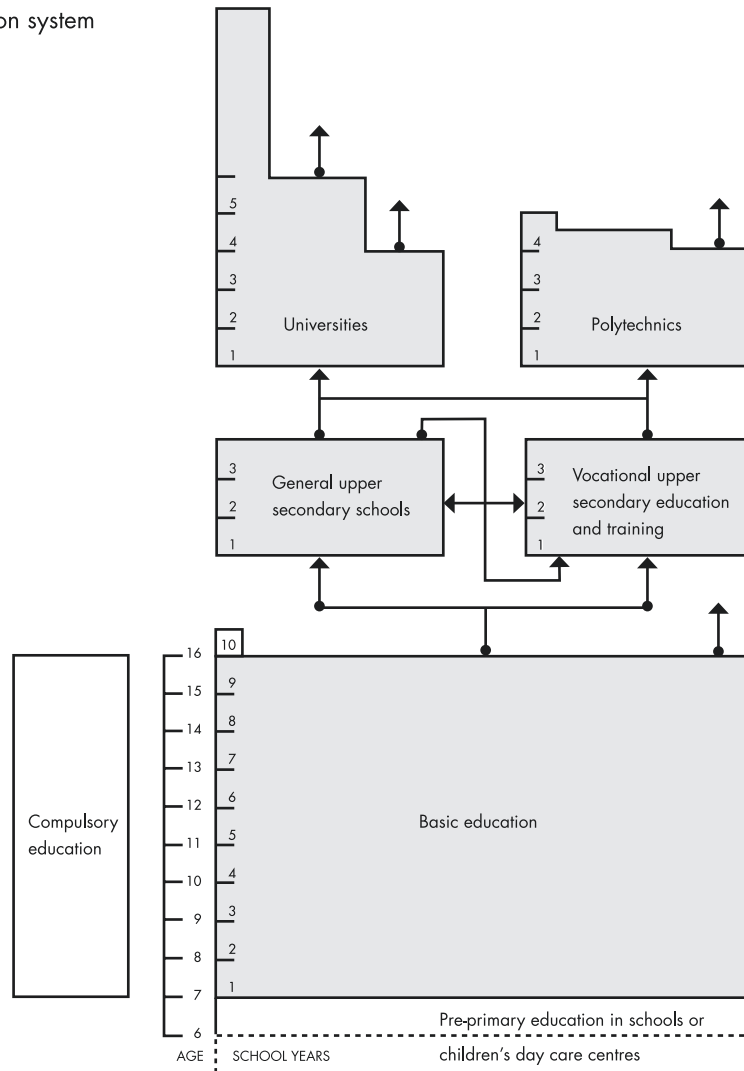


**NATIONAL CORE
CURRICULUM
FOR BASIC
EDUCATION 2004**

**National core curriculum for basic
education intended for pupils in
compulsory education**

ISBN 978-952-13-3346-0 (pdf)

Finnish education system



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ISBN 952-13-2081-8

LAYOUT
Studio Viiva Oy

IMPRINT
Vammalan Kirjapaino Oy
Vammala 2004

1	CURRICULUM	7
1.1.	Formulation of the curriculum.....	8
1.2	Content of the curriculum	9
2	STARTING POINTS FOR PROVISION OF EDUCATION	11
2.1	Underlying values of basic education	12
2.2	Mission of basic education.....	12
2.3	Structure of basic education	13
3	IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTRUCTION	15
3.1	The conception of learning.....	16
3.2	Learning environment	16
3.3	Operational culture	17
3.4	Working approaches	17
4.	GENERAL SUPPORT FOR STUDIES	19
4.1	Cooperation between home and school.....	20
4.2.	The learning plan.....	20
4.3	Provision of educational and vocational guidance	21
4.4	Remedial teaching	22
4.5	Pupil welfare	22
4.6	Club activities.....	23
5.	INSTRUCTION OF PUPILS NEEDING SPECIAL SUPPORT	25
5.1	Different modes of support	26
5.2	Part-time special-needs education.....	26
5.3	Instruction of pupils enrolled in or transferred into special-needs education.....	27
5.4	Individual educational plan	28
5.5	Provision of instruction by activity area	29
6.	INSTRUCTION OF CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE GROUPS	31
6.1	The Sami	32
6.2	Romanies.....	33
6.3	Sign language users.....	33
6.4	Immigrants	34
7.	LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND CORE CONTENTS OF EDUCATION	35
7.1	Integration and cross-curricular themes	36
7.2	Studies in mother tongues and the second national language	42
7.3	Mother tongue and literature	43
	<i>Finnish as the mother tongue</i>	44
	<i>Swedish as the mother tongue</i>	56
	<i>Sami as the mother tongue (Eatnigiella)</i>	70
	<i>Romany as the mother tongue</i>	84
	<i>Finnish sign language as the mother tongue</i>	89
	<i>Other mother tongue</i>	95
	<i>Finnish as a second language</i>	95
	<i>Swedish as a second language</i>	99

