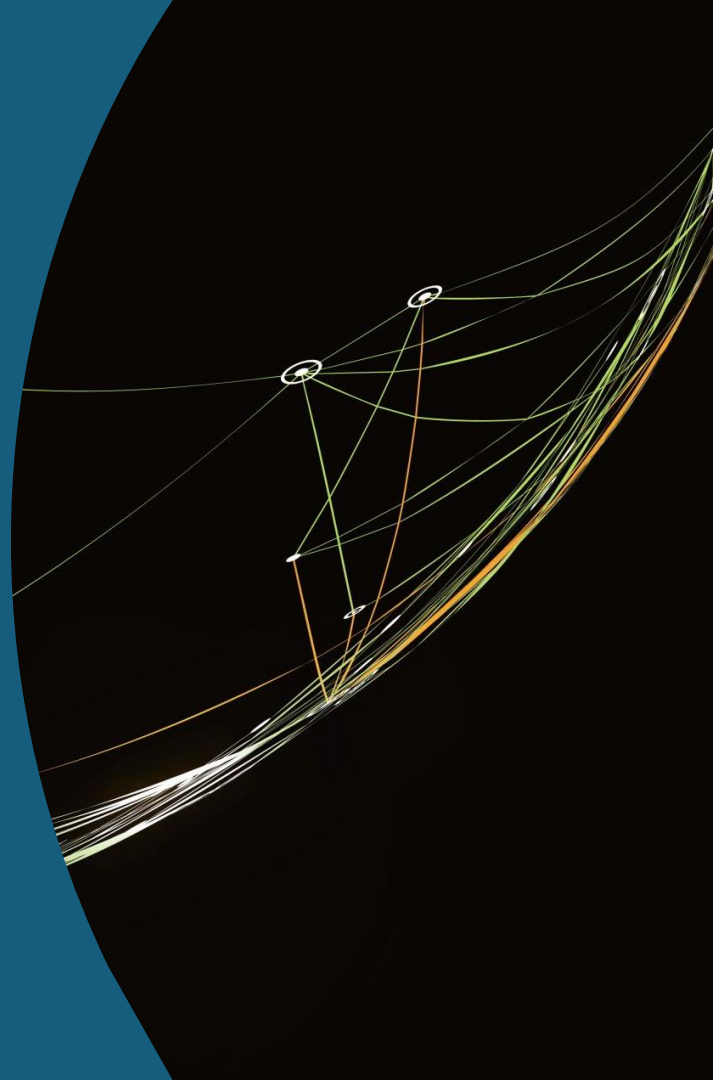


Operation SKY

Engaging school community work

Johanna Sergejeff,
Valteri

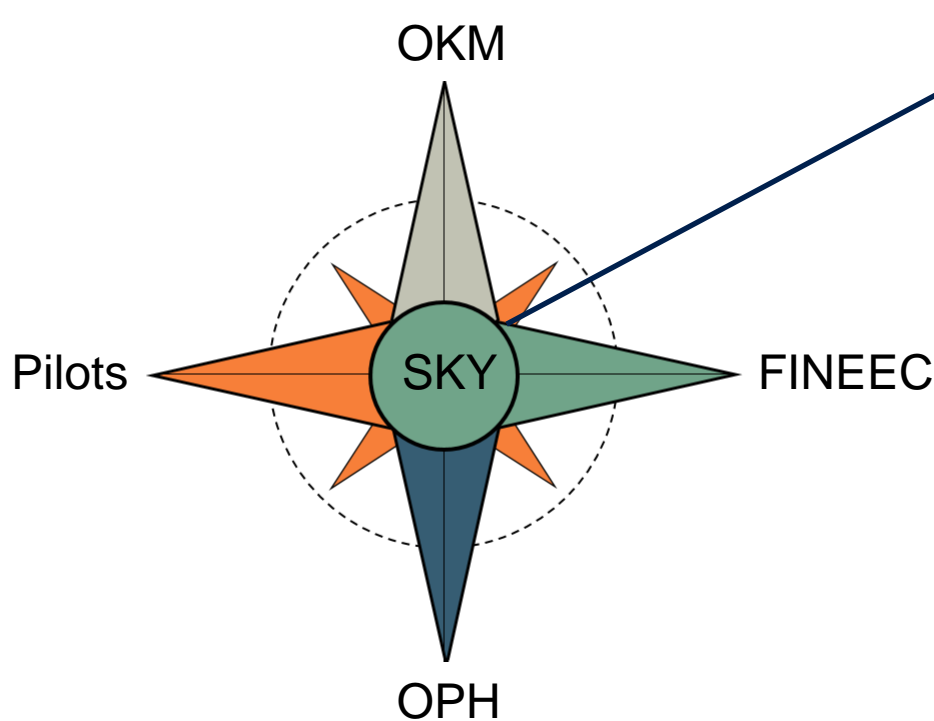


School attendance problems in Finnish basic education

- The Finnish National Agency for Education has published a survey about the current situation in municipalities struggling with SAP
- According to the survey there is a multitude of different local models to tackle SAP in the **absence of national guidelines**. Absences are often addressed too late and the models have not sufficiently taken into account **preventive measures and early intervention**. National **monitoring** of absences is currently lacking.
- The number of learners whose absenteeism clearly affects their learning is estimated to be over 4,000 in lower-secondary schools in Finland; approximately 2–3% of learners
- The COVID-19 pandemic has also contributed into absenteeism
