

2.4 Issues subject to local decisions

Discussions on values lay a foundation for both preparing the curriculum and engaging in a shared educational vision and implementation together. The manner in which the values are discussed when drafting the curriculum and at other times as a regular part of school work is subject to local decisions. These decisions also determine how preconditions will be created for the participation of staff, pupils and guardians and any other partners in the discussions.

The education provider makes decisions on and describes the following aspects in the curriculum:

- what are the local perspectives or emphases that may complement the underlying values and conception of learning of basic education and how are they manifested (in other respects, the text of the core curriculum may be used as such to describe the underlying values and the conception of learning)
- how is the implementation of the underlying values and conception of learning monitored and evaluated.

Any complementing school-specific details will be set out in the school-specific curriculum and/or annual plan as decided by the education provider.

CHAPTER 3 MISSION AND GENERAL GOALS OF BASIC EDUCATION

3.1 Mission of basic education

Basic education is the cornerstone of the education system and also part of a continuum that starts with pre-primary education. Basic education offers the pupils an opportunity to build an extensive foundation of general knowledge and ability and to complete their compulsory education. It imparts capabilities and eligibility for upper secondary education and training. It helps the pupils to identify their personal strengths and to build their future by learning.

The mission of basic education may be examined from the perspective of its educational task, social task, cultural task or future-related task. The development of basic education is guided by the inclusion principle. The accessibility of education must be ensured. Each school providing basic education has an educational task. This means supporting the pupils' learning, development and well-being in cooperation with the homes. Basic education offers the pupils possibilities for versatile development of their competence. It reinforces the pupils' positive identity as human beings, learners and community members. Education promotes participation, a sustainable way of living and growth as a member of a democratic society. Basic education educates the pupils to know, respect and defend human rights.

The social task of basic education is to promote equity, equality and justice. Basic education builds up human and social capital. Human capital consists of competence, whereas social capital comprises contacts, interaction and trust between people. Jointly they promote individual and social well-being and development. The mission of basic education is to prevent inequality and exclusion and to promote gender equality. Basic education encourages girls and boys to study different subjects equally and promotes information and understanding of the diversity of gender. Each pupil is supported in recognizing their personal potential and selecting learning paths without role models determined by gender.

The cultural task of basic education is to promote versatile cultural competence and appreciation of the cultural heritage, and to support pupils in building their own cultural identity and cultural capital. It promotes understanding of cultural diversity and helps the pupils to perceive cultures as a progression of the past, the present and the future where everyone can have agency.

Changes in the world outside the school unavoidably affect the pupils' development and well-being as well as the operation of the school. In basic education, the pupils learn to encounter pressures for change openly, to assess them critically and to assume responsibility for making choices that build our future. Global education as part of basic education contributes to creating preconditions for fair and sustainable development in line with UN development goals. As far as possible, schools work together with schools and education actors in other countries. Basic education exerts influence as a driver for positive change that contributes to society, both at the national and the international level.

3.2 National goals of education

The national goals of education are laid down in the Basic Education Act and, in greater detail, in the Government Decree²⁸. These goals steer the preparation of all aspects of the National Core Curriculum. They also steer the preparation of the local curriculum and are implemented in school work.

Growth as a human being and membership in society

Section 2 of the Government Decree underlines the educational task of the school. Supporting the pupils' growth as human beings and into ethically responsible members of society is a central goal. Education must also support the pupils' growth into balanced adults with a healthy self-esteem. Pursuant to the Decree, education promotes knowledge and understanding of cultures and ideological, philosophical and religious traditions, including Christian ones, and the heritage of Western humanism. In addition to respecting life, other people and nature, the Decree highlights the inviolability of human dignity, respect for human rights and the democratic values of Finnish society, including equity and equality. General knowledge and ability is also seen to include cooperation and responsibility, promotion of health and well-being, learning good habits and manners, and promotion of sustainable development.

Requisite knowledge and skills

Pursuant to Section 3 of the Government Decree, a key goal of education is laying a foundation on which the pupils can build extensive general knowledge and abilities and broaden their worldview. For this, both knowledge and skills in different fields of knowledge and cross-cutting competence that links the fields of knowledge are required. The significance of skills is highlighted. The Decree notes that the knowledge that is taught must be based on scientific information. It also contains provisions on the organisation and objectives of instruction provided in a language other than the pupil's mother tongue, and instruction based on a special worldview or a pedagogical system.

