TURKU
ÅBO

Pupil admission criteria effective from 24 November 2026

Finnish- and English-language basic education in the City of Turku

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1 General principles of pupil admission

1.1 Legislative basis for pupil admission

The general criteria for pupil admission are based on the Basic Education Act (628/1998) and the Act on Compulsory Education (1214/2020). The municipality is obliged to provide basic education for children of compulsory school age residing within its area. To fulfil this obligation, the municipality must assign each child of compulsory school age a local school where education is provided and which the child is always entitled to attend. The municipality is free to determine the procedure for assigning pupils to schools. However, school places 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 Types of pupil admission

There are three types of pupil admission:

1) Assigning a local school to a child of compulsory school age residing in the City of Turku.
2) Admitting a child of compulsory school age to a school other than their assigned local school on the basis of an application (secondary admission).
3) Admitting a child of compulsory school age to education with a special emphasis or English-language basic education on the basis of an entrance examination.

1.3 Pupil admission areas

The City of Turku is divided into four major areas: Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western. Each major area contains several pupil admission areas. Pupil admission areas can be viewed on the map at: **https://turku.asiointi.fi/IMS/**

A pupil's home address determines their pupil admission area and the area from which they are assigned a local school. Pupils in all grades have the right to attend a school within their own pupil admission area. Under the City of Turku's administrative regulations, the Finnish-language Children and Youth Services Committee decides on pupil admission areas and admission criteria.

1.4 Local school

Pupils are assigned a local school within the pupil admission area determined by their official home address. When assigning a local school, consideration is given not only to a short and safe journey to school but also to the school's facilities, pedagogical arrangements and the sizes and compositions of teaching groups (the so-called principle of appropriateness). It is not always possible to assign the geographically closest school as a pupil's local school.

If pupils need to be distributed between schools, they are assigned to schools in a way that ensures their journeys to school are as safe and short as possible, taking into account the pupil admission area as a whole. The education provider may deviate from the above criteria for a justified reason.

The regional principal makes the decision on assigning a local school. School principals participate in preparing the decision where necessary. The regional principal's decision must state the grounds for the decision. Instructions for appealing the decision in accordance with section 42 of the Basic Education Act are attached to the decision. The school principal is responsible for assigning pupils to the school's different buildings.

1.4.1 Change of home address during basic education

A change of home address may affect a pupil's school place. Pupils may continue attending the school assigned on the basis of their previous home address until the end of the school year if their guardian submits a notification to this effect. A school place decision is recorded for the pupil in accordance with their right to attend the school.

> If a pupil's official home address changes within the same pupil admission area and their journey to school becomes longer, they may be assigned a local school closer to home.
> If a pupil's official home address changes to another pupil admission area, their school place changes.

If a pupil wishes to continue attending the school assigned on the basis of their previous home address beyond the end of the school year, their guardian must apply for a place at that school through secondary admission.

The guardian is responsible for any school transport costs if the school place is based on the guardian's notification or application.

1.4.2 Change of municipality of residence during basic education

A change of municipality of residence may affect a pupil's school place. If a pupil changes their municipality of residence during basic education, they may continue attending a City of Turku comprehensive school until the end of the current term. The guardian is responsible for transport costs.

A school place decision is recorded for the pupil in accordance with their right to attend the school.

- Autumn term: 1 August–31 December
- Spring term: 1 January–31 July

If a pupil wishes to continue attending the school assigned on the basis of their previous home address beyond the end of the current term, an application for a school place must be submitted.

The application must be submitted using the application form for pupils residing in other municipalities, which is available on the Turku basic education website. An application for a pupil residing in another municipality may only be submitted to one school in Turku at a time.

Pupils residing in other municipalities may be admitted to schools in Turku if places are available. However, priority is given to pupils residing in Turku. When processing applications from pupils residing in other municipalities, the maximum teaching group size is 23 pupils in grades 1–9.

1.5 Taking pupil numbers into account in admissions

Maximum number of pupils per class when admitting pupils to schools:

Maximum class sizes for secondary admission:
- 23 pupils in grades 1–9

Maximum class sizes for education with a special emphasis:
- 25 pupils in grades 1–9

The above maximum class sizes also apply to multi-grade classes.

