

SCHOOL REFUSAL

*A small guide to supporting
school attendance*

To the reader

this guidebook is targeted at personnel working at schools and in student welfare with children and young people who are often absent from school, as well as their parents and guardians. The guidebook describes ways to support school attendance. The key points include early involvement, flexible arrangements, cooperation between the operators and, if required, accessing help from outside the school. The purpose of this guidebook is to increase knowledge and understanding of factors affecting school attendance, and possible measures of action.

Poor school attendance may be a sign of anxiety, depression, bullying or difficulties in social situations. Disturbances in the circadian rhythm, such as playing during the night, may make it difficult to go to school in the morning. Sometimes spending time with friends outside school tempts children and young people to miss classes. In some cases, serious illnesses or multiple allergies prevent children or young people from going to school, even if they would like to attend.

This guide focuses on school refusal which is distinct from truancy. School refusal is often in consequence of anxiety, depression, fear of social situations, characteristics of the autism spectrum disorder, or psychosomatic symptoms experienced by children or young people. Children and young people affected by these problems mostly stay at home during school days. Even if parents and carers know about their child's absenteeism, diverse support is often needed to ensure regular school attendance. Truant students on the other hand hide their absences from their parents and do not show emotional difficulties associated with coming to school.

This guide has been compiled as part of the Tuuve and Monni Online projects.

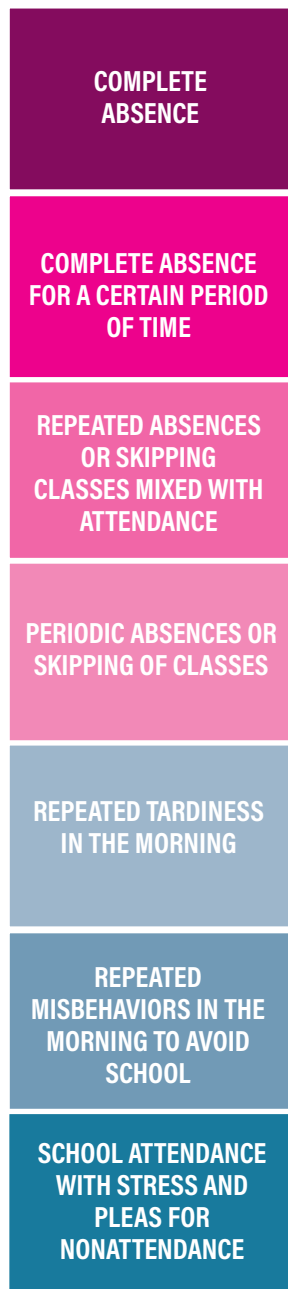
Liisa's story

Since her early school years, Liisa had a difficult time at school. Social situations and large groups stressed her out and caused tantrums. At times, Liisa refused to go to school. She managed to complete the early years of basic education with the help of support measures and a flexible teacher. In lower secondary school, Liisa was lonely and showed signs of depression. She started receiving special support and was placed in a small group. Despite several forms of support, Liisa found it impossible to go to school.

At this point, attempts were made to find out more specific reasons behind her poor attendance. It was recognised that Liisa was showing characteristics of the autism spectrum disorder, which partially explained why she had difficulties in social situations. She started receiving both therapy and medication to treat her depression. Following on the guidance provided by her school, Liisa studied at home and only took part in exams at the school premises. During her eighth school year, an administrative decision on grade-independent studies was made.

Liisa's teacher contacted a special needs teacher taking part in a supported online teaching project (tuuve.fi), and Liisa commenced online studies at the beginning of her ninth school year. Twice a week, Liisa met the project's special needs teacher online, and took part in group courses. The completion of school assignments started to reconnect Liisa with school activities. Support from specialised health care paved the way for recovery, and little by little, Liisa returned to her small group. A shortened school day helped Liisa manage, and she was still able to complete parts of the studies online.





It is important to take **IMMEDIATE** action

Problems with attendance can often be recognised first at home, when going to school becomes more difficult by the day. Little by little, tardiness becomes more common, and the pupil starts skipping individual classes. A child may miss certain classes during a specific time of day or week. As the number of absences increases, the chance grows for a child or young person to stay out of school entirely. The longer a period of absenteeism stretches, the more difficult it is to return to school. That is why early identification of school refusal is crucial. The local curriculum should include a strategy for dealing with absenteeism.

