



Problematic School Absenteeism

Improving Systems and Tools

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships
A NORDIC COLLABORATION – REPORT 2 | NOVEMBER 2022

Report 2:

Problematic School Absenteeism – Improving Systems and Tools

Preface.....	3
Project goals	3
Project phases	3
Report 2	3
Acknowledgements	4
1. Introduction.....	7
Objectives	7
2. Background.....	8
monitor, treat and prevent	9
3. Theoretical foundation.....	9
4. A Nordic overview of systems and tools	13
4.1. Framework factors	13
4.1.1. Understanding and competences	14
4.1.2 Collaboration	15
4.1.3. Student rights	16
4.1.4. Routines.....	16
4.2. Levels and dimensions.....	16
4.3 Attendance	17
4.4 Well-being.....	22
4.5 Learning	27
4.6 Case example.....	33
What was done, what could have helped	34
Targeted support:.....	35
What was done, what could have helped	35
Intensive support:.....	36
What was done and the way back.....	36
Final remarks	38
References	39
Appendix.....	41
Appendix 1 – Table of assessment tools	42
Appendix 2 – A case formulation model	45
Appendix 3 – A common understanding	46
Appendix 4.....	47
Appendix 5.....	62

Preface

Project goals

The Erasmus+ project *Problematic School Absence – Improving Systems and Tools* aims to improve existing systems and propose initiatives targeted at students with problematic school absence.

The Nordic project examines shared challenges in primary and secondary education systems and works to develop a common overview to improve practices related to problematic school absence. Societal changes, research results and experiences working with problematic school absence show the need to further improve existing routines and practices in schools and in the municipalities.

Project phases

The project has been divided into two main phases over 36 months. The first phase resulted in a description of current guidelines and practices in partner countries, while the second phase aimed to collect practices, guidelines, initiatives, and routines to prevent, detect, manage, treat, monitor and follow up on school attendance problems (SAP) across the Nordic countries, including stakeholder perspectives.

Partners

The coordinating organisation of the Erasmus+ KA2 – Strategic Partnership is Statped (Norway). The participating organisations are Valteri Centre for Learning and Consulting (Finland), Magelungen Utveckling (Sweden) and the municipality of Aarhus and Aarhus University (Denmark).

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Report 2

Differences and similarities between the Nordic countries with regards to school absenteeism were covered in OI1. This report will take a wider look at the systems and tools used for targeting SAPs within Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union administered by the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Higher Education (DIKU) for funding and service support. We wish to express our gratitude to *Robin Ulriksen* a co-founder of the project who wrote the application, *Maria Sandhaug* who was project manager until July 2022, and *Sidse Holiman* for her contributions as a previous member. We also want to thank past members *Robert Palmér*, *Johanna Sergejeff* and *Marit Solvoll*, for co-authoring the previous report.

It has been an honour and a privilege to be supervised by highly competent professionals in the Nordic reference groups.

Our thanks go out to:

Sweden

Martin Karlberg, PhD, Senior Lecturer, Uppsala University

Malin Gren Landell, Licensed Psychologist, PhD, Linköping

Johan Hallberg, Principal, Kolsva School District, Köping

Finland

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Kristine Damsgaard, Senior Advisor, Statped

We would also like to thank our organisations for supporting and co-funding the Erasmus+ programme for strategic partnerships. We appreciate your interest in improving systems and tools on Problematic School Absence across the Nordic countries. Thanks go out to:

Magelungen Utveckling, Sweeden

Municipality of Aarhus, Denmark

Statped, Norway

University of Aarhus, Denmark

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The first project report was published in October 2021. It provides an overview of existing definitions and theories about school absenteeism. It also attempts to determine definitions and frames of understanding overlooked in the literature or research. By examining mutual challenges in the compulsory education systems, the purpose of this second report is to provide a foundation for a common Nordic overview. It may help improve practices concerning problematic school absenteeism for students, teachers, and parents.

The outputs of the project are published in two reports, three multiplier events arranged as free online international conferences and one article in the journal of Orbis Scholae ([ref.](#)). Free downloads are available from:

- Statped (www.statped.no)
- Valteri (www.valteri.fi)
- Magelungen Utveckling (www.magelungen.com)
- Aarhus University (www.au.dk)
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1. Introduction

Societal changes, research results, and experience from working with problematic school absenteeism show the need to improve existing routines and practices in schools and in the municipalities. To improve systems and tools, we must share information about how the problems are addressed at different levels, as well as reported or experienced ways to effectively solve or reduce them. Further, we must ask how we can learn from each other, where we are now, and where we are going.

Students with school attendance problems are a heterogenous group. The causes for their absence are often many-faceted and complex. Systems, interventions, and tools should therefore be tailored and adapted to the specific child's needs and strengths.

The aim of the report is to raise awareness on school absenteeism from various perspectives and provide a Nordic overview of how to understand and tackle problematic school absenteeism, as well as give an overview of tools used in this work. Most importantly, the overall objective is to promote prevention and hope for the future.

1.1 Erasmus+ project

In December 2019 this project was approved as an Erasmus+ programme in Strategic Partnerships for school education. It is a Nordic Partnership consisting of five institutions: Magelungen Academy in Sweden, Valteri Centre for Learning and Consulting in Finland, Aarhus Municipality and Aarhus University in Denmark and Statped National Service for Special Needs Education in Norway (owner). The project ends in November 2022.

Objectives

The purpose is to provide and describe approaches to how policymakers, municipalities, schools, and teachers can implement useful systems for monitoring, recording, reporting, screening, assessing, evaluating, and following-up problematic school absenteeism together with the student at risk and their parents. The Convention of the Rights of the child should always be the basis of any decisions, measures or interventions put into action.

2. Background

To highlight the voices of students, and perspectives of parents and teachers in this report, we have asked a group of students at the University of Aarhus in Denmark to do a literature review of school attendance problems from the perspective of students, parents, and teachers in the Nordic countries of Finland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. For the full literature review, see Appendix 6. This review, combined with research, the previous report, and our experiences as professionals form the foundation of this report. We will now present some of the main categories from the students', parents', and teachers' perspectives.

Students

The three summary themes found in the articles that included the voices of children and adolescents, were a) social relations with peers, teachers and family dynamics, b) school environment and in its ecosystem, and c) common characteristics and trajectories of students with school absenteeism.

Parents

The two subthemes found in the articles including parents' perspectives were a) the child-parent relationship, and b) the parent-school relationship.

Teachers

The subthemes found in the articles including the teachers' perspective were a) a lack of resources, b) school organization and collaboration with external professionals, c) interaction between actors in the school and home environment, d) emotional responses, and e) their perspective on school absenteeism.

To sum up these findings, we see that students need to feel seen and heard, they need relationships with peers, and teachers that take them seriously. They need to feel safe and motivated at school and have a school environment that can adapt to their needs. Parents need to be met with understanding in the demanding situation they live in. When it comes to school attendance problems, parents can only do so much without help from the school. That is why they want the school to make a plan of action, and to take primary responsibility between extended school staff and external help. Teachers want more resources, competencies, and knowledge on

how to handle school absenteeism. They want a clearer organization in the school and management to take responsibility of the individual student, and support in difficult situations.

In these findings and other research, as well as our experiences as professionals, we find that both parents and teachers experience that the schools and the external help system lack knowledge on school attendance problems (Havik et al., 2014; Gren-Landell et al., 2015; Amundsen & Møller, 2020a). We also know that lack of collaboration and well-functioning routines between all involved makes it more difficult to design appropriate interventions and help. This also puts the students' rights at risk.

Based on this review, our first report in this project and our professional experiences, we have tried to develop an overview of systems and tools in the Nordic countries of Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Norway. We have made a figure to visualize this overview, based on four framework factors that we see as the foundation of all work with school attendance problems. These are a) collaboration, b) understanding and competences, c) routines, and d) student rights. Later, we will give a further description of these framework factors.

3. Theoretical foundation

Regular school attendance is fundamental for academic achievement and later overall well-being, as low attendance predicts lower academic achievement over time (Hancock et al., 2013) along with subsequent school drop-out (Schoeneberger, 2012). Students who drop out early are at a greater risk for long term negative outcomes such as lower socio-economic status and poorer mental and physical health compared to their peers (Rumberger, 2011). The risk of social exclusion as young adults is also higher for these students (Andersen, 2022). Yet, school absenteeism is a common and growing problem. Researchers from multiple disciplines have conceptualized and operationalized the phenomenon in various ways. This, unfortunately, has left us with a lack of definitional and pragmatic consensus, pragmatic and coordinated assessment, and systematic, evidence-based and/or evidence-informed prevention and intervention approaches.

Despite the challenges, we have learned a lot about the importance of understanding the reasons behind the phenomena and the short- and long-term consequences of it, and the impact of systematic preventive work and interventions:

All schools need a systematic procedure to monitor, record and intervene attendance and absenteeism in collaboration with student welfare.

Working with prolonged absenteeism requires well organized multidisciplinary collaboration between school, student, and family.

We need evidence-based and/or evidence-informed and theory driven approaches, as well as well-founded experience-based approaches to provide the support.

The support needs to be tailored to the individual student's needs. Thus, the student should have a professional assigned to create a trusting relationship with the student. This person will do the progress monitoring, execution of support and gather the professionals to organize and deliver the support as intensively and systematically as needed.

All the Nordic countries within this project have adapted some version of tiered learning support in their educational settings. They are mostly based on Response to Intervention (RtI), a model addressing academic and related problems in schools (Fuchs & Fuchs 2006). Most often the RtI is conceptualized as a three-tiered service delivery approach with universal, targeted, and intensive interventions (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008). It refers to a systematic and hierarchical decision-making process to assessing evidence-based strategies based on students' needs, with on-going progress monitoring and assessment (Fox et al., 2010). The models vary, but the key principles are based on a systems-level approach, proactive and preventive measures, aligning interventions to student needs, data-based decision making and problem-solving, and the most effective practices available (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008). This approach has been utilized for example with difficulties in reading and writing (Vauhgñ & Fuchs, 2003), mathematics (Lembke et al., 2012), and school-based behaviour support (Gresham et al., 2013).

Universally, different kinds of three-tiered systems are used to target a variety of challenges, for example Essential Public Health Operation (Jensen et al., 2018) and palliative care and hospice (Duodecim, 2019). Response to intervention (RTI) has its roots in the United States and it is a systematic way of delivering research-based three-tiered support for learning (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Many countries use some form of RTI for targeting learning difficulties (United States: Multi-tiered System of Support, Netherlands: Ondersteuningsniveaus, Finland: three-tiered support). It has also been recommended as a primary approach to target SAPs (Attendance works), although in many cases the challenge is the lack of research-based interventions.

The Attendance Works (2022) divides the three tiers in terms of SAPs as follows:

Tier I: Prevention-oriented support. Strategies aimed at encouraging better attendance for all students and preventing absenteeism before it affects achievement.

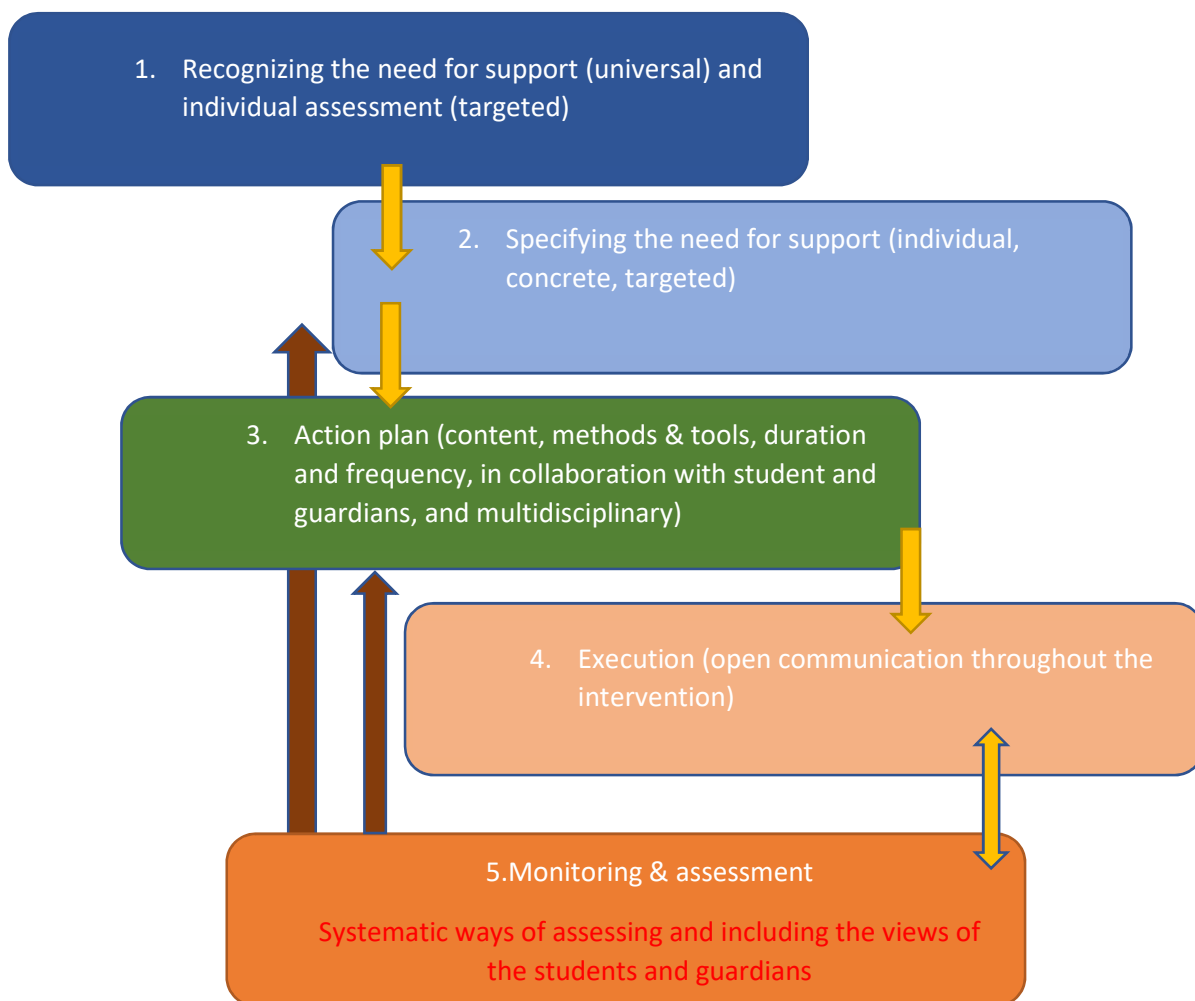
Tier II: More personalized outreach. Interventions designed to address barriers to attendance for students at greater risk of chronic absenteeism, such as those who missed 10 % of the school year, the standard definition of chronic absenteeism. Personalized attention provided to these students and families as part of engagement strategy.