- The national SKY-model which is created as a result of the development work aimed to improve these aspects.



Engaging school community work (SKY) 2021 - 2023



The goal of the program: to produce a national frame for promoting school attendance and for tackling absenteeism.

To develop practices to harmonize the monitoring and gathering the data about school attendance and absenteeism.

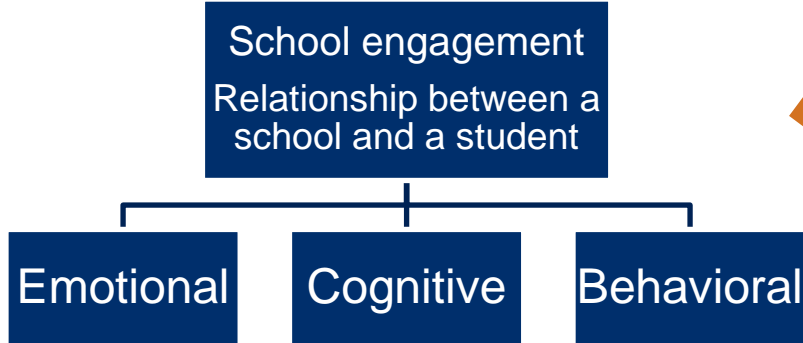
SKY was about working together

- Changes in legislation were made by the **Ministry of Education and Culture**
- **Finnish Education Evaluation Centre, FINEEC's** developmental assessment work supported national development
- Core curriculum updates were done by the **Finnish National Agency for Education**, who is also in charge of dissemination

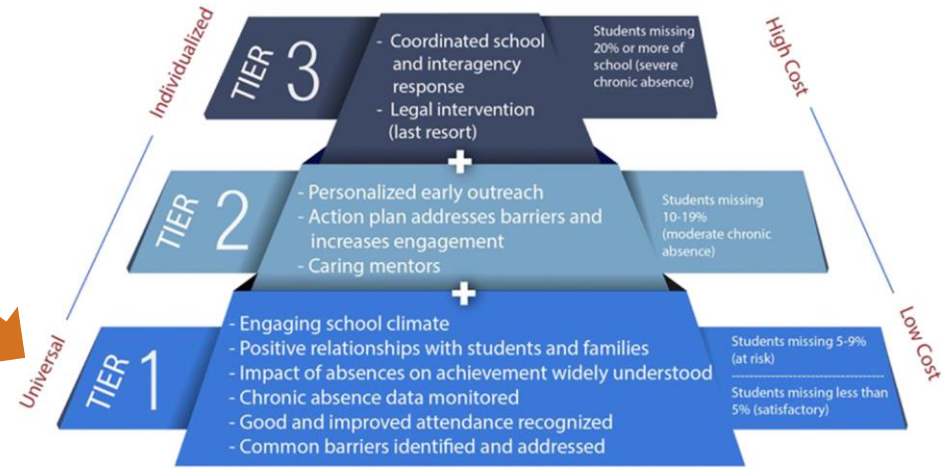


- The national model was prepared on the basis of local pilots.

