EDUCATION IN ESPOO

Early childhood education
Pre-primary education
Basic education
Upper secondary education
Education in Espoo - learning, wellbeing and growth

The Finnish education system has attracted plenty of positive attention in the past years. One reason is our success in the international PISA tests. According to national and international assessments, Espoo is top of the class, both in Finland and beyond.

Good results have encouraged us to develop education, instruction and upbringing so that future challenges can be met even better than today. Good guideposts along this path are the recently renewed national and municipal curricula. They encompass lifelong learning from early childhood education to the upper secondary level. And from there begins collaboration with tertiary education.

In addition to learning, the Finnish education system holds pupils’ growth and wellbeing in high regard. Free school meals, pupil and student welfare as well as school health care are viewed as being central to growth. Our local school principle is strong. All children and young people are welcome in our schools. Cooperation between home and school is carried out in appreciative interaction which aims at getting the best out of each pupil.

Talent is also promoted with different weight-ed-curriculum studies, for example in music or mathematics and natural sciences. Basic art education provides skills to express oneself by means of art in various genres. Creativity and self-expression are fostered in our schools. Pupils and students are encouraged to participate in decision-making, to think critically and constructively and to act for the good of the entire community.

International cooperation and interaction are important to us. We sincerely hope that visitors to our day care centres, schools and upper secondary schools will share their experiences with our teachers and work communities and encourage us to further develop our education for the benefit of the learners.

This brochure has been produced by the Espoo Finnish Education Unit in cooperation with the Finnish Child Day Care, the Swedish Educational and Cultural Services and Omnia Education.

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Director of Education
City of Espoo
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Espoo – Learning City
ESPOO INVESTS IN EDUCATION

Espoo is the second largest and fastest-growing city in Finland located in the vibrant capital region. The city has 280,000 residents living in five diverse city centres. Large nature areas characterise Espoo: shoreline, archipelago, forests, lakes and national parks. Espoo has been recognised as the most sustainable city in Europe measured on economic, sociocultural and ecological sustainability criteria.

Over 25% of the population is under 18 years-old and over 50% of under-25-year-olds hold a university degree. The city’s education services comprise early childhood education and care, pre-primary education, basic education and general upper secondary education.

Vocational and adult education is offered at Omnia, run by a joint municipal authority. In addition, Espoo hosts two universities of applied sciences, Laurea and Metropolia. The city has gained international fame as a hub of know-how, research and development, at the heart of which stands the Aalto University campus. Non-formal learning possibilities are offered at Espoo’s high-class libraries.

The City of Espoo invests in education: its learning results are on a top level nationally.

CREATIVE, COMPETENT AND RESPONSIBLE LEARNERS

Learning is valued in Espoo. The city promotes lifelong learning and uninterrupted learning paths from early childhood education to adult education. Espoo offers all children and young people high-quality, diverse and regionally equal development and educational opportunities.

The starting point of operations is educational equality that takes into account the individual characteristics of the learner.

In addition, Espoo supports sustainable development and the use of new technology in learning. New learning facilities are designed to encourage participation, to increase wellbeing and to lift the community spirit of residents of all ages. Activities are developed together with residents, partners, companies and communities both locally and internationally. The aim of the local development plan for education is:

A learning, creative, competent and responsible Espoo resident by 2020.

TOP LEARNING OUTCOMES

Espoo is recognised both nationally and internationally for its learning results.

In the esteemed PISA tests (Programme for International Student Assessment), Espoo ranks above the national average and Finland remained on top of the OECD countries between 2006 and 2015. In other words, Espoo has achieved
learning outcomes that are among the best in the world, year after year.

The city’s top learning results are achieved through the expertise of over 4,000 esteemed teachers, principals and other experts in schools. Alongside the results, we value the joy of learning, experienced in the schools each day.

In 2015, UNESCO awarded Espoo as a pioneering Learning City, and in 2016, the city won the International Educating Cities Award on Good Practices on Living Together in Cities. In addition, Espoo’s and Aalto University’s project School as a Service has won the International Quality Innovation Award for developing flexible learning spaces and operating models to meet the needs of future learning. Several pupils, educators and schools in Espoo have also been nationally and internationally honoured.

