

Core curriculum – values and principles for  
primary and secondary education

## Contents

About the core curriculum.....	3
The purpose of the education .....	5
1. Core values of the education and training.....	6
1.1 Human dignity.....	6
1.2 Identity and cultural diversity .....	7
1.3 Critical thinking and ethical awareness .....	8
1.4 The joy of creating, engagement and the urge to explore .....	9
1.5 Respect for nature and environmental awareness.....	9
1.6 Democracy and participation.....	10
2. Principles for education and all-round development.....	12
2.1 Social learning and development .....	12
2.2 Competence in the subjects.....	13
2.3 The basic skills.....	14
2.4 Learning to learn.....	14
2.5 Interdisciplinary topics.....	15
2.5.1 Health and life skills .....	15
2.5.2 Democracy and citizenship.....	16
2.5.3 Sustainable development .....	16
3. Principles for the school's practice .....	18
3.1 An inclusive learning environment .....	18
3.2 Teaching and differentiated instruction .....	19
3.3 Cooperation between home and school .....	20
3.4 On-the-job training in a training establishment and working life .....	20
3.5 Professional environment and school development .....	21

## ABOUT THE CORE CURRICULUM

*The core curriculum – values and principles for primary and secondary education and training – is part of the curriculum as laid down by Royal Decree on 1 September 2017, and pursuant to section 1-5 of the Education Act.*

The core curriculum applies to primary and secondary education and training in Norway. Primary and secondary education and training consists of primary and lower secondary school and upper secondary education and training. It thus comprises the education children and young people receive from Year 1 at the primary level through to education programmes preparing for university and to vocational programmes at the upper secondary level, parts of which take place in a training establishment and working life.

The core curriculum of the curriculum elaborates on the core values in the objectives clause in the Education Act and the overriding principles for primary and secondary education and training. It comprises this introduction, a summary of the objects clause and three chapters: 1. Core values of the education and training, 2. Principles for education and all-round development and 3. Principles for the school's practice. The subject curricula describe the content and goals of the subjects. The core curriculum gives direction for the teaching and training in the subjects, and all the subjects contribute to realising the broad purpose of primary and secondary education and training. The curriculum in its entirety is the foundation for the teaching and training, where the different sections are closely linked and are to be used together.

The core curriculum describes the fundamental approach that shall direct the pedagogical practice in all lower and secondary education and training. It shall also serve as the foundation for the collaboration between home and school. The core curriculum clarifies the responsibility of the school and training establishments when it comes to education and all-round development (Bildung) and the development of the competence of all participants in primary and secondary education and training. Everyone working in primary and secondary education and training must allow this fundamental approach to guide the planning, implementation and development of the teaching and training.

The core curriculum's main target group comprises everyone with a responsibility for the teaching and training: teachers, instructors, assistants, school leaders, school owners [local or county authority], other professional groups in school and training establishments. The core curriculum applies to the teaching and training given to pupils, apprentices, training candidates, certificate of practice candidates and adult participants in primary and secondary school, upper secondary education and adult education. In the core curriculum, the terms "pupil", "teacher" and "school" are mainly used about everyone taking part in education and training, all staff, all schools and all training establishments. Teacher training shall be based on the Education Act and the curriculum in force for primary and secondary education and training, including the core curriculum.

This core curriculum has the status as regulations together with the rest of the curriculum, and must be read in light of the Education Act and other relevant provisions applying to teaching and training in schools and training establishments. For example, the discussion on differentiated instruction in Chapter 3 must be considered together with the provisions governing differentiated instruction, special-needs education, pupil assessment, organisation of the teaching and parent-school cooperation.

The school and the training establishment are equal learning arenas. The teaching and training in these arenas is based on the same core values and the same principles, but consideration must be given to the fact that training in working life has requirements and frameworks that are different from teaching in school. In the same way as the school, training establishments are responsible for ensuring that the training given is in accordance with the Education Act and the curriculum. The tri-partite collaboration [the state, and employer and employee associations] has a long tradition of developing vocational education and training together.