Tier III: Intensive intervention. Approaches providing intensive support to students missing the most school (20% or more of the school year), often involving outside school agencies, and requiring case management customized to individual students' challenge

Recognizing the need of a multifaceted ecological framework in targeting these heterogeneous problems falling under different agencies and jurisdictions, Kearney & Graczyk (2020) have suggested a multidimensional, multi-tiered system of supports model (MTSS) to promote school attendance and address school absenteeism. This framework emphasizes many aspects matching with school attendance and attendance problems, including prevention, a continuum of supports, screening, evidence-based assessment and interventions, problem solving, data-based decision making, implementation fidelity, and natural embedding into extant school improvement plans.

Our overview combines theory and practice to a simplified approach, mapping the systems and tools in three dimensions: attendance promotion, student learning and student well-being. These dimensions are founded on shared understanding, student rights, routines and collaboration. Like with RTI-models, the intensity of support and assessment of the effects increases at each tier. Although the focus is on data-based decision making and systematic assessment of planning and execution, we emphasize the role of collaboration as the foundation of all dimensions and levels of support.

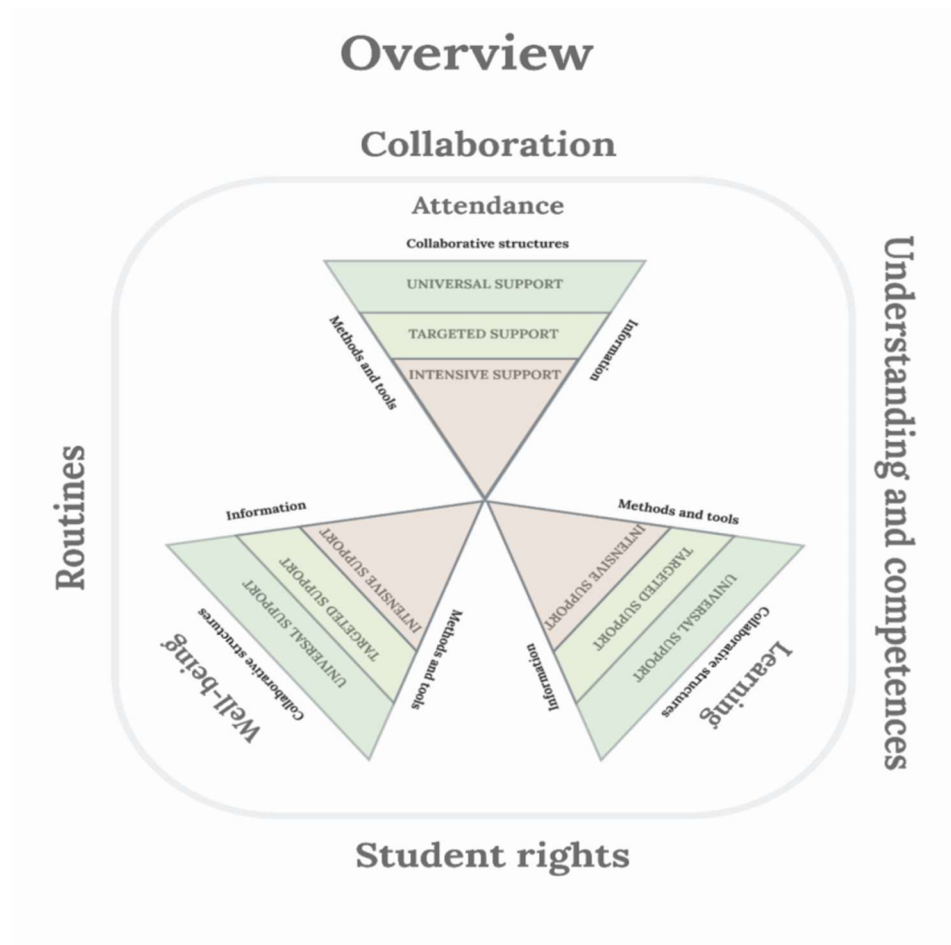
Each of the dimensions include three stages within: information; methods and tools; and collaborative routines. In our three-year collaboration, it has been underlined that there is a profound need for developing and promoting effective routines for multidisciplinary collaboration that truly includes students and their families. Main aspects of this work are ensuring information flow, clear responsibilities, combining support for learning, well-being, and attendance according to individual student needs.



Explanation of the model:

The first step is recognition of the need for support and individual assessments. In step 2 the need for support is specified. These two steps require social interaction, professional skills, and methods and tools for identification. When the need is specified, an action-plan needs to be formed, as is shown in step 3. This requires collaboration, mapping of potential support methods and tools in multidisciplinary collaboration and in collaboration with students and their guardians. The timeline for the intervention is also established, and the intervention is executed. This stage requires continual progress monitoring and open communication, see step 4. Finally, an overall assessment of the success rate of the intervention is needed, in addition to open communication about the processes and what to do next, and where the voices and views of the student and guardians involved is heard.

4. A Nordic overview of systems and tools



The challenge of SAPs is not solved by the individual student, teacher, parent, or principal alone. Tackling this challenge requires multidisciplinary collaboration that considers all aspects of students' school- and life situation. To provide a holistic overview, our group ended up creating a figure that combines the three levels of RTI –perspective (universal, targeted, and intensive) to different dimensions of SAPS in schools: assessing and promoting attendance, student well-being and learning at all levels of support. We have divided each level into information, tools, and organization level routines

4.1. Framework factors

As mentioned before, the four framework factors are: Understanding and competences, collaboration, student rights, and routines. Based on Report one (Sandhaug et al., 2022), available research and our experiences as professionals, we have found that these four factors should be

the foundation of work on school attendance problems. The factors are independent of the different levels and dimensions in the figure. In each of our countries there have been problems with silos between the different parts of the support systems (Sandhaug et al., 2022). Without routines, directing and delivering support is difficult. It is important that the team around the student have adequate competence and that they cooperate based on the same understanding. Even if the legislation in the Nordic countries differ, it is always important that the rights of the students are fulfilled.

We will now give a summary of the four framework factors.

4.1.1. Understanding and competences

To promote school attendance, it is important to intervene as soon as possible when a student exhibits dissatisfaction and/or withdrawal from classes or the school environment (Ingul & Haavik, 2021). For school staff and parents, knowledge of early signs and risk factors could be helpful in this regard. Risk factors can be found in the learning environments, as well as the social arenas the school offer.

There are also student groups that are at risk. Munkhaugen and colleagues (2017) found that students with autism spectrum disorders have a greater risk of school avoidance behaviour than other students. Likewise, a lack of adaptations for children with ASD and other neurodevelopmental disorders is a risk-factor for developing school attendance problems (Bühler, Karlsson & Österholm, 2018). Therefore, we see it as important that teachers and school leaders have knowledge of this, as well as the competences to provide adequate adaptations in both the learning- and social environment at school – not to set these students up for lower expectations, but rather to ensure that these students get equal opportunities. School leaders should be at the head of this to create a safe environment and a culture where diversity is promoted.

According to both the parent group and the professionals in our literature review (Appendix 6), there seems to be a lack of collaboration, and at the root of this, a lack of a common understanding of the students' absence. To make useful plans and interventions, we find it important that all parties have the same understanding of the student's triggers and needs, in addition to strong sides and interests. Further, the involved parties should have, or be able to secure, competence, as to be able to make good interventions and measures.

4.1.2 Collaboration

Collaboration to help a student return to school is crucial and should start from the very beginning.

The school, student, and guardian should strive to get a common understanding of the reason for the absence and how to best approach it. Next, they should cooperate to implement measures and finally evaluate the outcome. Everyone affected by the measures (e.g., school staff) should be involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The school and parents need to exchange experiences on how they perceive the student's situation. What does the school see when the student is at school and what do the parents experience? The student's voice is undoubtedly important - how does the student perceive their situation? What barriers to school attendance are there? It is crucial that the student is heard at every step of the way.

In collaboration meetings, everyone should listen to each other and be aware that you can see different things depending on the situation. The school staff are the professionals in these situations, but the parents are the experts of their own child. Depending on what appears as an obstacle to attendance, others may need to be involved.

The more extensive the absence is, the more important is effective collaboration. An action plan should be provided for student, school and parents and it should create a whole. Collaboration can take place based on different aspects, such as planning or ensuring that the different interventions support each other. For example, one needs to collaborate to make sure that a therapy session with a psychologist matches the measures the school implement for the student, as well as the strategies of the guardians at home. All efforts should support each other and contribute to a holistic solution for student and guardian.

A teacher or another professional should take the responsibility of arranging meetings and update all other participants. Regular meeting points are usually easier for students and parents, who otherwise tend to assume the task of keeping all ongoing efforts together, resulting in many meetings with many different actors.

Knowledge-based leadership is essential. This entails systematic, cumulative data collection; structured and clearly divided multidisciplinary work; and effective collaboration between the different agents promoting school engagement and student well-being. The collaboration needs to

be informed, structured, and clearly defined at every stage and a fundament for the support provided. Means for organizing and sharing the work could be structured in general as support and case formulation models, with a more finely structured division of work and roles in the execution and assessment of support and interventions.

4.1.3. Student rights

The Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) states in article 12 that state parties must assure that children are heard in all matters that affect them. Article 23 confirms that children with disabilities have the same right to an education as everyone else. In all the Nordic countries, the Convention of the Rights of the Child takes precedence over National law. This does not mean that children and youths get to have their own way about everything, but that their wishes need to be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, our experience suggests that the students' voices are often not heard in cases of school attendance problems. With this in mind, we find that conversations and assessments should be adapted to the student's needs and ways of understanding.

There is different legislation in the different Nordic countries of Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, but all involved should know what rights children have for help, adaptation, and interventions in their own country.

4.1.4. Routines

In Report one (Sandhaug et al., 2022), we found that, even though all schools are required to have routines for collecting attendance data, there is a lack of guidelines as to how and what this registration should contain. This can make it more difficult to discover early signs of school attendance problems and put in place appropriate interventions. This can be remedied by clear routines for collecting attendance data, prevention, discovery, and interventions.