CAREFULLY PLANNED EDUCATION LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY

The Finnish education policy begins with every citizen’s right to receive education. The education system comprises one year of pre-primary education, nine years of basic education followed by general upper secondary education or vocational education and training, as well as higher and adult education.

The Finnish National Board of Education prepares the National Core Curriculum for pre-primary education, basic education, general upper secondary education and basic art education. Municipalities design their own municipality-specific curricula based on the national ones.

TEACHERS AS ESTEEMED PROFESSIONALS

A Master’s degree is a basic requirement for all teachers in Finland. At all school levels, teachers work together and teach in pairs, share expertise and plan and assess their work. The latest curriculum reform encourages teachers to develop their cooperation even further.

Teachers in Espoo are highly qualified and committed. The city offers plenty of opportunities to improve one’s professional skills both individually and as a work community. Themes of pedagogical training events arranged each year vary from digital technology to pedagogy, and from environmental topics to proficiency in one’s own teaching subject.
KEY FIGURES OF EDUCATION IN ESPOO (JANUARY 2018)

Early and pre-primary education
200 Finnish-language early childhood education and care centres
• 10,700 children
• 2,800 members of personnel

23 Swedish-language early childhood education and care centres
• 1,460 children
• 350 members of personnel

110 private Finnish-language early childhood education and care centres

170 Finnish-language pre-primary education units (early childhood education and care centres, schools, private departments etc.)

11 Swedish-language pre-primary education units

Basic Education
77 Finnish-language comprehensive schools
• 28,000 pupils in grades 1–9
• 2,720 teachers

11 Swedish-language comprehensive schools
• over 2,900 pupils in grades 1–9
• 300 teachers

2 private comprehensive schools

Every year, 99% of the pupils in Espoo receive their basic education certificate (the dropout rate is very small).

General upper secondary education
11 Finnish-language general upper secondary schools
• 4,640 students
• 310 teachers

1 Swedish-language general upper secondary school
• 550 students
• 19 teachers

1 adult general upper secondary school

2 general upper secondary schools offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme.

Basic art education
16 independent art schools
• 10,800 students
• 460 teachers

Higher education
3 universities:
• Metropolia University of Applied Sciences
• Laurea University of Applied Sciences
• Aalto University
Early childhood education and care and pre-primary education
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) are part of the Finnish education system and an important part of a child’s path to growing and learning. The purpose of early childhood education and care is to create equal preconditions for the wholesome growth, development and learning of children participating in early childhood education and care. Early childhood education and care promote the age- and development-appropriate overall development of each child, support their health and wellbeing, and offer the prerequisites for learning. Early childhood education is implemented in an entity formed by upbringing, teaching and care.

The new National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care and the municipality-specific curriculum came into effect in autumn 2017. Children are the focus of pedagogical planning, and participate in the process as is appropriate and suitable for their age and development. An individual early education and care plan is prepared for each child together with the guardians. Day care teachers are responsible for preparing and assessing the individual plan in collaboration with other personnel and the parents / guardians.

Parents can care for their children at home or choose different early childhood education and care services, such as early childhood education and care centres or another service that suits the needs of the child and the family. The City of Espoo arranges early childhood education in centres, family day care and in open early childhood education and care services, such as resident parks, open centres and clubs.

PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Children participate in pre-primary education in the year they turn six. Pre-primary education is part of early childhood education and is carried out either at early childhood education and care centres or schools. Pre-primary education is free of charge.

Pre-primary education is based on the National Core Curriculum for pre-primary education. It promotes the favourable prerequisites for learning, development and growth among children. In cooperation with their families, children are offered equal opportunities for learning and starting school.

In the mornings before pre-primary education begins and in the afternoons after it ends, children may receive care provided by schools. This care is subject to a fee.