According to the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, the Sami in Norway have the status as an indigenous people. The Norwegian Constitution lays down the principle that the central authorities must make it possible for the Sami to protect and develop the Sami languages, culture and societal life, a principle that is addressed in the Education Act. The core curriculum also applies to the Sami school. The designation "the Sami school" is used about education and training which follows a parallel and equal Sami curriculum. The Sami curriculum applies in the municipalities that are part of the administrative area for Sami languages. The same curriculum also applies to pupils who have the right to be taught *in* one of the Sami languages in the rest of Norway. Pupils in the rest of Norway who have the right to learn a Sami language must follow the Sami curriculum in the Sami subject. School is responsible for ensuring that access is given to these rights.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE EDUCATION

The objectives clause in the Education Act states:

*Education and training in schools and training establishments shall, in collaboration and agreement with the home, open doors to the world and give the pupils and apprentices historical and cultural insight and anchorage.*

*Education and training shall be based on fundamental values in Christian and humanist heritage and traditions, such as respect for human dignity and nature, and on intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in human rights.*

*Education and training shall help to increase the knowledge and understanding of the national cultural heritage and our common international cultural traditions.*

*Education and training shall provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for the individual's convictions. They are to promote democracy, equality and scientific thinking.*

*The pupils and apprentices shall develop knowledge, skills and attitudes so that they can master their lives and can take part in working life and society. They shall have the opportunity to be creative, committed and inquisitive.*

*The pupils and apprentices shall learn to think critically and act ethically and with environmental awareness. They shall have joint responsibility and the right to participate.*

*Schools and training establishments shall meet the pupils and apprentices with trust, respect and demands, and give them challenges that promote formation and the desire to learn. All forms of discrimination shall be combated.*

(Section 1-1 of the Education Act)

## **1. CORE VALUES OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

*School shall base its practice on the values in the objectives clause of the Education Act.*

The objectives clause expresses values that unite the Norwegian society. These values, the foundation of our democracy, shall help us to live, learn and work together in a complex world and with an uncertain future. The core values are based on Christian and humanist heritage and traditions. They are also expressed in different religions and worldviews and are rooted in human rights.

These values are the foundation of the activities in school. They must be used actively and have importance for each pupil in the school environment through the imparting of knowledge and development of attitudes and competence. The values must have impact on the way the school and teachers interact with the pupil and the home. What is in the best interests of the pupil must always be a fundamental consideration. There will always be tensions between different interests and views. Teachers must therefore use their professional judgment so that each pupil is given the best possible care within the school environment.

The Sami school shall ensure that the pupils receive education and training based on Sami values and the Sami languages, culture and societal life. The values in the objectives clause are also Sami values and apply in the Sami school. It is important to have a holistic-Sami perspective and an indigenous-people's perspective in the Sami school, and to focus on material and immaterial cultural heritage, such as traditional knowledge, *duodji/duodje/duedtie* and the importance of familial relations.

### **1.1 Human dignity**

*School shall ensure that human dignity and the values supporting this are the foundation for the education and training and all activities.*

The objectives clause is based on the inviolability of human dignity and that all people are equal regardless of what makes us different. When teachers show care for the pupils and acknowledge each individual, human dignity is then recognised as a fundamental value for the school and society.

Based on human dignity, human rights are an important part of the foundation of our constitutional state. They are based on universal values that apply to all people regardless of who they are, where they come from and where they are. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is also a part of human rights, giving children and young people special protection. The education and training given must comply with human rights, and the pupils must also acquire knowledge about these rights.

Equality and equal rights are values that have been fought for throughout history and which are in constant need of protection and reinforcement. School shall present knowledge and promote attitudes which safeguard these values. All pupils shall be

treated equally, and no pupil is to be subjected to discrimination. The pupils must also be given equal opportunities so they can make independent choices. School must consider the diversity of pupils and facilitate for each pupil to experience belonging in school and society. We may all experience that we feel different and stand out from the others around us. Therefore we need acknowledgement and appreciation of differences.

Human beings are vulnerable and make mistakes. Forgiveness, charity and solidarity are necessary principles for the growth and development of human beings. Each person's convictions and principles must be taken seriously so that we can all think, believe and express ourselves freely. Pupils must also contribute to the protection of human dignity and reflect on how they can prevent the violation of human dignity.

## **1.2 Identity and cultural diversity**

*School shall give pupils historical and cultural insight that will give them a good foundation in their lives and help each pupil to preserve and develop her or his identity in an inclusive and diverse environment.*

Insight into our history and culture is important for developing the identities of pupils and their belonging in society. The pupils shall learn about the values and traditions which contribute to uniting people in our country. Christian and humanist heritage and traditions are an important part of Norway's collective cultural heritage and have played a vital role in the development of our democracy. Sami cultural heritage is part of Norway's cultural heritage. Our shared cultural heritage has developed throughout history and must be carried forward by present and future generations.

Common reference frameworks are important for each person's sense of belonging in society. This creates solidarity and connects each individual's identity to the greater community and to a historical context. A common framework gives and shall give room for diversity, and the pupils must be given insight into how we live together with different perspectives, attitudes and views of life. The experiences the pupils gain in the encounter with different cultural expressions and traditions help them to form their identity. A good society is founded on the ideals of inclusiveness and diversity.