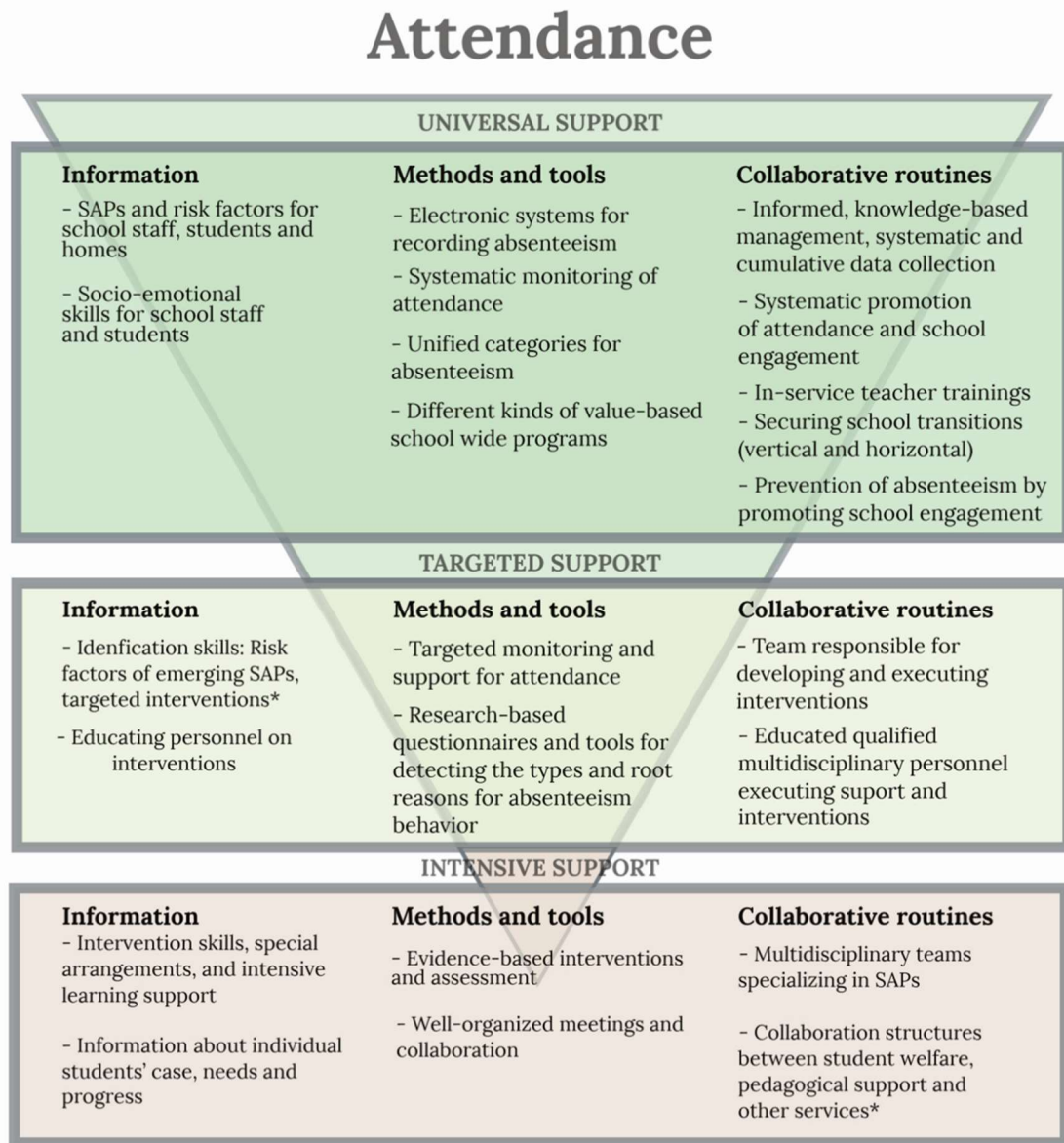
As mentioned in the literary review, collaboration and a clear plan, is also found to be important. We therefore recommend that school management have in place routines for parent-teacher cooperation, routines for meetings and a plan for measures and interventions. There should also be routines for contacting other professionals, such as the Psychological and Educational support system or mental health professionals.

4.2. Levels and dimensions

In the following we will explain the different dimensions on all three levels of the RTI-perspective.

The dimensions are assessing, well-being and learning. Collaboration, understanding and competences, student rights and routines persist throughout. We have divided each level to information, tools, and organization level routines.

4.3 Attendance



1. Targeted support: i.e. specialized health care professionals, child welfare
2. Intensive support: for example B2S

Universal support

Information

Raising awareness about the phenomenon of school attendance and school engagement among school staff, students and parents can be beneficial to prevent school absenteeism.

As mentioned earlier, students with neurodiversities are at risk of developing school attendance problems when the school- and learning environment is not adapted (Bühler, Karlsson & Österholm, 2018, Munkhaugen, 2017). These students are to be found in almost every classroom (Surén. M.fl., 2019), and it is therefore important that teachers and other school staff have knowledge on how to adapt their classrooms to promote a safe learning environment for these students. Ways of promoting attendance on universal level can also include other aspects, such as school-wide programs targeting socio-emotional skills training for students and staff.

Methods and tools

The first universal support method we recommend is systematic screening. As we found in Report one (Sandhaug et al., 2022), most schools in the Nordic countries use electronic databases to monitor absence. This is good, as systematic monitoring of attendance is an effective way to prevent absenteeism. Teachers are also obligated to record student absenteeism. The challenges lie within the variation of absence categories used, variety of recording and reporting practices, and the use of the data at school and municipal level. For example, following absenteeism rates at school level annually, would be a beneficial tool for collaborative decision making at school level. Attendance should not just be monitored but be promoted via different kinds of school-wide programs for a safe and engaging school environment.

To facilitate early intervention, it would be beneficial if the databases would send an alert, for example, on a weekly basis to the student, guardians, and the teachers. Yet, we have found that at the universal level, many schools lack systematic use of concrete routines and practices for promoting attendance and early problem detection. This is partly due to differing practices of monitoring, recording, and reporting absenteeism and attendance, and lack of shared definitions (Sandhaug et al., 2022).

Reporting tools and -practices at the municipal level vary greatly between the countries, municipalities and schools, and this information is not widely used as a basis for decision making (Sandhaug et al., 2022). Yet, continuous monitoring, recording, and reporting of absenteeism at the school level is needed to identify youth with emerging problems and possibly in need of Tier 2.

Collaborative routines

Universal level collaborative routines should include an assigned school team responsible for monitoring absenteeism at school level and helping individual teachers assist students at risk. As we have mentioned earlier, cumulative, systematic data collection and knowledge-based management is key to create a basis for prevention and early intervention. Therefore, schools should have in place methods for systematic promotion of attendance and school engagement, with routines of when and how the attendance data is viewed and ensuring the right measures are put in place if a student is absent. Collaborative routines, such as school teams and cooperation with student health and welfare staff are crucial in promoting engagement.

Special attention should be given to school transitions, as they are a particular risk for students with increased propensity for attendance problems. In Report one we found that there are no common routines for communication between kindergarten and schools, between school levels or across teachers' classrooms (Sandhaug et al., 2022). However, communication with, for example, the kindergarten in the transition to starting school can give information that can be used to prevent school attendance problems.

Targeted support

Information

As established earlier, teachers need to be able to understand different students' needs. To do this, schools should have routines for sharing knowledge about adaptations for learning, teaching, learning environment etc. Education of school staff on interventions can therefore be important. In addition to school staff, guardians need information and skills to identify signs and patterns that require reactions, and what the appropriate reactions and interventions would be. In our experience, everyone should also be educated on the importance of sharing information between home and school.

When delivering a targeted support, knowledge about services and support available from outside school parties is very useful. This necessitates student welfare group support and cooperation with teaching staff and families.

Methods and tools

Providing targeted support starts with case formulation and gathering information about the student, the situation, and the school environment. Systematic monitoring and support for attendance on individual/small group level is also needed. Methods and tools should include research-based and practical tools for detecting absenteeism, multi-informant assessments and interviews providing information about the root reasons. In addition, the school staff need low threshold intervention tools, such as interview and structured mapping forms or questionnaires. To get in contact with the student, it is important to create a relationship. Tools needed for the right actions, should be adapted to the student and are a model, plan or program for the school personnel to follow, preferably evidence-based and/or evidence-informed. Methods also include guides for structured meetings and intervention deliveries (examples in the Appendix 1). Information gathering can also include office disciplinary referrals, suspensions, behavioural observations, and reports from parents, teachers, guidance counsellors, and school-based psychologists, social workers, and nurses (Sailor, 2009).

Collaborative routines

In the literature review (Appendix 6), we found that parents and teachers both call for someone to take charge and make sure that meetings and plans are being followed up on. This can be solved by routines

a school-level plan of who, how and when to intervene, organizational level and clear division of responsibilities, teams supporting teachers responsible for developing and executing interventions, educated, and qualified multidisciplinary staff for executing the support. This can also include systematic psychological and school engagement supportive interventions and routines for providing peer and teacher mentoring.

Peer and teacher relations are important for students' attendance (Øverland m.fl., 2021). It could therefore be beneficial at this stage to promote positive social interaction. Building an alliance with those involved is also recommended, as well as meeting the student and the family, indicating concern and a will to help stabilizing school attendance, developing a clear and gradual strategy for orienting a youth to school, reducing emerging distress and obstacles to attendance, and ruling out competing explanations for absenteeism such as actual school-based threats (e.g., bullying). Targeted support means providing appropriate support to establish regular guardian-

school contact and collaboration, together identifying, and addressing high-risk times for premature departure from the classroom or school, resolving emerging academic deficiencies from non-attendance, or supplying academic work if a child remains home from school (Kearney and Bates 2005; Kearney and Bensaheb 2006).

Intensive support

Information

At this level information-gathering plays an even more important role than previously. All involved need information about the individual student's case, needs, and progress. A multi-informant, multidisciplinary case formulation is needed to gather the information about what has triggered absenteeism behaviour and the current factors reinforcing the behaviour. Schools should have intervention skills, make targeted arrangements, and provide intensive learning support.

Methods and tools

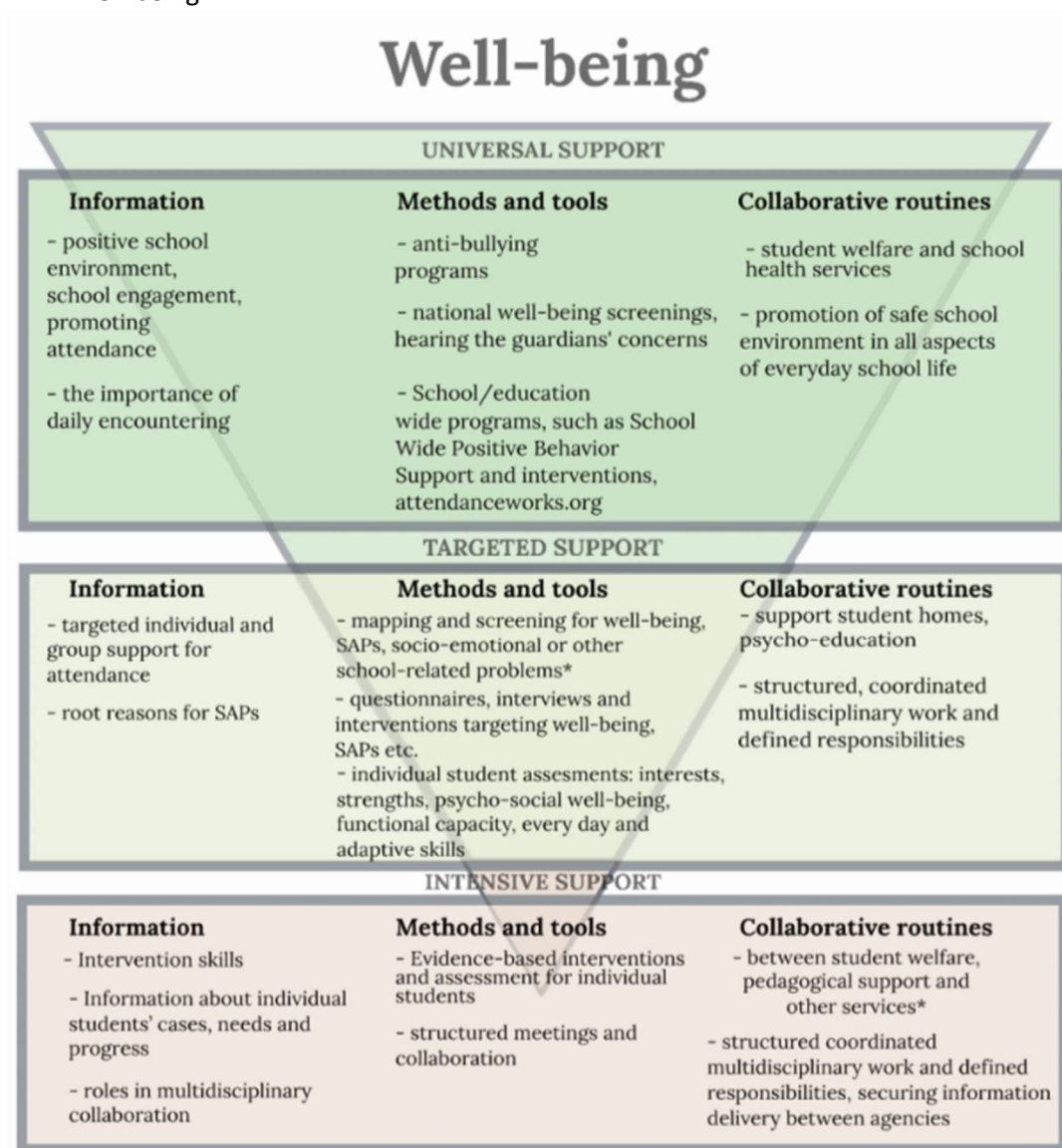
The methods and tools we recommend are mostly the same as at the previous level, but more intensively applied and expanded and could be combined with more treatment-like methods. It is also important that all methods and tools are tailored to the individual student. Structured (diagnostic) interviews and questionnaires (for example, internalizing/externalizing behaviour), dynamic assessment, observations of school preparation and school entry behaviours, and review of academic records are needed (Kearney et al. 2011). The purpose of these assessment methods is to better understand the contextual variables that impact a child's absenteeism to determine appropriate educational and community-based programming and supports. Some of the most important information to provide is the students' voice, their interests, and strong sides.