Pre-primary education is provided 190 days a year. The education lasts for 4 hours a day. The days consist of play, physical education, exploration, experimentation, acquiring information and problem-solving.
Basic education is arranged so that each child can learn according to his/her own conditions and experience the joy of learning.
BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL

All children of compulsory school age attend basic education. Comprehensive school begins the year the child turns 7. In Espoo, comprehensive schools are primary schools covering grades 1–6, lower secondary schools grades 7–9 or joint comprehensive schools grades 1–9. Each pupil is given a place in one of the local schools close to home.

Basic education is free of charge for the pupil. Textbooks, digital learning tools, materials and school meals are provided by the municipality, and only sports clothes and equipment are purchased by the parents / guardians.

THE NEW COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

In Espoo, school culture is being developed in the spirit of the newly reformed curriculum. The school is viewed as a learning community in which the pupils’ learning, wellbeing and growth are considered key values. Basic education is arranged so that each child can learn according to his/her own conditions, and experience the joy of learning.

Digital know-how is considered an essential skill for every pupil in Espoo. The city aims at becoming the national pioneer of digital learning and new learning environments. Other timely themes include sustainable development promoted in all schools, managing increasing cultural diversity and participating in the city’s development, for example through the co-creation of products and services by schools and companies.

All these promote the birth of the new comprehensive school.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Comprehensive schools in Espoo have over 4,500 pupils whose mother tongue is something other than Finnish or Swedish. In addition, children of multilingual families and Finnish or Swedish returnees are supported in the language skills they have acquired. Education in the pupil’s own mother tongue is provided for multilingual children in more than 40 languages.

Pupils who cannot speak Finnish or need to improve their Finnish language skills begin education in preparatory education. The studies are arranged inclusively in mainstream classes or in separate groups according to the pupil’s skill level. Preparatory education lasts for one school year, after which the pupil will attend basic education with enhanced language support, if needed. Children are also supported in maintaining the language skills they have acquired abroad.

The aim for pupils from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds is to obtain the skills and knowledge required for comprehensive school, to acquire functional multilingualism and to gain equal opportunities to pursue further studies after comprehensive school.

LEARNING NEW LANGUAGES

Learning languages promotes the development of thinking and learning skills. It provides ingredients for creating and appreciating multicultural identities. In language learning, there is plenty of room for play and creativity.

In Espoo, comprehensive schools have an extensive language programme. Foreign language studies usually begin in the third grade, and optional second foreign language studies in the fourth grade. In grades 7–9, pupils may study up
to four foreign languages. The foreign languages provided are English, Swedish, German, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese.

In some schools, the first foreign language studies can begin in the first grade as early language studies.

It is also possible to complete one's basic education entirely or partly in English. One of the city’s local schools, Espoo International, offers teaching in English in grades 1–9. In addition, some schools offer bilingual education (Finnish-English) and several provide Swedish-language immersion education, which aims at bilingual competence.

**WEIGHTED-CURRICULUM STUDIES**

Schools in Espoo offer weighted-curriculum studies in several subjects including music, mathematics and natural sciences, dance, physical education, information technology and visual arts. Music and mathematics and natural sciences weighted studies begin in the third grade whereas the rest may be studied from the seventh grade onwards.

Weighted-curriculum studies deepen the pupil’s knowledge and skills in a particular subject. Their assessment follows the regular assessment of the National Core Curriculum.

**A TYPICAL DAY IN SCHOOL**

In primary school, school days are short and the joy of learning is emphasised. Pupils in grades 1–2 have 20 lesson hours per week, and those in grades 3–6 have 23–27, depending on the grade. Most subjects are taught by one’s own class teacher but some, for example languages and sports, can be taught by a subject-specific teacher. Flexible grouping according to the pupil’s needs is used to enhance learning.

The school’s learning environment is diverse: in addition to the school’s own premises, it includes nature and the built environment as well as nearby libraries, museums, sports and art centres.

After school, most pupils in grades 1–2 attend afternoon activities arranged in the local school or nearby. Other pupils can join voluntary school clubs or leave for home, where homework is prepared in the evening.

