

# Supporting your child's well-being and education together



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The home is the child's primary growth environment. Each guardian wants their child to have a good life and the opportunity to study. The support and active approach of the guardian has a significant impact on the child's development and education.

Cooperation between the home and school is based on mutual trust and openness. As a guardian, you should know your rights and the options you have in terms of influencing your child's education and the cooperation between the home and school. It is important to talk about experiences, exchange ideas and support the child together.

This quick guide has been drafted in cooperation with guardians and school staff. We hope that it will provide you with ideas for supporting your child and building a cooperative relationship with the school. The world of education is changing and developing, which is why you should be interested and ask questions if you need more information on anything at school.

Guardians and school staff are important role models for children, which is why it is very important to work well together and develop our relationship.

## The Finnish comprehensive school



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### Teaching and learning materials

Participating in comprehensive education is free of charge for children. Children receive free learning materials from the school (pencils, notebooks and text books). You must take good care of the materials. The family must purchase other equipment, such as a school bag and exercise clothes, themselves.

### School meals

Your child will be given one free meal during the school day. The school will take any dietary restrictions into account. You can report any special dietary restrictions on a form at the school.

### Insurance

Each child is insured for accidents at school. The insurance covers time spent at school, journeys between the school and home, and school outings and camps. Children's personal belongings are not covered by the insurance.

### Journeys to and from school

If your child's journey to school is long or your child needs school transport due to a physical disability or other special challenges, they may be issued a free-of-charge travel card or free taxi transportation.

## The school promotes your child's learning and well-being

Every child needs support in learning, and here at the school we want to make sure that your child receives the support they need in learning and going to school.

### Health

If your child has an illness affecting their everyday life at school, please let the child's teacher know about it.

### Bullying and discrimination

Equality means that all people are equally important. The Finnish Non-discrimination Act prohibits the discrimination of anyone on the basis of age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, state of health, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.

Pupils have the right to a safe learning environment. Bullying, violence, racism or other forms of harassment are not permitted at school. If your child is bullied or discriminated against, contact the school so that we may intervene together and find a solution.

You should also cooperate with the school and support your child in dealing with the matter, if your child has bullied someone.

### Remedial teaching

Pupils are entitled to remedial teaching if they have temporarily fallen behind in their studies or need short-term support in learning.

Remedial teaching may also be offered during a lengthy absence. Teachers usually offer remedial teaching to pupils, but the pupil or guardians may also ask for it.

### Three-step support

Early identification of any obstacles to learning and learning difficulties and the determination of the correct level of support are important in terms of ensuring the child's learning and development. The support may be temporary or long-term. The multidisciplinary team at the school will assess a child's needs and discuss them with their guardians. It is very important to discuss these things with the guardians, and any decisions made about the support are made together with the guardians.

The support has three steps: general support, intensified support and special support. The type of support is selected based on the pupil's needs and situation. The intention is to support the child's learning and strengthen their skills for future studies.

### Preparatory education

If your child's Swedish or Finnish language skills are not sufficient for studying at comprehensive school, your child may participate in preparatory education. Pupils aged 6–17 are entitled to preparatory education.

The duration of preparatory education is one year. During that time, the pupils learn Finnish or Swedish and learn more about the Finnish school. Students receive a plan for preparatory education, or an education plan.

### Finnish/Swedish as a second language (S2)

If a pupil's mother tongue is not Finnish, Swedish or Sami and their Finnish/Swedish language skills are not yet sufficient to study the *Finnish/Swedish language and literature* syllabus, the pupil is offered the opportunity to participate in Finnish/Swedish as a second language studies (S2).

Pupils may replace the *Finnish/Swedish language and literature* studies either completely or partially with Finnish/Swedish as a second language studies.

The teacher will assess the pupil's learning requirements and arrange a meeting with the guardian. The guardian shall make the final decision on syllabus selection based on the teacher's view and the child's skills and needs. When the child's Finnish or Swedish language skills have developed and the child has the prerequisites to successfully complete the *Finnish/Swedish language and literature* syllabus, a new meeting will be arranged to change the previous decision.



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### Mother tongue and religion

In comprehensive school, children have the option to participate in classes in their own mother tongue and religion. Your child's school will be able to provide more information.

### Swimming education

Swimming is an important life skill. It is part of the sports syllabus and curriculum. Swimming is taught at

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swimming halls by swimming instructors employed by the Sports Department. A male and female teacher will accompany the children to the swimming hall to supervise the children on the way there, in the dressing rooms and during instruction. Children must wear appropriate swimsuits made out of swimwear fabric. Swimsuits may have sleeves and legs.

