

03 September

Metinvest and the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation prepare 1,333 first-year pupils for the new school year



Ukrainian children started back to school this week, with many restarts disrupted by Russian attacks. Our steel and mining company [Metinvest](#) has given school kits to 1,284 children of employees at its Ukrainian enterprises who are starting first grade, along with 49 children of employees at the company's overseas assets. The kits are part of the "First Time – First Grade" programme, run with the support of the "Rinat Akhmetov to Children!" charity initiative. For families in communities close to the front line, and for those with a father serving in the army, the support removes a real cost at a difficult time.

What have the first-year pupils received?

Each child received a school kit containing the basics needed for the first days of class: exercise books, pens, pencils, paints, brushes, diaries and other items. In Ukraine, 1,284 children of Metinvest employees received the kits by 1 September. A further 49 children of employees at the company's overseas assets received kits or vouchers to buy them, prepared to suit the specific needs of each country.

Why does this matter for families in frontline communities?

Because the first year of school arrives with costs and pressures that are much harder to carry during the war. Svitlana Drozdova, the wife of a soldier and steelworker, was preparing her daughter Polina for first grade this year.

"When a husband is defending the country on the front line, all day-to-day responsibilities of running the home and bringing up a child fall on the wife's shoulders. Getting our daughter ready for her first year at school today is both emotionally stressful and a significant financial burden. This gift has been a vital source of support for us. My husband knows that the company is supporting his family, and that gives him peace of mind there on the front line. We're truly grateful to Metinvest for the care!"

What do the children say?

They are looking forward to school. Valeriia Zaruba, the daughter of an employee at Metinvest Machinery, said she wants to make new friends, learn, draw and discover new things, and that she especially liked the coloured pencils and paints in her kit.

Seven-year-old Ihor Strungaru, whose mother works at Kamet-Steel, has already learnt to count and can read a short story on his own. He is looking forward to art and maths lessons, and liked the pencils and the exercise books with dinosaurs on them.

Polina Drozdova can already write her first name and surname neatly, and count. As she says:

"I hope my teacher at school will be kind, and that the lessons will be interesting. And I was given an incredibly lovely school kit – there are so many colourful things in it for school! Thank you for the gift!"

How long has the programme been running?

The "First Time – First Grade" programme has been in place for many years at Metinvest, and it is designed to take part of the preparation burden off parents before 1 September. It is delivered with the support of the "Rinat Akhmetov to Children!" charity initiative.

How does this fit into the wider approach?

Support for Ukrainian children through the war is a consistent part of the approach taken by our shareholder [Rinat Akhmetov](#), alongside the work of the [Rinat Akhmetov Foundation](#). The school kits are a small and practical part of that, aimed at the moment when a family needs it.

We wish all first-year pupils a good school year, new friends and happy memories of school life, and their parents patience and many happy moments. Have a peaceful new school year.