

# GREENHEART TRAVEL High School Abroad

*Finland*

Curriculum Guidelines







## OVERVIEW OF THE FINNISH SCHOOL SYSTEM

The school year starts in August and ends in late May. The school year is divided into five or six periods. A separate schedule is given for each period concentrating on certain subjects. Each period ends with a “test week”, when students are tested on the subjects studied during that particular period. During the school year there will be a few weeks of vacation; a short fall break in October, one or two weeks over Christmas and New Year’s break, one week of Winter break in February–March and a few days for Easter.

High school (lukio) is voluntary in Finland and it consists of three grades. Nowadays, almost all high schools have a flexible “classless system” meaning that students can finish school at their own speed in 2-4 years. The high school students have big exams at the end of their studies, which is called the *matriculation exam*. When students matriculate, they can choose to enter higher education at University or Polytechnic.

### Subjects in Finland

Exchange students in Finland can usually choose quite freely the subjects they want to study. Some schools may want exchange students to study one foreign language, mathematics, and physical education. For exchange students, it may be very difficult to attend classes because of the language barrier. Schools are, however, very supportive and they understand the problems exchange students may confront, especially at the

beginning of their stay. Exchange students are recommended to attend extra Finnish language courses outside of school.

## **Schedule**

The school day usually starts between 8 and 10 am and ends between 2 and 4 pm. Classes are held from Monday to Friday and weekends are days off. Lunch break is approximately 45 minutes and the school lunch is free of charge for all students.

## **School Logistics**

Students usually walk to school or bicycle or bus. Schools normally offer a weekly schedule of physical education. Other sport activities may be available in your town and must be organized outside of school.

Lunch break is approximately 45 minutes, and the school lunch is free of charge for all students.

## **Exams and Transcripts**

International exchange students will usually be graded at a different level than local students, especially at the beginning of the program given their limited experience.

You will be able to get a transcript from this program, but the student is in charge of talking to the local school about the transcript before leaving the program.

## **What Should I Do Next?**

The best next step would be to meet with your high school guidance counselor or administration to discuss your interest in going abroad. Every school handles exchange students, transfer credits and going abroad differently so there isn't an "average" process that you can be guided through.

You should bring this document with you to the meeting with your counselor so they can get a better idea of what types of classes you would be taking abroad. This helps create a plan for possible transfer credits. During your meeting, you should ask about what credits you need to graduate and if any of those can be fulfilled from transfer credit abroad.

## Application Process with Greenheart Travel

We don't usually recommend starting the application process before meeting with your guidance counselor because we want to ensure that you receive sufficient credit from your time abroad. After you meet with them or have a better idea of your school's process, let us know! Our [application process is online](#) and happens in several steps, so it is pretty straightforward and we can help you start whenever you're ready.

In addition to completing an application, you will also be required to submit documents. You can be collecting the documents during the application process, but all documents will be due 14 days after you submit your deposit. The following documents will be required for all destinations:

- Letter of Recommendation (from a teacher, coach or guidance counselor)
- Transcript
- Dear Family Letter (one written by student, one by a parent)
- Parent Questionnaire
- Medical Form
- Copy of your passport

There may be additional paperwork required for specific destinations. Your program manager will inform you of what those documents are during the application process.