Spectrum of school refusal behavior¹

COMMON WARNING SIGNS

School-based professionals, parents and carers should pay attention to the most typical warning signs predicting problems with attendance. These include:

- Various incidents of unexcused absences or tardiness
- Difficulty in considerably returning to school after a holiday or illness
- Absences particularly during days when a test, presentation or the lesson of a specific subject is taking place
- Increasing number of visits to the school nurse's office
- Increasing psychosomatic symptoms, such as headaches, stomach aches
- Contacting home continuously during the school day

The likelihood of absenteeism also increases if a child or young person experiences trauma, bullying or the death of a loved one. Moving or changing schools may also prompt school refusal. Sometimes an absence from school due to a physical symptom (such as a migraine or asthma) may turn into a problem related with school attendance, even if the physical symptom may already be treated. No matter what the reason, being absent from school always causes an additional psychological pressure on the pupil.

REGULATIONS

According to the Basic Education Act, a child of compulsory school age must attend basic education or otherwise obtain knowledge corresponding to the basic education syllabus. The law requires that the education provider (municipality) monitors the absences of a pupil in basic education and notifies the pupil's parent or guardian of unexcused absences. The parent of a pupil in compulsory education shall see to it that compulsory schooling is completed. If a child of compulsory school age does not participate in education provided under this Act, the local authority of the pupil's place of residence shall supervise his or her progress.²

A pupil is responsible for attending school. An unauthorised absence as such does not result in the requirement to repeat a school year, but if a pupil is continuously absent from school, misses exams, and does not demonstrate his or her competence by other means available, he or she does not complete the syllabus as required. In this case, the pupil is in danger of failing the subject. School welfare services should tackle unexcused absences, and make attempts to secure the pupil's school attendance through cooperation with the parent.

If a pupil is unable to attend instruction provided at school due to an illness, but is healthy enough to study at home or elsewhere, education can be organised by providing the child with guidance, learning material and feedback in support of learning either at home or elsewhere.³ In such cases, the pupil may demonstrate his or her competence by an oral exam, portfolio, project work, photograph or a video of completed work, or by presenting his or her competence to the teacher after the school day or in a place outside school. As far as possible, the goal should be for the pupil to participate in instruction taking place at school.

The national core curriculum emphasises the use of diverse assessment methods with all pupils during the studies. Even mild learning difficulties and insufficient language skills should be taken into account in the assessment and demonstration of competence. A pupil has a right to remedial teaching, part-time special needs education, guidance and other forms of support in a situation in which he or she is at risk of falling behind in studies because of an illness, learning difficulties, absences due to a difficult life situation, or other reason.

If a pupil is at risk of failing a certain subject grade, the matter should be discussed with the parent and the pupil during the school year, and an agreement should be made on measures to support learning. Before having to repeat a year, a pupil should be offered the opportunity to demonstrate that he or she has obtained the required knowledge and skills, in a separate exam. The separate exam may include a variety of oral, written, or other demonstration methods, so that the pupil will have an opportunity to demonstrate his or her competence in the best possible way.⁵

WHY IS IT DIFFICULT TO GO TO SCHOOL?

If you are concerned about a child refusing to go to school, it is important to look for the reasons why the child does not want to, or cannot, attend school regularly. This may include observations, discussions, and the registration of absences in Wilma. In addition, a specifically designed questionnaire can be used. In Finland, the SRAS-R School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised⁴ is in use, soon to be accompanied by the ISAP Inventory for School Attendance Problems. In addition, it may be necessary to screen possible learning difficulties which, in their own right, may make it difficult to attend school.