Pupils in grades 7–9 have 29–31 classes per week. Most subjects are taught by subject-specific teachers. The learner’s active role becomes increasingly important in the lower secondary grades.

**SCHOOL MEALS**

Lunch is often the highlight of the day for pupils. It provides a small break in learning and provides energy for the lessons in the afternoon. The school lunches are full of variety, nutritionally well-balanced and provide culinary experiences. School meals are free-of-charge for the pupils.

The school meals account for one-third of the pupils’ daily nutritional needs. All meals are served with a hot main course and side dishes, beverages, bread and spread. A model meal helps pupils to put together a well-rounded meal. Pupils can serve themselves the desired amount of food, and take seconds if needed. Special diets for health or ethical reasons are offered as well.
A TYPICAL DAY IN SCHOOL
(2ND GRADE)

8:15 am – 9:00 am
Finnish (mother tongue) instruction, reading and writing

9:00 am – 9:45 am
Nature studies, studying seasonal nature, its plants and animals.

9:45 am – 10:15 am
Recess, recess clubs organised by the school’s older students

10:15 am – 10:50 am
Mathematics

10:50 am – 11:15 am
School lunch

11:15 am – 11:30 am
Recess

11:30 am – 12:15 pm
Physical education, orienteering in the school yard

A TYPICAL DAY IN SCHOOL
(8TH GRADE)

8:15 am – 9:45 am
Finnish language and literature

9:45 am – 10:15 am
Recess

10:15 am – 11:15 am
History

11:15 am – 11:45 am
School lunch

11:45 am – 12:15 pm
History (continues)

12:15 pm – 12:45 pm
Recess, for example visiting the school library or guided sports

12:45 pm – 14:15 pm
Optional subjects: home economics, science, visual arts, crafts or technical crafts, music or drama
COOPERATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

Parents hold the primary responsibility for raising their child. In cooperation with homes, the schools instruct and educate pupils as members of the school community. Close cooperation with homes promotes learning. The school provides parents with information that allows them to monitor and advance the school attendance and learning of their child.

Cooperation between home and school is carried out for example as parent-teacher evenings, individual meetings and messages as well as through entries in the electronic Wilma-system.

SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

In basic education, each member of the school personnel is responsible for offering educational instruction. The instruction supports pupils in different phases of school attendance and develops their ability to make conscious choices concerning studies, life and career. In grades 7–9, a guidance counsellor gives personal guidance and instructs pupils in lesson form.

Each pupil is also entitled to sufficient guidance and support for learning and school attendance. The support is divided into general, intensive and special support. General support includes
remedial teaching, part-time special-needs education, flexible grouping, differentiation of teaching and assistant or interpreter services. General support is carried out as part of daily education.

Secondly, the pupil may receive long-term intensive support, if needed. The support measures of intensive support are more regular than in general support, and different measures can be combined. Thirdly, the pupil is entitled to special support either in a special class, part-time special class or inclusively in mainstream teaching.

In addition, pupil welfare services offer low-threshold support to facilitate learning and wellbeing. The focus of these services is on preventive work that supports the entire school community. Pupil welfare is divided into communal and individual support.

Communal pupil welfare promotes social responsibility, interaction and the participation of pupils. It is by nature preventive and strengthens the wellbeing of pupils by creating an atmosphere of belonging, open interaction and care in which it is good to be in and learn. Communal pupil welfare is carried as multi-professional cooperation.

Each pupil is also entitled to individual pupil welfare consisting of school health care services, psychologist and school social officer services as well as case-specific pupil welfare.

When a pupil’s case requires special expertise, a multi-professional group of experts gathers to investigate the pupil’s need for support and to arrange for individual welfare services with the consent of the pupil or the parent / guardian.

**ARVOKAS - SOCIAL SKILLS EDUCATION**

According to the Basic Education Act, the school’s task is to support pupils’ growth toward humanity and as ethically responsible members of society. Good socio-emotional skills ensure the development of children and young people. To become socially competent, pupils need strong cooperation skills and the ability to be empathic.