	<i>Finnish for Sami-speakers</i>	102
	<i>Finnish for users of Finnish sign language</i>	115
	<i>Swedish for users of Finnish sign language</i>	116
7.4	Second national language	117
	<i>Swedish</i>	118
	<i>Finnish</i>	128
7.5	Foreign languages	137
7.6	Mathematics	157
7.7	Environmental and natural studies	169
7.8	Biology and geography.....	175
7.9	Physics and chemistry.....	185
7.10	Health education	195
7.11	Religion	201
	<i>Lutheranism</i>	202
	<i>The Orthodox religion</i>	207
	<i>Other religions</i>	212
7.12	Ethics	213
7.13	History	219
7.14	Social studies	225
7.15	Music	229
7.16	Visual arts.....	233
7.17	Crafts	239
7.18	Physical education	245
7.19	Home economics	249
7.20	Optional subjects.....	253
7.21	Educational and vocational guidance.....	255
8	PUPIL ASSESSMENT	260
8.1	Assessment during the course of studies	260
8.2	Final assessment	264
8.3	Certificates and reports	266
9	INSTRUCTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH A SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL TASK OR SPECIAL PEDAGOGICAL SYSTEM OR PRINCIPLE	269
9.1.	Instruction in a foreign language and language-immersion instruction in the national languages.....	270
9.2	International language schools	274
9.3	Steiner-pedagogical instruction	274
APPENDIX 1	Letter models, numbers, and punctuation marks.....	276
APPENDIX 2	The language proficiency scale	278
APPENDIX 3	Government decree on the general national objectives and distribution of lesson hours in basic education referred to in the basic education act	296
APPENDIX 4	New distribution of lesson hours in basic education.....	302
APPENDIX 5	Recommendation of the Finnish National Board of Education for the core curriculum for instruction in the native languages of immigrant pupils.....	303
	NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM FOR INSTRUCTION PREPARATORY TO BASIC EDUCATION.....	309
	NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM FOR VOLUNTARY ADDITIONAL BASIC EDUCATION.....	315



FINNISH NATIONAL
BOARD OF EDUCATION

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION
Regulation valid only in Finnish and Swedish

REGISTER NUMBER	1/011/2004
REGULATION	To be observed as binding
DATE	16 January 2004
Period of validity	From 16 January 2004 until further notice
Provisions on which authority for issuance of regulation is based	Section 14, Basic Education Act
Repeals regulations	1/011/1994 26/011/1997 4/011/1999 63/011/2002

To comprehensive schools and education
providers:

NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM FOR BASIC EDUCATION 2004 **National core curriculum for basic education intended for pupils subject to compulsory education**

The Managing Board of the Finnish National Board of Education has approved the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004. The core curriculum is to be observed from 16 January 2004 until further notice, and has been prepared in accordance with Section 14 of the Basic Education Act.

The education provider is to draft and approve a local curriculum that adheres to the stipulations of this core curriculum and particularizes and complements its objectives and core contents.

A local curriculum conforming to this core curriculum may be introduced on 1 August 2004, and must be introduced at all levels, in accordance with the phase-in decided upon in the local curriculum, no later than 1 August 2006.

The basic education certificate, certificate for the completion of the basic education syllabus, and final-assessment criteria conforming to this core curriculum will be introduced at the end of the 2006-07 school year. In assessment in health education, however, the criteria will be applied only when the entire syllabus has been taught. Comparable certificates to be issued before that time will be prepared in accordance with the core curriculum issued before this core curriculum comes into force, and final assessment to be performed before that time will likewise be carried out in accordance with the earlier core curriculum.

Director General Kirsi Lindroos

Director of the
General Education Division Aslak Lindström

COPIES

Ministry of Education
National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health
State Provincial Offices

1 Curriculum

1.1. FORMULATION OF THE CURRICULUM

The national core curriculum is the national framework on the basis of which the local curriculum is formulated. The education provider takes responsibility for the preparation and development of the local curriculum. In the local curriculum, decisions are made regarding the educational and teaching task of basic education, and the objectives and contents specified in the national core curriculum, as well as other factors bearing on provision of the education, are specified. In formulating a curriculum for basic education, attention is to be given to the pre-primary educational curriculum, the coherence of basic education, and other decisions made by the local authority in respect of children, young people, and schooling.

National and local decisions regarding basic education constitute a whole that guides basic education. These decisions are

- the Basic Education Act and Decree
- the Government Decree on the General National Objectives and Distribution of lesson hours in Basic Education as Referred to in the Basic Education Act
- the national core curricula for pre-primary and basic education
- the local curriculum approved by the education provider
- the curriculum-based annual plan conforming to section 9 of the Basic Education Decree.

In the instruction, the teacher has to adhere to the curriculum approved by the education provider.

The curriculum may be formulated so as to include a segment specific to the municipality, or segments specific to the region or school, as decided by the education provider. The coherence of the curriculum for basic education requires cooperation among different teacher groups in drafting the curriculum. In particular, the pupils' parents and guardians must be able to influence the definition of the curriculum's educational objectives. The pupils may also be involved in the curriculum work.

As it concerns pupil welfare and home-school cooperation, the curriculum must be drafted in collaboration with authorities charged with tasks that are part of the implementation of the local authority's social and health services.