1.6 Applying for a place at a school other than the assigned local school

The education provider assigns each pupil a local school place. Guardians may also apply for a place for their child at a school other than the assigned local school through secondary admission. The school applied for may be located within the pupil's own admission area or another admission area. A place obtained through secondary admission is therefore not determined by the pupil's home address but is granted on the basis of an application, provided that places are available at the school.

Applications for secondary admission are processed in accordance with the pupil admission criteria. Applications for secondary admission submitted during the school year are processed at regular intervals. The processing schedules are published on the city's website. Places obtained through secondary admission are generally granted so that pupils begin attending their new school at the start of the following term. Pupils are admitted in the following order:

Pupils residing within the pupil admission area.
By distance to school, from shortest to longest.
Pupils residing in other municipalities.

In primary schools (grades 1–6), admission decisions are made until the end of grade 6; in lower secondary schools (grades 7–9), until the end of grade 9; and in comprehensive schools, for either grades 1–6 or grades 7–9. Pupils attending a school other than their assigned local school are not entitled to school transport benefits. The sibling basis is not taken into account when assigning places through secondary admission, even if the school is located within the pupil's own admission area.

2 Pupil admission at the start of compulsory education

2.1. Start of compulsory education

A child's compulsory education begins in the year in which they turn seven. Each year, the City of Turku notifies children of compulsory school age who are due to start grade 1 and their guardians of the start of school by means of a compulsory education notification. The notification is submitted to the city's administrative system, which guardians access using Suomi.fi e-Identification.

2.1.1. Early start of compulsory education

A decision on an early start to compulsory education is made in early childhood education and care before compulsory education begins. An early start to compulsory education applies to pupils with severe disabilities. For pupils starting compulsory education early, the year of pre-primary education forms part of compulsory education and is provided at a day-care centre. The decision on an early start to compulsory education is made by the Special Services Manager for Early Childhood Education and Care on the basis of expert statements.

2.1.2. Starting school later than the statutory age

Starting school later than the statutory age is only possible in exceptional circumstances. The decision is always based on an individual assessment. Permission for a later start must be requested when compulsory education begins. An expert statement must be submitted in support of the application. The regional principal makes the decision.

2.2. Stages of pupil admission

Admission to grade 1 takes place in stages. The guardian completes the different stages of pupil admission through the administrative system used by Turku basic education.

In the first stage, the guardian of a child starting school must:

- check the information about the child and guardian and complete any missing information
- specify which religion or ethics subject the child will study and the child's mother tongue.

In addition, the guardian may:

- indicate whether the sibling basis should be taken into account in pupil admission
- apply for a place for their child in education with a special emphasis
- apply for a place for their child at Turku International School
- enrol their child in an A1 language other than English
- indicate that they are applying for a place for their child at a school run by another education provider
- apply to postpone their child's start of school by one year beyond the statutory age.

In the next stage, the guardian of a child starting school:

- is informed of the local school place assigned to their child
- is informed of any school place granted to their child in education with a special emphasis
- may apply for a place for their child at a school other than the assigned local school (secondary admission).

In addition, the guardian may:

- apply for supplementary instruction in their child's own mother tongue
- apply for a place for their child in morning and afternoon activities for schoolchildren.

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

Assigning a local school to a pupil constitutes primary pupil admission (section 6(2) of the Basic Education Act). The criteria for assigning a local school are described in more detail in section 1.4. Equal selection criteria must be applied when admitting pupils. If there are more applicants than the school has places available, the selection criteria are applied in the following order:

1. Pupils residing within the pupil admission area.
2. Sibling basis: the pupil has a sibling living at the same address who attends the school in grades 1–5.
3. Distance to school.

In primary schools (grades 1–6), admission decisions are made until the end of grade 6; in lower 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 assigning pupils to schools within their respective areas. School principals subsequently decide how education is arranged in the different school buildings.

2.3.1. Sibling basis

Guardians may request that the sibling basis be taken into account during the first stage of pupil admission. The sibling basis is only taken into account if the siblings have the same official home address. When the sibling basis is applied, the pupil is assigned a place at the school as an administrative entity, rather than at a specific unit or building.

