



# Pupil admission criteria

**Finnish- and English-language  
basic education in Turku**



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## **Pupil admission criteria in Finnish- and English-language basic education**

City of Turku

Children and Youth Services, basic education

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# 1 Pupil school place

## 1.1. General

The general criteria for the admission of pupils are based on the Basic Education Act (628/1998) and the Act on Compulsory Education (1214/2020). The municipality is obligated to arrange basic education for those of compulsory school age residing within its area. In order to fulfil its obligations, the municipality must assign a pupil in compulsory education to a local school where education is provided and to which the pupil is always entitled. The municipality is free to define the procedure by which pupils are assigned to a school. However, a school place must be assigned fairly and consistently (Sections 4 and 6 of the Basic Education Act and section 6 of the Administrative Procedure Act).

## 1.2. Pupil admission area

The City of Turku is divided into four major areas: Pohjoinen, Itäinen, Eteläinen and Läntinen. Each major area has several pupil admission areas. There is a total of 12 pupil admission areas. As a rule, pupils are always assigned to a school in their own admission area. According to the administrative regulations of the City of Turku, decisions on pupil admission areas and the criteria for admission are made by the Finnish-language Children and Youth Services Committee.

Pupil admission areas on the map: <https://turku.asiointi.fi/IMS/>

## 1.3. Types of pupil admission

There are three different situations for the admission of pupils:

- 1) assigning a local school to a person of compulsory school age residing in the City of Turku area
- 2) admitting a person of compulsory school age on the basis of an application to a local school other than the one assigned by the city, and
- 3) enrolling a pupil of compulsory school age in curricula with a special emphasis on the basis of an entrance examination, a special needs class or English-language basic education.

Under the direction of the regional principal, the principals within the pupil admission area place pupils in schools in accordance with the criteria confirmed by the Finnish-language Children and Youth Services Committee. The regional principal makes the decision to assign pupils to a local school. The grounds for the decision are included in the regional principal's decision. Appeal instructions referred to in section 42 of the Basic Education Act are attached to the decision.

## 1.4. Maximum number of pupils per school and class

The principal of the school decides on the maximum number of pupils in mainstream education in the primary pupil admission for one school year at a time. This is recorded in the school's annual

plan. When making the decision, the principal takes into account the school facilities, physical restrictions placed on ventilation and safety aspects as well as pedagogical solutions.

Maximum number of pupils for each class at the time of admission:

**Maximum number of pupils in specialised classes and curricula with a special emphasis:**

- 25 pupils in grades 1–2
- 27 pupils in grades 3–9

**Maximum number of pupils in the secondary pupil admission:**

- 23 pupils in grades 1–2
- 26 pupils in grades 3–9

The number of pupils per class above also applies to multi-grade classes.

## 1.5. Local school

The admission area to which the pupil belongs and the local school to be assigned to them is determined on the basis of the pupil's home address. It is not always possible to assign the geographically closest school as a local school. In addition to a short and safe school journey, the school's facilities and resources as well as the sizes and compositions of groups ('appropriateness principle') are also taken into account when assigning a local school. The principal decides on the placement of pupils in different school buildings. If justified, the education provider may deviate from the aforementioned criteria.

In all grades, the pupil has the right to attend a school within their own school district. If there are two or more schools in the school district, the principals negotiate with each other under the direction of the regional principal, if necessary, and decide together on the placement of pupils within the school district. If it is necessary to evenly distribute pupils between schools, the pupils are placed in schools to ensure that the school commutes of pupils are as safe and short as possible, taking into account the school district as a whole. With respect to the maximum number of pupils, pedagogical and functional impacts must be taken into account in the placement of pupils, such as the size of classes in different schools or, for example, the pupil's language choices. If the principals/directors of the schools cannot agree on the placement of the pupils, the regional principal will decide on the matter.

**A local school is assigned to a person of compulsory school age who resides in Turku**

- when starting first grade
- when there is no subsequent grade in the current school for the following school year (i.e. usually when graduating from primary school to secondary school)
- when a pupil of compulsory school age moves to Turku.

## 1.6. Change of residence in the middle of comprehensive school

If a pupil's family moves to another pupil admission area after the school year has begun, the pupil becomes a secondary admission applicant. If desired, the pupil can continue attending their old school until the end of the term.