In Espoo, the Arvokas-model (engl. Valued) is used for social competence and ethics education. Its goal is to strengthen the social and emotional skills of pupils, and to develop their abilities in self-control. In this way, they learn responsibility, to distinguish right from wrong and to assess the ethics of their behaviour.

In Arvokas-lessons, social skills are rehearsed practically, arising from the pupils’ own experiences. Different themes of ethics education are also discussed.

**KULPS! - A CULTURE AND SPORTS PATH FOR PUPILS**

The KULPS! culture and sports path is a culture and physical education tool for schools in Espoo used to promote cooperation between schools and cultural and sports actors. The goal of KULPS! is to provide equal opportunities for children to experience and create art, to learn
how to use the diverse offerings of libraries and to try out different sports and sports venues in a diverse manner.

The contents of the KULPS! paths are free-of-charge for pupils in comprehensive school. KULPS! introduces new and diverse learning environments to the school day. KULPS! comprises three paths: a culture, sports and library path.

FINNISH SCHOOLS ON THE MOVE

Finnish Schools on the Move is a national programme aiming to establish an active, student-participatory culture in schools and to encourage the overall wellbeing of the whole school community. In Espoo, over 70 schools and all general upper secondary schools participate in the programme. The implementation of the programme follows local planning and decision-making, thus giving a varied outlook on the activities in different schools. The promotion of physical activity consists of both increasing physical activity and decreasing sedentary time.

School on the Move activities are often planned and organised by pupils and students themselves. This requires measures both at school and at home.

During the school day, physical activity can be increased by implementing active learning methods, adding short active breaks, promoting active commuting and organising various kinds of events. Cooperation with local sports associations and entrepreneurs is of vital importance.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The city of Espoo wants to serve as a responsible pioneer and provides different opportunities for learning sustainable living skills. Adopting a sustainable lifestyle requires education in environmental sensitivity and responsibility. It is important to understand that we are part of nature and entirely dependent on its services, i.e. ecosystem services. In addition to information, experiences and personal action play an important part in environmental responsibility education.

Sustainable development is the goal of education and the principle governing all activities in schools in Espoo. Children and young people are trained to make sustainable choices according to their age.

Sustainable development programmes, such as the Eco-Schools Programme, help to divide the extensive agenda into sections suitable for everyday school activities, and to ensure that children participate in their actual implementation. Each school in Espoo is encouraged to make a national commitment to promote sustainable development.

DIGITAL LEARNING

Digital education is part of every school day in Espoo. The city is investing in digital learning devices and spaces and, in the near future, all pupils will be able to use digital technology regularly in different subjects.

Helping schools with their ‘digital leap’, as the digitalisation of learning is called, is one of the current goals of education in Espoo. The goal is to change the entire learning culture of schools so that modern digital interaction, flexible learning spaces and the pupil’s active role as a learner are included.
ACCELERATED CO-CREATION OF SCHOOLS AND COMPANIES (KYKY)

One of the latest education-linked innovations in Espoo is the accelerated co-creation of schools and companies (KYKY). It is a new operating model that enables the co-creation of schools and companies, and promotes the innovation of new products and services for the purpose of developing education.

The concept was created together with pupils, students, teachers, companies, communities and different education experts. It fits well with the new National Curriculum.

In KYKY, companies test and develop their products and services for learning situations together with teachers and pupils. Authentic collaboration with companies promotes the pupils’ ability to innovate and increases the companies’ understanding of the daily life of pupils and teachers. The model has resulted in new digital tools and services that foster learning and growth and serve the needs of schools.

Pupils are often excited when their ideas come up in the co-created products. They have been able to tell the companies themselves what kind of apps and tools would help them learn.

The companies’ activity in the KYKY process and the quality of the products are assessed. After a successful conclusion, the companies receive a Co-Created with the City of Espoo Schools certificate, which can be used in advertising their products and services.