1.2 CONTENT OF THE CURRICULUM

The following factors must be evident in the basic education curriculum:

- values and underlying principle
- general educational and teaching objectives
- language programme
- lesson-hour distribution to be observed locally
- depictions of operational culture, learning environment, and working approach
- possible instructional emphases, language immersion, or foreign-language instruction
- possible integration of instruction .
- implementation of cross-curricular themes
- educational objectives and content in different subjects by year group, or, in instruction of mixed groups, by study module
- instruction in optional subjects
- objectives for pupil behaviour
- cooperation with pre-primary education and other basic education
- cooperation between home and school
- cooperation with other parties
- pupil welfare plan and organization of related cooperation
- principles of curriculum formulation
- guidance and counselling activities as a support for studies, and arrangements for an introduction to working life
- organization of club activities
- provision of remedial education
- instruction of pupils requiring special support
- instruction of pupils belonging to different language and cultural groups
- pupil assessment based on descriptions of good performance and criteria for final assessment
- principles of academic progress
- certificates and reports
- information strategy
- evaluation of activity and ongoing development.

2
Starting points
for provision
of education

2.1 UNDERLYING VALUES OF BASIC EDUCATION

The underlying values of basic education are human rights, equality, democracy, natural diversity, preservation of environmental viability, and the endorsement of multiculturalism. Basic education promotes responsibility, a sense of community, and respect for the rights and freedoms of the individual.

The basis of instruction is Finnish culture, which has developed in interaction with indigenous, Nordic, and European cultures. In the instruction, special national and local attributes, the national languages, the two national churches, the Sami as an indigenous people and national minorities must be taken into consideration. The instruction must also take into account the diversification of Finnish culture through the arrival of people from other cultures. The instruction helps to support the formation of the pupil's own cultural identity, and his or her part in Finnish society and a globalizing world. The instruction also helps to promote tolerance and intercultural understanding.

Basic education helps to increase both regional equality and equality among individuals. In the instruction, the diversity of learners is taken into consideration, and gender equality is promoted by giving girls and boys the ability to act on the basis of equal rights and responsibilities in society, working life, and family life.

In basic education, instruction in the different subjects is nondenominational and politically neutral.

In the local basic education curriculum, the values that underlie education are to be specified. They are to be incorporated into the objectives and contents of basic education, and into everyday activity.

2.2 MISSION OF BASIC EDUCATION

Basic education is part of fundamental educational security. It has both an educational and an instructional mission. Its task on the one hand is to offer individuals the chance to acquire a general education and complete their educational obligations; and, on the other, to furnish society with a tool for developing educational capital and enhancing equality and a sense of community.

Basic education must provide an opportunity for diversified growth, learning, and the development of a healthy sense of self-esteem, so that the pupils can obtain the knowledge and skills they need in life, become capable of further study, and, as involved citizens, develop a democratic society. Basic education must also support each pupil's linguistic and cultural identity and the development of his or her mother tongue. A further objective is to awaken a desire for lifelong learning.

In order to ensure social continuity and build the future, basic education assumes the tasks of transferring cultural tradition from one generation to the next, augmenting knowledge and skills, and increasing awareness of the values and ways of acting that form the foundation of society. It is also the mission of basic education to create new culture, revitalize ways of thinking and acting, and develop the pupil's ability to evaluate critically.

2.3 STRUCTURE OF BASIC EDUCATION

In terms of the curriculum, basic education forms an integral whole. The objectives and core contents of the instruction are defined in the national core curriculum by subject or subject group for segments falling between curricular transition points conforming to the Distribution of Lesson Hours (Government Decree 1435/20.12.2001, Section 6). A description of good performance has been prepared for the end of each segment (see 8.1, below). For the subject group of arts, crafts and physical education (music, visual arts, crafts, and physical education) the objectives, core contents, descriptions of good performance, and criteria for final assessment have been formulated for the minimum numbers of lessons on a subject-by-subject basis. In the curriculum approved by the education provider, the lesson-hour distribution and educational objectives and contents are specified by year group on the basis of the aforementioned decree and the national core curriculum.

In the first and second grades, the instruction is to consider the abilities provided by early childhood education – pre-primary education in particular. Pre-primary and basic education must make up a consistent, unified whole. The special task of instruction in the lower grades is to develop pupils' capability for subsequent work and learning.

The eighth and ninth grades constitute basic education's final phase, the task of which is also to guide the pupil towards further studies, and to develop their ability to function in society and working life.

If it has been decided in the curriculum, in accordance with Section 11 (3) of the Basic Education Decree, that the pupil may progress in accordance with his or her own personal study programme, rather than a syllabus organised by year group, the lesson-hour distribution and the objectives and contents of the instruction are defined for study modules. Study modules are formed on the basis of subject and subject-group segments defined by the government. When needed, the segments can be divided into two or more study modules, which can also be combined among different subjects and subject groups as unified study modules. The curriculum must specify which study modules are compulsory for the pupil and which are optional. The pupil's academic progress and completion of study modules are to be monitored systematically.

If in combined-class instruction pupils in the class have differing numbers of weekly lessons in some subjects, the subjects' number of weekly lessons per year can also be distributed among modules, and the number of lessons in the subjects thus levelled out. In the curriculum, the syllabus for a combined class can also be defined in terms of study modules without dividing the syllabus into grades. In this case the provisions of Section 11 (3) of the Basic Education Decree are observed.

3 Implementation of instruction

3.1 THE CONCEPTION OF LEARNING

The national core curriculum has been formulated on the basis of a conception of learning as an individual and communal process of building knowledge and skills. Through this process, cultural involvement is created. Learning takes place as purposeful study in a variety of situations: independently, under a teacher's guidance, and in interaction with the teacher and peer group. In addition to new knowledge and skills, both learning and work habits are to be learned that will serve as tools of lifelong learning.