Theoretical framework

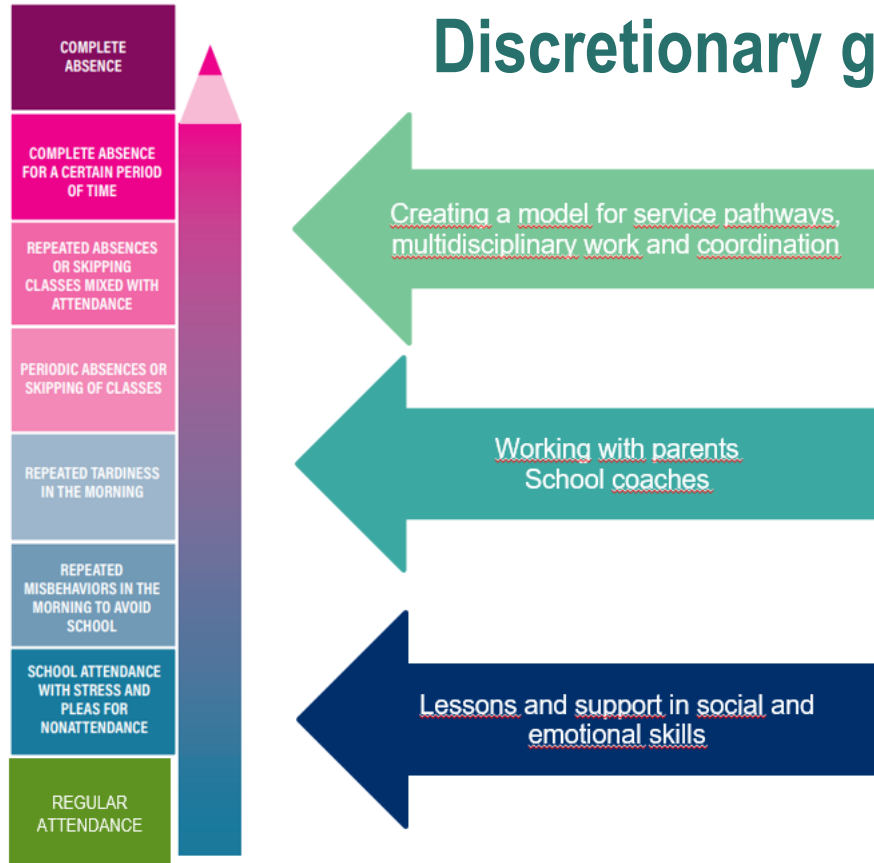


Appleton et al. 2006; Fredricks et al. 2004



A Change in the Frame: From Absenteeism to Attendance
Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, James Taylor, Corinne Renguette
Front. Educ., 21 January 2020
| <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2019.00161>

Discretionary government transfers



- 12,4 million €
- Coordination
- Time resource that is not used in teaching
- Time resource that can be used for teaching social and emotional skills

Piloting

24 pilots

- 126 education providers (121 municipalities)

549 schools

- 268 schools with grades 1 - 6
- 94 schools with grades 7 - 9
- 187 schools with grades 1 - 9