Pupils in grades 8 and 9 may choose to continue attending their old school until the end of the school year. In this case, the guardian takes care of any school commute costs. The school place decision is made in the school of the new school district.

Pupils may apply for a place in the original school as a secondary applicant. In this case, the criteria described in Section 3 are applied when making the decision on admission.

## 1.7. Change of municipality in the middle of comprehensive school

If a pupil changes their municipality of residence in the middle of comprehensive school, they may continue to attend comprehensive school in the City of Turku until the end of the current term provide that their guardian takes care of the transport costs.

- autumn term 1 August–31 December
- spring term 1 January–31 July

- The City of Turku is divided into 12 pupil admission areas.
- At the start of compulsory education, a local school place will be assigned to the admission applicant on the basis of their home address.
- Pupils of compulsory school age moving to the city later are directed to their local school on the basis of their home address.
- Pupils may also apply for a place in a school other than the local school.
- Applicants who are Turku residents take precedence over applicants residing in other municipalities.
- Applications for specialised classes are to be submitted during the application periods, and pupil places are filled through an aptitude test procedure.
- You can apply to Turku International School all year round. Pupil places are filled through the aptitude test procedure.

# 2 Pupil admission process and criteria

## 2.1. Compulsory education

A child's compulsory education begins the year they turn seven. The City of Turku announces the start of school by sending an annual compulsory education notification to a pupil of compulsory school age starting grade 1 and the pupil's guardian(s). The notification is submitted to the administrative programme run by the city, where the guardian logs in using Suomi.fi e-Identification.

## 2.2 When starting compulsory education

There are two stages in the admission to grade 1. The guardian completes the different stages of admission in the administrative programme used for Turku basic education. The guardians are informed of schedules and application procedures by means of messaging and on the City of Turku website. The city publishes an annual Welcome to School! guide, which contains more information on basic education and schools in the City of Turku.

When a pupil applies to start school one year later than prescribed, the decision on the matter is made by the regional principal.

### **In the first phase, the guardian of the new pupil**

- checks the information on the child and the guardian and corrects any incorrect or missing information
- specifies their child's religious and ethics education and mother tongue

In addition to this, the guardian may

- report any criteria as grounds for admission on a sibling basis
- apply for their child's placement in specialised education or a weighted-curriculum
- apply for their child's placement at Turku International School
- apply for their child's placement at a contract school (Turku Teacher Training School)
- enrol their child in language classes other than A1 English
- enrols their child for placement at the school of another education provider
- apply to postpone the start of their child's first year of school by one year.

### **In the second phase, the guardian of the new pupil**

- approves the local school place assigned to the child
- accepts an assigned school place for specialised education

In addition to this, the guardian may

- apply for their child's school place in a school other than the assigned local school (secondary application)
- enrol their child for education in their own mother tongue
- apply for a morning and afternoon activity place for their child

## 2.3. Admission criteria to be taken into account when assigning a local school

Assigning a local school to a pupil is primary pupil admission (section 6(2) of the Basic Education Act) When admitting pupils, equal selection criteria shall be applied. If there are more applicants than the school has room to admit, the selection criteria are to be observed in the following order:

- 1) pupils residing within the admission area
- 2) Sibling basis: the pupil has siblings (siblings residing at the same address) in the same school in grades 1-5.
- 3) travel distance.

The decision on admission is made in primary schools (grades 1–6) until the end of grade 6, in secondary schools (grades 7–9) until the end of grade 9 and in comprehensive schools (grades 1–9) until the end of grade 9. Regional principals make decisions on the assignment of schools in their area. School principals will later decide on the arrangement of education in different school buildings.

### 2.3.1. Sibling basis

The guardian is able to request whether they wish to take the sibling basis into account in the first phase of pupil admissions. This requires that the siblings live at the same address.

When the sibling basis is applied, the pupil is assigned a school place at an administrative school, not its different units/buildings.

The sibling basis does not apply if the sibling attends the highest grade in the school in question or has been admitted to curricula with a special emphasis, secondary school, preparatory education or special classes.

