

# Russian Kids Must Prove 'Patriotism' to Graduate High School

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Under the terms of the order, Russian Schoolchildren would be expected to demonstrate their patriotism to graduate from school.

Here is a list of some things that Russia now wants its high-school students to demonstrate in order to graduate: self-identification as a Russian citizen, responsibility to the motherland and respect for "traditional" values.

The Education and Science Ministry has drafted an order that expanding the scope of essential high-school education beyond the "basic" subjects — such as language, literature and math — to include "personal results" that the student must achieve, Izvestia reported Thursday.

The personal results, in addition to the list above, include patriotism, knowledge of the national anthem, respect for Russia's people, and pride for one's home region, the report said.

"The [educational] standard is firmly oriented toward building the personal traits of the

graduate, who must not only acquire knowledge about certain subjects, but also be formed as a complete and full-fledged individual," a spokesperson for the Education and Science Ministry was quoted as saying.

The ministry's "portrait of the Russian school student" also lists "anti-corruption views," "ecological thinking" and skills in online communication technologies among desirable traits, Izvestia reported.

Corruption has been rampant under President Vladimir Putin's rule, with Russia coming in 127th in Transparency International ranking last year, a place it shared with such countries as Nicaragua, Gambia and Comoros.

Meanwhile, as the Russian government has been increasingly blocking access to websites that criticize its policies, it appears likely that students would be expected to demonstrate their online skills by taking to the more acceptable segments of the Internet to communicate "patriotic" views.

Schoolchildren would also be expected to demonstrate their respect for "traditional values," a term by which Russia usually designates its dislike of Western liberal ideas and social freedoms such as gay rights.

The ministry order does, however, include encouraging "tolerance" in students, the report said, though it did not specify what areas that tolerance should extend to.

"Patriotism" and character-building were essential parts of the Soviet school system, with students required to be familiar with the teachings of founder Vladimir Lenin and the platform of the Communist Party, and be able to describe international news developments in a language that clearly showed their pro-Soviet sympathies. But that ended with the 1991 Soviet collapse.

A co-chairman of the Russian Teachers' Union, Andrei Demidov, appeared skeptical about Russia's new ideas about improving "standards" for students' views, the report said.

"We have standards everywhere, and now they have even got around to schoolchildren," he was quoted as saying.

**See also:**

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