The development of the KYKY-model was funded by the European Regional Development Fund.
Basic art education
Basic Art Education is an independent educational genre and a unique feature of the Finnish education system. The studies are voluntary but goal-oriented; various art genres are learned in a systematic, progressive, long-lasting manner. The education gives pupils the readiness to express themselves by means of art and to continue their studies in further education in their chosen genre.

Basic art education follows either the general syllabus with 500 study hours or the extended one with 1,300 study hours, prepared by the Finnish National Agency for Education.

BASIC ART EDUCATION AND OTHER ARTS IN ESPOO

In Espoo, basic art education is offered by 16 independent, non-profit associations and companies. More than 10,500 children and young people aged 0–19 take part in the education all around the city. Espoo offers basic art education in seven art genres: architecture, visual arts, crafts (design and technology), music, circus, dance and theatre. The most popular genre is music, offered by seven institutions.

In addition to curriculum-based basic art education, many institutions offer other types of art classes, for example school clubs and weekend or summer camps. Moreover, there are various free art schools in the Espoo region whose activities supplement basic art education.

Basic art education is run in cooperation with the institutions and the City of Espoo. The city’s educational authority approves each school’s curriculum and monitors their activities. Some of the institutions are partly funded by the city.

BASIC ART EDUCATION INSTITUTES

Music
Amado Music School
Espoo Music Institute
Espoon Music Institute Pop and Jazz Department Ebeli
Estrada Music and Dance School
Avonia Music Institute
Music Schools Demo and Jamkids
Juvenalia Music Institute
Musikinstitutet Kungsvägen
Rhythm Music School Tauko

Dance
Ballet School Heli Aalto
Estrada Music and Dance School
Espoon tanssiopisto (Dance Institute)
Dance Center Footlight
Dance School DCA

Theatre and circus
Espoo School of Performing Arts (ESKO)

Architecture, visual arts and crafts
Espoo School of Art
School of Architecture for Children and Youth (ARKKI)
Art School Tatavuu
General upper secondary education
STUDIES ON THE UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL

After nine years of basic education, young people aged 15–16 opt for general upper secondary education or vocational education and training. The education lasts three years on average and offers skills and knowledge needed in further studies and in working life.

Some general upper secondary schools in Espoo have a special educational mission from the Ministry of Education and Culture, such as the international IB diploma or specialisation in mathematics and natural sciences. Some schools also have weighed-curriculum programmes in particular subjects, such as in art and physical education, languages or in technology and media.

Instruction at the upper secondary level is free, but students purchase their own learning materials. They receive free daily meals and are entitled to government financial aid. Free psychologist, social officer and health care services are also guaranteed for the students, as they promote equality and student wellbeing.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE FOR FURTHER STUDIES

General upper secondary schools offer students high-quality education, an extensive basis as well as skills required for further studies, particularly for theoretical university studies and working life.

The education comprises languages, mathematical subjects, humanities and natural sciences as well as art and physical education. The studies train the students to plan their education in the long term, take responsibility for their studies and to practise regular self-assessment.

In general upper secondary education, students plan their own curriculum and set their own study goals. They may focus on specific subjects according to their interest. This creates a solid foundation for investigating and responding to their interests in the future.

Passing the final examination of general upper secondary school, the Matriculation Examination, entitles the candidate to apply for studies at university level and in polytechnic schools.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND DIVERSE ENVIRONMENTS

A student’s active role is considered vital for the learning process in general upper secondary school. Learning takes place in interaction with other students and teachers in diverse learning environments. Core competencies in general upper secondary school include critical thinking, creativity, active citizenship, communication skills and responsibility and enthusiasm for lifelong learning.

