

Russian Naming Conventions

Reference Guide

What you need to know

- Russian names generally consist of a first name, middle name/patronymic, and a last name.
- Some Russian first names are hyphenated: for example, **Mariya-Viktoriya**.
- Russian middle names are patronymics, which mean they combine the father's first name with the suffix meaning the *son* or *daughter of*. The most common suffixes for men are *-evich* or *-ovich*; and for women are *-evna* or *-ovna*.
- Typically men's and women's last names have different endings. Some women adopt their husband's last name, adding *-a* to the name.

Registering students

1. Include all names in databases and documents.
2. If the first name is hyphenated and the input field is limited, only enter the name before the hyphen.
3. Place patronymics in the middle name field, unless the parents indicate otherwise.

Example

A father introduces himself as **Andrey** *Ivanovich* **Medvedev**, the mother introduces herself as **Valentina** *Vladimirovna* **Medvedeva**, and their children are **Vladimir** *Andreyevich* **Medvedev** and **Anna** *Andreyevna* **Medvedeva**. (First names are in **red**, middle names are in *black italics*, and last names are in **blue** throughout this guide.)

Father: **Andrey** *Ivanovich* **Medvedev**

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| First name | Andrey |
| Middle name | <i>Ivanovich</i> |
| Last name | Medvedev |

Mother: **Valentina** *Vladimirovna* **Medvedeva**

| | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| First name | Valentina |
| Middle name | <i>Vladimirovna</i> |
| Last name | Medvedeva |

Son: **Vladimir** *Andreyevich* **Medvedev**

| | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| First name | Vladimir |
| Middle name | <i>Andreyevich</i> |
| Last name | Medvedev |

Daughter: **Anna** *Andreyevna* **Medvedeva**

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| First name | Anna |
| Middle name | <i>Andreyevna</i> |
| Last name | Medvedeva |

Remember

Naming practices vary among Russian speakers, so this guide provides only a general overview.

Some Russian families adopt English naming conventions. For example, some families give the masculine last name ending to their daughters, so **Anna Andreyevna Medvedeva** in the example above could be have **Medvedev** as her last name.

More examples

Student: **Valentina Vladimirovna Tereshkova**

| | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| First name | Valentina |
| Middle name | <i>Vladimirovna</i> |
| Last name | Tereshkova |

Student: **Maya Mikhailovna Plisetskaya**

| | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| First name | Maya |
| Middle name | <i>Mikhailovna</i> |
| Last name | Plisetskaya |

Student: **Vladimir Semyonovich Vysotsky**

| | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| First name | Vladimir |
| Middle name | <i>Semyonovich</i> |
| Last name | Vysotsky |

Addressing parents, students, and families

- Address parents as “Mr.” and “Mrs.” using the husband’s last name. **Mikhail Ivanovich Karlov** and his wife **Valentina Vladimirovna Karlova** may be addressed as Mr. and Mrs. Karlov.
- Shake hands when greeting and departing.
- Students are often addressed by a nickname. Ask the individual or the parents which name is preferred.
- When sending written materials to families, address them as follows:
 - To the parents of Katerina Vadimovna Pugachova
 - To the Pugachov family

Use a qualified translator if you are not able to communicate clearly with the parents and student.

School staff members who register students should come to an agreement with parents on a name that respects both their cultural patterns and the constraints of the database. That name should be written out and provided to the families and students in a notice written in the family’s home language, indicating that this is the name that will be used officially at school. Doing so will help students and families remember to use the modified name in school settings.

More information about this and other reference sheets can be found on the Education Northwest website: <http://educationnorthwest.org/resource/3130>.

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