Learning results from the pupils' active and purposeful activity, in which they process and interpret the material to be learned on the basis of their existing structure of knowledge. Although the general principles of learning are the same for everyone, learning depends on the learner's previously constructed knowledge, motivation, and learning and work habits. Learning that occurs through interactive cooperation aids individual learning. In all its forms, learning is an active and goal-oriented process that includes independent or collective problem-solving. Learning is situational, so special attention must be given to the diversity of the learning environment. In learning, new possibilities open up for understanding culture and the meanings that culture contains, and for participating in social activity.

3.2 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The term learning environment refers to the entirety of the learning-related physical environment, psychological factors and social relationships. In this setting, study and learning take place.

In particular, the physical learning environment consists of the school's buildings and facilities, the instructional tools and the learning materials. It also includes the wider constructed environment and the surrounding natural environment. The study tools and facilities must be designed and organized so as to allow the employment of diverse study methods and working approaches. The working tools, materials, and library services must be available to the pupil so that they provide an opportunity for active and independent study. The learning environment must also be equipped so as to support the pupil's development into a member of today's information society, and provide opportunities for the use of computers, other media technology, and, as possibilities allow, data networks. Attention also has to be given to the aesthetic qualities of the physical learning environment.

The pupil's cognitive and emotional factors on the one hand and, on the other, factors of interaction and human relations affect the formation of the physical and social learning environment.

The learning environment must support the pupil's growth and learning. It must be physically, psychologically, and socially safe, and must support the pupil's health. The objective is to increase pupils' curiosity and motivation to learn, and to promote their activeness, self-direction, and creativity by offering interesting challenges and problems. The learning environment must guide pupils in setting their own objectives and evaluating their own actions. The pupils may be given the chance to participate in the creation and development of their own learning environment.

The learning environment must also support interaction between teacher and pupil, and among the pupils. It must promote dialogue and guide the pupils in working as members of a group. The objective is an open, encouraging, unhurried, positive atmosphere, for whose maintenance the teacher and the pupils share responsibility.

3.3 OPERATIONAL CULTURE

A school's operational culture has a significant impact on education and instruction at the school, and thus on learning. The objective is that all the school's practices be developed uniformly, so as to support attainment of the objectives established for the educational and teaching work.

The operational culture embraces all the school's official and unofficial rules and operational and behavioural models, as well as the values, principles, and criteria on which the quality of the schoolwork is founded. It also encompasses extracurricular school activities such as celebrations, theme days, and various events. The school's values, educational objectives, and cross-curricular themes must assume concrete form in the operational culture. The objective is an open, interactive operational culture that supports cooperation both within the school and with the home and the rest of the society. The pupils must also enjoy the opportunity to participate in the creation and development of the school's operational culture.

3.4 WORKING APPROACHES

In instruction, methods characteristic of the subject are to be used, as are versatile working approaches that help support and guide the pupil's learning. The function of the working approaches is to develop social, learning, thinking, working, and problem-solving skills, and to foster active participation. The approaches must further the development of skills with information and communication technology. They must also provide opportunities for the creative activity, experiences, and play characteristic of the age group in question.

The teacher selects the working approaches. It is their task to teach and guide the work and learning of both the individual pupil and the entire group.

Working approaches are chosen because they

- excite a desire to learn
- take the process and purposeful nature of learning into account
- motivate the pupils to work purposefully
- further the formation of an organized knowledge structure, the learning of skills, and practice in those skills
- develop skills for acquiring, applying, and evaluating information
- support learning that occurs through interaction among the pupils
- promote social flexibility, an ability to function in constructive cooperation, and the assumption of responsibility for others
- develop capabilities for taking responsibility for one's own learning, for evaluating that learning, and for seeking feedback for purposes of reflecting on one's own actions

- assist the pupils in becoming conscious of their learning, and their opportunities for affecting that learning
- develop the pupils' learning strategies and skills for applying them in new situations.

The pupils' various learning styles and backgrounds, as well as the developmental differences between boys and girls and among individuals generally, must receive consideration. In implementing instruction either in combined classes or in combination with a pre-primary group, attention must also be given to the objectives and distinctiveness of the different groups making up the class.

4 General support for studies

4.1 COOPERATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

Children and young people live within the spheres of influence of school and home simultaneously. This requires these two educational communities to cooperate and interact in supporting the pupil's healthy growth and good learning in a holistic way. Interaction with the home adds to the teacher's knowledge of the pupil and helps the teacher to plan and implement the instruction. The parents or guardians carry primary responsibility for bringing up the child or young person. The school supports the home's educational task and takes responsibility for the pupil's education and instruction as a member of the school community. The school must cooperate with the parents or guardians so that they can, for their part, support their children's purposeful learning and schooling. The objective of education under this joint responsibility is to advance the child or young person's prerequisites for learning, as well as his or her feeling of security and well-being in school. Cooperation between home and school is implemented at both the communal and individual level.

Home-school cooperation is to be defined in the curriculum in collaboration with those in charge of implementing social and health services in the municipality.

The opportunities that parents or guardians have for working with the teacher and pupils in the planning and assessment of the school's educational and instructional work promote home-school cooperation. The parents or guardians must be given information about the curriculum, the provision of instruction, pupil welfare, and opportunities to take part in home-school cooperation. This calls for the teachers to take the initiative in the cooperation; it also requires the discussion of, and provision of information about, the rights and responsibilities of the parents or guardians, the teacher, and the pupil. Mutual respect and equality among the parties must serve as the starting point for cooperation.