The teaching and training shall ensure that the pupils are confident in their language proficiency, that they develop their language identity and that they are able to use language to think, create meaning, communicate and connect with others. Language gives us a sense of belonging and cultural awareness. In Norway, Norwegian and the Sami languages, South Sami, Lule Sami and North Sami, have equal standing. The Norwegian language comprises two equal forms of Norwegian *bokmål* and *nynorsk*. Norwegian sign language is also recognised as language in its own right in Norway. Knowledge about the linguistic diversity in society provides all pupils with valuable insight into different forms of expression, ideas and traditions. All pupils shall experience that being proficient in a number of languages is a resource, both in school and society at large.

Through the teaching and training the pupils shall gain insight into the indigenous Sami people's history, culture, societal life and rights. The pupils shall learn about diversity and variation in Sami culture and societal life.

Five groups with a long-standing attachment to Norway have the status as national minorities in accordance with our international obligations: Jews, Kvens/Norwegian Finns (people of Finnish descent in northern Norway), Forest Finns (Finnish people who settled in Norway), roma (the East European branch of the Romani, Gypsies) and Romani people/Tater (the Romanisel/Sinti, the western branch of the Romani, travellers). These groups have contributed to the Norwegian cultural heritage, and the teaching and training shall impart knowledge about these groups.

Throughout history the Norwegian society has been influenced by different trends and cultural traditions. In a time when the population is more diversified than ever before, and where the world is coming closer together, language skills and cultural understanding are growing in importance. School shall support the development of each person's identity, make the pupils confident in who they are, and also present common values that are needed to participate in this diverse society and to open doors to the world and the future.

### **1.3 Critical thinking and ethical awareness**

*School shall help pupils to be inquisitive and ask questions, develop scientific and critical thinking and act with ethical awareness.*

The teaching and training shall give the pupils understanding of critical and scientific thinking. Critical and scientific thinking means applying reason in an inquisitive and systematic way when working with specific practical challenges, phenomena, expressions and forms of knowledge. The teaching and training must create understanding that the methodologies for examining the real world must be adapted to what we want to study, and that the choice of methodology influences what we see.

If new insight is to emerge, established ideas must be scrutinised and criticised by using theories, methods, arguments, experiences and evidence. The pupils must be able to assess different sources of knowledge and think critically about how knowledge is developed. They must also be able to understand that their own experiences, points of view and convictions may be incomplete or erroneous. Critical reflection requires knowledge, but there is also room for uncertainty and unpredictability. The teaching and training must therefore seek a balance between respect for established knowledge and the explorative and creative thinking required to develop new knowledge.

Ethical awareness, which means balancing different considerations, is necessary if one is to be a reflecting and responsible human being. The teaching and training must develop the pupils' ability to make ethical assessments and help them to be cognisant of ethical issues.



Critical thinking and ethical awareness are a requirement for and part of what it means to learn in different contexts and will therefore help the pupils to develop good judgment. Practical work in a vocation, profession or artistic field also requires the ability to reflect, judge and evaluate.

#### **1.4 The joy of creating, engagement and the urge to explore**

*School shall allow the pupils to experience the joy of creating, engagement and the urge to explore, and allow them to experience seeing opportunities and transforming ideas into practical actions.*

Children and young people are curious and want to discover and create. The teaching and training must give the pupils rich opportunities to become engaged and develop the urge to explore. The ability to ask questions, explore and experiment are important for in-depth learning. The school must respect and nurture different ways of exploring and creating. The pupils must learn and develop through sensory perceptions and thinking, aesthetic forms of expressions and practical activities. For the youngest children in school, playing is necessary for well-being and development, but in education as a whole, play provides opportunities for creative and meaningful learning.

Creative abilities contribute to enriching society. Collaboration inspires innovation and entrepreneurship so that new ideas can be transformed into action. Pupils who learn about and through creative activities develop the ability to express themselves in different ways, and to solve problems and ask new questions.

Art and culture include many inventive and creative fields that have impact on our physical environment and social development. Our aesthetic sense is developed when we are exposed to different cultural expressions, and this helps to point out new perspectives. Art and cultural expressions are also important for individual personal development. Cultural experiences are also intrinsically valuable, and the pupils must be allowed to experience a wide range of cultural expressions in their time in school.

In a larger perspective, creative learning processes are also a necessary part of the pupils' development as human beings and in the development of their identity. The school must appreciate and stimulate the curiosity and creative power of the pupils, and the pupils must be allowed to use their creative energy throughout their entire schooling.

