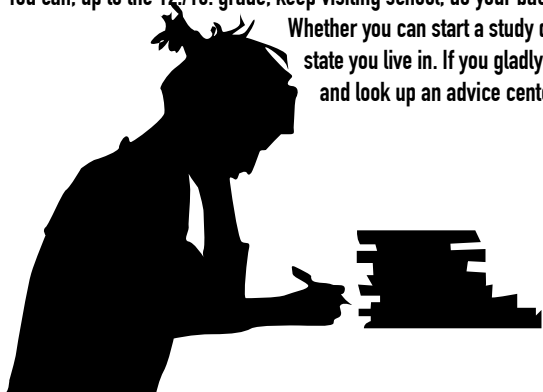


What is the baccalaureate and who may study?

Do you still have the desire to learn, do you not yet have desire to start with an apprenticeship or work? Then keep learning!

You can, up to the 12./13. grade, keep visiting school, do your baccalaureate and then start a study at a university.

Whether you can start a study depends on your residence title and in which state you live in. If you gladly want to study, you should seek help for yourself and look up an advice center.



May I work if I am underage?

Yes, but only under certain prerequisites. You should really discuss this with your guardian. You must additionally inform the youth office. If you receive money from the youth office, you can only keep a small part of your wage and must pass on the rest to the youth office. For that, it is not important what kind of a job it is (part-time job, seasonal job). There is only an exception if you engage yourself voluntarily and receive compensation based on effort.

Important: Unregistered labor in Germany is not allowed and will be punished.

How can I finance my apprenticeship and my study?

Once the youth assistance is over, the question arises, where you will get your money.

During the profession-based apprenticeship you receive money from your apprenticeship area (apprenticeship salary).

If you keep going to school, make a school-based or profession-based apprenticeship, or study, you initially receive no money from the social office or the job center (more to this further back). Therefore, you may be dependent on (student) BafoG or job apprenticeship assistance (BAB). Whether you receive that, depends on what residence status you have and how long you are already in Germany.

In order to verify if you have a claim or if there are alternatives to that, you should look up an advice center. If you receive (student) BafoG or BAB, you have to inform yourself if you may additionally work or not.

What if the money is not enough?

If you no longer receive youth assistance and the money from BafoG and BAB is not enough to pay all of your costs, you can eventually also receive support from the job center or the social office.

For that, you usually have to post a hard case application. Inform yourself what to have to watch out for!

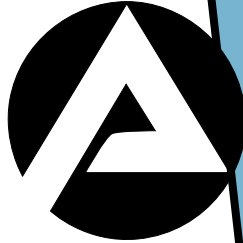
“Do not dream your life,
but live your dream!”



What is the job center?

The job center is a department in Germany that you can find in every city and county. The job center supports grown people that are looking for work, until they have found a job. It gives them money to secure their livelihoods, and helps with the search for work. In exceptional cases (hard cases) it pays for people that go to school or do an apprenticeship.

The job center pays for accommodation, livelihood and health insurance. So that the job center helps you, you must be an adult and have a residence permission.



"It is important, to – first and foremost – learn German."



Sozialamt

What is the social office (Sozialamt)?

The social office is also a department. The social office has to support you once you no longer receive youth assistance, can not yet earn your own money, and are not yet with the job center. The social office pays accommodation, livelihood and health insurance. The social office assists you when you are an adult, or your asylum application is not yet decided, your asylum application was denied, or you received an "acquiescence".

Nouhaila, 20 years old, Morocco

Hava Morina, 16 years old, Kosovo

Iqbal Tariq, 17 years old, Pakistan

R. Mhandu, 22 years old

Alireza Hossein, fom Gazhi, Afghanistan, I am 18 years old



Gholam Rasool Hakimi, Hazara, 19 years old, Afghanistan

Aish, 17 years old, Pakistan

Wael Zardah, 16 years old and from Damascus

Soltan Akbari, Hazara, Afhanistan, baccalaureate student, lives in Berlin

May I open a bank account?

Every human in Germany has the right to open a bank account. Every bank in Germany plays along and opens an account, even for asylum seekers and those with an acquiescence.