## Co-operation between home and school

As a guardian, you are entitled to receive information about your child's education and any learning challenges. If your child needs support and if different forms of support are planned for them, you have the right to participate in the decision-making.

If you feel that your own Finnish-language skills are not sufficient for discussing or understanding matters related to your child's education, you will be provided with an interpreter. It is very important that we are able to discuss and agree on matters related to your child's education and well-being together. Even if your child speaks Finnish very well, we should not use him/her as an interpreter during discussions about matters concerning them.

### Timetable

Guardians should check their child's timetable to make sure that the child has all the learning materials they will need during the day with them. Sports classes, for example, may be held outdoors or indoors. Children also spend time outdoors during breaks, meaning that you should ensure that your child has weather-appropriate clothes with them when they leave for school.

### Homework and tests

The home environment has a major impact on the child's life, and guardians should encourage their

child to do homework and study for tests. If you are not able to help your child with homework yourself due to language or other challenges, ask the teacher if the school or other local operators provide homework clubs, for example.

### Using Wilma

Wilma is an electronic service where you will receive information from the teacher about your child's day at school and any absences. School staff also use Wilma to publish important bulletins.

Teachers may not have a dedicated, direct telephone number, which is why it is important to learn how to use the Wilma service. You can also use Wilma to send messages to the teacher or principal. The school will provide assistance and guidance with using Wilma.



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## Meetings with the teacher

The teacher may make an appointment with you to discuss matters concerning your child's education, learning and behaviour. You can voice observations or concerns about your child in these meetings.

## Parents' evenings

Parents' evenings are held 1–2 times during the school year, and they may be held for one class or the entire school at a time. Parents' evenings provide information about important topical matters and offer the opportunity to meet other parents.

## Class committee

Guardians may establish a class committee together, which is a fun way to get to know your child's classmates and their guardians. Class committees may organise outings, parties and discussion events together. Participation is voluntary.

## Parents' association

All guardians are encouraged to join the parents' association, because everyone's special skills, time and commitment are valued. A school representative also participates in the association's activities.

The parents' association organises events, outings, clubs, games and discussion events for all the children at the school. The association may participate in developing school operations and introduce new ways of cooperation between the home and school.

## School board

The school board is part of school administration. In addition to the principal, the school board also features parent and school staff representatives. Members are elected every four years. The tasks of the board include supporting the school and maintaining good cooperation and a safe learning environment.

## School staff

People from many different professional fields work at your child's school. You can find staff contact details on the school website.



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## Principal

The principal leads, guides and oversees the teaching and education work at school. Their role is comprehensive, ranging from administrative to financial tasks, for example. The principal is in charge of communications and the safety of the entire school.

## School secretary

You can apply for a Wilma ID from the school secretary. The school secretary also processes school transport applications and maintains the register of pupils. You can report any changes to your contact details to the secretary.

## Teacher

Teachers educate, teach and guide pupils. They inform guardians of any matters concerning the pupils. Teachers also assess the progress pupils make, participate in planning and implementing the three-step

support measures and engage in multidisciplinary cooperation.

The class teacher monitors the absences of the pupils and has primary responsibility for cooperation between the home and school.

### **Teaching assistant**

A teaching assistant works with the teacher in class. They support pupils in independent and self-directed activities and growth. The teacher has primary responsibility for teaching.

### **Multilingual instructor**

Multilingual instructors provide guardians with information about school practices and help guardians and schools understand each other better. Multilingual instructors support cooperation between the home and school as well as the well-being and integration of the entire family.

City of Helsinki multilingual instructors currently offer guidance in Finnish, English, Arabic, Somali and Russian.

### **School coach**

School coaches support pupils during school days and promote their well-being, as well as organising activities.

School coaches support the school's community spirit with the help of team building, dispute resolution, break-time activities and clubs. They work in cooperation with teachers, pupil welfare and parents.

### **Pupil welfare to support families**

If your child or family have any challenges or concerns affecting the child's education and well-being, you may contact pupil welfare, in addition to your child's teacher. The pupil welfare team consists of a school social worker, psychologist and school nurse.

**The school social worker** is a social work expert offering help when a child has difficulties with their education or relationships with their friends, or if a

child experiences other changes in their life, affecting their education and well-being. If your family need support or you wish to discuss support measures, you may contact the school social worker. If necessary, the school social worker will work together with local social welfare services, the family counselling office and school health care.