#### **1.5 Respect for nature and environmental awareness**

*School shall help the pupils to develop an appreciation of nature so they can enjoy and respect nature and develop climate and environmental awareness.*

Human beings are part of nature and are responsible for taking good care of it. Throughout their schooling the pupils must acquire knowledge about and develop respect for nature. They must experience nature and see it as a resource and as a source of utility, joy, health and learning. The pupils shall develop awareness of how our

lifestyles impact nature and the climate, and thus also our societies. The school shall help the pupils to develop the willingness to protect the environment.

Children and young people will need to deal with the today's and tomorrow's challenges, and our common future depends on the coming generations and their willingness and ability to protect our world. Global climate changes, pollution and loss of biological diversity are some of the greatest environmental threats in the world. These challenges must be solved together. We need knowledge, ethical awareness and technological innovation to find solutions and make the necessary changes to our lifestyle to protect life on earth.

### **1.6 Democracy and participation**

*School shall provide the pupils with the opportunity to participate in and learn what democracy means in practice.*

The teaching and training shall promote belief in democratic values and in democracy as a form of government. It shall give the pupils an understanding of the basic rules of democracy and the importance of protecting them. Participating in society means respecting and endorsing fundamental democratic values, such as mutual respect, tolerance, individual freedom of faith and speech, and free elections. Democratic values shall be promoted through active participation throughout the entire learning path.

School shall promote democratic values and attitudes that can counteract prejudice and discrimination. Pupils shall learn in school to respect the fact that people are different and learn to solve conflicts peacefully.

A democratic society is based on the idea that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes. Protecting the minority is an important principle in a democratic state governed by law and in a democratic society. A democratic state also protects indigenous peoples and minorities. The indigenous-people perspective is part of the pupils' education in democracy. All the participants in the school environment must develop awareness of minority and majority perspectives and ensure that there is room for collaboration, dialogue and disagreement. Nurturing diversity on the one hand and including the individual on the other demands awareness of values and the exercising of professional judgment.

The school must be a venue where children and young people experience democracy in practice. The pupils must experience that they are heard in the day-to-day affairs in school, that they have genuine influence and that they can have impact on matters that concern them. They must gain experience and practise different forms of democratic participation in the day-to-day work with their subjects, and through such bodies as pupil councils and advisory bodies. The dialogue between teacher and pupils, and between the school and the home, must be based on mutual respect. When the voices of the pupils are heard in school, they will experience how they can make their own considered

decisions. Such experiences have a value in the here and now, and prepare the pupils for becoming responsible citizens in society.

## **2. PRINCIPLES FOR EDUCATION AND ALL-ROUND DEVELOPMENT**

The school's mission is the education and all-round development (Bildung) of all pupils. Education and all-round development are interlinked and mutually dependent, and their underlying principles should help schools accomplish this dual mission.

Primary and secondary education and training is an important part of a lifelong process which has the individual's all-round development, intellectual freedom, independence, responsibility and compassion for others as its goal. The teaching and training shall give the pupils a good foundation for understanding themselves, others and the world, and for making good choices in life. It shall also provide a good point of departure for participation in all areas of education, work and societal life. At the same time, children and young people are living in the here and now, and school must recognise the intrinsic value of childhood and the adolescent years.

The teaching in school shall develop the all-round person and give each pupil the opportunity to learn and develop their skills and abilities. This process occurs when the pupils acquire knowledge about and insight into nature and the environment, language and history, society and working life, art and culture, and religion and worldviews. This all-round education is also achieved through the experiences and practical challenges found in the teaching and everyday school affairs. A broad range of activities, from structured and goal-oriented work to spontaneous play will give the pupils a wealth of experiences. Pupils also develop through interaction with others and through physical and aesthetic activities which promote the joy of movement and mastering. This occurs when they are working on their own and when they cooperate with others. They develop when they struggle with theoretical challenges using formulas and academic material in the subjects, and when using tools to master a practical task. Pupils develop when they learn how to find correct answers, but also when they understand that simple and set answers are not always easy to find.

### **2.1 Social learning and development**

*School shall support and contribute to the social learning and development of the pupils through work with subjects and everyday affairs in school.*

A pupil's identity and self-image, opinions and attitudes grow in interaction with others. Social learning takes place in both the teaching, training and in all the other activities at school. Learning subject matter cannot be isolated from social learning. Bearing this in mind, in the day-to-day work, the pupils' academic and social learning and development are interconnected.

