

# Operating model for chronic absenteeism

## Support for school attendance in wellbeing services county services

### When consistent school absences become apparent

- We take the concerns expressed by the client or the school seriously and seek cooperation that benefits all parties.
- We determine the client's ongoing services and share information about school absences with the responsible employees. Our work may be consultation-based or be based on a customer relationship.
- We appoint a responsible person from the wellbeing services county, who will contact the responsible person at the school as soon as possible to initiate good cooperation.
- We examine whether the reasons for consistent school absences have been mapped and whether a shared situational picture has been created.
- We support cooperation between the home and school and ensure that the two have agreed on communication methods.
- We participate in network cooperation when requested. We agree on the responsibilities held by each actor in multidisciplinary cooperation.
- We work in an intensive manner with parents. We can support parenting even if the child refuses to take part in support measures.
- We act in a systematic and solution-oriented manner. We focus on strengths and strengthen the positive.
- We encourage the client to utilise digital services, such as [self-care programmes](#) and the [intervention navigator](#) in a versatile manner.

### Proactive prevention of problems

- We provide guidance and advice to clients.
- We communicate openly about services and low-threshold contact channels. We encourage clients to use the [omagehe.fi website](#).
- We utilise communal and participatory methods, such as peer support and small group activities both in the school environment and, for example, in meeting place activities.
- We highlight local phenomena using the social reporting tool.
- [We share information on school absences and provide psychoeducation.](#)
- We are aware that all support provided to families also affects the ability of the child or young person to continue with their studies.

Work to influence school absences is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (e.g. Articles 24, 28), and national legislation, (e.g. section 16 of the Constitution of Finland, sections 16 and 26 of the Basic Education Act, section 4 of the Social Welfare Act, sections 2 and 24 of the Health Care Act, sections 4 and 5 of the Pupil and Student Welfare Act, sections 1 and 2 of the Child Welfare Act)

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and related legislation oblige work in a multidisciplinary manner to support the child's growth, development, and wellbeing. Education and, in particular, basic education are seen as an essential part of a child's growth, development, and wellbeing.

Work on situations where a child does not attend school regularly and encountering clients must be carried out with a customer-oriented, equal, and responsible approach in accordance with the values of the wellbeing services county. In accordance with the wellbeing services county's strategy, we work in positive cooperation to achieve the best results.

In our work, we utilise a systemic approach in which the life of the child and the family is examined as a whole, and its different factors affect each other. Multidisciplinary cooperation is crosscutting throughout the service system. Where necessary, we utilise special professional competence across an organisation's internal boundaries and the external boundaries between organisations.

### When the school absence situation has grown worse

- Our work is based on the [Intervention for outlining absenteeism situations](#), which helps us to know the reasons behind school absences and the factors that maintain them, and ensures that work is based on the situational picture created from them.
- We ensure that the objectives set with the family are based on information on the underlying causes of absenteeism and that the factors maintaining the problems are worked on. A shared understanding of the situation and a solution-oriented approach are emphasised.
- We ensure that all actors are aware of who the responsible persons at both the school and the wellbeing services county are.
- We ensure the continuous flow of information. The responsible person works closely with the family and responsible person at the school.
- We agree on the division of responsibilities in network work. We use the wellbeing services county's [Guidelines for work in networks and compilation form](#).
- We ensure the transfer of information when people transition from one service to another, especially when the person in charge changes. Preference should be given to the "accompanying clients in transitions" approach.
- We support cooperation between the home and school and help resolve potential conflicts. We understand the importance of cooperation between the home and school as a prerequisite for the child or young person to return to school.
- We ensure that the work is sufficiently intensive. The parents are strongly involved in the work.
- Psychoeducation focuses on issues to be worked on in accordance with the objectives.
- We understand that returning to school is a process in which the return to school will support rehabilitation and rehabilitation will support school attendance.

### If chronic absenteeism continues

- The responsible person in the wellbeing services county works together with the responsible person at the school to ensure that the underlying reasons for absences from school and factors maintaining absences are known and that a situational picture has been formed. They review the information obtained in the intervention for outlining reasons for school absences and identify the need for additional information.
- We ensure that all actors have a common understanding of the absenteeism situation. Regular meetings ensure that everyone works as required by the situational picture.
- We will continue close multi-actor cooperation where a party, who will invite the network to meetings, has been selected. We ensure that all actors know their own and each other's responsibilities for moving forward in the situation.
- We understand that intensive work is the only method for resolving the situation. We plan the number of meetings and their content, understanding the child's or young person's need to return to everyday school life.
- We know that it will take time to resolve a difficult situation. We do not rush to change the provided service but change the approach if the solution option first selected does not work. Our approach involves walking alongside our clients, perseverance and being solution-oriented.
- We see returning to everyday school life as rehabilitation, which is supported by school support measures and health and social services.

We create  
hope!



All services for children, young  
people and families include work to  
intervene in school absences.



Absences from school  
often increase gradually.

First gain un  
understanding

- Each of us is responsible for helping a child or young person when they are consistently absent from school.
- Being repeatedly absent from school is a symptom the underlying factors of which must be examined to the extent required by the situation. This information will guide the work to address school absences.
- We work to promote the client's inclusion by listening to the client and by taking the information they provide about their situation seriously.
- We work closely with the home, the school and other actors. We ensure that information is only shared with the client's consent or on the basis of legislation. We utilise continuous mutual consultation between different services and the school.
- We recognise risk factors in different school life and service transitions. When transitioning from one service to another, the party referring the client to the next service ensures that work will continue on the factors maintaining the consistent absenteeism while the client waits for the new service to begin.
- We strengthen basic everyday functions to improve a child's or young person's wellbeing and ability to study. We understand that the situation in question is a difficult phase in the person's life. We act in a sensitive manner, and do not point fingers. We are solution-oriented and create hope.
- When we know the risk factors associated with school attendance, we act proactively and do not just monitor the situation.

When a pupil is absent  
even 20% of the time  
from school, this can  
significantly weaken the  
prerequisites for  
wellbeing and learning!



Repeated school  
absences are always  
a symptom of  
something.

Together,  
we succeed!

Even difficult life  
situations can be  
overcome!