



Horizon 23

Information bulletin for migrants in Geneva

Return visa : caution

If you have an ongoing permit procedure, you cannot travel freely yet. If you haven't actually obtained the permit yet, you still need a return visa to come back to Switzerland.

It is often complicated to obtain such a visa: OCPM only rarely delivers a return visa and the procedure can be long. Please be cautious, it is very risky to plan a trip, and especially to buy airplane tickets, if you haven't yet obtained the return visa.

Back-to-school allowance

The « Back-to-school allowance » (allocation de rentrée scolaire) is an aid from the City of Geneva to help families buy what their children need for school (school supplies, clothes, school bag, etc.). It is delivered via a credit card worth CHF 130.- (primary-school children) or CHF 180.- (children attending cycle d'orientation), allowing you to buy items in certain stores.

Since 2021, all children who live in the City of Geneva, with or without a permit, who attend primary or high school, and whose parents meet the income-related criteria can access this aid.

If you have a file at CCSI, you can ask for an appointment with us so that we can help you request the 2022 "Back-to-school allowance". The allowance must be requested before end October 2022. On the day of your appointment, please bring a copy of the 2022 health insurance subsidy, your valid passports, and salary slips if you have them.

Information by SMS

If you have a file at CCSI, you will receive text messages from us on your phone. These messages will remind you when your next appointment is coming up, announce the date and topic of our next information session, or inform you on the latest changes or new resources for you.

Please note that receiving a text message does not necessarily imply that the content applies to your personal situation. It is important to click on the link to get the full information. You can also share the message with other persons who could be interested in the information.

If you do not wish to receive any messages from us, you can send a message saying Stop SMS to accueil@ccsi.ch. Please indicate your family name and phone number so we can take you off the list.

Information sessions

CCSI organises collective information sessions. They are free of charge, in several languages, and on topics that interest you.

To find out the dates of the next sessions, please check the screens in the waiting areas, or our website, where you will find a special tab for information sessions (<https://ccsi.ch/help-and-information/sessions>).

Cantonal and municipal benefits

Geneva is both a city and a canton. The City of Geneva occupies most of the territory but there are other municipalities too (Meyrin, Vernier, Onex, Carouge, etc.). Certain aids and benefits are cantonal, whereas others depend on where you live. You can access cantonal aids and benefits regardless of where you live in Geneva (parascolaire, dental clinics, etc.).

But some benefits are municipal and can vary depending on where you live. For example, the price of school meals is different in every municipality: in some places, families do not have to pay for school meals, in others school meals are only partly subsidized, and in some municipalities, families pay full price for school meals. These rules are decided by each municipality and CCSI must comply with them. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask when you come for your next appointment.

Subsidized housing

After the vote on 13 February 2022, the required length of (legal) residence needed to access subsidized housing in Geneva has increased, from two to four years. Exceptions remain possible in certain cases.

Health insurance subsidy

You must request the subsidy (financial aid from the State for health insurance) for your child's health insurance each year by 30 November. If you haven't done so yet, please make an appointment with CCS as soon as possible. Please note that you will need to bring documents, reception at CCSI can tell you what to bring to the appointment. If you have a permit or are taxed at source (directly deducted from your salary), please tell reception.

As soon as you receive the subsidy, please bring a copy of the certificate to our reception. The subsidy is a right based on your income. **Requesting it will not affect other proceedings, such as the request for a residency permit.**

The subsidy covers your child's premium up to 100.- maximum. Every month, you will have to pay whatever exceeds 100.-. If you have supplementary health insurance, you will have to pay for it entirely; it is never covered by the subsidy.

It often takes time for the insurance company to register your subsidy. In the meantime, it is best to pay the first bills yourself (they will be reimbursed later), or to contact CCSI so that we can try to block the bills.

How to change health insurance providers

Every year it is possible to change health insurance providers, for example in order to lower the cost of your monthly premiums. To change health insurance providers, you must send a registered letter (« recommandée ») to the insurance company you want to leave before 20 November 2022.

For your request to be accepted, it is necessary to **pay all the bills** from your former insurance (including the one for the December premium!). If you do not pay all the pending bills, the change will not be registered, and you will not be able to leave that provider.

Supplementary insurance

Supplementary insurance (called assurance complémentaire in French, or LCA) are not required. These insurances only cover costs that are not included in mandatory health insurance (LAMal), such as dental care or alternative medicines.

Caution! The **subsidy** (financial aid for health insurance costs) **does not cover supplementary insurances**. If you subscribe to supplementary insurance, all of the costs will befall you.

If you have signed a supplementary insurance contract, you have up to 14 days to cancel the contract. If however you decide to keep the insurance, it will be valid three years minimum. After that, if you wish to get rid of it, you can ask for a termination of the contract. Caution, this must be done at least a month before the end of the contract period.

In both cases, you must send a registered letter (recommandé) to your insurance company. If needed, we can provide a model for you. Just ask at CCSI reception desk.

Primary school: registration

Any child living in Geneva, regardless of his/her legal status, has the right and the obligation to go to school. This year, all **children born before 01.08.2018** must attend school.

To be accepted at school, your child must have health insurance. CCSI is in charge of affiliation for children without a residence permit. Make an appointment and come with the official identification for the child and his/her legal guardian, as well as your address. Your child will be able to start school as soon as you have come to CCSI.

Daycare

It is very difficult to find a place in daycare for pre-school children in Geneva. CCSI can help you increase your chances, but cannot guarantee a place. If you live or work in Geneva city, go to the Bureau d'Information de la Petite Enfance (BIPE, rue du Cendrier 8). If you live in another area in the canton of Geneva, you must go to the Secteur de la Petite Enfance of your commune – if there is one. If not, pre-register your child in the daycare center(s) closest to your home or workplace. To do so, you must present your child's insurance certificate.

CCSI can write a letter of recommendation to support your request. For this, you will need to make an appointment with the *Childhood, education and health* consultation at CCSI. Please note that there is no guarantee that your child will have a place in daycare. The cost of monthly payments depends on your income. There are currently no financial aids for those costs.

Parascolaire and school meals for children

Depending on your income, after-school care (parascolaire) could be **free** for your children regardless of where you live in Geneva. Please note that the exoneration must be requested each year before the month of November. Please fill in and sign the green form and leave it at reception.

Depending on where you live and on your income, there are also aids for school meals. Ask CCSI if such aids are available for you.