A bank account is an awesome thing that makes things easier. But you have to make sure that your account is covered. If you buy something or pay without having enough money on the account, it is possible that you have to pay many extra fees.



What can I do in my free time?

In Germany, one can do many things in their free time. Here, Hava talks about her many activities and projects:



"One can do whatever one wants. I love to play soccer and acting. Everything that has to do with sports, I like. In the last school year, I always went to soccer practice of Moabiter FSV twice a week after school, and furthermore I was at Clara Outreach and practiced for various theater pieces. I participated in the youth project "Alice in Wonderland" from Gangway e.V. and in the youth theater festival FESTIVALLA 2016 from JugendtheaterBuro. I also registered for the HUCKEPACK organization and received a sponsorship there. Roughly once a week I meet with my sponsor, we then do things outside the house together, e.g. bicycle tours or going to the cinema. There are also other organizations through which one can receive sponsorship. Surely there is also one in your vicinity!"

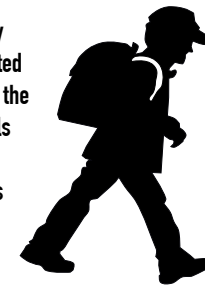


Advice for daily life

May I travel?

If you are in the asylum process or have an acquiescence, you can't make a travel in every case. Before you e.g. visit relatives or have a class trip, you must check if your stay is limited to a certain area and how long you may leave it. Most of the times there are problems if, in the first three months of your arrival in Germany, you want to drive somewhere else. For travels abroad, you always need the permission of the immigration authority.

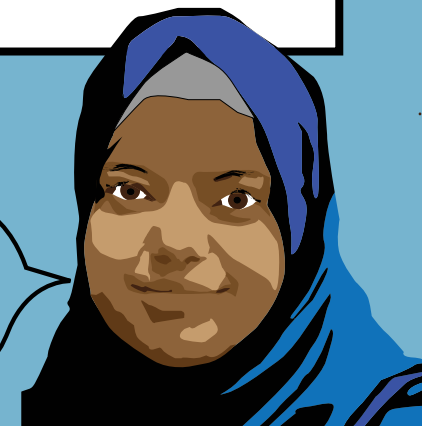
The permission for the travel abroad or the "suspension of territorial restriction" for travels in the country can be requested by your guardian at the immigration authority. They decide then alone or at a residence concession together with the BAMF.



Can I live in an own apartment?

That depends. If you can organize your life well on your own, in the help plan talk you can ask for an own apartment. Finding an own apartment, however, is always a long affair.

"If you don't fight for what you love, then don't cry when you lose it."



May I drive a car?

In order to drive cars, you must get a drivers license. The drivers license is a practical thing, but it does not have to be done first. Every human above the age of 18 can get a drivers license, but one needs a document that verifies the identity.

So long as one does not have a residence permission or cannot show a birth certificate or valid passport, one cannot take an exam. There is a theoretical and a practical exam for the drivers license. Additionally, one must make sure that one has enough money, because one has to pay a lot of money for a drivers license.

Where do I receive help?

Asylum procedure and residence

In asylum procedure advice centers you receive advice about your asylum procedure. Therein you can clear very general questions or discuss specific things, such as your protocol to the interview of the asylum procedure. Many cities have these advice centers. Your guardian and your supervisor can tell you where in your vicinity an advice center is found.

Lawyer (Rechtsanwalt/Rechtsanwältin)

Do I need a lawyer?

Sometimes a lawyer can help you. For example in an asylum procedure, when you have to go before the court or to the police and when you experience abuse.

What can a lawyer do ?

A lawyer can represent you with the departments (such as the BAMF, the immigration authority or the job center) He/She can help you protect your rights. He/She can also sue another person for you if you were harmed.

A lawyer can answer your letters and lawsuits. He/She is there for you for all negative legal developments, i.e. when a bad letter arrives or if you're supposed to be deported. A lawyer also comes along to the Interview.

Who pays the lawyer?

Actually one has to pay the lawyer themselves, but for teenagers there are possibilities that one receives help. For that, you must talk to your guardian. Also for people over 18 years of age that have little money, there is help. For that, one must talk to the lawyer.