The ability to understand what others think, feel and experience is the basis for empathy and friendship between pupils. Dialogue is crucial in social learning, and the school must teach the value and importance of a listening dialogue to deal with opposition. When

interacting with their pupils, the teachers must promote communication and collaboration that will give the pupils the confidence and courage to express their own opinions and to point out issues on the behalf of others. To learn to listen to others and also argue for one's own views will give the pupils the platform for dealing with disagreements and conflicts, and for seeking solutions together. Everyone must learn to cooperate, function together with others and develop the ability to participate and take responsibility. The pupils and their homes are also responsible for contributing to a good environment and sense of belonging. Just as each pupil contributes to the environment in school, so will this environment contribute to the individual's well-being, development and learning.

Each individual's good judgment is necessary to protect privacy and respect for one's private life. Utterances that are hateful and show a lack of respect must not be tolerated in school. The pupils must be trained to act in a considerate way and develop awareness of their own attitudes. Different communication forms and use of technology will enrich and challenge the social environment. All pupils must learn to act responsibly in all contexts in and outside school.

## **2.2 Competence in the subjects**

*School shall understand that teaching and training in the subjects is linked to the values and principles the entire education path is based on.*

Learning subject content is a key part of the educational and all-round development mission of primary and secondary education and training. The subject curricula establish the content of the various subjects and are based on the following definition of competence:

*Competence is the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills to master challenges and solve tasks in familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations.  
Competence includes understanding and the ability to reflect and think critically.*

This understanding of the competence concept must underpin school's work with the subject curricula and the assessment of the pupils' competence in the subjects. The competence goals in the subjects must be considered together, both in and across the subjects. The competence goals must also be understood in light of the objectives clause and the other sections of the curriculum.

Knowledge means being familiar with and understanding facts, concepts, theories, ideas and relationships in various subject fields and topic areas. Skills are used to master actions or procedures in order to carry out tasks or solve problems, and comprise, for example, motor, practical, cognitive, social, creative and linguistic skills. The competence concept also includes understanding and the ability to reflect and think critically in subjects, which is vital for understanding theoretical reasoning and for carrying out practical tasks. Reflection and critical thinking are part of developing attitudes and ethical judgment.

School must provide room for in-depth learning so that the pupils develop understanding of key elements and relationships in a subject, and so they can learn to apply subject knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar contexts. In their work in the subjects, the pupils shall be given tasks and participate in varied activities with increasing complexity. In-depth learning implies applying knowledge and skills in different ways so that over time the pupils will be able to master various types of challenges in the subject, individually and in interaction with others.

The teachers and school leaders must regularly reflect on the connection between the teaching and training in the subjects and the overriding goals, values and principles for the teaching and training.

### **2.3 The basic skills**

*School shall facilitate for and support the pupils' development in the five basic skills throughout the entire learning path.*

The curriculum defines five basic skills: reading, writing, numeracy, oral skills and digital skills. These skills are part of the competence in the subjects and necessary tools for learning and understanding them. They are also important for developing the identity and social relations of each pupil, and for the ability to participate in education, work and societal life.

The development of the basic skills is important throughout the entire learning path. For example, there is continuous progression, starting from when one first learns to read and write all the way to acquiring the ability to read advanced subject texts.

In the teaching and training, the basic skills must be considered in connection with each other and across subjects. The basic skills are incorporated in all the subjects, but the subjects have different roles in the development of the five skills. Some subjects will have more responsibility than others. Developing subject competence must therefore occur in accordance with the development of subject skills as described in the subject curriculum. All teachers in all subjects must support the pupils in their work with the basic skills.

### **2.4 Learning to learn**

*School shall help the pupils to reflect on their own learning, understand their own learning processes and acquire knowledge independently.*

Understanding their own learning processes and their development in subjects will contribute to the pupils' independence and sense of mastering. The teaching and training shall fuel the pupils' motivation, promote good attitudes and learning strategies, and form the basis for lifelong learning. This means that the teachers must monitor their pupils' development closely and give them support appropriate for their age, maturity and functional level.

By reflecting on learning, both their own and others', the pupils can gradually develop an awareness of their own learning processes. Pupils who learn to formulate questions, seek answers and express their understanding in various ways will gradually be able to assume an active role in their own learning and development. By working with challenges in the subjects, the pupils will acquire knowledge about how they learn and develop in each subject. Deeper insight is developed when the pupils understand relationships between fields of knowledge and when they master a variety of strategies to acquire, share and use knowledge critically.

In spite of their personal efforts and use of learning strategies some pupils will have learning challenges. There are often many and complex reasons for this. The ambition of developing the lifelong learning ability in all pupils thus requires a broad approach from the school.

## **2.5 Interdisciplinary topics**

*School shall facilitate for learning in the three interdisciplinary topics health and life skills, democracy and citizenship, and sustainable development.*

These three interdisciplinary topics in the curriculum are based on prevailing societal challenges which demand engagement and effort from individuals and local communities, nationally and globally. The pupils develop competence in connection with the interdisciplinary topics by working with issues from various subjects. They shall gain insight into challenges and dilemmas in these topics. Pupils must understand where we can find solutions through knowledge and collaboration, and they must learn about the relationship between actions and consequences.