Promotion of knowledge and ability, equality and lifelong learning

²⁸ Section 2 of the Basic Education Act and Sections 2-4 of the Government Decree (422/2012)

Section 4 of the Government Decree contains goals and principles that direct the organisation of education and pupil welfare. All activities must reinforce educational equity and equality and improve the pupils' learning-to-learn skills and capabilities for lifelong learning. The Decree stresses the utilisation of interactive learning environments and learning outside the school as instructional resources. It also underlines the significance of a school culture that promotes growth and learning as well as effective pupil welfare.

The goals laid down in the Government Decree point the way to examining education as a whole that imparts general knowledge and abilities needed here and now and lays a foundation for lifelong learning. In addition to competence in individual fields of knowledge, competence that crosses the boundaries of individual subjects should be striven for. On this basis, the core curriculum defines the objectives and contents both for core subjects and for transversal competences as well as multidisciplinary learning modules. In order to meet these goals, systematic cooperation and evaluation of target achievement is needed.

3.3 Aiming for transversal competence

Transversal competence refers to an entity consisting of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will. Competence also means an ability to apply knowledge and skills in a given situation. The manner in which the pupils will use their knowledge and skills is influenced by the values and attitudes they have adopted and their willingness to take action. The increased need for transversal competence arises from changes in the surrounding world. Competences that cross the boundaries of and link different fields of knowledge and skills are a precondition for personal growth, studying, work and civic activity now and in the future.

Values, the conception of learning and the school culture lay the foundation for the development of competence. Each subject builds the pupil's competence through the contents and methods typical of its field of knowledge. Competence development is influenced not only by the contents on which the pupils work but also, and especially, by how they work and how the interaction between the learner and the environment functions. Feedback given to the pupils as well as guidance and support for learning influence attitudes, motivation and willingness to act.

The following sections describe seven transversal competence areas and justify their significance. These areas are frequently interconnected. Their joint objective is, in line with the mission of basic education and taking the pupils' age into account, to support growth as a human being and to impart competences required for membership in a democratic society and a sustainable way of living. It is particularly vital to encourage the pupils to recognise their uniqueness and their personal strengths and development potential, and to appreciate themselves.

The objectives of transversal competence are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 13, 14 and 15 by grade unit. These competences have been taken into account in the definition of the objectives and key content areas of the subjects. The subject descriptions point out the links between the objectives of the subjects and the transversal competences.

Thinking and learning to learn (T1)

Thinking and learning skills underlie the development of other competences and lifelong learning. The way in which the pupils see themselves as learners and interact with their environment influences their thinking and learning. The way in which they learn to make observations and to seek, evaluate, edit, produce and share information and ideas is also essential. The pupils are guided to realise that information may be constructed in many ways, for example by conscious reasoning or intuitively based on personal experience. An exploratory and creative working approach, doing things together and possibilities for focusing and concentration promote the development of thinking and learning to learn.

It is crucial that the teachers encourage their pupils to trust themselves and their views while being open to new solutions. Encouragement is also needed for facing unclear and conflicting information. The pupils are guided to consider things from different viewpoints, to seek new information and to use it as a basis for reviewing the way they think. Space is given for their questions, and they are encouraged to look for answers and to listen to the views of others while also reflecting on their personal inner knowledge. They are inspired to formulate new information and views. As members of the learning community formed by the school, the pupils receive support and encouragement for their ideas and initiatives, allowing their agency to be strengthened.

The pupils are guided to use information independently and in interaction with others for problem-solving, argumentation, reasoning, drawing of conclusions and invention. The pupils must have opportunities to analyse the topic being discussed critically from different viewpoints. A precondition for finding innovative answers is that the pupils learn to see alternatives and combine perspectives open-mindedly and are able to think outside the box. Playing, gameful learning and physical activities, experimental approaches and other functional working approaches and various art forms promote the joy of learning and reinforce capabilities for creative thinking and perception. Capabilities for systematic and ethical thinking develop gradually as the pupils learn to perceive the interactive relationships and interconnections between things and to understand complex issues.