In the lowest grades, the cooperation that began during the pre-primary education is continued, and a foundation is created for interaction among parents and guardians. Various modes of cooperation that support dialogue between home and school are to be developed throughout the period of basic education, and especially when the pupil is moving from one stage of schooling to the next, and in other transitional phases. The cooperation must be organized so that, with the help of pupil welfare and a multi-professional cooperative network, the pupil's schooling and well-being can be supported. At the final stage of basic education, the parents or guardians must be given an opportunity to discuss the questions and possible problems associated with the pupil's further education. As necessary, the parents or guardians must also be given a chance to discuss these issues with the pupil's guidance counsellor and the various pupil welfare experts.

4.2. THE LEARNING PLAN

The learning plan is a plan for implementation of the pupil's study programme, i.e., the list of subjects and subject groups that the pupil studies in the course of a school year. The purpose of the learning plan is for the pupil to learn to take more and more responsibility for his or her studies, make a commitment to them, and be more purposeful in his or her learning. The learning plan also helps keep the parents or guardians informed, so that they can better support the pupil's study. The learning plan also makes it possible to differen-

tiate the instruction and help the school and teachers ensure that the pupil enjoys the best chance of learning and progressing academically. The learning plan can also be used as a basis for assessing the pupil's progress.

In formulating the learning plan, the key consideration is cooperation between the pupil, the parent or other guardian, the teachers, and the school's other experts. In the initial phase of basic education, primary responsibility for drafting the learning plan lies with the teacher, but responsibility for its preparation can gradually be transferred to the pupil. The learning plan of a first-grade pupil can be constructed on the basis of the child's pre-primary learning plan, if one has been formulated.

The learning plan includes the pupil's study programme and describes how the curriculum's objectives are to be achieved. It specifies possible optional studies and the special emphases of study. It also depicts possible support functions, such as remedial teaching or part-time special-needs education.

If it has been decided in the curriculum that the pupil may progress academically according to his or her own study programme rather than a grade-by-grade syllabus, the learning plan must mention the study modules included in the pupil's study programme and specify their schedule and order of completion, as well as possible special objectives.

A learning plan may be drafted for any pupil. The decision to draft such a plan is made in the curriculum. As needed, a learning plan is drafted for pupils who need special support and pupils receiving part-time special-needs education, as well as immigrant pupils. For pupils who have been enrolled in or transferred into special-needs education, an individual educational plan (IEP) replaces the learning plan.

4.3 PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Guidance and counselling activities are to constitute a continuum lasting the duration of basic education. The fact, that teachers participating in the guidance work together with study counsellors guarantees that pupils get guidance and counselling services during their studies and in transition phases of the study path.

It is the task of all teachers to guide pupils in their study, to help them develop learning skills and capabilities, and to prevent the emergence of study-related problems. It is the task of every teacher to support the pupils' personal growth, development, and participation.

Pupils and their parents or guardians are to have the chance to receive information on the working approaches of basic education and possibilities for choice, and the implications of those choices for the pupils' studies and future. School-specific issues concerning the provision of guidance and counselling services, studying, pupil welfare, and support services are to be explained to pupils and their parents or guardians. The parent or guardian must be given opportunities to discuss issues related to the pupil's studies and choices by meeting collectively with the teacher, study counsellor, and pupil.

In addition to preventive activities, guidance and counselling implemented at the school should especially support those pupils who have difficulties with studying or who are in danger of dropping out.

The principles and division of labour among the different players in guidance and

counselling activities are to be defined in the local curriculum. The curriculum must include a description of how cooperation with the local labour market and business community is implemented at the level of the entire school's activity. Classroom visits by labour market representatives, visits to workplaces, project work, the use of different sectors' informational materials, and an introduction-to-working-life periods make up the central part of this cooperation. The instruction in the different subjects is to include modules that connect the knowledge and skills provided by the subject to the demands and possibilities of working life.

4.4 REMEDIAL TEACHING

Remedial teaching is a form of differentiation characterized by individualized tasks, individualized use of time, and guidance and counselling. Remedial teaching is to be commenced as soon as learning difficulties are observed, so that the pupil does not lag behind in his or her studies. Before the pupil is judged to be doing poorly in the subject or subject group, he or she must have the chance to participate in remedial teaching.

The teacher takes the primary initiative regarding remedial teaching. An attempt is to be made to arrange for remedial teaching as a matter of mutual understanding with the pupil's parents or guardians, and they are to be informed about how the instruction is to be provided.

Remedial teaching is to be provided as often and as broadly as is appropriate from the standpoint of the pupil's academic success. The instruction is given either during lessons conforming to the pupil's schedule, or outside of those lessons.

4.5 PUPIL WELFARE

Pupil welfare includes attending to the child's or young person's basic learning prerequisites and his or her physical, psychological, and social well-being. Pupil welfare consists of both communal and individual support. The objectives are to create a healthy, safe learning and school environment, protect mental health, prevent social exclusion, and advance the well-being of the school community.

Through pupil welfare, an operational culture of care, concern, and positive interaction is promoted in the school community, and an equal opportunity to learn is ensured for all. Pupil welfare helps to maintain the individual's and the community's ability to function in situations that threaten physical and psychological security.