It is important to review the causes in a diverse manner, as sometimes the first and most obvious reason is not the most important factor increasing or maintaining school refusal. The factors affecting school attendance may include the pupil's

- need to avoid negative emotions or situations linked with school, or feeling anxious or depressed in general
- need to avoid unpleasant social situations or assessment situations
- need for attention from loved ones
- need to seek for rewarding experiences outside school¹

In addition to the teachers and parents, a school nurse, school social worker, or school psychologist can participate in investigating the reasons behind poor attendance. The purpose of this review is to increase pupils', families' and professionals' understanding of the causes for school refusal, and to help target support activities correctly. It is important to react to all school attendance problems and consider their effect on school performance. The causes for increased absenteeism are often intertwined, and multiprofessional cooperation is required in order for the pupil to continue attending school. Once the reasons are known, a joint plan should be drafted to support school attendance.

SCHOOL CULTURE PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE

The national core curriculum draws attention to school culture, which lays the foundation for well-being and security, thus creating the preconditions for learning. These perspectives cover all school work and guide everyone's activities. All activities taking place at school consider the community members' individuality and equality, as well as communal needs. School practices are flexible and enable a wide variety of activities. Physical exercise and joint activities for the promotion of mental well-being are a natural part of every school day. Collective pupil welfare services are an important part of school culture.

Pupils should have an equal opportunity to receive guidance and support for their development and learning. Good will and friendliness are appreciated in the school community. Bullying, violence, racism and other forms of discrimination are not acceptable, and inappropriate behaviour should be handled. School work aims to be unhurried, and the predictability of everyday life is a common objective. Being heard and the feeling of fairness build trust. A calm and accepting atmosphere, good social relationships and a pleasant environment promote peace to work. Social interaction, co-operation, and diverse working methods are factors promoting all community members' well-being and learning.⁵



Pupil and student welfare support well-being

When a pupil does not attend school regularly, systematic collaboration between many operators is often required. At school, pupil welfare facilitates the maintenance of good learning, psychological and physical health, and social well-being. These include the services of psychologists and school social workers as well as pupil and student healthcare services. There are two levels in pupil and student welfare: common welfare services and individualised welfare services.

Pupil and student welfare for all is primarily preventive student welfare that supports the school community as a whole. It aims at the promotion of all pupils' learning, well-being, health, social responsibility, interaction and participation, as well as the wholeness, safety and accessibility of the learning environment. The prevention of bullying can, for example, affect school attendance before absenteeism becomes a problem. A school culture which strengthens the sense of community, reconnects young people with school despite challenges on a personal level related to mental health or other.



**READ MORE ON
STUDENT WELFARE:**
<https://minedu.fi/en/pupil-and-student-welfare>

Individualised pupil and student welfare focuses on the pupil, and the services are based on the pupil's right to sufficient support in resolving difficulties. This means access to school health services, school social worker's and psychologist's services, and other multiprofessional services implemented by a team of experts. Such a multiprofessional team of experts is compiled, if the need arises to clarify an individual pupil's need for support and to organise services.

If signs of challenges related to mental health can be detected in relation to school attendance problems, it is advisable to engage a school psychologist in the cooperation as early as possible. A psychologist can provide strategies for relaxation and problem solving, or self-control techniques. If special health care is needed, a school doctor can write the required referral. A school social worker can, in turn, introduce the alternatives offered by social services in the municipality, such as family-related services and support persons. It is advisable to obtain a parent's consent for the transfer of information in order to make the cooperation in-between appointments as smooth as possible.