An attendance team could be expanded to include school-based/health care mental health professionals with administrators and select teachers who review attendance and academic records, consult with clinicians and family members, and develop individualized education (Logan et al. 2008). These plans can allow for part-time attendance, modifications in class schedule and academic work, escorts to school and class, attendance journals, increased supervision, and daily feedback to parents regarding attendance and academic performance (Kearney and Bensaheb 2006; Schwartz et al. 2009). These teams should also host well organized meetings and provide systematic delivery of multidisciplinary collaboration.

Collaborative routines

At this stage collaborative routines usually reach beyond school, and multidisciplinary teams specializing in school attendance problems could be beneficial. Thus, it is vital that collaboration is clearly directed, that contact threshold between different agents is low and information flow is secured. As the number of agents grows, the risk for information gaps increases. The role of the classroom or homeroom teacher may be restructured to secure the information flow. At an organizational level this means that the school needs to educate all staff members annually and provide education for all new staff members.

4.4 Well-being



1. Targeted support: see appendix X

2. Intensive support: i.e., children and youth psychiatric care, child welfare

Universal level

Information

Universal level student well-being support includes sufficient student health and welfare services, as well as promotion of a safe and positive school environment in all aspects of everyday school life. These are entwined with other universal practices promoting attendance and learning (see other triangles). There is multiple theory driven, evidence-based and evidence informed approaches to provide this type of universal support. School personnel need to be informed about these methods and programs, and school leaders must communicate clearly which programs the school is invested in, and how these programs are systematically applied. There are also small things that can make a big difference, such as daily encounters and all school staff should have information on the importance of this.

Methods & tools

Tools at this level may include national screening for well-being data – used at school level, antibullying programs, such as KiVa, School Wide Positive Behaviour Support and Interventions, social skills training-programs, or programs targeting positive social interactions throughout the school day and embracing diversity. Also, different kinds of national, municipal, or school directed well-being screenings are valuable tools towards gathering school-level information.

Collaborative routines

On a structural level this includes a safe learning environment, communal student welfare, and student health services. Supporting school transitions and routinised ways of bringing out concerns. A safe learning environment is important for both students and well-being.

Targeted level

Information

Beyond the preventive and universal work on a school level, more selective interventions must be available for the students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems. Since sporadic absence tends to evolve, early reaction to emerging attendance problems is crucial (Ingul and Haavik, 2021).

Psycho-social wellbeing is often crucial to school attendance, and often a precursor to actual attendance problems (Amundsen and Møller, 2020). A student can, for example, have anxiety when thinking about going to school, be a victim of bullying, or be excluded from peer groups. Insufficient adaptation for students with extra needs, is often a hidden risk factor. Schools need to be able to identify students with mental health problems or other risk factors and be able to react and intervene. In order to manage this, it can be beneficial that school staff are organised in multi-professional teams, comprising of, for example, the teacher who meet the students daily, as well as a mobile student health team who are regularly present and visible at school. This will ensure that the school is better equipped to identify and prevent school attendance problems.

Keeping in mind that some symptoms are more visible than others, such as externalised problems, this is not always easy. Further, students' mental health tends to vary over time, with for example periods of more anxiety or minor symptoms of depression, symptoms that do not necessarily develop into more serious problems, but instead alleviates by itself. Likewise, it does not have to influence the students' ability to attend school. In these cases, we find that tools for screening could be of great value. When a student has started contact with the student health team, assessment tools could be a way of investigating and create a deeper understanding of the problem. Are there symptoms of mental health problems, and how do these affect schoolwork and attendance? One such instrument is the Inventory of School Attendance Problems (ISAP, see Appendix 1).

Methods & tools

We find that proper understanding of the situation for the individual student is essential to be able to provide a tailored intervention, and this should be founded in thorough assessment. As we found in Report I, schools are obliged to react on absenteeism (Sandhaug et al., 2022). To further the effectiveness of these reactions, we recommend that the process is multimethod and multi-professional. The aim should be to collect information from different sources, such as observation, interviews, and questionnaires, to include the voices of the student and the parent, assessing the learning environment, but also involving several professions, such as teacher, psychologist, and special education teacher.

To be able to succeed in the work with students with school attendance problems, our experience is that assessments should target the students interests and strengths, social relations and skills,

psychosocial wellbeing, and functional capacity, specific medical, psychological needs, psychosocial wellbeing, everyday- and adaptive skills, or the family situation. It could also focus on the situation in school and the need for adaptations. A full list of suggested areas to cover can be found in Appendix 1.

Prior to starting an assessment, we find that one needs to be aware of how the assessment situation should be organized. Not all students are interested in talking and sharing. Accordingly, one needs to start by building a trustful relation with the student and the parents. A topic to start with could for instance be student's interests and strengths. A list with examples of tools could be found in Appendix 1.

Collaborative Routines

As previously mentioned, collaboration is central to being able to detect emerging problems, but also to handle and intervene. At this stage the collaboration in the school is important, as well as the contact with the families. Investigating the root reasons behind school attendance problems could be time consuming, and for that reason we find it to be a good idea to have a structured plan. In Sweden schools are obliged to start an investigation in case of worrying and repeated absence, but exactly how this should be done is interpreted very differently in different municipalities and at different schools (Swedish Education Act, 2010)

As mentioned before, we found in the literature review that both parents and teachers call for easier, more frequent, and concrete meetings. Therefore, we recommend including the parents, to ensure that they quickly get informed of school absence. This contact could also be low threshold support for the students' home, or maybe even psychoeducation for the family. Further, parents need to be informed of the ongoing observations and contacts with student health care. This can be done through structured, coordinated multidisciplinary work with defined responsibilities. If the problem is becoming more extensive, other professions need to be involved (see also 3.1, about collaboration, or 3.4 about intensified support).

Intensive level

Information

It can be difficult to differentiate between indicated prevention and intensive support for school attendance problems, but intensive supports are typically more comprehensive interventions that

needs a more specialized or qualified professional, e.g., a school psychologist or a trained social worker, which is offered to children with more severe or chronic school absenteeism. As mentioned earlier, information about the individual students' case, needs and progress is essential at this level, as all measures and interventions must be tailored to the individual.

Methods & Tools

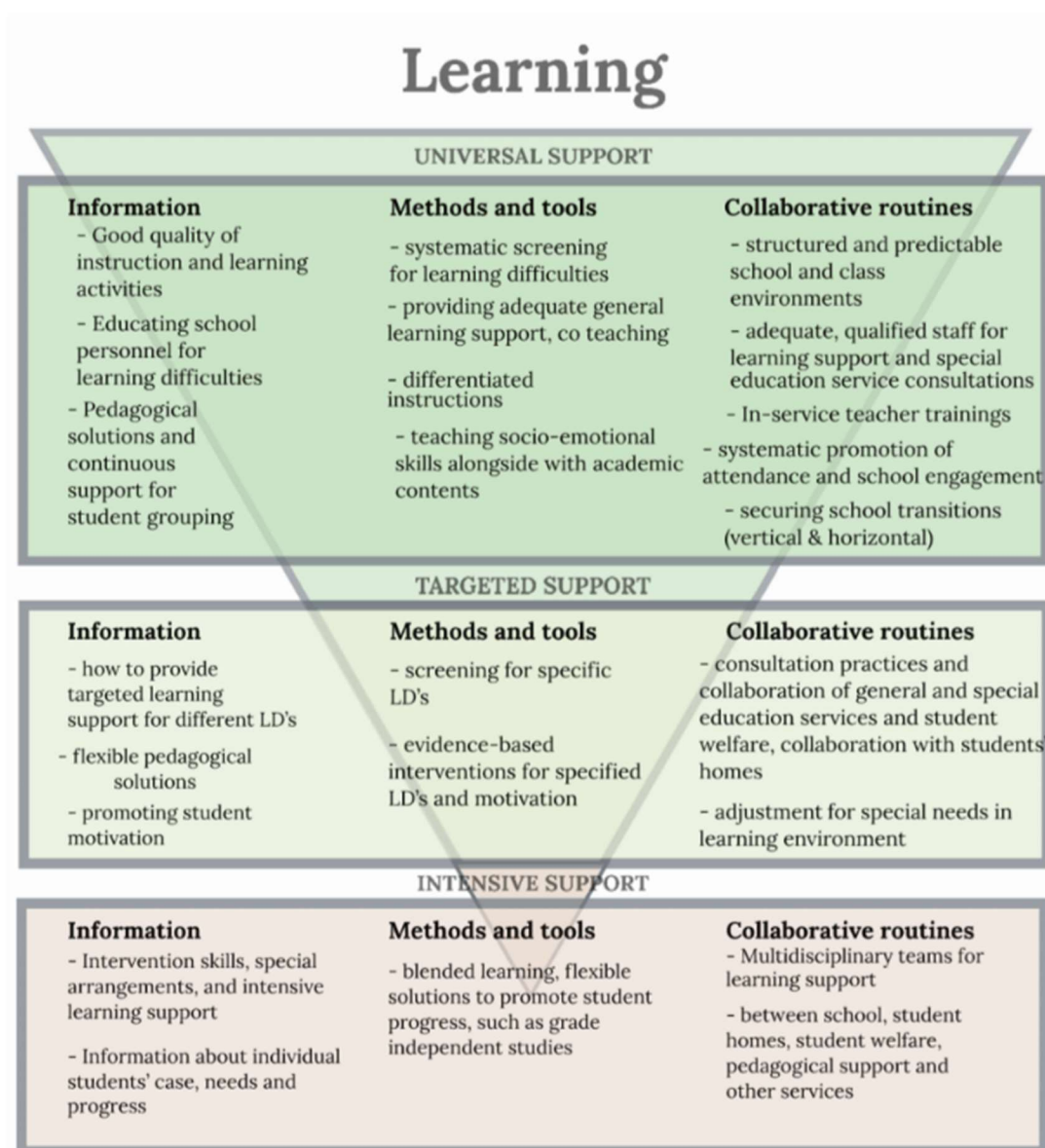
Since reasons for, functions of and maintaining factors for school attendance problems are different for each child, and interventions typically involves working with the school, the parents and the child, a structured assessment interview is important. This ensures that the professional is guided to ask all relevant questions and collect all relevant information. An example of a structured assessment interview can e.g. be found in the Back2School manual, see appendix 5d.

From research, we know that there are many factors in the school environment that affects a student's wellbeing and school attendance (Amundsen and Møller, 2022). In our experience there is a lot of emphasis on the student and their mental health and family relations. However, these factors alone cannot explain the absence. It will therefore be important to assess the learning environment, relations with teachers, relations with peers and potential bullying, triggers in the school environment and the school's previous adaptations and interventions. In addition to, or before the assessment interview it is appropriate to ask the child, the parents, and the teacher to fill out a range of questionnaires which could be relevant to get an understanding of the absence, see appendix 1.

Assessment will hopefully result in a common understanding of the problem ideally shared by the child, parents, school, and others involved, like a therapist. Also, the case formulation can be used to design goals for the treatment together with the child, the parents, and the school.

Collaborative Routines

As mentioned in the other triangles ("Learning" and "Attendance"), parents and teachers both stress the importance of predictable collaboration with defined responsibilities and a clear plan for securing information between agencies. At this stage, this collaboration should involve, in addition to student, parents and school professionals, student welfare and others, like child welfare, a child- and youth psychiatrist, and specialised health services.



Universal support

Information

Research has found that learning difficulties are a risk factor for developing school attendance problems (Amundsen and Møller, 2022). We therefore recommend that school staff get information and a good base knowledge about children's development and learning processes. A good relationship between student and teacher is important for learning and can also be a

protecting factor against school non-attendance (Havik, Bru and Ertesvåg, 2015). Therefore, we find it important that all teachers and other school staff is trained in creating relationships with all students. Students also need teachers with knowledge in what makes for good quality of instruction and learning activities for all students, and why this is important to promote school attendance.

Since learning difficulties are a risk factor for school attendance problems, we recommend that schools have routines for systematic screening of learning difficulties, and of how to adapt these screenings for students who have specific needs or are unable to perform these tasks in an ordinary way.

We know from research that neurodiversity also can be a risk factor for school attendance problems (Munkhaugen m.fl., 2017 and Orm m.fl., 2020), and we know that many of these diagnoses, such as ADHD, are common (Surén et.al, 2018). With this in mind, we find that teachers should have information and knowledge on how to adapt the classroom and their teaching, to ensure equal opportunity for learning for students with different needs. Information on how motivation and positive learning experiences promote school attendance, and how this may be achieved can contribute to better awareness in school staff members, to make sure that all students experience a safe learning environment.

Learning is also linked to wellbeing. Information concerning the effect of learning experiences on school attendance should be given in parent-teacher conferences and meetings. This to ensure that parents are comfortable contacting school staff if they are worried about their child.

Methods and Tools

Schools should provide adequate general learning support, enough resources, and other measures, such as co-teaching (Udir, 2022). Differentiated and individually adapted instruction must be the norm, and a part of every teacher's planning and teaching, as well as teaching socio-emotional skills along academic contents. Students differ in their social skills and executive functions and for some this makes them more vulnerable for school non-attendance. Therefore, it is important that these, as well as other students, get quality education in socio-emotional skills alongside the academic content. The teachers also need to know how to adapt and compensate

for students' different executive functions through structure and predictability in the classroom, learning activities and free time.