Pupil welfare promotes the learning and balanced growth and development of the child or young person. The objective of pupil welfare is the prevention, recognition, amelioration, and earliest possible elimination of obstacles to learning, learning difficulties, and other problems connected with attending school.

Pupil welfare shall encompass pupil welfare in accordance with the curriculum adopted by the education provider and pupil welfare services comprising school health care referred to in the Public Health Act and support to education and parenting referred to in the Child Welfare Act. Pupil welfare is the concern of all persons working in the school community, as well as those authorities responsible for pupil welfare. It is implemented

in close cooperation with the home. In planning the necessary pupil welfare support for an individual pupil, the child or young person and the parent or other guardian must be consulted. Confidentiality, respect for the child or young person and parents or guardians, and statutes on secrecy and the parties' access to information guide pupil welfare work. The work can be coordinated and developed by a multi-professional pupil welfare team.

With respect to pupil welfare, the curriculum is to be prepared in collaboration with those in charge of implementing social and health services in the municipality.

For the curriculum, a plan is to be drafted that depicts the objectives and key principles of pupil welfare, as follows:

- activities to promote health, well-being, security, social responsibility, and interaction in the school community
- general pupil welfare support and guidance and counselling in schooling, and in support of the child's or young person's physical, psychological and social development
- cooperation in formulating and monitoring the learning plan or IEP, and in planning further studies
- pupil welfare offered to the pupil in various difficulties, and pupil welfare offered in connection with disciplinary punishment, and when the pupil has been suspended from school
- cooperation between pupil welfare personnel and the home, school, pupil welfare experts or other experts, and local support networks
- measures and distribution of work and responsibility aimed at the prevention, observation, or taking care of the following problem and crisis situations:
 - monitoring of absences
 - bullying, violence and harassment
 - mental health issues
 - smoking, alcohol and drug abuse and the use of other intoxicating substances
 - various accidents, misfortunes, and deaths
- implementation of objectives established for general safety in transport to and from school
- objectives for health and nutritional education and the learning of manners in conjunction with the provision of school meals.

4.6 CLUB ACTIVITIES

Club activities may be organized to support the school's educational and teaching work. In accordance with the objectives of basic education, club activities are to support the pupil's ethical and social growth and diversified self-development. The purpose of club activities is to encourage the kindling of pastimes, and to give the pupil an opportunity for something other than normal schoolwork, in a secure and peaceful environment.

Clubs must offer diverse activities that respect children and young people. They must also provide opportunities for positive interaction with adults and other children. The

principles of organizing club activities are to be recorded in the curriculum. Club participation is voluntary for the pupils.

The objectives of club activities are

- to support the educational work of the home and school
- to increase involvement on the part of children and young people
- to provide an opportunity for developing social skills and nurturing a sense of community
- to provide an opportunity to feel one is capable and successful
- to develop creative activity and thinking
- to encourage children and young people to produce their own culture
- to provide an opportunity to become more familiar with the pupil
- to support the pursuit of interests and promote constructive pastimes.

5

Instruction of pupils needing special support

5.1 DIFFERENT MODES OF SUPPORT

The pupil receives help in overcoming learning difficulties by means of different support modes, which are determined according to the quality and extent of the difficulties. The early recognition of learning difficulties and the early commencement of support measures are vital if the negative impacts of the learning difficulties on the pupil's development are to be averted. In this context it is important to work with the parents or guardians. Pupils whose prerequisites for growth, development, and learning have been weakened by a disability, sickness, or deficit need special instructional support. Pupils who need psychological or social support also fall within the sphere of special support, as do pupils whose development faces learning-related risk factors, in the opinion of educational and pupil welfare experts and a parent or other guardian.

All pupils who need special support may be given remedial teaching as specified in Chapter 4.

The pupil's studies are to be supported by different means, according to the nature and scope of the learning difficulty. The pupil is given part-time special-needs education if remedial teaching alone does not suffice.

If the pupil cannot be given instruction otherwise, he or she should be enrolled in or transferred into special-needs education, in which case the syllabi, instructional arrangements, and support services are defined in the IEP.

5.2 PART-TIME SPECIAL-NEEDS EDUCATION

Part-time special-needs education is to be given to pupils who have mild learning or adjustment difficulties and who need special support, in conjunction with other instruction, to improve their prerequisites for learning. Part-time special-needs education is provided in addition to, and simultaneously with, other instruction, whether in a small group or individually, and is to be articulated purposefully with the other instruction the pupil is receiving. As needed, a learning plan is formulated for the pupil which can be prepared in cooperation with the parent or guardian, teachers, and other experts. Part-time special-needs education can also be provided for pupils enrolled in or transferred into special-needs education.

5.3 INSTRUCTION OF PUPILS ENROLLED IN OR TRANSFERRED INTO SPECIAL-NEEDS EDUCATION

The objective of special-needs education is to assist and support pupils so that they possess equal opportunities to complete their compulsory education in accordance with their prerequisites and together with their peers.

The pupil's strengths and personal learning and developmental needs constitute the starting point. The instruction must support the pupil's initiative and self-confidence. Special-needs education requires a place, facility, and time for study, as well as decisions applicable to its functions, and the earmarking of resources to implement those functions. To the extent that the pupil cannot study in a general instruction setting, or general instruction is not appropriate from the standpoint of his or her development, the special instruction is to be provided partially or entirely in a special-needs education group.