Where do I find a lawyer?

You can ask your guardian, your supervisor, friends, relatives or an advice center.

Discrimination

When single people or groups are disadvantaged, this can happen due to different characteristics. Especially frequently is that people are discriminated against due to their gender, skin color, heritage, religion or sexual preference.

Discrimination in Germany is actually forbidden, but unfortunately it keeps happening. You do not have to accept it or endure it. You can turn to trusted people or advice centers in order to receive support.

Help upon experiencing violence:

No one has the right to harm you or force you to do something that will harm you or others. There are different forms of violence and force, e.g. some boys and girls are forced to steal or beg, sell drugs, prostitute themselves or do other work, instead of going to school. Some boys and girls are hit, others are pressured with threats against their families. Some boys and girls experience sexual violence. The perpetrator can be a stranger or a person from the own vicinity, i.e. from the family.

You are not alone! There are advice centers that can help you, and facilities where you can find protection if you are being threatened or persecuted. The advice centers can also support you.

If you are worried about a friend look for a person who you trust and tell them about your experiences and fears. This can be a guardian, your supervisor, a

teacher, a social worker in school, a doctor, the police, a neighbor, a friend. The person will listen to you and help you find an advice center near you. There are advice centers in every city.

There is also the help phone-line (Hilfetelefon) in Germany, where you can speak anonymously about your problems and fears.

Notice:

If you need support, help and protection, the youth office must help you. In every state there are hotlines and child protection centers for children and teenagers.

For girls and young women: 08000 116 016

For LGBTQI: www.queer-refugees.de

Violence and persecution can lead to mental illness.

These can be treated in so-called therapy centers for refugees. Such treatments are free of charge.

A list of therapy centers with contact data can be found here: www.baff-zentren.org

A

Abschiebeverbot (deportation prohibition) =

Germany says: Your home country is actually not dangerous. However, since you are underage or sick, you cannot go back since there is, for you specifically, no help or treatment in your home country. You receive a deportation prohibition and may stay in Germany for now.

Abschiebehindernisse (deportation interference) =

With deportation interferences you have not received a residence title. You may still not be deported right now. You will receive an acquiescence.

Ablehnung (denial) = The denial is the first negative decision regarding your asylum application. In order to do something about it, you only have very little time and quickly need a lawyer.

Alterseinschätzung (age estimation) = If you do not have any identification documents with you, it can happen that your age is not believed and is therefore estimated or with help from medical examinations it is attempted to estimate your age.

Asyl (Asylum) = Generally speaking, asylum describes a safe haven where you are protected against dangers such as persecution. Asylum is one of the most important German rights and is listed in the constitution. All people in Germany who, for example face political persecution, can make a claim for asylum. Those who receive asylum may stay in Germany for three years.

Asylantrag (asylum application) = You have possibility to tell every German department (immigration authority, police, etc.) that you require asylum. They then have to make sure that you can post a written application at the Bundesamt

für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) – (Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees) – the asylum application means that you want asylum per the constitution or “international protection”.

Asylverfahren (asylum procedure) = After you have posted an asylum application at the Bundesamt fuer Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) – (Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees) – it is verified and decided whether you actually receive asylum or not. This is called asylum procedure and can take some time.

Aufenthalt (stay) = Generally speaking, the term stay describes an area where a person finds themselves. Legally speaking, the term stay means the permission for foreigners to live for a limited time (restricted) or even without time limit (unrestricted) in Germany. The stay is regulated per the Residence Act (AufenthG) and given out by the immigration authority in form of a residence title.

Aufenthaltsurlaub (residence permission) = is a restricted permission to live in Germany as a Foreigner.

Aufenthaltsgesetz (AufenthG) (Residence Act) = is a law that regulates the entry and departure as well as stay of foreigners in Germany.

Aufenthalts gestattet (residence concession) = is the stay that you receive during the asylum procedure.

Aufenthaltsstittel (Residence title) = is a permission handed out by the immigration authority for foreigners to live in Germany.

Ausbildung (Apprenticeship) = is a teaching that takes between two and three and a half years in which you learn a job you chose.

