**Exemption from the obligation to study the Swedish language**

* Under the instructions of the Finnish National Agency for Education, a pupil of migrant background may be exempted from the subject syllabus of Swedish if learning that language would be an unreasonable requirement seen the pupil’s prior schooling background (Basic Education Act No. 628/1998, section 18). Exemption from a school subject requires an administrative decision to be made by the principal or the school leader.
* Exemption from studying a subject is always a pupil-specific decision, and a migrant background will not automatically count as a justification from such exemption. Seen that teaching of Swedish at level B1 starts on grade 6 for all pupils attending basic education, it is recommended that pupils of migrant origin would also start studying Swedish at this point.
* In the case of a pupil of migrant origin who enrolls in basic education at lower secondary school age, the need to exempt him or her from learning Swedish will be assessed on an individual basis, observing for example the pupil’s age, prior schooling, current level of knowledge of Finnish and any linguistic challenges. Exemption from this school subject must be done in collaboration with the pupil and the guardian, and they must be explained that the exemption measure may have on impact on the pupil’s further studies. However, a student may also be exempted from studying Swedish in general upper secondary school (“lukio”) and in higher education, but such a decision is always discretionary and depends on the educational institution in question.
* Being exempted from the school syllabus of the Swedish language will not reduce the pupil’s annual weekly school hours; other teaching will be arranged in place of Swedish, for example Finnish as a second language (S2), or English at level B1.