The sibling basis only applies if the sibling is attending grades 1–5 at the school at the time of registration. The sibling basis does not apply if the sibling has been admitted to education with a special emphasis, a school other than their assigned local school, preparatory education or a special education class.

2.3.2. A-language

As a rule, English is the common A1 language for all pupils in Finnish-language basic education in Turku.
Other A1 languages may also be offered in basic education. In such cases, the initial size of the local classes is at least 16 pupils. Turku basic education also offers language classes in which the amount of language instruction corresponds to the A1 language syllabus. If a pupil's A1 language is not English, they must study English as their A2 language.

Pupils continue studying their chosen A-language (A1 or A2) in grade 7. They are assigned a school place at a school where they can continue studying their A-language. The school principal decides how A-language instruction is arranged.

The guardian is responsible for any school transport costs associated with studying an A1 language other than English.

3 Education with a special emphasis

3.1. Application for education with a special emphasis

Finnish-language basic education in Turku offers education with a special emphasis on languages, mathematics, music, visual arts and physical education. The Finnish-language Children and Youth Services Committee decides on the provision of education with a special emphasis and the application procedure. In Turku, applications for all classes offering education with a special emphasis and specialised classes are made through a testing procedure. Pupils from all pupil admission areas and other municipalities may apply for education with a special emphasis. Pupils who have accepted a place in education with a special emphasis in grades 1–6 or 7–9 may not apply for another form of education with a special emphasis during primary or lower secondary school, respectively. The guardian is responsible for any school transport costs.

Guardians are informed of the annual application procedure through the city and school websites and the administrative system.

Pupils are admitted to education with a special emphasis according to the following criteria:

- The maximum class size for education with a special emphasis is 25 pupils in grades 1–9.
- Education with a special emphasis starting in grade 1: priority is given to applicants residing in Turku, ranked by test score.
- Education with a special emphasis starting in grade 3: priority is given to applicants residing in Turku, ranked by test score.
- Education with a special emphasis starting in grade 7: all applicants are ranked by test score.

Education with a special emphasis can only be introduced if at least 16 pupils can be admitted. Admission requires a passing score in the entrance examination. If the number of applicants who pass the entrance examination exceeds the number of available places, a waiting list procedure is applied. Waiting list positions remain valid until the start of the following school year. A pupil moving to Turku who has previously attended education with a special emphasis may be admitted directly to equivalent education with a special emphasis if places are available.

The school principal decides how education with a special emphasis is organised pedagogically at their school. Education may be organised in class-based or programme-based formats.

- **Class-based education**: Pupils selected for education with a special emphasis form a separate class.
- **Programme-based education:** Pupils selected for education with a special emphasis are placed in mainstream education classes and participate in education with a special emphasis in certain subjects or periods.

3.2. Schools offering education with a special emphasis and other A1 languages

Starting in grade 1	Eastern	Southern	Western	Northern
English (grades 1–6)		Wäinö-Aaltonen (grades 1–6)		
English (grades 1–9)			Puolala (grades 1–9)	
Swedish (grades 1–9)			Luostarivuori (grades 1–9)	
French (grades 1–9)		Vähä-Heikkilä (grades 1–6), continuing in grades 7–9	Topelius (grades 7–9),	
German (grades 1–9)			Puolala (grades 1–9)	
Spanish as an A1 language (grades 1–9)	Hannunniittu (grades 1–6) Nummenpakka (grades 7–9)			

Starting in grade 3	Eastern	Southern	Western	Northern
Music (grades 3–9)			Puolala (grades 3–9)	
Visual arts (grades 3–9)			Luostarivuori (grades 3–9)	
Mathematics (grades 3–9)				Raunistula (grades 3–6) Rieskalähde (grades 7–9)

Starting in grade 7	Eastern	Southern	Western	Northern
Physical education (grades 7–9)		Vasaramäki (grades 7–9) Puropelto (grades 7–9)	Luostarivuori (grades 7–9)	Rieskalähde (grades 7–9)

4 English-language basic education

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

Admission to Turku International School is comparable to admission to education with a special emphasis. Admission requires passing an entrance examination. Each grade has its own entrance examination. The primary purpose of the entrance examination is to ensure that applicants have sufficient language proficiency to learn and function in the language of instruction.