B

Behörde/n (Department/s) = Departments are state facilities that enforce laws. e.g. The immigration authority.

Betreuer/Betreuerin (Supervisor) = is a grown person who works in the house where you live. The supervisor is there for you and helps you in your everyday life. The supervisor accompanies you if you i.e. Have to go to the doctor or go shopping, he explains to you what is important for your life in Germany and helps you look for a school or a German course.

Bundesland (state) = Germany consists of 16 states. These may not be independent states, but they have the right to their own governments and laws, meaning they are independent in some areas and can decide themselves.

BumF = The Bundesfachverband unbegleitete minderjährige Flüchtlinge e.V. is an organization that engages itself for the rights of unaccompanied juvenile refugees. We work for the improvement of the rights of refugees so they can build themselves an own life. Our homepage: www.b-umf.de; facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bumf>

C

Clearingverfahren (Clearing procedure) = In the clearing procedure, your needs and request for support and provision as an underage refugee are determined. For this, your health status is checked, among other things. It is determined if relatives of yours live in Germany or the EU, or to which school you can go. Additionally, the background and circumstances regarding your flight are cleared and first legal residential perspectives are cleared up. All of this has to happen with your participation.

Term Explanations

With that information, the “assistance plan” can be created in which all the support measures for your future will be written.

D

Dolmetscher/in oder Uebersetzer/in (translator) = Is a person who can speak multiple languages and translates important conversations or documents into the language that you understand.

Dublin-Verordnung (Dublin Act) = is a law that is valid in all European countries: The Dublin Act regulates in which country your asylum procedure takes place.

Duldung (Acquiescence) = An acquiescence is what you get when you have not received a stay. You can receive the acquiescence because you are underage or because you are doing a profession-based or a school-based apprenticeship. It can always be extended until the reason (school/apprenticeship/underage) falls away or you have the right to a residence permission.

E

Europäische Union (EU) (European Union) = is an alliance (union) of currently 28 European states with around 500 million inhabitants, a common currency (EURO) and a shared parliament that decides over EU-laws.

F
Familiengericht (Family court) = is a court that reaches decisions about family issues. Part of the family issues is also a question of what happens to children and adolescents that live in Germany without parents. Upon request, the family court assigns children and adolescents that are not yet adults to a guardian. The request can be made to the family court by anyone.

Familienzusammenführung (family reunification) = Up until your 18. birthday, you can have the right to live with your parents. This means that, if your parents live apart from you, they have the right to come to you in Germany if you have a residence title. This is called family reunification. This can, in exceptional cases, also apply to close relatives or siblings.

Fluechtlingsrat (refugee council) = Refugee councils are in every state and in many big cities. They are non-state organizations that engage themselves for the rights of refugees. There you can find advice, information and legal help, as well as support to orientate yourself better. A list of refugee councils and other advice centers can be found at PRO ASYL under www.proasyl.de/beratungsstellen-vor-ort/

Fluechtlingssschutz (refugee protection) = See international protection

Frauenarzt/Frauenaerztin (gynecologist) = is a doctor that only treats sicknesses that girls or women can have. All girls or women should, every year, at least once go to the gynecologist for examination.

G
Gemeinschaftsunterkunft fuer Asylbewerber (GU) (commu-

nal accommodation for asylum seekers) = is a place where only refugees live that have not yet received a decision in their asylum procedure or have been given acquiescence. If you are under 18 years old and are without your parents, you may not live there. In that case, the youth office has to take care of you.

Gericht (Court) = is a state facility, a place where legal issues are cleared. To that belongs e.g. the Question of if someone receives a guardian or if someone must go to jail for a crime. If you are not satisfied with decisions from departments, you can go to court along with a lawyer and try to receive a different decision.

Grundgesetz (Constitution) = the german constitution. Will also sometimes be abbreviated as GG.

H
Hilfeplangespraech (Assistance plan conversation) = The assistance plan conversation should happen every six months between your supervisor, the youth office, and yourself. The assistance plan conversation is about how you are doing and a plan is made on how to proceed with you. Here you can mention if you need anything, or if you have problems.