Development work was done by

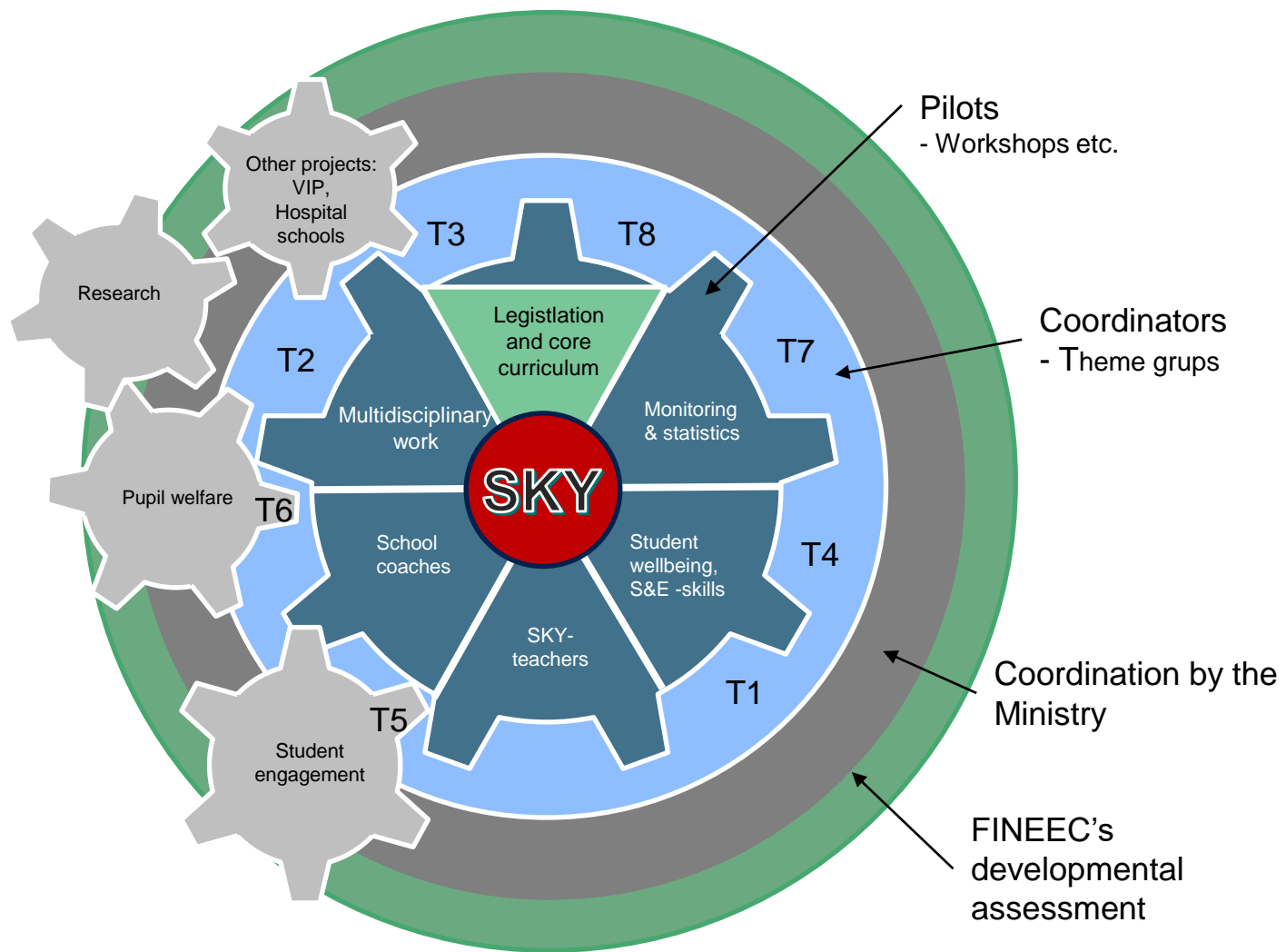
- 30 coordinators
- 105 school coaches
- 154 teachers who are involved in the process
- 10 other experts

117 000 students

- From grades 5 - 9



Production process of the SKY-model



BEA 26§

Section 26 of the Basic Education Act was amended so that education providers must in future prevent absences and systematically monitor and intervene in them.

The amended Act and the related changes to the core curriculum for basic education entered into force on 1 August 2023.

