**Dear parents,**

We are writing to you about an important issue concerning school attendance and absences. The aim of this letter is to raise awareness among guardians about school absenteeism and strengthen the cooperation between home and school. This way, we can support the students’ learning, well-being and engagement in school. Regular participation in education provides the best possible conditions for achieving positive learning outcomes and fostering social development.

School absenteeism has been increasing alarmingly in Finland for years. Therefore, the school has a statutory obligation to support the students’ engagement in school and prevent absences. Engagement in school means a student’s positive attitude and commitment to schooling, which arises from emotional experiences, participation in school, and learning. According to the section 26 of the Basic Education Act, the school must prevent, systematically monitor, and address absences. Furthermore, guardians have a duty to ensure their child completes compulsory education.

In the urban area of Tampere, we have developed a plan to support school attendance and monitor absences. The goal is to support students, homes, and school staff in committing to schooling as well as preventing and rectifying absences. Engagement in school is best supported in everyday school life, as part of education and daily interactions.

Absences are a significant risk factor that can impair learning and well-being. It is important to address absences at an early stage to reduce them. Absences often tend to accumulate, so even absences of 10% indicate a risk of problematic absenteeism. Therefore, it is crucial and effective to address absences when they reach the 10% threshold.

There can be many reasons for absences and school absenteeism. Support measures are planned and implemented according to the underlying causes. The first signs of school absenteeism often appear at home. Together, we can identify the reasons for the situation and how to support the student’s schooling.

There can be many different reasons or a combination of factors behind absences, such as:

* Repeated tardiness
* Difficulty attending certain classes
* Difficulty coming to school on certain days of the week or at certain times
* Physical symptoms like stomach ache, a headache, or nausea
* Frequent visits to the school nurse
* Increased tearfulness or withdrawal
* Avoidance or fear of social situations at school
* Seeking rewarding situations outside of school
* Avoidance or neglect of school assignments

Together, we can find solutions and support school attendance as follows:

1. **Regular communication**: Let us keep in touch regularly and discuss your child’s schooling and any challenges. We can arrange meetings or discussions via Wilma or by phone.
2. **Reporting absences**: Always report your child’s absences as soon as possible. This will allow us to monitor the situation and provide the necessary support for completing compulsory education.
3. **Providing support**: If your child is having difficulties at school, we can work together to determine what kind of support they need. This may include things like flexible teaching arrangements, counselling, the services of a school counsellor or psychologist, and student welfare support. Teaching social and wellness skills to the student and the class can also be beneficial.
4. **Motivation and encouragement**: Encourage your child to actively participate in schoolwork and discuss their school day with them. A positive attitude and support at home are important for your child’s school success.

We are here at the school for your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. Together, we can ensure your child receives the best possible education and support. Every school day is important.

Best regards,

The teachers, classroom assistants, school coaches, and principals of the schools in the urban area of Tampere