Each pupil is assisted in recognising their personal way of learning and in developing their learning strategies. The learning-to-learn skills are improved as the pupils are guided to set goals, plan their work, assess their progress and, in an age-appropriate manner, use technological and other tools in learning. During their years in basic education, the pupils are supported in laying a good foundation of knowledge and skills and developing an enduring motivation for further studies and life-long learning.

Cultural competence, interaction and self-expression (T2)

The pupils are growing up in a world where cultural, linguistic, religious and philosophical diversity is part of life. Preconditions for a culturally sustainable way of living and acting in a diverse environment are possessing cultural competence based on respect for human rights, skills in appreciative interaction and means for expressing oneself and one's views.

Pupils in basic education are guided in recognising and appreciating cultural meanings in their environment and building a personal cultural identity and a positive relationship with the

environment. The pupils learn to know and appreciate their living environment and its cultural heritage as well as their personal social, cultural, religious, philosophical and linguistic roots. They are encouraged to consider the significance of their own background and their place in the chain of generations. The pupils are guided to consider cultural diversity a fundamentally positive resource. They are also supported to recognise how cultures, religions and philosophies exert influence in society and daily life and how the media shapes the culture, and also to consider what is unacceptable as a violation of human rights. In cooperation within the school community and outside it, the pupils learn to discern cultural specificities and to act flexibly in different environments. They are educated to encounter other people respectfully and to have good manners. The pupils are given opportunities for experiencing and interpreting art, culture and cultural heritage. They also learn to communicate, modify and create culture and traditions and to understand their significance for well-being.

Plenty of opportunities for the pupils to practice expressing their opinions constructively and acting ethically are embedded in school work. The pupils are guided in putting themselves in the place of another person and examining issues and situations from different viewpoints. School work systematically promotes the recognition and appreciation of human rights and, in particular, the rights of the child, and actions indicated by these rights. Respectful and trusting attitudes towards other groups of people and peoples are reinforced in all activities, also by means of international cooperation.

In the school community, the pupils experience the significance of interaction for their personal development. They develop their social skills and learn to express themselves in different ways and present and perform publicly in various situations. Education supports the pupils' development as versatile and skilful users of language, both in their mother tongue and in other languages. They are encouraged to use even limited language skills to interact and express themselves. It is equally important to learn to use mathematical symbols, images and other visual expression, drama and music, and movement as means of interaction and expression. School work also offers versatile possibilities for developing manual skills. The pupils are guided to appreciate and use their bodies to express emotions, views, thoughts and ideas. School work encourages the use of imagination and creativity. The pupils are guided to act in a manner that promotes aesthetic values in their environment and to enjoy their various manifestations.

Taking care of oneself and managing daily life (T3)

Managing daily life requires an increasingly wide range of skills. This area covers health, safety and human relationships, mobility and transport, acting in the increasingly technological daily life, and managing personal finance and consumption, all of which are elements of a sustainable way of living. Basic education encourages the pupils to think positively about their future.

The school community guides the pupils to understand that everyone influences both their own and other people's well-being, health and safety. The pupils are encouraged to take care of themselves and others, to practise skills that are important for managing their daily lives and to work for the well-being of their environment. During their years in basic education, the pupils learn to know and understand the significance of factors that promote or undermine well-being and health and the significance of safety, and to find information related to these areas. They are given opportunities to assume

responsibility for their own and shared work and actions, and to develop their emotional and social skills. The pupils grow to appreciate the importance of human relationships and caring for others. They also learn time management, which is an important part of daily life management and self-regulation. The pupils are given opportunities to practise looking after their own safety and that of others in various situations, also in traffic. They are guided to anticipate dangerous situations and to act appropriately in them. They are taught to recognise key symbols related to safety, to protect their privacy and to set personal boundaries.

The pupils need basic information about technology and its advancement and its impacts on various areas of life and their environment. They also need advice in sensible technological choices. In instruction, the versatility of technology is examined, and the pupils are guided to understand its operating principles and cost formation. The pupils are also guided in using technology responsibly and invited to consider ethical questions related to it.

The pupils are guided and supported in developing their consumer skills and capabilities for managing and planning personal finance. They receive guidance in acting as consumers, examining advertising critically, knowing their own rights and responsibilities and using them ethically. Moderation, sharing and being economical are encouraged. In basic education, pupils have opportunities to practise making choices and acting in a sustainable way.