### 2.3.2. Travel distance

The distance to school is measured by estimating the length of the shortest and safest routes. The travel distance is measured using pedestrian-friendly routes that are open all year round. Basic education in Turku primarily uses the Föli journey planner and, if necessary, the Turku Region Map Service to measure the distance to the school.

## 2.4. A-language

As a rule, the A1 language common to all in Turku basic education is English, with the exception of Luostarivuori School, which offers not only English, but also A1 Swedish, and Hannuniittu School, which also offers A1 Spanish in addition to English. The starting size for local classes in A1 Spanish and Swedish is at least 16 pupils.

Basic education in Turku has language classes in which the amount of instruction in languages corresponds to the syllabus in A1 languages. A1 German is taught at Puolala School and A1 French at Vähä-Heikkilä School.

A-language (A1, A2) classes started by the pupil will continue in grade 7. The pupil is assigned a school place at a school where A-language classes can continue. A-language classes may continue at one's own school, another school in one's own school district or a school in another school district. The principal of the school decides on the method of arranging A-language classes.

## 2.5. Specialised classes and curricula with a special emphasis

In Finnish-language basic education in Turku, instruction and specialised class activities are emphasised in different languages, mathematics, music, visual arts and sports. The Finnish-language Children and Youth Services Committee decides on the arrangement of curricula with a special emphasis and specialised class activities as well as their application procedure.

In their own school, the principal decides how specialised class activities or curricula with a special emphasis are to be arranged pedagogically. These can be arranged in a class or line form.

**Class-form education:** The pupils comprise their own special class, in which weighting is reflected throughout the education. The class works as a single group throughout the school year.

**Line-form education:** Pupils are in mainstream education classes, but participate in curricula with a special emphasis in certain subjects or periods. Special emphasis does not apply to the activities of the entire class.

Pupils are selected for curricula with a special emphasis and specialised classes on the basis of section 28 of the Basic Education Act by means of a special application process. In Turku, all weighted-curriculum classes and specialised classes are applied for through an aptitude test procedure. Guardians are provided with information on the annual application procedure on the city/school website and through the administrative system.

A pupil may only apply to one school offering specialised classes or curricula with a special emphasis at a time. A pupil who has once accepted a place in a specialised class or curricula with a special emphasis is no longer eligible to apply for another specialised class or curricula with a special emphasis during primary school. An exception to this are sports classes starting in secondary school,



where the pupil can first apply for one special line or general coaching line and, if desired, for two other general coaching lines.

Pupils may apply for curricula with a special emphasis and specialised classes in all pupil admission areas and other municipalities. Pupils are admitted to school based on the following criteria:

**1. Specialised classes and curricula with a special emphasis starting in grade 1:**

- Applicants from Turku in order of score.
- Applicants from other municipalities in order of score.

**Specialised classes and curricula with a special emphasis starting in grade 7:**

- Applicants are ranked according to the test score, regardless of their place of residence.

A maximum of 25 primary applicant pupils are admitted to curricula with a special emphasis and specialised classes in grade 1 and a maximum of 27 primary applicant pupils in grades 3–9.

**Curricula with a special emphasis and specialised classes in Turku's Finnish-language basic education**

| Starting grade 1 | ITÄINEN                    | ETELÄINEN              | LÄNTINEN             | POHJOINEN |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| English          | Turku International School | Wäinö Aaltonen School* | Puolala School       |           |
| Swedish          |                            |                        | Luostarivuori School |           |
| French           |                            | Vähä-Heikkilä School   |                      |           |
| German           |                            |                        | Puolala School       |           |

| Starting grade 3 | ITÄINEN | ETELÄINEN | LÄNTINEN             | POHJOINEN         |
|------------------|---------|-----------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Mathematics      |         |           |                      | Raunistula School |
| Music            |         |           | Puolala School       |                   |
| Visual arts      |         |           | Luostarivuori School |                   |

| Starting grade 7 | ITÄINEN                    | ETELÄINEN                           | LÄNTINEN             | POHJOINEN          |
|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| sports           |                            | Vasaramäki School Puro-pelto School | Luostarivuori School | Rieskalähde School |
| English          | Turku International School |                                     | Puolala School       |                    |
| Swedish          |                            |                                     | Luostarivuori School |                    |
| French           |                            |                                     | Topelius School      |                    |
| German           |                            |                                     | Puolala School       |                    |
| Mathematics      |                            |                                     |                      | Rieskalähde School |

\*curricula with a special emphasis

Pupils in curricula with a special emphasis do not move up to a specialised class in the same subject in secondary school. If so desired, they will be given an opportunity to participate in the supplementary application process when moving up to secondary school.