In Espoo, digital learning is an integral part of studying as it encourages students to learn collaboratively, outside the classroom. From August 2016 to 2019, all matriculation exams will be digitalised and all candidates will use computers to complete the tests.
A TYPICAL DAY IN GENERAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL (2ND YEAR STUDENT)

8.15–9.30 am
Advanced mathematics

9.45–11.00 am
Geography

11.05–11.50 am
French

11.55 am –12.25 pm
Free lunch in the school cafeteria

12.25–1.00 pm
Class continues: French

1.05–1.20 pm
Weekly tutoring sessions in the group’s home classroom

1.25–2.40 pm
Mother tongue (Finnish)

2.45–4.00 pm
Psychology, optional course

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND MOBILITY

Cultural identity, cultural knowledge and internationality are strongly emphasised in the curriculum of Espoo general upper secondary schools. Espoo’s extensive language programme supports the internationalisation of the students. Student exchange programmes and course trips abroad are increasingly popular.

Collaboration with sister schools around the world offers students and teachers alike a range of opportunities for international mobility and learning from other cultures.

PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

All general upper secondary schools in Espoo foster cooperation with working life. Students are encouraged to enhance their entrepreneurship skills by developing their attitude towards school work, making them familiar with careers and working life, and by bringing their own business ideas to life. General upper secondary schools in Espoo take part in a...
programme, which enables students to found a company for the duration of one academic year.

Another way of participating in entrepreneurship education is visiting the Me & MyCity (Yrityskylä). Me & MyCity is a learning innovation aimed at students. The concept covers society, working life and entrepreneurship. The learning environment is a miniature city where students work in a profession and function as consumers and citizens as part of society. Visits to Me & MyCity have become increasingly popular. In addition to these two models, the City of Espoo and individual schools have several long-term collaboration projects (entrepreneurs, associations) in promoting the theme.

In addition, general upper secondary schools, like comprehensive schools, take part in the accelerated co-creation of schools and companies (KYKY).

COLLABORATION WITH TERTIARY EDUCATION

General upper secondary schools in Espoo cooperate with universities and polytechnics in the capital region. Students are encouraged to visit universities and attend courses held by university students, for mutual benefit.

For instance, a course called Global Challenges was recently planned with the University of Helsinki. The course comprised eight themes concerning global challenges, from technological interactions to vegetarianism, and challenged the students to examine timely phenomena critically and creatively.

SCHOOL AS A SERVICE

Espoo’s new quality awarded innovation, School as a Service (SaaS) operating model, organises education in a new way. The model challenges the conventional learning environment, resolves challenges relating to the physical organisation of teaching and introduces new learning environments and communities. These in turn enable new pedagogy, a new operating culture in schools and user-oriented development.

SaaS was co-developed by the City of Espoo and Aalto University. The first SaaS project started at Haukilahden lukio (general upper secondary school) in autumn 2016. In the project, students began studying in decentralised facilities on the Aalto University campus in Otaniemi and sharing resources with the university. Aalto University turned its campus into a learning community, in which the university opened up and created value with the various parties involved.

From the school’s viewpoint, the results were excellent. School as a Service supported new ways of learning, increased the joy of learning, strengthened communality and opened the school doors to networking and doing things together. It made efficient use of spaces when facilities were flexible, and the rest of the environment was used for teaching.

The SaaS-model also promotes sustainable development by improving utilisation rates, and supports social density by increasing interaction.

Encouraged by the positive experiences, the second SaaS project began at Pohjois-Tapiolan lukio (general upper secondary school) in autumn 2017. Further uses of the concept are being planned.
Vocational education and training
OMNIA EDUCATION - ONE OF THE LARGEST VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN FINLAND

In Espoo, vocational education and training is provided by Omnia Education, a modern educational institution. Omnia offers vocational and general upper secondary education, youth workshops and liberal adult education for tens of thousands of young people and adults each year. Omnia is one of the largest providers of vocational education in Finland.

Omnia has a diverse selection of vocational upper secondary qualifications in almost every field. Working life training is included in all qualifications. At Omnia, it is also possible to combine studies from general upper secondary school and vocational education and training.

Learners at Omnia have plenty of international opportunities. Vocational qualifications in social and health care and in business and administration are available in English, and there are educational services for non-Finnish speaking students. International study paths for vocational studies are offered, and on-the-job learning can be completed abroad through international exchanges. Linguistic and cultural trips to Europe are also made on a regular basis.