The foremost objective is to support the pupil's studies so that the objectives conforming to the general syllabus can be attained. If the pupil does not meet those objectives in spite of the support measures, the syllabus is individualized.

Individualization of the syllabus is the first alternative, being preferable to excusing the pupil from completing the syllabus. Individualization of the syllabus assumes a decision that the pupil be enrolled in or transferred into special-needs education. The individualization may involve the entire basic education syllabus or only individual subjects. Pressing reasons must exist for excusing the pupil from studying the syllabus. A pupil who has been exempted from studying a subject must receive either instruction in other subjects or directed activity so that his or her number of weekly lessons per year does not decrease.

On the basis of Section 9 of Government Decree 1435/2001, instruction of a pupil enrolled in or transferred into special-needs education may in part be given in divergence from the stipulations of the lesson-hour distribution observed at the school, if that is justified given the pupil's learning prerequisites. In this case the IEP specifies the subjects in which the pupil's study programme deviates from the lesson-hour distribution to which the school adheres.

Instruction of a pupil enrolled in or transferred into special-needs education is provided in the context of either a general or an extended educational obligation, as stipulated in the decision mandating the enrolment or transfer. In the instruction of pupils within the sphere of extended compulsory education, subjects may be combined into subject modules. These may be formed from core and optional subjects, in a manner to be decided in the curriculum.

If the pupil no longer requires special-needs education, a decision is to be taken enabling his or her transfer into general instruction.

5.4 INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN

An individual educational plan (IEP) based on an approved curriculum must be prepared for every pupil being enrolled in or transferred into special-needs education. The plan is to include the following information, as needed to individualize the pupil's instruction:

- a description of the pupil's learning abilities and strengths, his or her special learning-related needs, and the resultant developmental requirements for the instructional and learning environments
- the short- and long-term objectives for the instruction and learning
- the numbers of weekly lessons per year in the subjects in the pupil's study programme
- a list of the subjects in which the pupil's studies diverge from the syllabi for general instruction
- the objectives and core contents of those subjects in which the pupil has an individualized syllabus
- the principles for the monitoring and assessing the pupil's progress
- assistant and interpreter services, other instructional services and pupil welfare, communication techniques, and special aids and learning materials, as required for participation in the instruction
- a description of how the pupil's instruction is to be provided, i.e. through participation in general instruction and/or in a special-needs education group
- the persons who are participating in providing the pupil's instructional and support services, and those individuals' areas of responsibility
- monitoring of the implementation of support services.

The purpose of the IEP is to strengthen the pupil's individual learning process over the long term. Experiences with support services, working approaches and instructional arrangements that support the pupil's development and learning are recorded in the IEP.

Assessment of the pupil is based on the general syllabus or on the individualized syllabus established for them in the IEP.

Working in multi-professional cooperation, the pupil's teachers, pupil welfare experts, and, as possibilities allow, the pupil's parents or guardians participate in the formulation of the IEP.

Implementation of the IEP is to be monitored and assessed regularly, especially when the pupil transfers from pre-primary education to basic education, from one grade or school to another during basic education, and from basic education to the upper secondary level.

5.5 PROVISION OF INSTRUCTION BY ACTIVITY AREA

When the pupil has a serious disability or illness and it is therefore impossible to provide instruction in accordance with a subject-by-subject syllabus, the instruction is to be provided by activity area. The activity areas included in the curriculum are motor skills, language and communication, social skills, skills in daily functions, and cognitive skills. In the curriculum, the activity areas are to be divided into sub-areas.

In the learning of motor skills, the aim is to strengthen the pupil's perception of his or her body, and to promote the development of gross and fine motor skills. Instruction in motor skills is to include sub-areas on the planning and guidance of motor functions, balance, coordination, rhythm, endurance, and the development of muscular strength.

In the learning of communication skills, the objective is the formulation of an orientation reaction, and, on that basis, the production and understanding of various expressions. Instruction in language and communication is to include sub-areas on developing linguistic awareness, expression, vocabulary and the store of concepts, thinking, and the recognition and use of symbols, letters, words, and signs, including those used in sign language.

In the learning of social skills, the aim is the development of the pupil's interaction skills. The sub-areas are to incorporate objectives for skills in interaction and self-control.

The objective in the learning of daily skills is to increase the pupil's active participation in the functions of the living environment, and to further his or her independence and initiative. The sub-areas are to incorporate objectives for health and safety, daily living skills, residential living, moving about in the environment, and spending free time.

In the learning of cognitive skills, the aim is for the pupil to become active and learn to use his or her senses to perceive the surrounding reality. The sub-areas are to include sensory stimulation and practice, and exercises for learning about choice, classification, problem-solving, and the cause-and-effect relationship.

6

Instruction of cultural and language groups

6.1 THE SAMI

Education for Sami pupils must take account of the fact that the Sami are an indigenous people with their own language and culture. The Sami's relationship with nature, traditional livelihoods, and the Sami community form the Sami language and culture's core, which basic education supports. For some pupils, the Sami language (North, Inari or Skolt Sami) is the mother tongue and language of instruction; for others the language is taught as a foreign language. Special attention is directed at the varied linguistic capabilities of the pupils beginning basic education. For the most part, instruction of Sami-speaking pupils is given in Sami.