The knowledge base for finding solutions to problems can be found in many subjects, and the topics must help the pupils to achieve understanding and to see connections across subjects. The goals for what the pupils should learn in the topics are stated in the competence goals for the individual subjects where this is relevant.

### **2.5.1 Health and life skills**

The school's interdisciplinary topic health and life skills shall give the pupils competence which promotes sound physical and mental health, and which provides opportunities for making responsible life choices. In the childhood and adolescent years, the development of a positive self-image and confident identity is particularly important.

A society which gives the individual the platform from which to make good health choices will have great impact on health. Life skills refers to the ability to understand and influence factors that are important for mastering one's own life. This topic shall help the pupils learn to deal with success and failure, and personal and practical challenges in the best possible way.

Relevant areas within this topic are physical and mental health, lifestyle habits, sexuality and gender, drug abuse, media use and consumption and personal economy. Other

issues that come under this topic are value choices and the importance of meaning in life and relations with others, the ability to draw boundaries and to respect others' boundaries, and the ability to deal with thoughts, feelings and relationships.

### **2.5.2 Democracy and citizenship**

Democracy and citizenship as an interdisciplinary topic in school shall give the pupils knowledge about the basic tenets of democracy and its values and rules, and prepare them for participating in democratic processes. The teaching and training shall give the pupils an understanding of the relationship between democracy and key human rights, such as freedom of speech, the right to vote and freedom of association. They shall gain insight into the fact that democracy has different forms and expressions.

By working with the democracy and citizenship topic the pupils shall develop an understanding of the relationship between individual rights and obligations. Individuals have the right to participate in political activities, while society is dependent on citizens exercising their rights to participate in politics and influence developments in the civil society. The school shall stimulate the pupils to become active citizens, and give them the competence to participate in developing democracy in Norway.

The teaching and training shall give the pupils knowledge and skills to face challenges in accordance with democratic principles. They shall understand dilemmas that arise when recognising both the preponderance of the majority and the rights of the minority. They shall train their ability to think critically, learn to deal with conflicts of opinion and respect disagreement. Through their work with the topic the pupils shall learn why democracy cannot be taken for granted and understand that it must be developed and maintained.

### **2.5.3 Sustainable development**

Sustainable development as an interdisciplinary topic in school shall help the pupils to understand basic dilemmas and developments in society, and how they can be dealt with. Sustainable development refers to protecting life on earth and providing for the needs of people who live here now without destroying the possibilities for future generations to fill their needs. Sustainable development is based on the understanding that social, economic and environmental conditions are interconnected. Our lifestyles and resource consumption have local, regional and global consequences.

In working with this topic the pupils shall develop competence which enables them to make responsible choices and to act ethically and with environmental awareness. The pupils must learn to understand that all individual activities and choices are significant. This topic includes issues relating to the environment and climate, poverty and distribution of resources, conflicts, health, equality, demographics and education. The pupils shall learn about the different aspects of sustainable development.

Technology has substantial impact on humans beings, the environment and society. Technological competence and knowledge about the links between technology and the



social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development are thus key discussion points here. While technological development may help to solve problems, it may also create new ones. Knowledge about technology implies understanding which dilemmas may arise due to the use of technology, and how these can be dealt with.

### **3. PRINCIPLES FOR THE SCHOOL'S PRACTICE**

The school shall treat pupils with trust and respect and also place demands on them and give them challenges that will promote their all-round development and desire to learn. To do this successfully, the school must create a good learning environment and differentiate the teaching and training in collaboration with the pupil and the home. This requires professionals who are involved in the development of school.

#### **3.1 An inclusive learning environment**

*School shall develop an inclusive environment that promotes health, well-being and learning for all.*

A benevolent and supportive learning environment is the basis for a positive culture where the pupils are encouraged and stimulated to develop academically and socially. If pupils feel anxious and uncertain, learning may be undermined. Confidence-inspiring learning environments are developed and maintained by open, clear and caring adults who work in collaboration with the pupils. Together, the school staff, parents, guardians and pupils are responsible for promoting health, well-being and learning, and for preventing bullying and abuse. When developing an inclusive and inspiring learning environment, diversity must be acknowledged as a resource.

Pupil involvement must be a part of the school's practice. The pupils must participate and assume co-responsibility in the learning environment which they create together with the teachers every day. Pupils think, experience and learn in interaction with others through learning processes, communication and collaboration. The school shall teach the pupils to demonstrate good judgment when they express themselves about others and shall ensure that they learn to interact in an appropriate way in varying contexts.