For grades 1–6, there are two different entrance examinations: one for admission at the beginning of the school year and another for pupils applying after the midpoint of the school year. Applicants must achieve a passing score in each section of the examination, and scores in different sections cannot fully compensate for one another. If there are more applicants than available places, pupils are admitted in order of test scores. Applicants who pass the entrance examination but cannot be offered a place may remain on a waiting list until a place becomes available. School places are not reserved and cannot be promised to applicants in advance.

Applicants who fail the entrance examination may not apply again until the following school year. An exception may be made for applicants to grade 1, who may be considered for retesting in August if places are available. Retesting may only be permitted for a justified reason and following individual consideration. Decisions on retesting are made by the TIS Admission Test working group.

Entrance examinations are held in person. Remote testing may only be arranged in justified cases where it is absolutely necessary in the pupil's best interests (for example, where a family's relocation for a work assignment depends on the child securing a place at Turku International School). However, an admission decision will only be made once the applicant has an official home address in Finland.

If a pupil is admitted to Turku International School, the guardian is responsible for any school transport costs.

5 Schools run by other education providers

Turku Teacher Training School

Turku Teacher Training School is assigned as a local school in the same way as schools run by the city. Turku basic education and Turku Teacher Training School have a mutual agreement on this arrangement. For legal purposes, Turku Teacher Training School is treated as a private school.

Turku Steiner School

Guardians residing in Turku may enrol their child at Turku Steiner School during the first stage of pupil admission and submit a separate application online. Pupils are admitted in accordance with the school's own admission criteria.

6 Admission to special education classes

Admission to special education classes takes place through a separate process, and only pupils residing in Turku are admitted.

In addition to a decision on pupil-specific support measures, a separate decision on school placement is made for pupils who require such measures. Pupils are primarily assigned a place at their own local school. Another school may also be assigned as the pupil's local school if it can provide sufficient support for the pupil's learning and school attendance.

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. The pupil and their guardian must always be heard before a decision is made.

A decision on an early start to compulsory education is made in early childhood education and care before compulsory education begins. An early start to compulsory education applies to pupils with severe disabilities. For pupils starting compulsory education early, the year of pre-primary education forms part of compulsory education and is provided at a day-care centre. The decision on an early start to compulsory education is made by the Special Services Manager for Early Childhood Education and Care on the basis of pedagogical documents and medical and/or psychological statements.

If a pupil requiring support is assigned to a school other than their own local school because of the support services provided by another school, their school transport costs will be reimbursed if the school transport criteria are met for the new school. In addition to pupils receiving pupil-specific support measures, this also applies to recently arrived foreign-language pupils attending preparatory education for basic education, pupils in flexible basic education (JOPO) and pupils attending transition classes at a hospital school.

7 Admission to preparatory education

Preparatory education for basic education (VALO) is intended for children and young people of basic education age with an immigrant background who were born outside Finland and whose language proficiency is not yet sufficient for studying in basic education.

For the purposes of preparatory education for basic education, the entire city constitutes a single pupil admission area. Pupils from municipalities with an agreement on the provision of education may also be admitted to preparatory education if places are available in the groups. Preparatory education is provided in groups at designated schools.

When assigning a school place, consideration is given to the location of the group, the pupil's age and readiness. For pupils in grade 1, preparatory education is provided inclusively within a basic education group at the pupil's local school, which is determined by their home address. The sibling basis does not apply to admission to preparatory education. Under the City of Turku's administrative regulations, decisions on the provision of preparatory education are made by the Special Services Manager for Children and Youth Services.

When a pupil transfers from preparatory education for basic education to basic education, they are assigned a local school based on their home address. Guardians may also apply for a place for their child at a school other than the assigned local school, such as the school where the child attended preparatory education.

If, after preparatory education, the education provider assigns a pupil to a local school other than the one determined by their home address, a school transport benefit may be granted at its discretion for a bus journey to school of at least 3 kilometres.