In the case of specialised classes, pupils move up from grade 6 without an application process to grade 7 of the school in which the education continues.

Curricula with a special emphasis and specialised classes may be supplemented each year if there is space in the classes. Before applying, the guardian must ask the principal of the school in question about any vacancies. Pupils applying will be tested before they are admitted to school. The guardian is responsible for the pupil's transport costs if the pupil is selected for curricula with a special emphasis or specialised classes.

## 2.6. Turku International School

Turku International School is one of the basic education schools in Turku. The school comprises grades 1–9. The school's language of instruction is English, and it is intended for children whose language proficiency is sufficient for studying in English.

Admission to Turku International School is comparable to admission to specialised classes. Admission requires passing an admission test. Each grade has its own admission test. The primary purpose of the admission test is to ensure that the applicant has sufficient language proficiency to learn and function in the language of instruction.

Grades 1–6 have two different admission tests: one at the beginning of the school year and one for pupils applying in the middle of the grade. The pupil must receive a passing score for each section, and the scores for each section cannot entirely compensate for each other. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of places, the applicants will be selected in order of test scores. When approving applicants who have passed the admission test, priority shall be given to applicants whose mother tongue is English or whose parent(s) speak English, or the applicant otherwise has an international background. Pupils who have passed the test and for whom there are not enough places may remain on the wait list for an opening. Pupil places cannot be reserved or promised to applicants in advance.

If the applicant fails the admission test, they may not apply again until the following school year. The exception to this is applicants for grade 1, who may be considered for retaking the test in August if there is space in the grade. The test may only be retaken for a justified reason and on a discretionary basis. Decisions on retaking the test are made by the TIS Admission Test working group.

Admission tests are taken at the school. Remote testing may only be arranged in justified cases, in which remote testing is absolutely necessary in the interests of the pupil (e.g. the work relocation of a family requires the child to have a place in an international school). However, before a decision on admission can be made, the applicant and the applicant's guardian must have a permanent home address in Turku or in the municipalities covered by the agreement.

The guardian is responsible for the pupil's transport costs if the pupil is admitted to Turku International School.

## 2.7. Schools under other education providers

### **Turku Teacher Training School**

Turku Teacher Training School is assigned as a local school in the same way as the city schools. Turku basic education and Turku Teacher Training School have a mutual agreement on this. Turku Teacher Training School is legally treated as a private school.

### **Turku Steiner School**

A guardian from Turku may enrol their children in the Steiner School in the first phase of pupil admissions and submit a separate application online. Pupils are admitted to the school based on the school's own admission criteria.

# 3 Applying for a place in a school other than the local school

The guardian may also apply for a school place for their child in a school other than the assigned local school. This is called a **secondary admission**. The school may be located in your own school district or another school district in the city. In order to become a pupil, there must be space at the school and the set maximum number of pupils must not be exceeded. The admission must also not require forming a new class at the school.

When a pupil from Turku is admitted to a secondary primary school at the end of grade 6, the pupil's local school for grade 7 will become the local school in accordance with the school district of the new school. The pupil and the guardian must be informed of this. The rule applies to decisions made at all times and in all grades of primary school. The principal of the school makes the decision on admission.

If more pupils apply for secondary admission than there are places, the pupil will be admitted to the school in the following order:

1. pupils residing within the admission area
2. according to the school commute distance, from shortest to longest.
3. pupils residing in other municipalities.

## 4 Admission to a specialised class

pupils in specialised classes are directed through a separate admission process, and only pupils from Turku are admitted to them.

In addition to the decision on pupil-specific support measures, a separate decision on the pupil's school place is made for pupils in need of support. The school place is primarily assigned to the pupil's local school. Other schools with sufficient support for learning and school attendance may also be assigned as local schools.

Decisions on pupil-specific support measures are made by the Special Services Manager for Children and Youth Services on the basis of an assessment and plan prepared for the pupil. When making a decision, the pupil and the guardian must always be heard.