Humanitaerer Status / Humanitaere Gruende (humanitarian status / humanitarian reasons) = These reasons could be that your parents are no longer alive or that you face danger upon return to your home country, or that you are sick, or something similar. Then you can receive a residence permission, in order to stay in Germany for now. However, it is possible that this residence permission is only valid until you turn 18 years old.

I
Identitaetspapiere (Identity papers) = are documents that prove your identity, meaning they show what your name is and when you were born, i.e. A passport or birth certificate.
Inobhutnahme (Custody) = For all children and adolescents under 18 years old that come to Germany without parents or caretakers, the youth office is responsible for them. They have to make sure you reach a safe place where you feel good. There you receive food, clothing, medical support and supervision. This is called custody. During the first time period it is checked if you redistributed. During this time, the youth office has to take care of you as well. This is called temporary custody.

Integrationskurs (Integration course) = Integration courses are mandatory courses that one must take after receiving one's asylum acknowledgment and may stay in Germany. Integration courses are only for grownups that do not yet speak german well.

Internationaler Schutz (International protection) = International protection is also asylum, but not only in Germany, but Europe-wide. It's directed to european rules and also gives you the right to stay in Germany. Either because you have a "refugee trait" or because you receive "subsidiary protection". You receive both if e.g. your country is at war.

Interview im Asylverfahren (Interview during the asylum procedure) = is also called a hearing. When you have posted an asylum application, an employee of the BAMF has to hold an interview with you in order to find out if you have the right to receive asylum in Germany. You will be asked questions about your origin country, your identity and your flight. If you do not speak german, you will receive a trans-

lator, who can translate the questions and answers for you. Everything that you ask and everything that you say will be written down into a protocol. After the interview, an employee of the BAMF reads through the protocol and looks at the documents that you maybe added. Then he/she decides whether you receive asylum, and therefore may stay in Germany.

J
Jugendhilfe (Youth assistance) = are all of the services and duties of the youth office and other departments that have to do with children and adolescents. The exact duties that the youth office has and how these duties are fulfilled practically so all children and adolescents in Germany have a nice and pleasant life, is regulated in the Children and Juvenile assistance law (KJHG) in the SGB III.

JOG = Jugendliche ohne Grenzen (Youths without borders) was founded in 2005 and is a union of adolescent refugees. Our work follows the principle that the affected have an own voice and do not need "politics of representation for the affected". We decided on our own what form of action we take and also how we do it. JOG is against any form of discrimination, especially: Racism, fascism, and anti-Muslim racism. Our webpage: www.jogspace.net; Facebook: <https://de-de.facebook.com/jogspace>

K
Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz (KJHG) Children and Juvenile Assistance Law = is the law in which the child and youth assistance is written. Some also call this "SGB VIII".
Klage/Klagen (lawsuit) = this is what one calls a complaint

in court. If you i.e. received a negative decision in the asylum procedure, you can file a lawsuit against it. Most of the time one does this with a lawyer, and that as fast as possible.

M **Minderjaehrige/r** (underage/minors) = this is what one calls all children and adolescents that are not yet 18 years old.

O **Organisation/en** (Organization/s) = is the union of people in order to achieve certain work or tasks. Many organizations can easily be joined and participated with, i.e. a soccer organization. The goal then is simply to play soccer. Many organizations, however, one does not have to join, and even receives help from them. For example, young refugees can receive help from the youth council or UNICEF.

P **Protokoll** (Protocol) = This document contains everything that you have said during the interview for the asylum procedure. The protocol is sent to you so you can check if everything that you said was written down properly. It is in German, so it is important that someone takes the time to give you the exact translations.

Psychologen/Psychotherapeuten (Psychologists) = is the job title of people that help you with psychological problems. Frequent nightmares, fears and bad thoughts are a sign for these. For treatment of psychological sicknesses, there are, specifically for refugees, so-called therapy centers for refugees.

R **Rechtsanwalt/Rechtanwaeltin** (Lawyer) = is the job title of people that advise you on legal matters and represent you in court.