**The school psychologist** helps pupils with learning difficulties, challenges with emotional development and family crises. They draft assessments, consult guardians and school staff and provide guidance. The psychologist is often involved with making plans for support measures.

### **School nurse**

The purpose of school health care is to ensure the healthy growth and development of pupils and support pupils in their ability to go to school. Pupils are provided with health guidance and referred for any special examinations they may need.

### **Support outside school**

Sometimes life events affect a family's everyday life. In these situations, the child and/or guardians may need support outside the school. The *Family support* website maintained by the City of Helsinki offers plenty of information on services for families with children:

<https://www.hel.fi/sote/perheentuki-en>

## **Social guidance for families with children**

is support, guidance and counselling intended for families with children aged 0–16 in various life situations. Social instructors meet with families primarily in the families' homes. You can apply for the service by calling *Social welfare counselling for families with children*, tel. 09 3101 5454 Mon–Fri 9–12, or by clicking the *Need help?* icon at [www.hel.fi/sote/perheentuki-en](http://www.hel.fi/sote/perheentuki-en), for example.

You can contact social guidance for families with children if:

- you want to discuss matters concerning parenthood, child care and upbringing, such as setting boundaries or the child's sleep, daily schedule or stropky phase ('terrible twos')
- you need support with sudden changes in your life, e.g. divorce or a family member falling ill
- you need information on services in the area and accessing them
- you need support and guidance with managing practical matters.

The service is provided for the family free of charge.



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## **Service needs assessment and support for families with children**

The service is based on the act on social welfare services (sosiaalihuoltolaki) and it is intended for children and families living in Helsinki and experiencing a difficult life situation and the need for support, and who do not receive enough support from basic services or early support measures. During the assessment, the need for basic services, special support services and child welfare services is assessed together with the child and family and employing multidisciplinary cooperation.

The family members are met with together and separately 1–5 times over a period of up to three months, during which time the family are offered guidance and counselling as well as immediate support and help. The authorities also work together with other professionals familiar with the child and family's situation. Stressful life situations can include issues with bringing up children, a child having symptoms, parents' exhaustion, issues with communication within the family, the use of intoxicants in the family, mental health issues and other issues affecting everyday life.

The customer may contact the local service needs assessment and support working group themselves, or the group may be contacted by an employee

concerned about the child and family's situation. The service is provided for the family free of charge.

### **Child welfare notification and contact in accordance with the social welfare services act**

Anyone concerned about the welfare of their own child or a child they know may submit a child welfare notification. The notification may also be submitted anonymously. If school staff observe or are made aware of matters that indicate that the family's need for child welfare services should be determined, they must submit a child welfare notification by law.

Service needs assessment and support for families with children processes child welfare notifications and contacts in accordance with the act on social welfare services within seven days of receiving the notification. The process may also be concluded with a decision not to assess the need for services. The service needs assessment process is carried out within three months of the information or notification being submitted. Any need for child welfare services is assessed at the same time. During the service needs assessment and the determination of the need for child welfare services, the child does not have a client relationship with Child Welfare.

### **Information about City of Helsinki services and Finland in several languages**

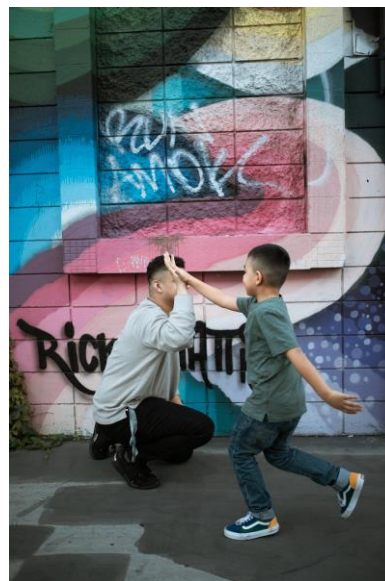
If you need more information on the social welfare and healthcare services of your area or the City, you can contact the school. We will try to help you with any challenging situations by referring you to local or City services.

### **City of Helsinki services**

You can also look for services yourself by browsing the City of Helsinki website at [www.hel.fi/helsinki/en](http://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en). You can find information on services in Finnish, Swedish and English.

### **InfoFinland**

You can also find further information on life in Finland and Finnish services at [www.infofinland.fi](http://www.infofinland.fi). Information is available in Finnish, Swedish, English, Russian, Estonian, French, Somali, Spanish, Turkish, Chinese, Farsi, and Arabic.



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This guide was drafted in cooperation with the Mukana programme and the staff, pupils and parents at Keinutie lower stage comprehensive school. Thank you for your input and excellent cooperation!