National guidelines

Our common school path - Handbook for supporting attendance and reducing absence in basic education

<https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/165025>

Norms

Law **BEA 26§**
education providers must in future prevent absences and systematically monitor and intervene in them

Core curriculum **Updates**

- [Chapter 4.2](#)
- [Chapters 5.1, 5.6](#)
- [Chapter 8.1](#)

Local **Model**
Education provider decides and describes in the local curriculum the operating model for preventing and systematically monitoring and intervening in student absences

Handbook **National guidelines**
Our common school path

Support material

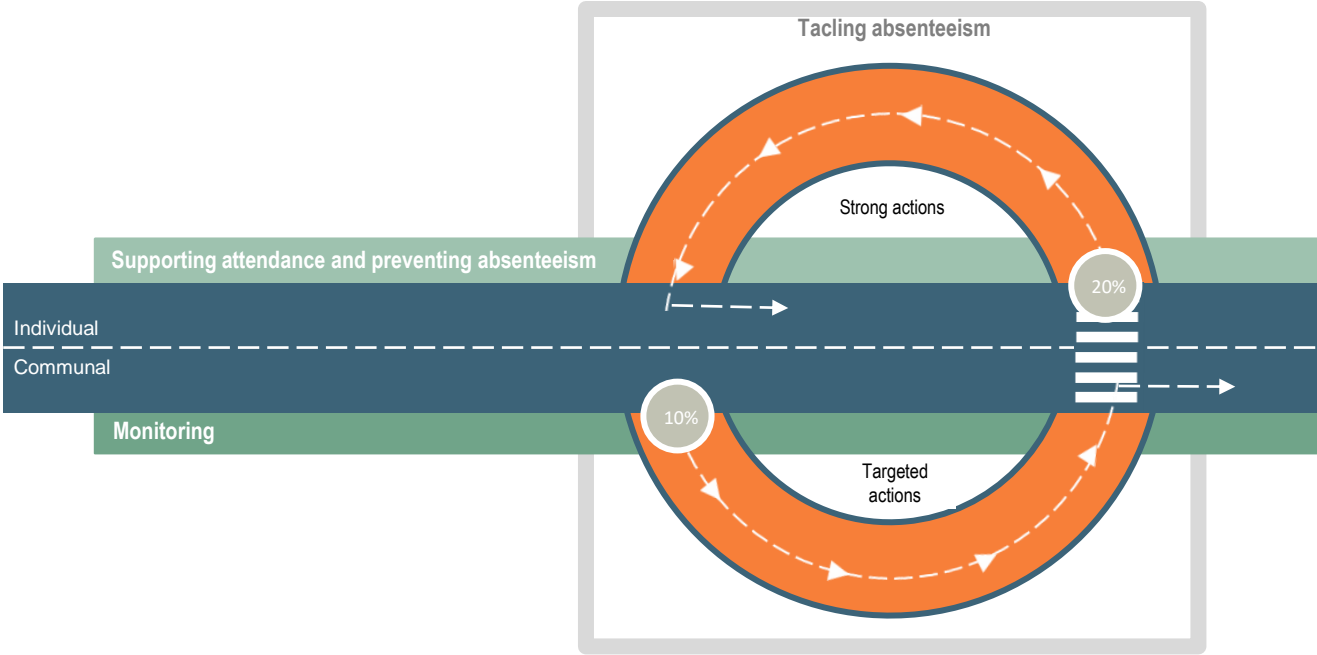
Yhteisellä koulutiellä

Käsikirja perusopetuksen oppilaiden läsnäolon tukemiseen ja poissaolojen vähentämiseen

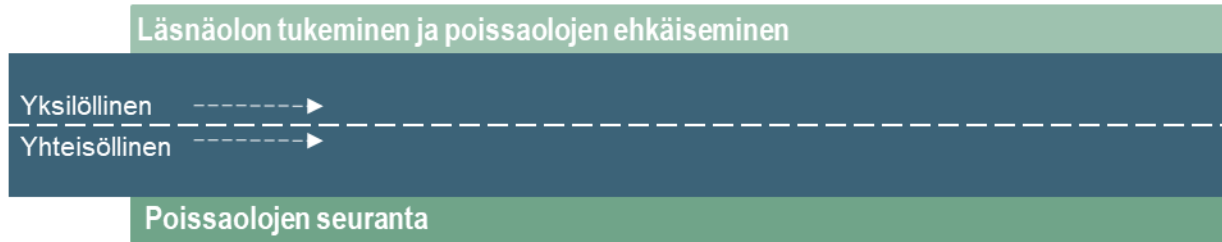
Phanna Sergejeff (toim.)