Residenzpflicht (Residential obligation) = is a restriction of your movement by the immigration authority. If you have an acquiescence, you may mostly only remain in the state in which your immigration authority is. To be able to move freely in Germany, you sometimes have to post a written application for a "departure permission". This isn't always the case, however. If you have an important reason, if you have to go to your lawyer or a doctor that doesn't live in your city, or if you want to visit relatives, the immigration authority can give you an exemption. If the youth office supports you, you or your guardian must be given permission. If you leave the city or the state without this and are caught by the police, it's possible that you will not receive an exemption or have to pay a fine. Actually, there shouldn't be a residential obligation if you are housed in the youth assistance. Please approach the immigration authority with your guardian and the youth office.

Roentgen(untersuchung) (X-Ray examination) = With this medical examination, a part of your body is highlighted so a picture of your body and bones can be created.

S **Subsidaerer Schutz** (subsidiary protection) = See international protection

Schulabschluss (graduation) = is what students receive upon a successful completion of a school. The graduation is noted together with a graduation report card.

Schulpflicht (school requirement) = In Germany, children and adolescents under the age of 16 have the right and the duty to go to school. This is called school requirement.

SGB VIII = is the eighth book of the social code. It is the same as the Children and Juvenile Assistance Law.

Sorgberechtigte/r (Care Taker) = describes the person/people that has/have the responsibility of caring for minors. Part of that involves caring for the child or the adolescent, raising them, to look after them, and to determine their stay. This also includes the protection against dangers, the representation in court, and the conclusion of businesses, like e.g. the apprenticeship contract. In most cases, the parents are the caretakers. If they are incapable of doing so, then a guardian takes over the caretaking.

U **Unbegleitete minderjaehrige Auslaender (umA)** (Unaccompanied underage foreigners) = Is another term for unaccompanied underage refugee.

Unbelgeitete minderjaehrige Fluechtlinge (umF) (Unaccompanied underage refugees) = this describes all refugees that are fleeing without parents or caretakers and are not yet 18 years old.

Unbegleitete Minderjaehrige (UM) (Unaccompanied minors) = another term for unaccompanied underage refugees.

(UN-KRK) = is a worldwide agreement for the protection of children that has been ratified by almost all countries of the world, meaning as national law by the parliament. In the UN-KRK, human rights are specially written for children, so for everyone who is not yet 18 years old. All countries that signed the UN-KRK must respect and protect these chil-

dren's rights, including Germany.

Unterbringung (Placement) = is the place where you as child or adolescent can live with the help of the Youth office. There, you can, most of the times, live with other children or adolescents and receive help and support by the supervisors. There are different types of placement, i.e. juvenile shelter, living group, or an own apartment. What is the best for you, that you decide together with the youth office.

V **Volljaehrigkeit, volljaehrige** (adulthood) = in most countries in the world, one is considered an adult upon reaching their 18th birthday. In some countries one becomes an adult later. With adulthood, you receive the right to close contracts. At the same time you are fully responsible for yourself in front of the courts. With adulthood, you lose the special protection of the youth assistance as well as your guardian. However, the youth assistance itself can still continue until you are 27 years old. The right to a guardian is based on the laws of your home country. This means that if you come from a country in which you become an adult later, then you have, until you reach adulthood, the right to a guardian. In case you come from a country in which adulthood happens sooner, so under 18 years, it makes no difference in Germany. All people under 18 years old are minors here.

Vormund/Vormundin (Guardian) = is a person that is responsible for you, so long you are not grown and live in Germany without your parents. With the guardian, you talk about for instance your stay and the school that you

want to visit. Only the guardian may sign contracts for you, such as e.g. The apprenticeship contract or the cell phone contract.

W

Widerspruch (objection) = written protest against the decision of a state department that involves you.

Wohngruppe (living group) = This is the form of placement by the youth office with which a group of adolescents lives together in an apartment and is supported by supervisors.

Z

Zeugnis/se (report cards) = are important documents that are handed out at the end of the school year. In the report cards, your school-based capabilities in individual subjects (German, Mathematics, English, etc.) are noted. You must present your report cards especially during school change or job application.

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Jugendliche ohne Grenzen

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