To ensure that students not only stay in school, but thrive and build resilience, they need to experience acknowledgement, a sense of achievement and belonging (Udir, 2022). According to the students in the project "Hear our Voices" (Øverland, m.fl., 2021), good quality of instruction and learning activities should be facilitated based on the students' individual prerequisites and interests.

Collaborative Routines

A structured and predictable school and class environment across classes and teacher groups can contribute to the feeling of a safe learning environment. This should be promoted from the management to make sure it is seen as a valuable part of the school's philosophy. Schools should also make sure that they have adequate, qualified staff for learning support and special education service consultations. This will help early detection of learning difficulties, sensory issues, difficulties with executive functions and socio-emotional skills, as well as implement correct measures and assistance for the individual student. The management should also make sure that there is room and finances for pedagogical solutions, continuous support for student grouping and on-site teacher training.

Transitions, both big and small, are a common occurrence in school. Transitions within a school day can be between classes, in the change of an activity or getting from class to the lunchroom. For many students, transitions can be disruptive of concentration or be unpredictable. It is important that there are routines in place to ensure communication between students and teachers, and between the school staff to make these transitions as painless as possible. Transitions between class levels, or from kindergarten to school are some of the biggest transitions children go through. Communication and collaboration between kindergarten, school and parents is therefore pivotal to identify vulnerable students and act with preventive measures. The students themselves need adequate and adapted information of the transitions, what they can expect, what is expected from them, and who they can ask for help. The same goes when transitioning in school levels or starting school after a holiday.

Targeted support

Information

If a student is at risk or develops absence or school refusal behavior, either from specific classes or school in general, the school must provide targeted support. Teachers and other school staff need information on how to provide targeted support for different learning disabilities as well as flexible pedagogical solutions for students at risk. This will likely increase student motivation.

Methods and Tools

To implement the correct measures, it is important to map the reasons for non-attendance. These reasons may be poor executive functions, social skills, sensory issues or a mix, and can also affect the students' wellbeing. In some cases, there might be a suspected learning disability. This information is of great importance, along with the student's abilities and strong sides.

There are different kinds of screenings for learning abilities and difficulties, and one should choose the one best suited for the individual. To get as much information as possible, mapping and assessment should include information from parents, teachers as well as the student themselves. The conversation with the student must take place in a carefully orchestrated context. In our experience, few children or teens will provide information when in an uncomfortable setting or talking to unfamiliar people. Building a relationship with the student is necessary for both mapping and interventions. A good place to start is to focus on the student's interests – e.g., If the student enjoys rock climbing, mapping and assessment could take place at a local climbing center. It can also be helpful that questions are visualized using pictures, videos, or dynamic questionnaires.

Based on the mapping, schools need to adapt the learning environment. If poor executive functions, social skills or sensory issues are in the way of learning, concrete measures must be provided. To help poor executive functions, the school can provide visual plans for the day, lesson, and/or task. This will help with predictability and autonomy in an otherwise chaotic school environment. This should be based on the following 7 principles:

1. What the activity is
2. Why do it
3. Who they are going to do it with
4. Where they are going to be

5. How the activity should be done
6. The duration
7. What will happen next

Adaptions for sensory issues depend on the individual student's experiences. It is important to take sensory experiences into account as they can be bothersome, or even painful for the student. Examples of adaptions can be placing tennis balls underneath chair legs to prevent scraping, blinds on the windows, or giving the student noise-cancelling headphones to be able to work.

Students with neurological diagnoses, such as autism, needs specific support. This can involve use of social stories and role play.

If the absence seems impacts learning outcomes, the school should provide targeted, intensified learning support and flexible pedagogical solutions. This should be based on the student's interests and strong sides to promote the student's sense of accomplishment and motivation. Note that students with school attendance problems are at risk of developing academic "holes", which again may lead to further non-attendance. In case of learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, the school should put in place specific evidence-based interventions, again adapted to the individual student.

Collaborative Routines

To succeed in helping students with an emerging school attendance problem, it is important that all involved work together. Parents' worries need to be taken seriously by teachers and school management, and their views should be considered. Regular meeting points between all involved – teachers, special education services, student welfare and the students' homes are essential. These meetings have to be structured and open, and everyone must have their voices heard. Note that the voice of the student should be in the forefront of all meetings concerning them, but that not all are able to attend in an ordinary way. However, a student can "attend" through a letter, filled in questionnaires or a video presentation.

As mentioned before, students at risk need adjustments in the learning environment. Teachers cannot be expected to know everything, but they do need access to further knowledge and competence. Therefore, it is important to have collaborative routines between the general and special education services.

Intensive support

Information

Helping a student that is completely absent from school will demand resources, special arrangements and intensive learning support, and all involved must have this information. Concrete information concerning triggers and reinforcing factors must be gathered and shared, as well as information on the student's interests and the relevant measures. Teachers must have information on why and how the measures should be implemented, and there should be regular meeting points to discuss progress and relevant changes.

Methods and Tools

What kind of arrangements and support that is available depends on national legislation. However, it is important that all interventions and measures are tailored to the individual student. In Norway, teachers may come to the student's home, or to an alternative arena where the student feels safe and confident. This can be beneficial, as the student will receive some sort of learning activities even if they are not able to come to the school building. It is also a good way to build a relationship between teacher and student. Many students who are at home suffer from anxiety, and it is important to build trust and make the student feel safe before demands are set. As mentioned earlier, the school must make an alliance with the student and parents, and measures and interventions should always be based on the student's interests and needs and follow the student's pace.

Learning activities should be based on the student's interests, and have the purpose to build a relationship, create positive experiences and hope, a sense of accomplishment, and build motivation for school attendance. Providing flexible solutions, such as grade independent studies, blended learning or project-based learning activities, could promote student progress. Teachers should be creative and flexible, not only concerning learning activities, but also when it comes to where the activities take place. The latter could be based on an activity the student like, such as a computer game, going to the aquarium or being with a pet. However, these activities should be structured by the teacher with regards to the student's needs.

Not all students are able to return to an ordinary school setting or classroom. If the student suffers from severe school attendance problems, it can be useful to check in on the aims in the plan of action. The RIM-model – "The Way Back to School" can be a useful tool to visualize place, type of

activity and aims in four stages. RIM stands for relationship, inclusion, and mastery. For further explanation of the model, see appendix 5 a.

Collaborative routines

As mentioned before, collaboration is essential at this stage. There must be routines in place for teacher support, resources, information, and a plan of action. The special education services should be involved, and there should be multidisciplinary teams for learning support. In our experience, the collaboration at this point is often difficult. There are many services and support systems involved. However, the student might be difficult to get in contact with or they might not benefit from the help, as the systems themselves are quite rigid. These students need to be met on their own terms. They need systems and professionals that are flexible and predictable. They need to feel safe, heard and taken seriously. Therefore, routines and systems between school, home, student welfare, pedagogical support and other services are of utmost importance. It is also important that the school management and support system recognize the severity, both for student, families, and teachers, so that no one feels left behind or alone with this challenge.

4.6 Case example

To further exemplify our figure, we have written a case to show a history of school attendance problems. We will go through the levels of universal support, targeted support and intensive support, describe what was done, and also what could have been done to help at each level.

Kim is a 17-year-old boy. He loves playing computer games, music, and football. He likes being outside and is in constant motion. He likes ancient history and discussing politics and can often be found in heated arguments concerning climate change.

Universal support

Kim was a very active child, quick to laugh, but who also often got frustrated and angry while playing with the other children in kindergarten. Subsequently, he spent much of his time alone. Kim's language development was delayed, and the kindergarten-staff considered him to be quite immature. He had problems paying attention and sitting still, unless the activity was something he liked or excelled at. The staff saw a difficult child but lacked the knowledge and competence to meet him in a warm, predictable and helpful manner. This made for many bad experiences. Kim was blamed for conflicts with other children and often got in trouble. The kindergarten staff

contacted PPT (the Educational and psychological service in Norway), and he was assigned special needs help, working on social skills.

At age 6, Kim started school. Already during the first autumn, both teachers and his parents started worrying. His immaturity was more prevalent at school, and he became exceedingly rigid. He had poor relationships with his peers and there were episodes of bullying. He did not learn to read and write at the expected pace, and quite soon he started pleading with his parents to stay at home. It started with tummy aches, before stating that he “didn’t like it” and “I’m no good anyway”. His parents had hours of struggling and pleading most mornings.

What was done, what could have helped

In the transition from kindergarten to school, the communication between school, parents and kindergarten is paramount, as this will help identify students with special needs or other vulnerabilities. Kim’s school did not have an electronic system for monitoring absenteeism and had poor information flow between the school and parents. The parents were worried about Kim wanting to stay at home but felt the school did not take them seriously and did not listen when they suggested adaptations. The school told the parents that it was common for young boys to struggle a bit and that he would find his place eventually.

The school had an anti-bullying program but had not used it actively in the last few years. The same went for awareness about SAP and risk factors. If the school had used these tools actively, they might have been able to prevent some of the bullying, and they might also be aware that Kim displayed a lot of risk factors for developing SAP and started interventions both concerning learning activities, socio-emotional skills, and good relations to peers.

A child like Kim would profit from visits to the school multiple times before actually starting. That way he would have known the layout of the building and playground, he would have been able to meet his teachers and feel more prepared. The teachers would also be prepared concerning Kim’s needs for structure, predictability, meaningful tasks, and breaks. They would have had knowledge and time to make a system and plans to help Kim succeed.

It is beneficial for teachers and school staff to listen to the parents’ concerns when it comes to school attendance. Many students like Kim mask their difficulties, but this masking may cause stress and exhaustion in the student. This might trick teachers into believing there is nothing to worry about.

Targeted support:

At the age of 7 Kim got an ADHD-diagnosis, and two years later an ASD-diagnosis. The school did not have the knowledge or competence to adapt the school day and learning activities to meet his needs. He started leaving the classroom for extended periods of time, hid in the bathroom or a small broom closet near the exit. The school staff tried their best but were frustrated at their lack of success – they were exhausted and felt they had “tried everything” and were sure that the absence was home related.

The parents on their side, saw a young boy who was scared to go to school. He was afraid of his teacher and talked about bullying from his peers. He also had sensory issues and struggled with many of the sounds in the school building, the fluorescent lights, and the smell of the other kids’ packed lunches.

Another few years went by, and Kim turned 11. He was no longer a part of the class. He attended school one hour a day, 3 days a week and spent that time in a small room off the classroom. He had no social relationships other than with an assistant, and one friend who came to play board games during breaks a few times a week. Kim had also developed severe anxiety towards demands from others, and the teachers struggled to find learning activities that could motivate him

What was done, what could have helped

When students are portraying school avoidance behaviours it is important to assess the situation quickly and thoroughly. Through knowledge about risk factors and emerging SAPs, the school can start targeted interventions early, and prevent a stuck situation. The school must assess the students’ strong sides, vulnerabilities, motivations, learning abilities and difficulties, and their needs in the learning environment in general.

In Kim’s case the school staff lacked knowledge about neurodiversity and how this affected Kim’s functioning and needs in the school environment. They felt they had tried everything but lacking proper assessment tools, they had little concrete information about Kim’s situation. They did not know that students with autism and ADHD are vulnerable for school attendance problems, and that this is often unrelated to the home environment. Not having enough knowledge about the needs of neurodivergent students in general, and Kim specifically, made it difficult for school staff to see the problems in the school environment and learning activities. There were few written

plans and little predictability. The teachers felt they fell short in communicating with him, and gradually stopped trying. Kim's relationships at school became fewer and more fragile.

There was little systematic communication between the school, the parents and other agencies, and roles and tasks in the support system. Subsequently, few measures were taken.

Intensive support:

During the winter he turned 11, Kim stopped coming to school all together. His parents described a boy who was sad most of the time and saw little meaning in life. He spent most of his time in his bedroom, gaming online, hardly eating, showering, or changing his clothes. A teacher would stop by his house a few days a week but when she went on maternity leave, the visits and communication between school and home stopped all together. At this point Kim had few relations outside his immediate family. He had isolated himself from his friends and extended family.

What was done and the way back

In situations like these intensive measures are needed. There must be coordinated collaboration between the different organizations to help the student. Student home, student welfare system, school personnel, social work, and specialized health care professionals must be involved to turn this situation around. Efforts must be made to get in contact with the student, to assess and put in to place well founded measures.

In Kim's case the PPT, the school, Statped, a therapist, and parents collaborated closely. The school reserved a teacher who had experience with both school attendance problems, neurodiversity and who had an interest in online gaming. With help from PPT and Statped, the therapist and the teacher slowly started making contact with Kim and building a relationship through the help of preparational films and activities involving his interests. In time they were able to start assessing Kim with broad scoped adapted questionnaires. The assessment showed that Kim had a lot of gaps in his knowledge, but also that he had previous undetected reading and writing difficulties. He had need of structured days, classes, and tasks with the possibility to retire to a quiet room when he became overwhelmed.

Because of Kim's neurodivergence, his executive functions were low. For him it meant that he needed assistance in starting new tasks, knowing when a task was completed, and in transitions throughout the school day.