Our Common School Path 2023



Focus is on preventive actions



- Strengthening the school's operating culture that supports attendance, inclusiveness and community spirit.
- Supporting and valuing good relationships between students and teachers.
- Strengthening good interaction and cooperation with the home.
- Strengthening social and emotional skills.
- The most common barriers to participation are taken into account and removed.
- Guaranteeing a safe learning environment and preventing bullying.
- Understanding the importance of absences as a risk factor for learning and well-being.
- Systematic monitoring of absences at the individual and group level.

Systematic monitoring reduces absenteeism

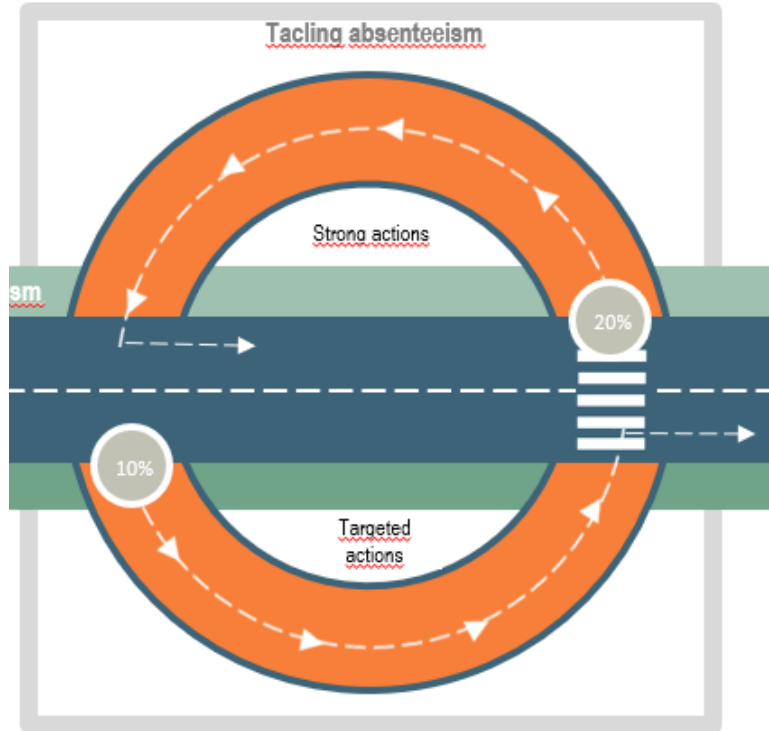


- Absences must be reacted early, regardless of the reason for the absence.
- The guardian or other legal representative of the student is notified of the absence as soon as possible.
- In case of increased or prolonged absences, one should contact the professionals of student welfare without delay.
- The education provider/municipality monitors absences in a planned manner using school-level data.