Omnia participates in several international development projects aimed at creating new learning solutions and environments. Vocational education exports are carried out by Omnia Education Partners (OEP) world-wide.

THE MOST IMPORTANT TASK IN THE WORLD

Learners at Omnia have the most important task in the world – to make their dreams come true. The institution offers possibilities for learning new skills and updating their existing skills with training and courses. At Omnia, the learner can for example complete the Matriculation Examination or learn how to speak Finnish.

In addition to diverse education opportunities, Omnia is known as a place where it is good to be and learn.
Vocational education and training lasts from 2 to 4 years. In vocational studies, the learner can create his/her own individual study path. Studies may be chosen according to interests and hobbies, which makes studying meaningful. The learner may also plan his/her studies according to themed study paths.

A vehicle body repairer’s qualification, a course certificate for seamanship, the matriculation examination, apprenticeships, business partnerships, dude yoga, the right career - Omnia can provide all of these. Each learner is encouraged to do what he/she loves.

**THEMED STUDY PATHS**

- Active path
- International path
- Higher education path
- General upper secondary education path
- Sports path
- Entrepreneurship path
- Motorsports path

**FACTS AND KEY FIGURES**

- 8,300 students studying for a vocational qualification
- 1,900 general upper secondary students
- 1,200 attending professional development and further vocational training
- 230 young people in Youth Workshops
- 150 students in basic education
- 360 VALMA students, preparatory education for vocational training
- 49,000 students attending liberal adult education courses - approx. 3,000 courses
- 870 staff members
Education authorities
EDUCATION AUTHORITIES IN ESPOO

In Espoo, decision-making concerning education takes place at different administrative levels.

Espoo Education and Cultural Services administer their subordinate units and are responsible for the strategy and economy of the organisation as well as for planning and developing their operations and services.

The Finnish Education and Early Education Committee and the Swedish Education and Cultural Committee decide upon matters regarding education and early education. The committees are appointed by the Espoo City Council.

The Finnish Education Unit organises, evaluates and develops education in Finnish-language comprehensive schools and general upper secondary schools. The Finnish Early Education Unit organises, evaluates and develops the operations of Finnish-language day care and pre-primary education services.

Swedish Education and Cultural Services are responsible for organising, evaluating and developing Swedish-language day care, pre-primary education, comprehensive schools and general upper secondary schools as well as cultural activities, youth work and adult education in Swedish. The Swedish services are produced both independently and in cooperation with other units.

The strategy of the City of Espoo - the Espoo-story - promotes resident participation with new electronic tools and encounters. New participatory tools for education are also being developed well. The participation of pupils and parents / guardians is considered vital when decisions are made on education, concerning for example the curricula, school premises or work and holiday times.

SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS

School boards, appointed by the Committees, serve as bodies of elected officials in comprehensive schools and general upper secondary schools. The boards develop cooperation between home and school and decide on the school year plan, the use of the school’s allowance and on the school-specific curriculum.

Student associations help to construct communal spirit in all schools and improve everyday life at school from the perspective of pupils and students. Each grade appoints a representative to the school’s student association board.
**EDUCATION IN FINLAND**

The **Ministry of Education and Culture** drafts legislation and government resolutions concerning general education, and coordinates activities in its administrative branch. General education comprises pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, general upper secondary education and other non-vocational studies, such as those at liberal adult education institutions. It also includes morning and afternoon activities and basic art education. General education also incorporates matters related to pupil and student welfare.

The **Finnish National Agency for Education** is a national development agency responsible for the development of early childhood education and care, pre-primary, basic, general upper secondary, vocational upper secondary and adult education. It is subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Culture and its tasks and organisation are set out in legislation.

The agency also prepares the National Core Curriculum for basic education and general upper secondary education, based on which municipalities compile their municipality-specific curricula. Individual schools also prepare their own curricula.

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Adapted from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ brochure Education in Finland, Key to the nation’s success (2017).
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