In cases like Kim, baby steps are key. Once the teacher and therapist managed to build a relationship and gain Kim's trust, they started working together to find their way back to a school situation that made sense to him. The goal was not to include Kim full time in an ordinary classroom. Rather, they slowly worked their way through home lessons adapted to his needs and based on his interests, adding another handpicked teacher, and making their way through an alternative arena – in Kim's case an unused building in connection to the school. The intention was to make an adapted space outside the house and close to the school. In this way they gradually helped him enter the school building. Kim now attends school 1 ½ hours a day, has stable attendance, positive experiences, and a hope for the future.

Final remarks

In our overview we recognize that a lot has been done during the past decades. The challenge is shared between the Nordic countries, and the continuing worry about problematic school absenteeism seems to have grown since the pandemic. The systematicity, methods and tools, and collaboration vary, not only between the countries, but also between municipalities and schools.

The report gives insights into the complexities of school-absenteeism and suggests different tools and methods that can be used. It highlights informational needs and the need for collaborative routines at every level. At the same time, it is clearly a lot more that needs to be done to tackle this growing problem. This applies to all three levels of the three-tiered model that we have applied, and across the three dimensions attendance promotion; student learning and; student well-being, and at each of the three stages information; methods and tools and; collaborative routines. This reaches from the more mundane, like a common understanding of what absence constitutes and how to register attendance, to how to deal with high-complexity cases with long-lasting school absence.

We have throughout the report stressed the profound need for developing and promoting effective routines for multidisciplinary collaboration that truly includes students and their families. To reach this goal it is paramount that we listen to the students and their parents.

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Appendix

1. Table of assessment tools
2. Case formulation model
3. A common understanding
4. Example of report from school
5. Descriptions of Interventions:
 - a. Rim-model "the Way back to School"
 - b. NEST
 - c. Hemmasittarprogrammet
 - d. B2S

Appendix 1 – Table of assessment tools

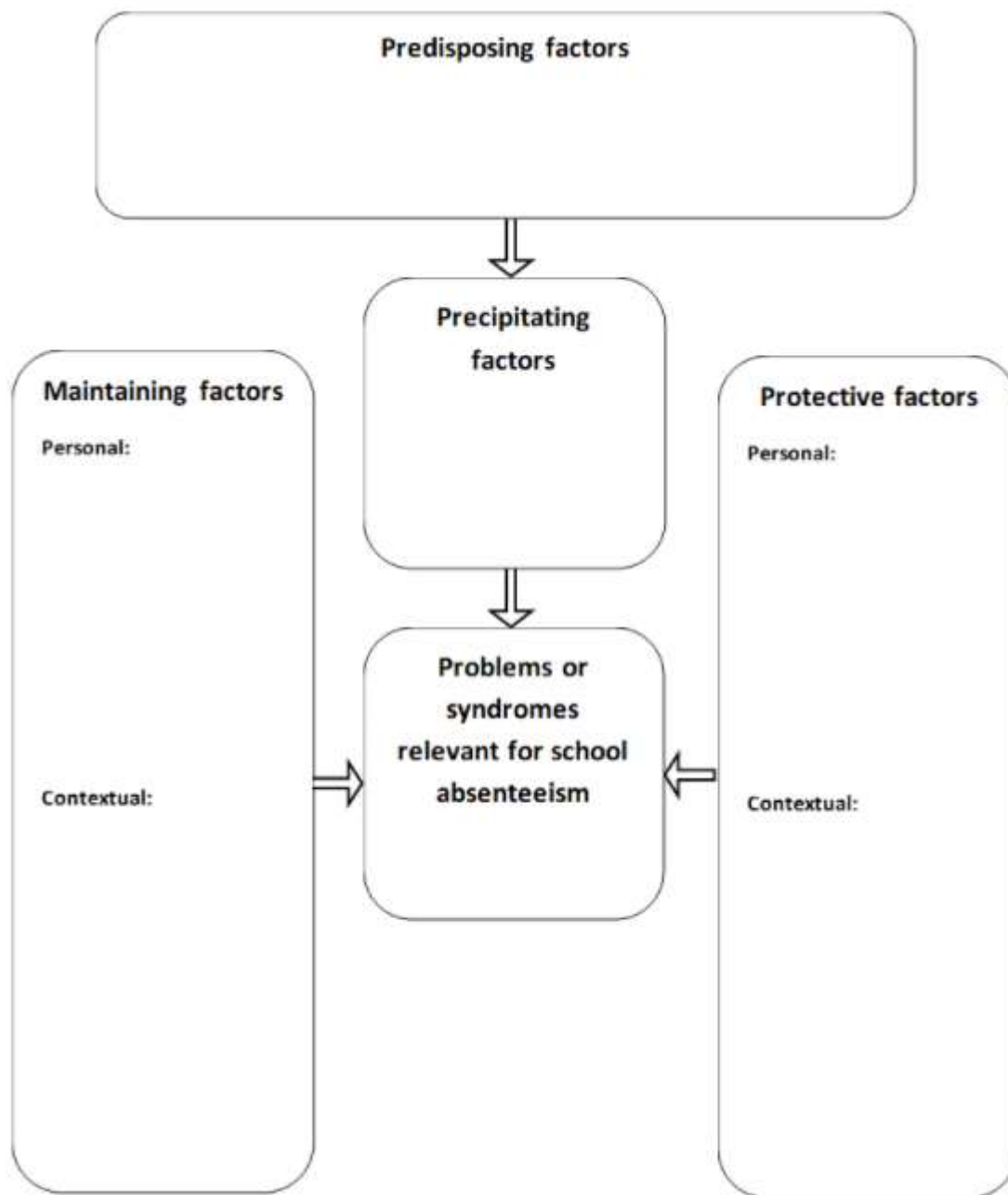
Measure	Age	Items	Response format	Informant	Dimensions	Item example	Author(s)
5-15	5-15	181		P, T			Kadesjö et al. (2004)
Assessment tools of Hemmasittarprogrammet (HSP)							Magelungen
Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scales (DASS)	18-	42	4-point Likert	P	Depression Anxiety Stress	I found myself getting upset by quite trivial things	Lovibond (1995)
Experience of Service Questionnaire (ESQ)	7-	7/10	5-point Likert and Qualitative information	S, P, T	Satisfaction with the treatment	The treatment helped me The treatment made me feel worse The treatment helped my child The treatment made my child feel worse	Thastum (2017) on the background of Attride-Stirling (2002)
Inventory for School Attendance Problems (ISAP)	11-18	48	4-point Likert	S, P	(1) Depression (2) Social Anxiety (3) Performance Anxiety (4) Agoraphobia/Panic (5) Separation Anxiety (6) Somatic Complaints (7) Aggression (8) School Aversion (9) Problems with Teachers (10) Dislike of Specific School (11) Problems with Peers (12) Problems within the Family (13) Problems with Parents	Before or at school/school time... ...I have no hope anymore that my school situation will get better. ...I'm afraid of being bad at school.	Knollman et al. (2018)
Mood and Feelings Questionnaire (MFQ)	4-17	33/13	5-point Likert	S, P	Depression	I felt miserable or unhappy. Sh/e felt miserable or unhappy.	Angold & Costello (1987)
Oppstartssamtale elev [in English:]	8-19			S			

School Non-Attendance Checklist (SNACK)	6-18 ?	16	Checklist – check reasons during last 4 weeks	P	(1) School Refusal (2) Truancy (3) School Withdrawal (4) School Exclusion (5) Non-problematic absenteeism	I or my partner gave my child a day off. The school asked that my child stay away from school.	Heyne et al. (2019)
School Refusal Assessment Scale - Revised (SRAS-R)	8-17	24	7-point Likert	S, P	(1) Avoidance of negative affectivity (2) Escape from aversive social or evaluative situations (3) Attention-getting behavior (4) Positive tangible reinforcement	How often do you stay away from school because you do not have many friends there? Would it be easier for your child to go to school if you or your spouse went with him/her?	Kearney (2002)
School Refusal Evaluation scale (SCREEN)	10-16	18	5-point Likert	S	(1) Anxious Anticipation (2) Difficult Transition (3) Interpersonal Discomfort (4) School Avoidance	I'm absent more often this year than last year. In the morning, I don't want to go to school.	Gallé-Tessonneau & Gana (2018)
Screening tool for student's ability to attend school	7			P, T			www.koulukäyn_tikykyarvio.fi
Self-efficacy Questionnaire for Responding to School Attendance Problems	Parents	13	4-point Likert	P	Parents self-efficacy in helping their child to school	If my child have difficulties in going to school, I know what to do to solve this problem	Lavooi (2010)
Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for School Situations (SEQ-SS)	5-15	12	5-point Likert	S	(1) Academic/Social Stress (2) Separation/Discipline Stress	How sure are you that you can do things in front of your class or group?	Heyne et al. (1998)
Sensory difficulties	8-19			S			
Spence Children's Anxiety Scale (SCAS)	7-17	44/38	4-point Likert	S, P	Anxiety	I worry about things My child worries about things.	Spence (1998)
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)	4-17	25	3-point Likert	S, P, T	(1) Emotional Symptoms (2) Conduct problems (3) Hyperactivity/inattention (4) Peer relationship problems (5) Prosocial behaviour	I am restless, I cannot stay still for long. Generally liked by other children.	Goodman (1997) www.SDQinfo.org

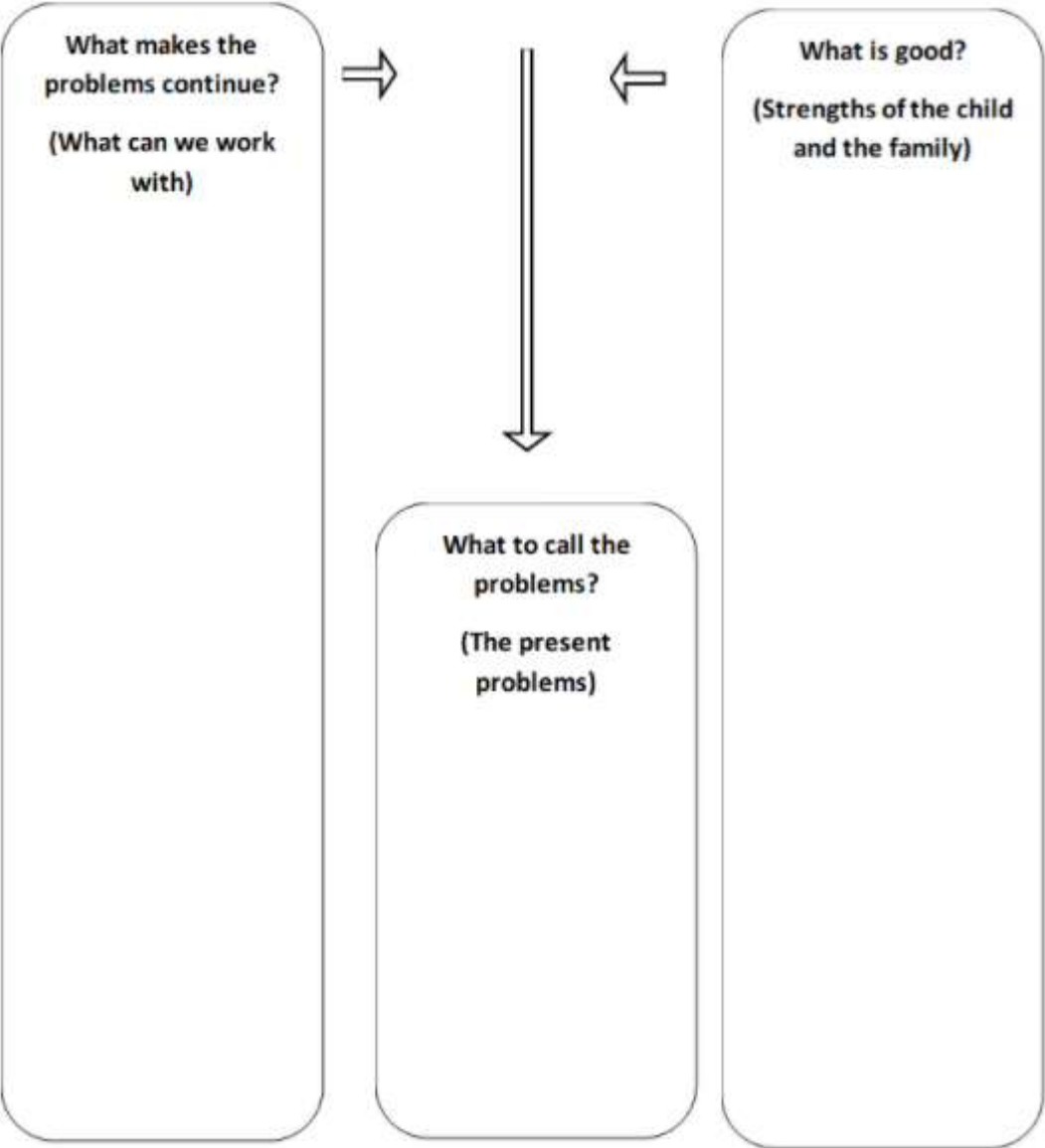
					+ Impact Score/Factor		
Så vill jag ha det i skolan				S			Rosqvist & Andersson Sånn vil jeg ha det www.statped.no
Toimintakäyryä [Functional capacity description and learning support]		Depend sections chosen	0-4 likert, text fields	S, P, T, others	Strengths, support needs, conflicts, issues emerging in the discussion	Various questions about everyday life and learning skills, assessed from “can do independently – needs a little help – needs a lot of help – cannot do independently” etc. Requires consent form from the student and guardian.	https://toimintakayry.fi/frontpage

1. Appendix 2 - Case formulation model
2. A common understanding

Appendix 2 – A case formulation model



Appendix 3 – A common understanding



Pedagogisk rapport for elever med fravær



Elevers navn	
Fødselsdato	
Skole	
Trinn inneværende år	
Kjent eleven antall måneder/år	
Tidligere skoler	
Gyldig sakkyndige vurdering, dato/varighet	
Enkeltvedtak dato	
Timeantall og anbefalt organisering og kompetanse for spesialundervisningen jfr. enkeltvedtak.	
Tilstede på skolen antall timer pr uke	
Tilstede på alternativ opplæringsarena antall timer pr uke	
Elevers diagnoser	

Rapporten er utarbeidet av		
Kontaktlærer/pedagog	Dato:	Sign.
Rektor	Dato:	Sign.

