

Russian National Guard Takes Over Siberian Schoolkids' Education

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Russia's National Guard has taken over teaching duties at a fifth-grade class in the Siberian city of Irkutsk this week.

Officer Alexei Volk, wearing a military uniform, [assumed](#) homeroom teaching duties over the class of 12 girls and 20 boys on the first day of school.

"Primarily, we will instill patriotic upbringing and a positive view of people in uniforms," Volk told local television as he stood in front of the classroom's chalkboard.

Tuesday's classes began with a "lesson in courage," with the kids attending a weapons exhibition at the Irkutsk anti-riot police office, the National Guard's regional branch [said](#).

"I want to know how to strip and assemble weapons," one of the schoolchildren told local television. "I also want to learn more about grenades."

The militarization of young Russians has sparked heated debates in the past several years,

with President Vladimir Putin's [establishment](#) of the Youth Army in late 2015 drawing comparisons to the Hitler Youth.

Security officials [announced](#) this year that delinquent youngsters would be sent to military-patriotic reeducation camps. The Defense Ministry reportedly [plans](#) to educate high-schoolers at weeklong camps each year at its sprawling \$350 million military-themed park outside Moscow once construction is completed.

The National Guard is a powerful defense force that Putin founded in 2016 to take over the functions of riot police and better combat terrorism and protect public order. Critics say that the force was designed to target anti-government protesters.

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