The norms and values which characterise the learning environment have major impact on the social development of the pupils. Friendship creates belonging and makes us all less vulnerable. When we are acknowledged and are shown trust, we learn to appreciate ourselves and others. The pupils shall learn to respect uniqueness and understand that everyone has a place in the school community. Each pupil has their own history, and they have hopes and ambitions for the future. When children and young people are treated with respect and acknowledgment in the teaching and training, their sense of belonging will be strengthened.

By varying its learning arenas, school can give pupils practical and realistic experiences which promote motivation and improve insight. The involvement of the local community and society may contribute positively to the development of the school and the pupils. Various forms of local, national and international cooperation will add up-to-date relevance to the pupils' learning. Knowledge exchange with individuals of all ages and from all over the globe will give the pupils perspectives on their own learning, their all-round development as young people and their identity, and show the value of cooperation across linguistic, political and cultural boundaries.

### **3.2 Teaching and differentiated instruction**

*School shall facilitate for learning for all pupils and stimulate each pupil's motivation, willingness to learn and faith in their own mastering.*

The pupils' learning and development must be the focus of the school's activities. The pupils come to school with different experiences, prior knowledge, attitudes and needs. School must give all pupils equal opportunities to learn and develop, regardless their background and aptitudes. Good classroom management is based on insight into the needs of the pupils, warm relations and professional judgment. To create motivation and the joy of learning in the teaching situation, a broad repertoire of learning activities and resources within a predictable framework is needed.

School's expectations for each pupil when it comes to effort and mastering influence learning and the belief in one's own abilities and opportunities. Therefore it is extremely important that the school has ambitious but realistic expectations for all pupils, and that the teachers exercise professional judgment when assessing the pupils' learning.

The pupils must be given the time to explore various subject areas in depth. Giving room for in-depth learning requires that the school takes into consideration that the pupils are different and learn at different speeds and with different progression. This requires knowledge about how pupils learn and what they know from before, and requires close follow-up of each pupil. Pupils who experience mastering are motivated to be more persevering and independent. Trial and error may be a source of learning and acknowledgment, and the pupils must be encouraged to try to do their best even when success is not guaranteed. School is responsible for furnishing pupils with the confidence to cross boundaries and try something difficult.

Assessments of the subject competence of the pupils should give an idea of what they know and can do, but a key purpose of assessment is also to promote learning and development. Mapping and observation of the pupils are aids for following up each pupil individually and for developing school's practice. However, this has little value if it does not lead to constructive measures. School and the teachers must balance the need for good information about pupils' learning and unwelcome consequences of different assessment situations. Unfortunate use of assessment may undermine a person's self-image and prevent the development of a good learning environment.

Differentiated instruction means that the school adapts the teaching so that all pupils have the best possible learning outcome from the ordinary teaching. School can adapt the teaching by using various work methods and pedagogical approaches, by using various teaching aids, by the way they organise the teaching and by working with the learning environment, subject curricula and assessment. The teachers must use good judgment when differentiating the instruction in the subject.

Good assessment, where expectations are clear and the pupil participates and is heard along the way in the learning work, is a key to differentiated instruction. In their teaching and training, the teachers shall support and guide the pupils so they will be able to set their own goals, choose appropriate approaches and assess their own development. School must plan for good cohesion in the pupils' learning in the different subjects, and for the teaching and training to be experienced as something that they can cope with and that is sufficiently challenging.

Differentiated instruction applies to all pupils and shall for the most part take place through variation and adaptation to the diversity in the pupil group within the learning community. Pupils who need differentiated instruction beyond the ordinary teaching programme are entitled to special-needs education. Pupils may struggle, and there may be learning difficulties throughout the entire learning path. The teachers can receive good support from other professional groups both to reveal challenges and to give the pupils the assistance they need. It can be vitally important for a pupil's development that measures are launched as quickly as possible once the challenges have been discovered.

### **3.3 Cooperation between home and school**

*The teaching and training shall be given in cooperation and understanding with the home, and this cooperation shall contribute to strengthening the pupils' learning and development.*

Good communication between the home and school contributes positively to the school's work with the learning environment and to the pupils' early-development environment. The parents and guardians have the main responsibility for a child's upbringing and development. They are the most important caregivers for children and young people and have knowledge school can use to support the pupil's education and all-round development. School has the overriding responsibility for initiating and facilitating for cooperation. This means ensuring that parents and guardians receive necessary information, and that they are given the opportunity to have influence on their children's everyday school life.