Kopi er sendt foresatte: Dato	
Overgang barnehage-skole	
<u>Barnehage</u> Var det rapportert om bekymring i barnehagen? Hvis ja, beskriv.	
Hvordan vil du beskrive overgangen mellom barnehage-skole?	
Tidlige skoleår og fravær	

<u>Trivsel:</u> Gledet eleven seg til skolestart? Hvis ja, beskriv det du er kjent med. Hvis nei, beskriv det du er kjent med.	
Hvordan gikk skolestarten? Var noe spesielt utfordrende? Hvis ja, beskriv.	
Trivdes eleven på skolen? Hvis ja, beskriv atferd. Hva sa eleven om egen trivsel? Hvis mistrivsel, beskriv atferd. Hvordan artet mistrivselen seg? Var det noen tiltak fra skolens side? Hva tenker skolen en eventuell mistrivsel handlet om? Har eleven opplevd mobbing?	
<u>Relasjon til voksne på skolen:</u> Er det noen voksne på skolen som har en positiv relasjon til eleven?	

<p>Er det noen voksne på skolen eleven har en negativ relasjon til? Er det noen voksne på skolen eleven er ekstra trygg på?</p> <p><u>Venner og sosiale forhold:</u> Fikk eleven venner? Hvis ja, beskriv. Hvis nei, beskriv.</p> <p>Hadde eleven noen å leke med/være sammen med i friminuttene? Hvis ja, beskriv. Hvis nei, beskriv.</p> <p>Ble eleven inkludert av andre barn? Hvis ja, beskriv. Hvis nei, beskriv.</p> <p>Ble eleven mobbet, ertet eller utestengt på noen måte? Hvis ja, beskriv. Hvilke tiltak satt skolen inn?</p> <p>Hvilken effekt hadde tiltakene?</p> <p>Var de gode nok? Varte de lenge nok?</p>	
<p><u>Sjenanse:</u> Var eleven sjenert utover vanlig på dette tidspunktet? Hvis ja, beskriv.</p> <p>Tiltak fra skolens side:</p> <p>Effekt av tiltak?</p>	
<p><u>Redsel:</u> Var eleven engstelig eller redd for noe på dette tidspunktet? Hvis ja, beskriv.</p>	

<p>Tiltak fra skolens side:</p> <p>Effekt av tiltak?</p>	
<p><u>Tidlige tegn på vegringsatferd:</u> Hendte det at eleven ikke ville på skolen om morgenen?</p> <p>Hvis ja, beskriv.</p> <p>Når var første gangen dette skjedde?</p> <p>Tiltak fra skolens side:</p>	
<p>Når og på hvilken måte startet elevens fravær?</p> <p>Beskriv.</p> <p>Hva slags fravær var det? Timer eller deler av timer. Hele dager. Bli hentet tidlig. Komme for sent.</p> <p>Ble eleven borte selv/gikk hjem selv?</p> <p>Hvilke tiltak ble satt inn?</p> <p>Effekt av eventuelle tiltak?</p>	
<p>Når ble skolen informert om elevens mistriksel/vegring mot å gå?</p> <p>Hvem fortalte om dette? Foresatte/eleven selv/andre?</p> <p>Hva var skolens reaksjon?</p>	
<p>Hvordan håndterte skolen elevens tidlige tegn på mistriksel og skolevegring?</p> <p>Beskriv tiltak dere prøvde ut.</p>	

<u>Foreldresamarbeidet:</u> Beskriv foreldresamarbeidet i den tiden eleven har gått på din skole.	
Hvordan reagerte eleven på tiltakene? Var det noe som syntes å bedre eller forverre situasjonen? Hvis ja, beskriv.	

<p align="center">Elevens styrker og interesser</p>
--

Hvilke styrker/sterke sider og egenskaper har eleven? Beskriv.	
Har eleven noen interesser og/eller hobbyer? Beskriv.	
Har elevens styrker vært forsøkt utnyttet i skolesammenheng? Hvis ja, beskriv.	
Har elevens interesser vært forsøkt utnyttet i skolesammenheng? Hvis ja, beskriv.	

<p align="center">Klassens klima, ressurser, størrelse og eventuelle utfordringer</p>
--

Hvor mange elever har klassen?	
Hvilke ressurser har klassen og hvordan benyttes disse? Beskriv.	
Hvordan vil skolen beskrive klassemiljøet?	
Har klassen særlige utfordringer?	
Er klassen informert om elevens utfordringer? Hvis nei, hvorfor ikke? Hvis ja, hvem ga informasjon. Hvordan har klassen respondert?	
Overganger: Hvordan takler eleven ulike overganger? Beskriv atferd og eventuelle tiltak. Eksempler på overganger: Fra time til friminutt, fra friminutt til time, bytte av klasserom, tilbake på skolen etter ferier, vikarer, bytte av klassetrinn, bytte av aktivitet i en time m.m.	

Arbeid på skolen med eleven innen ordinær opplæring

Når ble eleven første gang drøftet med rektor/spes.ped.team?	
Hvilke tiltak har vært iverksatt for eleven? Hvor lenge? Beskriv.	
Hvordan var tiltakene organisert?	
Resultater av tiltakene?	

<u>Skolens forutsetninger for tilpasset opplæring:</u> Organisatoriske rammer. Læremidler. Lærernes kompetanse. Lærerdekning. Grupper. Leksehjelp. Annet av betydning.	
<p style="text-align: center;">Arbeidsmåte</p>	
<u>Beskriv elevens arbeidsmåte/strategier ut fra følgende stikkord:</u> Evne til konsentrasjon, oppmerksomhet, distraherbarhet, utholdenhet, planleggingsevne, evne til å holde orden, og evne til å gjennomføre oppgaver. Gjennomførte tiltak: Beskriv effekt.	
<u>Kollektive beskjeder:</u> I hvilken grad får eleven med seg disse?	
<u>Klasseromsregler:</u> I hvilken grad klarer eleven å følge disse? <u>Lekser</u> Hvordan gjør eleven lekser? Innleveringer?	
<u>Evne til selvregulering:</u> I hvilken grad klarer eleven å:	

Vente på tur, overgang fra en setting til en annen, overgang mellom time/friminutt, bruke verbalspråk til konflikthåndtering, utsette behov etc.	
Sensorisk overfølsomhet	
Er eleven spesielt følsom for: Lys, lyd, lukt, berøring, smak eller annet? Beskriv	
Sosial kompetanse/emosjonell atferd	
<u>Selvhevdelse:</u> Beskriv eleven utfra stikkord som åpenhet, trygghet, ta kontakt med andre, si sin mening, lese sosiale situasjoner og ta korreksjon.	
<u>Selvkontroll:</u> Beskriv eleven utfra stikkord som vente på tur, ta imot beskjeder, kontrollere seg, utholdenhet i ulike settinger etc.	
<u>Samarbeid/samspill:</u> Beskriv eleven utfra stikkord som å hjelpe andre, dele med andre, støtte andre og vise omsorg. <u>Gjennomførte tiltak innen sosial kompetanse/emosjonell atferd:</u> Beskriv tiltak og effekt.	
Er det gitt særskilt språkopplæring jfr. 2-8 i opplæringsloven? Ja X Nei X	
<u>Pedagogisk fagstøtte på morsmålet:</u>	
<u>Følger plan for norsk som annetspråk:</u>	

<u>Beskrivelse av opplæringen:</u> Antall timer pr. uke, samordning av trinnets plan, materiell og hvordan eleven mestrer faget (Nivå 1, 2 eller 3).	
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Andre opplysninger
Fyll inn informasjon som kan være av betydning.

Del 2

Beskrivelse av eleven/utbytte av det ordinære opplæringstilbudet
Beskriv fag/områder hvor eleven mestrer trinnets læreplan.
Beskriv fag/områder der eleven <i>ikke</i> mestrer trinnets læreplan, og angi hvilket trinn elevens nivå tilsvarer.
Vurder i hvilken grad eleven følger kompetansemålene som gjelder (1-2. trinn, 3.-4. trinn, 5.-7. trinn, 8.-10. trinn).

Norsk		
Er skolen bekymret for elevens fungering i faget? Hvis ja, si kort hvorfor.	Ja X	Nei X

<u>Førleseferdigheter:</u> Hvordan er elevens fonologiske bevissthet og bokstav og lydkunnskap?	
--	--

<p><u>Muntlig/elevens språk:</u> Hvordan uttrykker eleven seg når hun/han skal fortelle noe, alene, i liten eller stor gruppe?</p> <p>Er det noe påfallende ved språket?</p> <p>Hvordan er begrepsforståelsen?</p> <p>Beskriv.</p>	
<p><u>Lesing:</u></p> <p>Leseflyt, leseforståelse og leselyst.</p> <p>Beskriv.</p> <p>Bruk av hjelpemidler?</p> <p>Hvilke?</p> <p>Effekt?</p>	
<p><u>Skriftlig:</u></p> <p>Skriftforming, formuleringsevne, skriveglede og rettskrivningsferdigheter.</p> <p>Beskriv.</p> <p>Bruk av hjelpemidler?</p> <p>Hvilke?</p> <p>Effekt?</p> <p>Gjennomførte tiltak i norsk:</p> <p>Organisering, materiell, IKT, læringsstrategier og effekt av tiltak.</p>	
<p>Elevens eget synspunkt:</p>	
<p>Angi hvilket trinn eleven mestrer faget på.</p> <p>I hvilken grad følger eleven kompetansemålene som gjelder?</p>	
<p>Hvem, i tillegg til skolen, har vurdert elevens vansker i faget?</p> <p>Når?</p> <p>Konklusjon?</p>	
<p>Hva får eleven til?</p>	

Matematikk	
Er skolen bekymret for elevens fungering i faget? Hvis ja, si kort hvorfor.	Ja X Nei X
<u>Forståelse av grunnleggende matematiske begreper</u>	
<u>Kunnskaper innen de fire regningsartene:</u> Addisjon: Subtraksjon: Multiplikasjon: Divisjon:	
<u>Tekststykker:</u> Hvordan mestrer eleven dette? (Er det kompensert for eventuelle lesevansker)?	
<u>Gjennomførte tiltak i matematikk:</u> Organisering, materiell, IKT, læringsstrategier og effekt av tiltak. Elevens opplevelse av mestring? Angi hvilket trinn eleven mestrer på. I hvilken grad følger eleven kompetansemålene som gjelder?	
Elevens eget synspunkt	
Kunnskapsfag	
Er skolen bekymret for elevens ferdigheter i faget? Hvis ja, si kort hvorfor.	Ja X Nei X
<u>Forståelse for fagbegreper:</u>	
<u>Elevens interesse for de ulike fagene:</u> Er det noen fag eleven liker?	