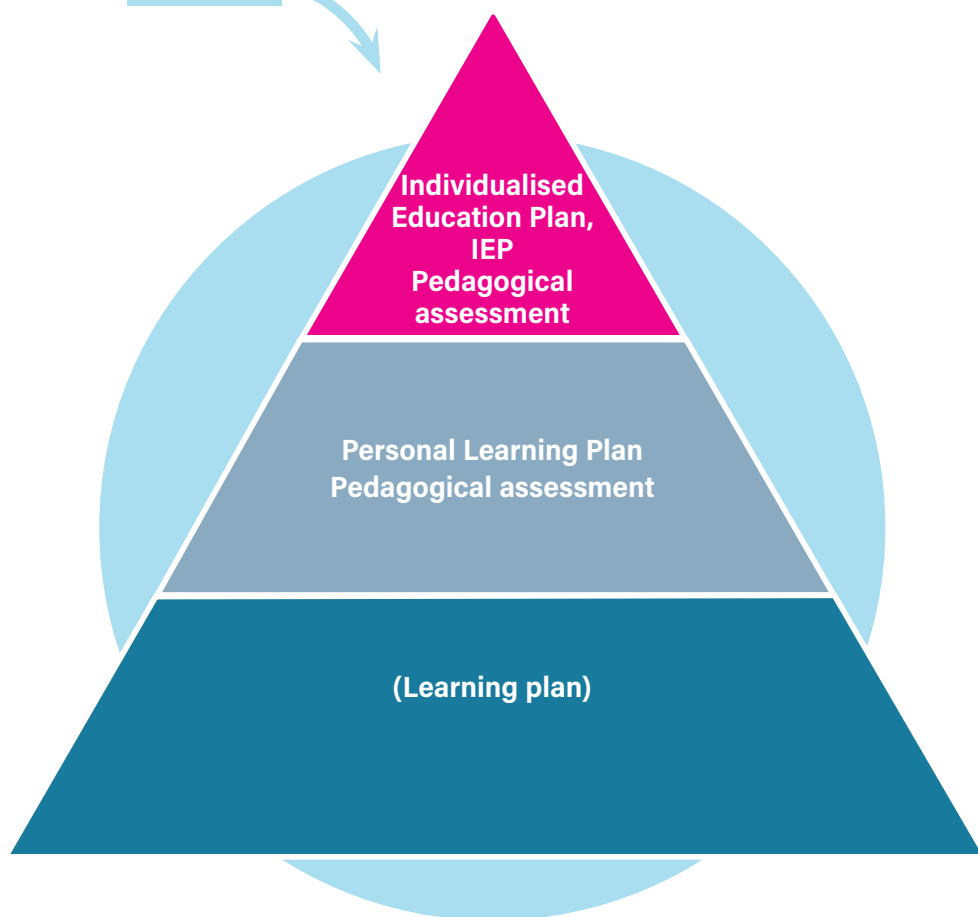
Student welfare;
ongoing/perpetual
support of student's
school engagement

**Student welfare and
individualised stu-
dent welfare;** re-en-
gagement with school
environment

**Individualised stu-
dent welfare;**
multiprofessional
team helping to sup-
port school engage-
ment

SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

According to the Basic Education Act, an enrolled pupil shall be entitled to teaching according to the curriculum, guidance counselling and sufficient support in learning and schoolgoing on school days directly as the need arises. There are three levels of support in pre-primary and basic education ².



SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORT

If intensified support is not enough, a pupil may receive special needs support. It consists of special needs education and other support required by the pupil. Special needs support may include

- individually tailored syllabi in different subjects
- adjustments to the distribution of lesson hours

INTENSIFIED SUPPORT

means a form of more continuous, stronger and more personalised support. In intensified support, for instance,

- certain focus areas can be emphasised, that is, pupils study only the most central matters in different subjects

GENERAL SUPPORT

is the first response to a pupil's need for support and it's given to all pupils. This usually means singular pedagogical solutions, guidance and support activities. Specific tests or administrative decisions are not required for providing general support. At the level of general support, the following methods can be used

- Differentiation: learning material, time, support
- Special teaching arrangements, such as changing the distribution of classes
- Grade-independent studies: the pupil will not have to repeat a year⁷

Differentiation is an answer to the challenges brought on by heterogeneous learning groups. Differentiation may involve, for instance, learning methods, materials, or time in accordance with the pupil's needs.

Emphasis on selected contents: One way of differentiation is to determine special focus areas. In this case the goal is for the pupil to focus on the key learning content essential for making progress in the studies. It is worth noting that other forms of support are still required for the pupil to manage learning these focus areas, and to achieve the joint objectives listed in the core curriculum. These special focus areas can only be used while student is assigned to special needs or intensified support, and the pupil's teacher is in charge of their definition. The focus areas are defined in the personal learning plan or pupil's individual educational plan (IEP) in subjects in which the syllabus has not been individualised. These special focus areas are based on the grade-specific key content as defined in the core curriculum.⁸

The special focus areas facilitate the progress of learning during a challenging life period. By focusing on the essential, a pupil will have enough resources to become stronger and possibly gain command of other school subjects.

