

MODEL FOR ADDRESSING ABSENCES AT THE SOUTH KARELIA IB WORLD SCHOOL

1. PREVENTION OF ABSENCES

A sense of belonging, participation, and community enhances commitment to IB Diploma studies.

- The school's practices support students' integration into the school and promote their well-being.
- All IB school staff participate in supporting student welfare and student welfare services.
- Student welfare services include the school counselor (opo), special educational needs teacher, welfare officer (kuraattori), nurse, doctor, and psychologist.
- The homeroom teacher (RO) actively monitors their student group's absences.
- Subject teachers record absences immediately in Imatra Wilma.
- Students' individual actions significantly impact the overall atmosphere and satisfaction of other students.

2. ABSENCE REQUESTS AND CLEARING OF ABSENCES

Absence Requests

Students must attend classes unless officially excused (Lukiolaki §30). Exemptions are granted only for illnesses or pre-approved reasons.

- Permission for a single class absence is granted by the respective teacher.
- Absences of up to three (3) days, if known in advance, are approved by the homeroom teacher.
- Absences exceeding three (3) days and up to five (5 days) require approval from the IB Coordinator.
- Absences due to vacations are limited to a maximum of one week (5 school days).
- In unclear cases, the IB Coordinator and/or the Principal will be consulted.

- Students must agree with their teacher on how to complete assignments missed during their absence and commit to fulfilling the same requirements as their peers.

Clearing of Absences

- For students under 18, guardians must report absences in Wilma as soon as possible. Once students turn 18, they manage absence reporting themselves unless they delegate the responsibility to their guardians. All absences must be promptly explained in Wilma.
- If illness causes an absence of more than five (5) school days, a doctor's certificate or equivalent proof from a healthcare professional should be provided to the homeroom teacher (RO).

3. ABSENCES AND UNFINISHED WORK IN INDIVIDUAL SUBJECTS

Consequences of Absences

- Students are responsible for finding out what work they have missed during an absence and agreeing with the teacher due dates for turning in missed work.
- Subject teacher expresses concern over absences after three (3) lessons missed. The teacher and the student have a conversation about the importance of attendance in succeeding with IB studies.
- If a student misses six (6) lessons in a 7-week course, the subject teacher sends them and their guardians a Wilma message stating that they risk receiving an Unfinished (U) mark for the course. In the same message, the teacher also sets due dates for any missing summative assessments, which need to be completed to avoid the U mark. If required assessments are not completed according to the schedule set by the teacher, the student receives a U mark for the course. If they are not completed by the retake day of the period in question, a U mark will be converted to a Discontinued (D) mark.
- At the end of Pre-IB/ IB1 (by the conclusion of the 5th period's exam week), students with D marks cannot proceed to IB1/ IB2 but must either repeat the year from the start of the following school year or apply to another institution (e.g. the national lukio programme).
- By the registration deadline for IB2 final exams, students with D marks will not be registered for IB final examinations. By the end of IB2 4th period, students with D marks are not admitted to take their IB final examinations.
- If absences in excess of six (6 lessons) in a 7-week course remain unexplained by the end of the exam week, the teacher may declare the course grade directly as Discontinued (D).

- If illness prevents participation in the exam week assessment, the guardian must notify the subject teacher before the exam. In urgent cases, notification must be given to the course teacher via Wilma or by phone on the exam day. Alternatively, students can provide a medical certificate or equivalent proof from a healthcare professional. If a student misses the final exam due to justified reasons, they are entitled to retake the exam on the retake day. If they miss several exams, a separate retake plan will be made for the student.

Consequences of Unfinished Work

- If the teacher lacks sufficient basis for assessment due to work missing for other reasons than lesson attendance, the student receives an Unfinished (U) mark for the course. Missing work must be completed before the retake day, or the U mark will be converted to a Discontinued (D) mark.

4. CONCERNS RAISED FOR OVERALL ABSENCES: 12 HOURS / 20 HOURS (= 12 unexplained absences or 20 explained absences in a study period)

- Subject teachers report concerns about absences in their courses to the homeroom teacher (RO).
- The RO investigates the reasons for absences (health, psychological, or learning-related issues).
- The RO addresses absences with the student and their guardians and documents the communication. The importance of attendance in succeeding with IB studies is emphasized. The RO communicates their concerns about absences to the IB Coordinator.
- The RO consults with the student welfare team regarding absences and considers further actions that could change the course for the student.
- If child protection concerns arise, child welfare services will be contacted.
- The RO continues monitoring the situation.

5. CONTINUING ABSENCES: 20 HOURS / 40 HOURS (= 20 unexplained absences or 40 explained absences in a study period)

- The RO convenes an individual student welfare meeting with the student and the guardians. The IB Coordinator attends, as well as relevant members of the student welfare team.

- Additional study guidance and support are provided (special education teacher, counselor, school psychologist, etc.). It is evaluated whether the absences stem from health-related issues warranting the possibility of splitting IB exams across two examination sessions.
- School support measures and monitoring are initiated.
- A child welfare notification will be considered based on the situation and need.
- If absences persist at this level during the next or another period within the same school year, the student will either repeat the same IB year from the start of the following school year or apply to another institution (e.g. the national lukio programme). This decision is taken by the IB Coordinator in consultation with the Principal.

6. WHEN SCHOOL SUPPORT IS INSUFFICIENT

When previous support measures prove inadequate:

1. School support measures and monitoring are reviewed in the welfare team.
2. A child welfare notification is filed if necessary.
3. A school contact person and a monitoring plan are assigned for the student.
4. External support resources are explored.
5. Alternative study options, medical leave, or temporary suspension of compulsory education are considered.

Whenever a student's situation causes concern, adults discuss the matter with the student. If the student recognizes difficulties in their studies, they should talk to their subject teachers, homeroom teacher (RO) or a member of the student welfare team. The sooner challenges are addressed collaboratively, the easier they are to resolve.