Multiliteracy (T4)

Multiliteracy is the competence to interpret, produce and make a value judgement across a variety of different texts, which will help the pupils to understand diverse modes of cultural communication and to build their personal identity. Multiliteracy is based on a broad definition of text. In this context, text refers to knowledge presented by systems of verbal, visual, auditive, numeric and kinaesthetic symbols and their combinations. For example, text may be interpreted and produced in a written, spoken, printed, audiovisual or digital form.

The pupils need multiliteracy in order to interpret the world around them and to perceive its cultural diversity. Multiliteracy means abilities to obtain, combine, modify, produce, present and evaluate information in different modes, in different contexts and situations, and by using various tools.

Multiliteracy supports the development of critical thinking and learning skills. While developing it, the pupils also discuss and reflect ethical and aesthetic questions. Multiliteracy involves many different literacies that are developed in all teaching and learning. The pupils must have opportunities to practise their skills both in traditional learning environments and in digital environments that exploit technology and media in different ways.

The pupils' multiliteracy is developed in all school subjects, progressing from everyday language to mastering the language and presentational modes of different ways of knowing. A precondition for developing this competence is a rich textual environment, pedagogy that draws upon it, and cooperation in teaching and with other actors. The instruction offers opportunities for enjoying different types of text. In learning situations, the pupils use, interpret and produce different types of texts both alone and together. Texts with diverse modes of presentation are used as learning materials, and the pupils are supported in understanding their cultural contexts. The pupils examine

authentic texts that are meaningful to them and interpretations of the world that arise from these texts. This allows the pupils to rely on their strengths and utilise contents that engage them in learning, and also draw on them for participation and involvement.

ICT Competence (T5)

Competence in information and communication technology (ICT) is an important civic skill both in itself and as part of multiliteracy. It is an object and a tool of learning. Basic education ensures that all pupils have possibilities for developing their ICT competence. ICT is methodically exploited in all grades of basic education, in different subjects and multidisciplinary learning modules, and in other school work.

The pupils develop their ICT competence in four main areas: 1) They are guided in understanding the principle of using ICT and its operating principles and key concepts, and supported to develop their practical ICT competence in producing their own work. 2) The pupils are guided in using ICT responsibly, safely and ergonomically. 3) The pupils are guided in using information and communication technology in information management and in exploratory and creative work. 4) The pupils gather experience of and practise using ICT in interaction and networking. In all these four areas, it is important that the pupils themselves are active and that they are offered opportunities for creativity and for finding working approaches and learning paths that are suitable for them. The joy of doing things together and making discoveries, which influences learning motivation, is also vital. ICT provides tools for making one's own thoughts and ideas visible in many different ways, and it thus also develops thinking and learning-to-learn skills.

The pupils are supported in familiarising themselves with various ICT applications and uses and in observing their significance in their daily life, in interpersonal interaction and as a channel of influence. The pupils together with the teacher consider why ICT is needed in studying, work and society and how these skills have become a part of general working life competence. They learn to assess the impact of ICT from the perspective of sustainable development and to be responsible consumers. During their years in basic education, the pupils also gather experiences of using ICT in international communication. They learn to perceive its significance, potential and risks in a global world.

Working life competence and entrepreneurship (T6)

Working life, occupations and the nature of work are changing as a consequence of such drivers as technological advancement and globalisation of the economy. Anticipating the requirements of work is more difficult than before. Basic education must impart general capabilities that promote interest in and a positive attitude towards work and working life. It is important for the pupils to obtain experiences that help them to understand the importance of work and enterprising, the potential of entrepreneurship and their personal responsibility as members of their community and society. School work is organised to allow the pupils to accumulate knowledge of working life, learn entrepreneurial operating methods and understand the significance of competence acquired in school and in leisure time for their future careers.

The pupils are familiarised with the special features of businesses and industries and key sectors in their local area. While in basic education, the pupils are introduced to working life, and they gather experiences of working and collaborating with actors outside the school. On these occasions, the pupils practise appropriate conduct required in working life and collaboration skills and understand the importance of language and interaction skills. The pupils also get acquainted with skills in employing oneself, entrepreneurship, risk assessment and controlled risk-taking through various projects. The pupils learn team work, project work and networking.