The instruction must reinforce the pupils' indigenous identity and afford possibilities for learning their own language and developing linguistic capabilities. Basic education has to promote a knowledge of the Sami's own culture and history, and of the Nordic Sami community, as well as an awareness of the Sami as a people and one of the world's indigenous peoples. The objective of the instruction is that the pupil, upon completing basic education, will be aware of his or her roots and cultural heritage, the different Sami languages, cultural areas, and groups. The school must provide pupils with conditions conducive to developing healthy self-esteem, so that they will be able to preserve a Sami identity without being absorbed into the main population.

Sami-language instruction is given in North, Inari, and Skolt Sami. The key instructional objective for Sami-speaking pupils is to support growth towards active bilingualism and multiculturalism. In Sami-language instruction, all the subjects taught support the development of the pupil's native-language skills.

The instruction must support both the pupils' identification with their national heritage and an affinity among Sami people living in different countries. The instruction adheres to national objectives and educational contents, but in such a way that the distinctive features of Sami culture and the Sami language's status are taken into account. The instruction gives special emphasis to Sami history, and to a knowledge of the modern Sami community, traditional livelihoods, and the Sami's musical (*luohti, leu'dd*), narrative (*máinnas*) and handicraft (*duodji*) traditions.

The local environment, the clan, the Sami-language media and active links with other Sami areas are utilized as instructional resources. As a learning environment, the school must support instruction provided in Sami. The school must also work with the home and parents or guardians so that Sami educational and teaching traditions are taken into account.

The pupils are to receive positive experiences of their own culture through play, story-telling, activity, and participation. As possibilities allow, the instruction is adapted to the local Sami community's yearly cycle, the traditional work associated with the different seasons, and changes in the natural environment.

6.2 ROMANIES

Education for Romany pupils must take account of the position of Finland's Romany population as an ethnic and cultural minority. With the advent of the Romanies' social integration and new legislation on the rights of minorities, issues of education and the preservation of a unique linguistic and cultural heritage must be considered in basic education, too. Instruction in Romany must advance the formation of a double identity and enhance the quality of schooling.

Instruction in Romany must give Romany pupils a natural opportunity to express their minority identity in school, too. The instruction must promote a knowledge of the Romany pupils' own history and language, as well as an awareness of Romanies as one of the important minorities in Europe and the entire world.

The significance of language instruction in school is especially conspicuous with Romany children because Finland's Romany language has traditionally been a spoken language only. For this reason, instruction in the Romany language and culture must make allowances for the regional differences and varied linguistic abilities encountered among the pupils. The instruction makes use of the local environment, the clan, and Romany-language media.

6.3 SIGN LANGUAGE USERS

Pupils who use sign language have no hearing, limited hearing, or normal hearing. Their native language is Finnish sign language. They have learned sign language as their first language; it is the language they have mastered best or use most in everyday life.

Instruction for pupils who use sign language complies with the comprehensive school's general educational and learning objectives, adapting these to sign language culture. The language of instruction is Finnish sign language, alongside which Finnish or Swedish is used in the instruction for reading and writing.

The objective is to reinforce the pupils' sign language identity and to teach them to value their own language and culture as equal with the majority language and culture. The pupils must be able to realize their own linguistic and cultural rights in different situations, so as to make egalitarian activity and interaction possible.

It is also an objective to become aware of, and learn about, the culture and ways of acting of the world of sound and hearing, which diverge from sign language culture and ways of acting, so that acting flexibly in the spheres of two or more cultures becomes possible.

Since Finnish sign language is a minority language and the pupils' opportunities for assimilating it before reaching school age vary a great deal, the instruction must focus especially on creating the richest possible sign language learning environment. There is no generally used writing system for sign language, so that personal linguistic interaction assumes greater importance. In addition, the potential of information and communication technology is utilized for sign language communication and information access in the most diverse way possible.

6.4 IMMIGRANTS

In this national core curriculum for basic education, the term immigrant pupils refers to children and young people who have moved to, or been born in, Finland, and have immigrant backgrounds.

Instruction for immigrants complies with this national core curriculum, taking into account the pupils' backgrounds and starting points, such as native tongue and culture, reason for immigrating, and duration of residence in Finland. In addition, the instruction has special objectives. It must support the pupil's growth into active and balanced membership of both the Finnish linguistic and cultural community and the pupil's own linguistic and cultural community.

Instead of the mother-tongue-and-literature instruction determined by the school's language of instruction, immigrants learn Finnish or Swedish as a second language if their skill in Finnish or Swedish is not viewed as being on a par with that of native speakers in all areas of language proficiency. As possibilities allow, immigrants also receive instruction in their own native tongues.

In addition to instruction in the pupil's language and Finnish or Swedish, immigrants must be supported in other areas of learning so as to acquire learning abilities equivalent to those of non-immigrant pupils. A learning plan may be formulated for the immigrant pupil which can serve as part of the pupil's cultural integration plan.

The instruction takes into account the immigrant pupil's prior learning history and educational and instructional background. In home-school cooperation, attention is given to the family's cultural background and experiences with the school system in the country of departure. The parents or guardians receive an introduction to the Finnish school system, the school's operating idea, the curriculum, assessment, teaching methods, and the pupil's learning plan.

The instruction utilizes the knowledge the pupil and his or her parents or guardians possess of the natural environment, ways of life, languages, and cultures of their own cultural and language region.