Individualisation of syllabi: If, despite the support, an individual pupil is not able to achieve even the key objectives of a subject, it is possible to individualise one or more subject syllabi. Individualisation of a subject syllabus means defining the target level set for a pupil's learning according to his or her own abilities. A pupil's need for an individualised syllabus is justified in a pedagogical statement, and determined in a decision on special needs support. The objectives and contents of an individualised subject are derived from the general objectives and contents of the subject determined for the pupil's year group, which often also involves applying objectives and contents for lower grades. The objectives are described in the pupil's individual educational plan (IEP). This is important, as the teaching and assessment are implemented in accordance with the objectives listed in the IEP.⁵

Special teaching arrangements § 18 Special teaching arrangements can be made in order to make the learning, teaching and assessment more flexible. A pupil's education may, to a certain degree, be arranged differently from the provisions of the Basic Education Act if, for example, it is justified for reasons relating to the pupil's health.²

This section in the Act can be used to shorten the school day or exempt a pupil from certain studies or for a pre-determined length of time. If this is done on the basis of the pupil's health, it is advisable to attach a medical certificate in the decision. In terms of pupils receiving special needs support, the decision is made as part of the decision on special support. The individual educational plan (IEP) describes how the studies are implemented in practice. For pupils other than ones receiving special support, a separate agreement will be drafted, followed by the compilation of a personal learning plan.

Grade-independent studies, that is, studies following an individual syllabus, enable flexibility in terms of time spent on studies. In other words, a pupil may make slower progress in certain studies than in the grade-dependent system.

Grade-independent studies may help avoid the expiry of completed studies, which otherwise takes place when a pupil needs to repeat a year. In grade-independent studies, both the subject-related objectives and content are defined as learning modules.

A pupil making slower progress can continue studying in his or her own learning group. At the end of the school year, a pupil completing grade-independent studies will receive a certificate of the completion of studies, and move on to the next grade.

A study programme must be drafted for pupils completing grade-independent studies. The implementation of grade-independent studies requires a related decision in the local curriculum. The opportunity to do so must also be mentioned in cases when grade-independent studies are in place for an individual pupil. 9, 13 The use of grade-independent studies may prevent pupils from dropping out of school.

HOME-SCHOOLING, OR EDUCATION AT HOME ORGANISED BY A SCHOOL

In Finland, a pupil can complete compulsory education in ways other than by attending school, such as by home-schooling. A pupil with school attendance problems may be offered this option, but a school cannot demand that a parent or carer home-schools a child even on a temporary basis. The decision is always made by parents or guardians, who will be subsequently responsible for the organisation of compulsory studies and teaching. Parents are responsible for ensuring that the pupil completes his or her compulsory education. The Basic Education Act requires that the education provider (municipality) monitors the progress of a pupil in compulsory education if the pupil does not attend school. Generally, the municipality designates a teacher to be in charge of reviewing and assessing the pupil's progress. These audits are usually organised once or twice a year.

If a pupil does not attend basic education provided by the municipality, the municipality is not responsible for providing the pupil with services or benefits.

In other words, a home-schooled pupil may be left without

- necessary remedial teaching
- special needs education; no special needs education is available in home-schooling, the individualisation of syllabi is not possible, and possible earlier decisions on special support are annulled
- books, other free learning material and equipment
- school meals free of cost, school health services, school transport and other pupil welfare services.¹⁰

A pupil with school attendance problems often requires diverse support and various services. And so, home-schooling is not the best option for the completion of compulsory education in cases when the pupil finds it challenging to attend school. Home-schooling can be easily confused with education organised by the school and taking place at home. When a school organises education at home, a child remains a pupil of his or her school, and is thus entitled to services and other benefits. Education organised by the school and taking place at home may be a necessary form of additional support, or a phase in the teaching of a pupil with attendance-related problems.