Classification of the reasons, Ministry's recommendation

Poissaololuokitus	Luokituksen selitys
Terveydellisiin syihin liittyvä poissaolo	Oppilas on fyysisesti poissa koulusta (sairaana, fyysiseen ja/tai psyykkiseen terveydenhoitoon liittyvä tapahtuma / vastaanottokäynti esim. hammaslääkäri, terapia tai leikkaus). Kirjauksen voi tehdä huoltaja tai opettaja huoltajan ilmoituksen perusteella.
Ennalta anottu vapaa	Huoltajan ennalta anoma vapaa, myös yksittäiset oppitunnit ja koulupäivät (lomamatka, harrastukseen liittyvä poissaolo, etävanhemmalla). Opettaja kirjaa poissaolon huoltajan ilmoittaman tiedon/anomuksen perusteella.
Muu selvitetty poissaolo	Käytetään vain niissä tapauksissa, kun poissaolo ei kuulu mihinkään muuhun kategoriaan (esim. POL36§, omaehtoinen karanteeni, odottamaton perhetilanne). Huoltajan tai opettajan kirjaus.
Luvaton poissaolo, selvitetty	Huoltajan tai opettajan selvittämä luvattomaksi luokiteltu poissaolo (pinnaus tai yli oppitunnin kestävä myöhästyminen).
Selvittämätön poissaolo	Koululla ei tietoa miksi lapsi on poissa. Poissaolo voidaan opettajan tai huoltajan toimesta selvittää ja merkinnän luokkaa muuttaa.
Muu koulutyö, läsnä	Lapsi on fyysisesti koulussa, mutta luvallisesti pois oppitunnilta (opiskeluhuollon palveluissa, oppilaskunnan tehtävissä, opolla tms.). EI TILASTOIDU POISSAOLOKSI.
Opiskelu muualla	Oppilas on fyysisesti pois koulusta esim. sairaalakoulussa tai tekee sovitusti lyhennettyä koulupäivää tai -viikkoa (POL 18§). EI TILASTOIDU POISSAOLOKSI.
Myöhästyminen	Alle oppitunnin mittainen myöhästyminen kirjataan tuntimerkintänä (minuuttimäärä). EI TILASTOIDU POISSAOLOKSI.

Municipalities have action plans for dealing with absences



Yli 20%

Strong actions

- Strengthening of individual support and care.
- Flexible teaching arrangements and sufficient pedagogical support are made possible.
- Coordinated cooperation between home, school and extracurricular actors.

5 - 10%

Targeted actions

- strengthening community actions
- checking pedagogical support
- guidance to student welfare services
- initiating multidisciplinary cooperation

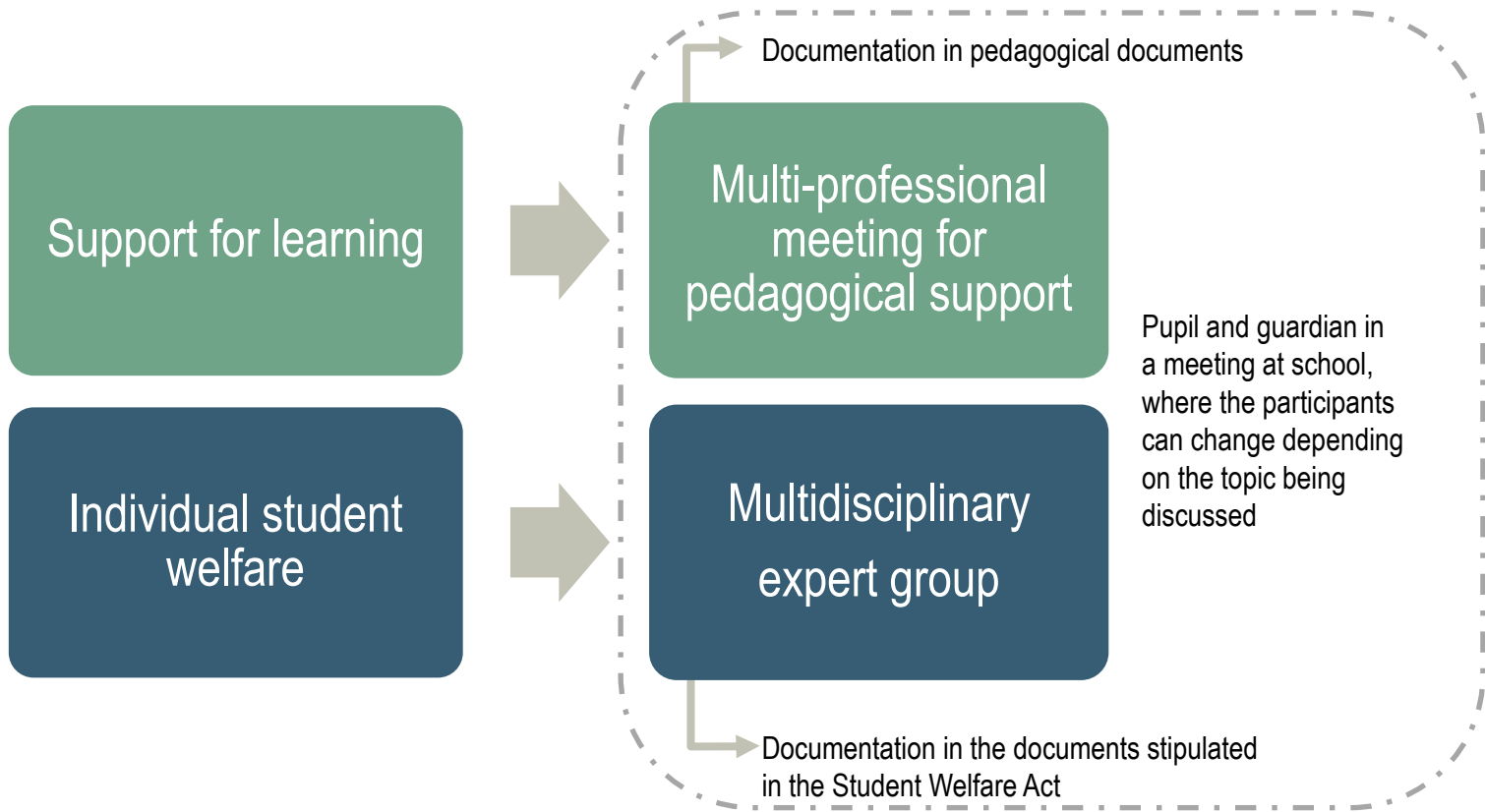
The underlying reasons for the absences are examined. The level and measures of learning support, as well as support for individual student welfare, will be checked.