The pupils must have opportunities to practise working independently and together with others and acting systematically and over a longer time span. In shared tasks, each pupil can perceive his or her own work as part of the whole. They also learn about reciprocity and striving for a common goal. In functional learning situations, the pupils may learn to plan work processes, make hypotheses, try out different options and draw conclusions. They practise estimating the time required for a task and other preconditions of work, and finding new solutions as circumstances change. At the same time, they also have opportunities for learning to anticipate any difficulties that they may encounter in the work and to also face failure and disappointments. The pupils are encouraged to show tenacity in bringing their work to conclusion and to appreciate work and its results.

The pupils are encouraged to grasp new opportunities with an open mind and to act flexibly and creatively when faced with change. They are guided to take initiative and to look for various options. The pupils are supported in identifying their vocational interests and making reasoned choices regarding further studies from their own starting points, conscious of the impacts of traditional gender roles and other role models.

Participation, involvement and building a sustainable future (T7)

Participating in civic activity is a basic precondition for an effective democracy. Skills in participation and involvement as well as a responsible attitude towards the future may only be learned by practising. The school environment offers a safe setting for this, while basic education also lays a foundation of competence for the pupils' growth into active citizens who use their democratic rights and freedoms responsibly. The mission of the school is to reinforce the participation of each pupil.

Basic education creates the bases for the pupils' interest in the school community and society. The school respects their right to participate in decision-making as indicated by their age and level of development. The pupils take part in planning, implementing, assessing and evaluating their own learning, joint school work and the learning environment. They gather knowledge and experiences of the systems and methods for participation and involvement in civic society and communal work outside the school. The pupils understand the significance of protecting the environment through their personal relationship with nature. They learn to assess the impacts of media and to exploit the potential it offers. By experience, the pupils learn about involvement, decision-making and responsibility. They also learn to understand the significance of rules, agreements and trust. Through participation both at school and outside it, the pupils learn to express their views constructively. They learn to work together and are offered opportunities to practise negotiation skills, arbitration and conflict resolution as well as critical examination of issues. The pupils are encouraged to consider

proposals from the perspectives of equality of the different parties, fair treatment and a sustainable way of living.

During their years in basic education, the pupils consider the links between the past, the present and the future and reflect on various alternative futures. They are guided to understand the significance of their choices, way of living and actions not only to themselves but also to their local environment, society and nature. The pupils develop capabilities for evaluating both their own and their community's and society's operating methods and structures and for changing them so that they contribute to a sustainable future.

3.4 Issues subject to local decisions

When preparing a local curriculum, the actors should discuss what the mission of basic education and the national goals of education specified in the Government Decree mean locally. They should also consider the requirements that the national goals and objectives place on the provision and leadership of education at the local level.

The education provider makes decisions on and describes the following aspects in the curriculum:

- what are the perspectives that may complement the mission of basic education and that are manifest in its practical implementation (in other respects, the text of the core curriculum may be used as such to describe the mission; the mission may also be expressed in more concrete terms and implemented through plans complementing the curriculum, including for instance a sustainable development programme or a cultural education programme, in which case a reference to these programmes must be made in the curriculum)
- what are the potential local emphases of the transversal competence areas defined in the core curriculum, and how are these emphases manifested in practice (in other respects, the text of the core curriculum may be used as such to describe the transversal competence)
- what are the arrangements and measures by which the achievement of transversal competence objectives in education is ensured and monitored (the more detailed objectives of transversal competence are defined by grade unit, see Chapters 13-15).

CHAPTER 4 OPERATING CULTURE OF COMPREHENSIVE BASIC EDUCATION

4.1 Significance of school culture and its development

Basic education is being developed as a coherent curricular and pedagogical whole. Pursuant to the Government Decree, basic education is structured around units consisting of grades 1–2, 3–6 and 7–9. The grades add up to a continuum of coherent instruction and consistent education. Cooperation with pre-primary education supports the long-term goals of the work. Cooperation and coherence of instruction are ensured by the education provider, even if pre-primary and basic education, or various grades of basic education, were operated in different administrative units or located in different facilities. As far as possible, this cooperation also extends to educational institutions of the following stage of education and training.