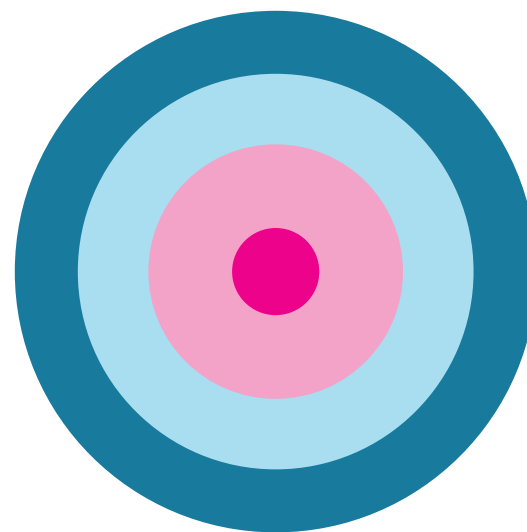
MOST TYPICAL PROBLEMS

When a pupil refuses to go to school, the relationships between the pupil, parents and school-based professionals are often put to the test, as everyone is concerned about the situation. From the parent's point of view, a lack of objectives and instruction may be seen as a problem, as well as an unreasonable amount of homework. The parents may feel as though they carry the greatest responsibility for school work.

The situation can be challenging for the school in that school-based professionals do not always have up-to-date information regarding the situation of a pupil studying at home, or how the pupil's case progresses in social services and special health care. Additional difficulties are brought on by the requirements to provide education outside school, organise optional subjects and ensure diverse assessment options within the school's limited resources.



From the point of view of helping the pupil, it is of utmost importance to maintain the connection between the pupil, school and family without looking for a culprit. Mutual efforts to bring the pupil back to school often produce the best results.



- Child
- Parents and family
- Support services from school, pupil and student welfare
- Social security/child welfare, special health care

How to support school attendance?

The Basic Education Act offers schools many possible ways to tailor education, if a pupil is struggling with attendance. Support for learning and school attendance provides an opportunity to offer help of various degrees. Grade-independent studies and special teaching arrangements can be used to make education considerably more flexible.

Arrangements in terms of study place

If a pupil struggles to study in a large group, one option might be to organise education either partially or in its entirety in a rehabilitation class. This can be done in various municipalities. A pupil may also feel relieved, if there is a plan of action in place for what to do if he or she is overwhelmed by anxiety during the school day, or a particular lesson. Depending on the situation, teaching can also be organised outside the school, such as in a library, or some other calm facility. If necessary, the school day and/or school week can be shortened in order to support the pupil in accordance with the decision on special support, or through special teaching arrangements (Act on Basic Education, § 18). Such arrangements shall be included in the decision on special needs support, and a separate decision shall be drafted for pupils who do not receive special needs support. Online studies and guidance may also engage the pupil better with the studies, and make it easier to return to school.

A network of trusted people

It is important for the pupil to have a trusted adult for support at school (such as a tutor or a school nurse), who is aware of the situation and who can be reached during the school day. In addition, it is advisable to ensure that the pupil has a friend for support, with whom he or she can spend time during the breaks and over lunch. Sometimes it is necessary to designate a support person or a family support worker, who can assist the pupil in going to school.

Pedagogical support

School personnel should agree on who is in charge of the pupil's studies overall. By the use of differentiation and special focus areas, the overall load of subject syllabi can be lightened. The structuring of studies with the help of a progress schedule and a timetable makes it easier to reach goals. Learning packages compiled for studying at home and consisting of electronic learning material or text books, make it possible for the pupil to progress in a few subjects at a time.

Diverse forms of assessment

Pupils should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their competence in various ways suited to their personal situation. When assessing a pupil's competence level, it is important to provide the pupil with an opportunity to demonstrate his or her competence in various oral, written and other means suited to the pupil's personal situation. This way, the teacher will obtain the information required for making a reliable assessment of progress and competence, and will thus be able to provide encouraging feedback and guidance, and make a final assessment for the end-of-year certificate.¹¹ When tailoring education, the assessment should still be based on the learning objectives. These objectives should be clarified for the pupil and parents. If a pupil studies in accordance with the objectives of the core curriculum, flexible teaching arrangements and diverse forms of assessment make it possible for the pupil to aim for good grades in most subjects, despite his or her absences.



HOW CAN PARENTS ENCOURAGE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE?