Finding out the underlying reasons for absences

- Responsibilities for examining the reasons are agreed upon in close cooperation with the student, guardians, teachers and professionals from the student welfare services.
- Discussions, interviews and semi-structured and structured forms are used
- https://www.koulukunnossa.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/KouluKunnossa_opas_kartoitukseen_9_2023.pdf
- <https://koulupoissaolo.fi/koulupoissolojen-kartoitukseen/>

Things to consider when teaching a student with problematic absenteeism

- The arrangements related to teaching are planned and documented, the responsibilities are clear and the evaluation of the student's skills is properly taken care of.
 - Content and goals of the studies: What are we studying?
 - Implementation of the studies: How are the tasks performed? How is teaching implemented?
- Physical location of the study: When at school and/or online learning?
 - Evaluation of studies: By what criteria? What assessment methods?
 - Monitoring the progress of the studies: Who is responsible for the subject-specific and overall progress of the studies?
 - Utilization of support for learning and flexible teaching arrangements.



An example of student support planning when the student simultaneously needs support for learning as well as individual student welfare

When going back to school plan...

- which classroom or group the student returns to
- which classes the student returns to and how long the school days/weeks are in the beginning
- clear operating models for transitions, meals, etc.
- what the student himself wants to say about his absence, if asked about this
- school staff roles and support; agreeing how the student will be met when he returns
- a security person, e.g. a friend or an adult from the school, who meets when entering the school
- a plan for psychological or physical symptoms
- a plan for monitoring of presence or absence



Materials in Finnish:

Yhteisellä koulutiellä –käsikirja

<https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/165025>

Karvin loppuraportti

<https://karvi.fi/publication/sitouttavan-kouluyhteisötyön-arviointi-arvioinnin-loppuraportti/>

Kouluvalmentajatyön käsikirja

<https://heyzine.com/flip-book/e9e95f9b6a.html>

Opetushallitus aloittaa täydennyskoulutukset ja toiminnan vakiinnuttamisen

<https://www.oph.fi/fi/tapahtumat/2023/kouluun-kiinnittyminen-ja-poissaoloihin-puuttuminen-skolengagemang-och-ingripande>





Thank you!

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