The attitude to school that the home has is important for a pupil's engagement and efforts in school. In their interactions with the school, parents and guardians have different needs, expectations and opinions about the school's goals and practice. This may create tensions that the school may find demanding to work with. The school must state clearly what it is able to and must provide, and what is expected of the home. Good and trusting dialogue is a mutual responsibility. However, the school must consider that not all the pupils have equal opportunities to receive assistance and support in the home.

### **3.4 On-the-job training in a training establishment and working life**

*On-the-job training in a training establishment and working life shall provide practical experience and relevant competence, and it shall prepare the pupils for the vocational demands and expectations they will encounter in working life.*

On-the-job training in a training establishment is part of the learning path for apprentices, training candidates and certificate of practice candidates. Moreover, many pupils will receive parts of their primary and secondary education and training in working life. Vocational training shall develop and train competent, knowledgeable, creative and innovative skilled workers. Working life is diverse and provides valuable experience. Apprentices, training candidates and certificate of practice candidates shall experience and take part in the traditions, values and culture of the training establishment and the trade.

Pupils, apprentices, training candidates and certificate of practice candidates enter working life with different backgrounds and learning needs. Good cooperation between school and working life increases the chances that more individuals can actively participate in their own education and acquire a sense of belonging in working and societal life. Cooperation also creates mutual understanding and promotes the goal of the training, which is to prepare each pupil for his or her future working life.

### **3.5 Professional environment and school development**

*School should be a professional environment where teachers, leaders and other members of staff reflect on common values, and assess and develop their practice.*

School as a societal institution is obliged to base itself on and practise the values and principles that have been established for primary and secondary education and training. According to their different roles, the school owners [local or county authority], school leaders and teachers have the joint responsibility for laying the ground for good development in school. Together they must ensure that the school's practice complies with the entire curriculum. Good and systematic cooperation between early childhood education and school, between the different school levels along the learning path, and between school and home will ease the transition from one level to the next.

A teacher is a role model who shall instil confidence and guide the pupils on their journey through the learning path. The teacher is crucial when it comes to creating a learning environment that motivates and helps the pupils to learn and develop. To accomplish this the teacher must show care for each pupil. The teacher must help pupils who make unfortunate choices, who do not feel included or who are struggling to learn what is wanted and expected of them. By creating an environment with solidarity, where the pupils feel they belong, the teacher will be developing a learning culture that gives the pupils academic and emotional support.

The teaching profession practises the profession according to core values and a common knowledge base that takes research and experience into consideration. The profession and the teacher are responsible for exercising good judgment in complex situations. Teachers and leaders develop academic, educational, didactic and pedagogical content knowledge judgment in dialogues and interaction with colleagues. The exercise and development of professional judgment occurs individually and together with others. Professional judgement also requires being regularly updated. The teaching profession

must therefore assess its educational practice so that it gives individual pupils and groups of pupils the best possible teaching.

Complex educational issues rarely have fixed answers. School staff must therefore have acceptance for and have the opportunity to apply their judgment skills in the exercise of their profession. Teachers must consider carefully what, how and why pupils learn, and how they can lead and support the pupils' education and all-round development optimally. Teachers who reflect together on and assess planning and implementation of their teaching develop a richer understanding of good educational practice. This must be done while bearing in mind the profession's knowledge base and the core values for primary and secondary education and training.

Professional collaboration in school requires good leadership. Good school leadership in turn requires legitimacy in professional leadership and good understanding of educational and other challenges teachers and other members of staff are facing. Good leadership gives priority to developing collaboration and relationships to build trust in the organisation. The school leaders are in charge of and facilitate for the learning and development of pupils and teachers. The school leaders must lead the educational and professional collaboration between the teachers and help to develop a stable and positive environment where everyone is focused on performing at his or her best. It is the duty of the school leaders to ensure that all staff can make use of their strong sides, experience mastering and develop in their profession.

Good school development requires that there is room to ask questions and look for answers, and needs a professional environment interested in how school's practice contributes to the pupils' learning and development. All school staff must take an active part in the professional learning environment to develop the school. This means that everyone in the environment must reflect on the value choices and development needs, and use research, experience-based knowledge and ethical assessments as the grounds on which to base targeted measures. Well-developed structures for collaboration, support and guidance between colleagues and across schools promote a sharing and learning culture.

The school's broad purpose is realised in the daily interaction between pupils and teachers. In specific teaching situations teachers will face tensions between different purposes and values. They must always strive to balance between consideration of individual pupils and consideration of the entire group, between supporting and demanding, between the work in school here and now and the work to prepare for the future. All pupils are different, and what is in each pupil's best interest is the foundation of all education. This question must be answered again and again every day by everyone working in school.