The decision on extended compulsory education is made before the start of compulsory education in early childhood education and care. Extended compulsory education applies to pupils with severe disabilities. For pupils in extended compulsory education, the year of pre-primary education is part of compulsory education and it is arranged in a day-care centre. Decisions on extended compulsory education are made by the Special Services Manager in early childhood education and care on the basis of pedagogical documents and medical and/or psychological statements.

If a pupil in need of support is placed in a school other than their local school due to the support services provided by another school, the costs incurred by the pupil's school commute will be reimbursed if the school transport criterion is met in relation to this new school. In addition to pupils receiving pupil-specific support measures, this also applies to foreign-language pupils in preparatory instruction for basic education who have just moved to Finland, pupils in flexible basic education (JOPO) or pupils studying in the joint classes of a hospital school.

# 5 Admission to preparatory education

Preparatory education for basic education is intended for children and youth of basic education age with an immigrant background whose language proficiency is not yet sufficient for studying in basic education.

With regard to preparatory education for basic education, the entire city is one school district. Pupils from municipalities with an agreement for providing basic education may also be admitted to preparatory education if there is space in the groups. Preparatory education is arranged in groups in separately designated schools.

The location of the group, the pupil's age and prerequisites are taken into account in the assignment of a school place. For pupils starting grade 1, preparatory education is arranged inclusively in a basic education group in the pupil's local school, which is assigned based on the pupil's home address. The sibling basis does not apply to the admission of pupils to preparatory education. In accordance with the City of Turku Administrative Regulations, the decision on the provision of preparatory education is made by the Special Services Director for Children and Youth Services.

When a pupil moves from preparatory education for basic education to basic education, they are assigned a local school based on their home address. The guardian may also apply for a school place for their child in a school other than the assigned local school, such as the school providing preparatory education. When a pupil receives a school place from a so-called secondary school, the guardian is responsible for the transport costs.

## 6 Applying for basic education in Turku for people living in another municipality

A pupil living in another municipality may apply for basic education arranged by the City of Turku. Applicants must fill out an **application for the right to attend school in Turku**, which is then submitted via the suomi.fi service.

**Application (in Finnish):** <https://www.turku.fi/sites/default/files/document/turun-kaupunki-vieraskuntalaishakemus.pdf>

The application for the right to attend school in Turku may only be submitted to one school in Turku at a time.

If there are available places, a pupil from another municipality may be accepted as a pupil in Turku. However, pupils residing in Turku are given priority for school admissions. The decision on the matter is made by the principal of the school to which the pupil is applying for the right to study. The right to attend school is granted in comprehensive school until grade 9, in primary schools until grade 6 and in secondary schools until grade 9.

The maximum size of the basic education group is:

- 23 pupils in grades 1–2
- 26 pupils in grades 3–9

The guardian is responsible for any costs incurred by transporting or accompanying the pupil.

## 6 School transport

Under the Basic Education Act, if the distance to school for a pupil in pre-primary, basic or additional voluntary education exceeds five kilometres, or if the route to school is too difficult, strenuous or dangerous in view of the pupil's age or other circumstances, the pupil shall be entitled to free transportation. An alternative to free transportation is an adequate subsidy for transporting or accompanying the pupil to school (section 32 of the Basic Education Act).

School transport in the City of Turku is primarily provided using public bus services, for which the pupil may be issued a school bus card for free travel. Taxi transport is granted in exceptional cases where the pupil is unable to travel to school by walking or by public transport.

The school transport benefit is granted based on the pupil's official home address in the population system. An exception to this is a temporarily placed child on child welfare grounds.

If the pupil attends a local school other than the one assigned by the education provider on the application of the guardian (secondary admission or studying in specialised classes/curricula with a special emphasis, and studying at Turku International School), the guardian is responsible for the costs of transporting or accompanying the pupil to school.

If a pupil residing in another municipality is admitted to basic education in Turku (grades 1–9), the guardian, the pupil's municipality of residence or home municipality is responsible for the costs of transporting and accompanying the pupil to school.

Applications for school transport benefits are made using a separate form: <https://www.turku.fi/en/basic-education/school-transportation>