Try to maintain a discourse with your child in all situations. Ordinary everyday life facilitates school attendance.

Help your child sleep sufficiently at night, and maintain a normal circadian rhythm. This may mean limiting playing or the use of a mobile phone during the night.

Set an example with regular meal times and healthy dietary choices.

Physical exercise and hobbies facilitate coping and good friendships. It is important for the child to engage in various activities instead of being stuck at home.



IF YOUR CHILD REFUSES TO GO TO SCHOOL:

1. Ask for help as soon as possible!
The longer the absence, the more difficult it is to go back to school. Do not authorise an absence unless you are certain of the reasons behind it. In addition to a teacher or principal, you can also contact a school nurse, school psychologist or school social worker.
2. Be observant and have a discussion with your child on what makes it difficult to go to school.
3. Be friendly but firm. Through their own actions, parents can strengthen a child's self-belief, and thus support school attendance. Exaggeration and avoidance of unpleasant matters may, in turn, increase fear and anxiety in a child.
4. If the absences continue, ask for a meeting at school. Also a multiprofessional team of experts can be collected together to support the child. The team can, among other things, discuss the appropriate social and health care services available for the alleviation of the situation.

Online crisis centre Tukinet offers 24-hour support for different crisis situations:

<https://www.tukinet.fi>
(in Finnish only)

Sekaisin chat is a national chat line for young people. The purpose of this service is to support mental well-being, and help people recover from mental health problems:

<https://sekaisin247.fi/>
<https://www.mielenterveystalo.fi/en/Pages/default.aspx>



SUPPORTED ONLINE TEACHING

In some cases, pupils who refuse to go to school can participate in online teaching. Online education means a situation in which a pupil and teacher are not physically in the same place. In online teaching projects (Tuuve and Monni Online), Valteri, Otavia (previously Otava Folk High School) and the cooperative municipalities have created a model for providing online teaching and guidance for a pupil studying at home.

Before commencing online teaching, the school has usually experimented with various ways of supporting the pupil who refuses to go to school. When the situation seems to drag on, and all the local alternatives have been tried and tested, the parents or school representatives usually take the initiative to use online teaching. In the start of the studies, a personal learning plan is drafted for the pupil, including a personalised combination of face-to-face teaching and online teaching and guidance. In some cases, this also includes streaming from own school.

Pupils at the final stages of their basic education have access to Otavia's Muikku learning environment, in which subjects are studied as courses in accordance with a plan. Pupils can proceed in the non-stop courses at their own pace, and take part in scheduled group courses taught by subject teachers. It is important to remember that the pupil will not be left alone to pursue online studies, but the studies are supported and monitored either online, or through appointments with the pupil's own school. For many young people, online meetings are the first step in reconnecting with the others, and towards ordinary school attendance.



**FURTHER INFORMATION ON SUPPORTED
ONLINE TEACHING CAN BE FOUND ON**
www.tuuve.fi
(link in Finnish).

TEACHING ONLINE THROUGH LIVE-STREAMING

Studying can also be supported by live-streaming the teaching to the pupil online. Live-streaming enables schooling in situations in which the pupil's physical or mental health prevents him or her from attending regular school, but the pupil is sufficiently motivated to study, and the appropriate facilities are in place for distance learning. Each online teaching situation is different, and the pupil's age and health should always be taken into consideration in the planning. Technical facilities also affect the planning, implementation and success of the live-streaming.

Live-streaming requires equipment suited for video conferences. The classroom from which the teaching is streamed has to have a computer. In addition to a computer, the pupil can also take part using mobile devices. As well as computers, it is necessary to have cameras and microphones, and a remote connection programme (such as Skype, Adobe Connect, Blackboard Collaborate, Teams or similar). The latest technology includes remote-controlled robots and cameras which the pupil can control and direct regardless of the location.

Online teaching models

Models which are not dependent on the learner's physical location:

two-way, real-time online teaching,

in this model, a pupil participates virtually in a teaching situation taking place in a class

one-way, real-time online teaching,

in this model, a pupil follows the teaching but does not participate or comment

online guidance, a two-way teaching situation taking place between a pupil and teacher,

time-independent online teaching,

in this model, learning is not dependent on the time or place e.g. watching a recorded teaching situation, online courses.

Pekka's story

Pekka's school attendance was interrupted when he was diagnosed with leukaemia. In addition to his own school, arrangements for schooling during the illness were made by a rehabilitation counsellor of the local hospital, a special class teacher of the hospital school, and an employee of the local cancer association. Already at the early stages of his illness, an agreement was made to support Pekka's studies through online teaching, in addition to teaching taking place at the hospital school or at home. Support and advice for this arrangement were provided by the Tuuve project, which reviewed the technical facilities available at the school and at Pekka's home, and provided advice on what equipment had been successfully used in similar situations earlier.

When the equipment was in place, a meeting was arranged at the school through Tuuve. The teacher was instructed on online teaching: what matters are important to consider, and how to inform other pupils in the class and parents on the matter. Most importantly, however, the online connection was tested in practice. At first, it was tested in the school between one class and another, and subsequently, between the classroom and the pupil's home. When the connection was working, it was time for the classmates to contact Pekka at home using the remote connection. The sense of belonging and joy of reunion were very real. Online teaching returned the connection between the children and enabled interaction and learning together again.



VARIOUS FACTORS AFFECT A PUPIL'S ABILITY TO ATTEND SCHOOL¹²

Personal health

- general well-being
- physical symptoms
- psychological symptoms
- learning difficulties

Functional capacity

- cognitive control
- time management
- taking care of things and tasks
- social skills
- emotional and behavioural control
- anger management
- problem-solving skills

Personal resources

- personality
- resilience
- coping
- strengths
- self-knowledge
- care and support

Learning environment

- physical facilities and circumstances
- group size and dynamics
- number of other pupils with special needs
- number of adults and the way they act
- cooperation in the class and school
- teachers' community
- atmosphere, expectations, values

ABILITY TO ATTEND SCHOOL

Teaching

- resources
- support and acknowledgement of difficulties
- pedagogical methods
- group guidance
- teacher's attitude
- support provided for the teacher

Factors affecting motivation

- earlier experiences
- self-image
- adopted roles
- expected subjective/objective gain

Study skills

- orientation
- understanding of oneself as a learner
- taught and learned techniques
- time management

Personal life situation

- family members' and environment's support for school attendance
- taking care of basic personal needs
- stability of life situation, changes
- stressful experiences
- bullying

FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.tuuve.fi (Tuuve project; link in Finnish)
www.monnionline.fi (Monni Online; link in Finnish)
<https://otavanopisto.muikkuverkko.fi> (Digital learning platform Muikkuverkko)
www.valteri.fi/en
www.etaopetus.fi/sairastuminen (link in Finnish)
www.toimintakykyarvio.fi (Functional capacity assessment)
www.koulunkayntikyky.fi
www.sijoitettulapsikoulussa.fi (Foster

children at school)
<https://www.mielenterveystalo.fi/> (Health village / Mental hub)
www.mielenterveysseura.fi (Finnish Association for Mental Health)
www.finlex.fi
www.oph.fi (Finnish National Agency for Education EDUFI) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZTSAA6UROE&t=43s>
https://info.edu.turku.fi/etaopetus/images/files/Kouluun_l%C3%A4helt%C3%A4_ja_kaukaa.pdf (Distance learning, turku.fi)

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$$X + Y = Z$$

This guidebook is targeted at personnel working at schools and in pupil welfare services with children and young people who are often absent from school, as well as their parents and carers. The guidebook describes ways to support attendance both at school and at home. The key points include early involvement, cooperation between the operators and, if required, accessing help from outside the school. The goal is to increase knowledge and understanding of factors affecting school attendance, and possible measures of action.

REMEMBER!

- Tackle unauthorised absences early
- Find out the real cause for poor attendance
- Seek for multiprofessional support from the available networks
- Tailor the teaching and the learning environment
- Make sure the pupil receives sufficient pedagogical support and has opportunities to demonstrate competence in a diverse manner
- Support learning, whether it takes place at home or at school. Completion of school work strengthens children's and young people's belief in their own abilities, and reconnects them with school.

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