Effekt av tiltak. Elevens opplevelse av egen mestring. Angi hvilket trinn eleven mestrer på. I hvilken grad følger elevene kompetansemålene som gjelder?	
<u>Elevens eget synspunkt:</u>	
Praktisk/estetiske fag	
Er skolen bekymret for elevens fungering i noen av fagene? I tilfelle hvilke: Beskriv kort hvorfor:	Ja X Nei X
<u>Beskriv elevens fungering utfra følgende:</u> Interesse, engasjement, selvstendighet, ideer og gjennomføring av oppgaver/arbeid.	
<u>Gjennomførte tiltak i fagene:</u> Organisering, materiell, IKT, læringsstrategier, og effekt av tiltak. Elevens opplevelse av mestring. Angi hvilket trinn eleven mestrer på. I hvilken grad følger eleven kompetansemålene som gjelder?	
<u>Elevens eget synspunkt:</u>	
Kroppsøving om motoriske ferdigheter	
Er skolen bekymret for elevens fungering? Hvis ja, beskriv hvorfor. Hva mestrer eleven: Hva er vanskelig:	Ja X Nei X

Beskriv utfra følgende stikkord: Grovmotorikk, balanse, koordinasjon, spenst, individuelle aktiviteter og lagspill.	
Beskriv utfra følgende stikkord: Finmotorikk, hånddominans, blyantgrep, presisjon.	
<u>Gjennomførte tiltak innen kroppsøving og motoriske ferdigheter:</u> Organisering, materiell, IKT, læringsstrategier, og effekt av tiltak. Elevens opplevelse av mestring. Angi hvilken trinn/alder eleven mestrer på. I hvilken grad følger eleven kompetansemålene som gjelder?	
<u>Elevens eget synspunkt:</u>	

For ungdomsskoleelever og elever i videregående skole. Vurderingsgrunnlag og karakterer i fagene.			
<p>Dersom eleven følger samtlige kompetansemål i et fag, det er vurdert at skolen har vurderingsgrunnlag til å gi karakter, beskriv kort grunnlaget og karakteren.</p> <p>Gjør på samme måte dersom eleven har avvik fra kompetansemål eller det vurderes å ikke være vurderingsgrunnlag for å sette karakter.</p>			
Faget	Følger kompetansemål (ja/nei)	Skolen har vurderingsgrunnlag (j/nei)	Elevens karakter
Norsk			
Matematikk			
Engelsk			
Naturfag			

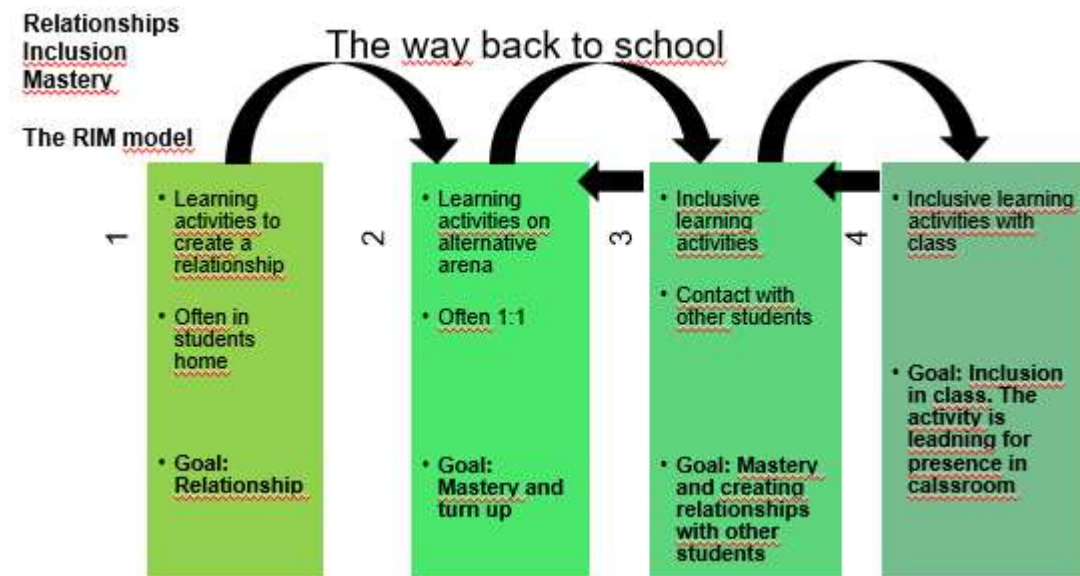
Samfunnsfag			
Mat og helse			
KRLE			
Fremmedspråk			
Kroppsøving			
Utdanningsvalg			
Musikk			
Arbeidslivsfag			

Vedlagte resultater fra kartlegging (Sett kryss og dater)			
Test	Utført	Dato	Merknader-resultater
Språk 6-16			
LOGOS			
CELF 4			
Friskrivingsarbeid			
M-prøve			
Alle teller			
Nasjonale prøver			
Annen kartlegging			
Annen kartlegging			
Samtlige tester må skåres og legges ved.			

Appendix 5

1. Descriptions of different Interventions:

- RIM-Modell "The way back to school", relationships, inclusion and mastery
- Nest
- B2S
- Hemmasittarprogrammet



(Kristine Damsgaard, Hedda Gjeste Tjäder and Maren-Johanne Nordby)

1: when a student is mostly at home, the main aim will be to create a relationship with the student. This will most likely be at the students' home. The aim is to create a relationship between teacher and student, and the activity should therefore be based on the students interests and have few, if any, demands. The teacher should be flexible, and create a feeling of safety and controle for the srudent. This can be solved by using preparational films, visual plans and questionnaires where the student can express their wishes

2: when a stable relationship is made, it may be time to move to an alternative arena. One should use learning activities that motivate the student and are easier ore more appropriate to do outside the home. However, it is important that this happens in the students' pace. The aims are a stable turn up for the student and mastery, or a sense of accomplishment.

3: when the student feels safe on the alternativa arene, it might be time to step in to the school building. However, the classroom is not the aim here, rather the student might need their own room or another safe place. Here one can start introducing peers. It is usefull to find peers that share some of the same interests and create learning activites based on these. The aim at this step is creating relationships with peers and continue a sense of accomplishment.

4: when turn up is stable, if maybe not full time, the aim will be inclusion. Not all students are able to attend fully in a classromm, and may have need for a room or safe spot to retire to. Therefore the school should find learning activites that plays to the students' strengths and needs. These activites can be used to

include the student in a group of peers or with the whole class. This must always be done in a structured way, in cooperation with the student and parents to ensure inclusion, participation as well as a possibility to withdraw when needed.

It is important to note that not all students will stay on step 4 of this model. In good periods they might participate in many learning activities with peers or in the classroom. In other periods they might need more time in their room or safe place, or even on the alternative arena from step 2. This is ok. Many students have good and bad periods. The important thing is for the school to continue with the adaptations, and have a plan A, B and even a plan C.

NEST Model – School for neuro-divergents and neuro-typical children

Nest is a pioneering school programme developed in New York where children with and without special needs are taught together using a pedagogy that caters for children on the autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It stands on human and educational values ensuring that all children learn and thrive and are given the same opportunities. Nest schools have Nest trained staff who use targeted co-teaching methods aiming to benefit and cater for the needs of all children.

The local authority of Aarhus has adopted the Nest approach after a study visit in New York 2014. Today 2022 they have 12 Nest classes with trained teachers. Parents are informed about the Nest programme.

Nest class inclusion paradigms:

- *Children are more alike than different and should be taught together*
- *If children do not learn in the ways we teach them, we must teach them in ways that teach them*

Highlights of the Nest Program:

- That in a 0th grade there are 16 students, of which 4 are students with ASF
- That there are two teachers in the class who collaborate according to a co-teaching model
- That the pedagogical staff in the Nest classes are particularly qualified to teach according to the Nest Program
- That all students learn the same thing regardless of special needs or no special needs
- That all students meet at their individual learning level
- That the room is equipped with special learning stations / quiet corners / common places
- That classrooms visually support learning
- That everyone at the school, both students, parents, teachers and leaders, is involved
- Common values for the teaching staff, and that leaders and teachers take the lead and are role models
- A focused balance between the individual and the community
- A close cooperation between the school with Nest classes and Pedagogical Psychological Counselling PPR in Denmark and PPT in Norway.

Sweden

Hemmasittarprogrammet and Hemmasittarprogrammet Online

Hemmasittarprogrammet (HSP; In English Home Sitting Program) is a multimodal and manual-based treatment program designed to increase school attendance and decrease anxiety, depression, and other psychiatric symptoms. The target group is elementary and secondary school students with severe, chronic, and complex school absenteeism. HSP incorporates treatment elements at different levels: the individual, parent, and school. The programme is about 12 months long and divided into three phases: 1) assessment phase, 2) treatment phase and 3) maintenance phase (Magelungen, 2017).

HSP includes individual components for the youth (e.g., skills training, social skills training, gradual school approach, behavioral activation, and problem solving) and for the family (e.g., regular meetings with the parents that focus on rules, agreements, daily routines, psychoeducation, and conflict reduction strategies). Treatment staff also meet with teachers and other school staff to explain the student's specific needs and problems and help them adapt the pedagogic and social environment to address these needs.

Since 2010 Magelungen has developed our own treatment program for child-motivated school absenteeism, known as school refusal or in Swedish "*hemmasittande*". The theoretical framework is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). The idea is to intensely work with the youth, their family and with the school. The goal is to increase the attendance in school.

Since late 2020 Magelungen has been working on a project to further develop our work with school refusal. We want to see if and how it is possible to reach, both parents, youths, and the school Online instead of in real life (IRL). The framework of this project is the same as the IRL-version. The project intends to investigate both the theoretical work, practical work and the technical conditions needed.

We are currently working with a number of families within what we call "Hemmasittarprogrammet Online - Pilot", which is a pilot version of an online translation of the HSP. Our preliminary results are: 1) it seems to be possible to reach and work with both, youth/adolescence, parents, and school online, 2) in some cases it seems that a contact with youths is even better online than IRL. It is easier to establish a contact.

Finland

Possibilities from Operation SKY, which prevents school attendance problems (bullying, violence and harassment in schools): Back2School and HSP: Back2School is a CBT based programme. HSP: see Sweden.

Denmark

Back2School: a CBT based programme

Tier 3 programs	Methods	How do the family get in contact with the program?	Who have responsibility to offer the knowledge about	Where do the employees find knowledge about the possibilities?	Who provides the program?

			possibilities to the family		
HSP	Assessment-, treatment- and maintenance phase. CBT based				
Nytorp and School contact	Assessment, and on social skills learning				
Back2School	CBT based programme				

Back2School

Back2School (B2S) (M Thastum, Arendt, & Kjerholt, 2020) is a manualized modular CBT program aimed at helping students in grades 1-10 with school absenteeism increase their school attendance, by involving the child, the parents, and the school staff in the treatment. Originally, (in the randomized controlled trial; RCT) (M. Thastum et al., 2019) the B2S program was used together with the trans-diagnostic MMM manual (Jeppesen, 2017). In the new and revised B2S manual evidence-based methods for treating anxiety, depression and behavioral problems has been integrated in the manual, which therefore now stands alone. Compared to the original RCT manual, additional important changes have been made: There is an increased focus on parent management training, methods for treating anxiety, depression and behavior problems have been integrated in the first 6 sessions – first from session 7 there are separate modules for the different problems, the number of sessions has been increased from 10 to 11, the assessment interview is now a part of the manual, and it also includes a focus on motivation and several chapters e.g. on use of roleplay and rewards have been added.

The B2S manual is specifically developed for treating school absenteeism. Intervention is determined via a descriptive functional analysis obtained via the School Refusal Assessment Scale (SRAS) (24) together with a case formulation approach to planning CBT for attendance problems. In the development of the intervention, we adapted aspects of the @SCHOOL intervention (Heyne, Sauter, Ollendick, Van Widenfelt, & Westenberg, 2014) and the When Children Refuse School intervention (Kearney & Albano, 2007).

The intervention consists of a 3.5-hour clinical interview with the child and parents aimed at designing a case-formulation and a treatment plan and preparing the family for the first therapy session, eleven 1-hour sessions with the child and parents together (except for session 2, 3 and 7 which is only with the parents), a 1-hour booster session with the child and parents together, and

four school meetings. With the aim of installing hope for change in the family, to speed up the change process, and to show the family that the school attendance problem is taken seriously, the first two weeks of the intervention involve two sessions per week. For the following 6 sessions there is the option to schedule them weekly or once each two weeks as decided appropriate by the therapist and the family together. The implementation of the booster session is flexible regarding the timing and will be held within 3 months after the last session. An important part of the B2S intervention is to collaborate with the school. In addition to the sessions with the child and parents, four meetings with participation of teachers from the child's school, the therapists and the parents are conducted. The meetings will take place at the child's school at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the treatment period, and shortly after the booster session. For a detailed overview of the intervention, see Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of the Back2School sessions

Session	Participants	Content
0	Parents and child Therapist	Structured assessment interview with the family including motivational work. The family receive handouts on psychoeducation and SMART goals as homework for session 1. Before session 1, the therapists are summarizing all relevant information, including the questionnaires, into a case formulation. Therapists are discussing the case formulation, choice of treatment modules, and treatment goals on a clinical conference.
1	Parents and child	Presenting and discussing the case-formulation (a common understanding) with the family. Psychoeducation regarding school absence, development of SMART goals
2	Parents	Clarify and solve questions/problems regarding school placement, somatic symptoms in child, and parental motivation for change. Planning better routines at home. Working with sleep problems. Introduce the parents for rewards and praise as motivation for the child.
3	Parents	Rehearse with roleplaying to give instructions in a clear and kind way. Reinforcing positive behavior. Introduce ignoring.
4	Parents and child	Psychoeducation on exposure. Planning a graduated exposure plan for returning to school. Planning the first school meeting.

School meeting 1	School staff and parents	Presenting and discussing the case formulation with the school. Planning the role of the school in the child's return to school. Informing the school about the B2S and CBT approach.
5	Parents and child	Introduction to cognitive restructuring If relevant psychoeducation regarding the child's primary problem related to school absence (anxiety, depression, or behavioral problems). Continuing work with the gradual exposure plan for returning to school.
6	Parents and child	Cognitive restructuring. Continuing work with the gradual exposure plan for returning to school. Problem solving. How can the parents help? Introduction to positive child/parent interactions.
7	Parents and child	Separate methods for anxiety, depression and behavior problems. For all: Continue with the school stepladder. Anxiety: Anxiety stepladders/exposure. Depression: Avoidance behavior and consequences. Behavior activation. Behavior: Family rules. Token system.
School meeting 2	School staff and parents	Follow up on the child's progress in the school setting. Discussing potential academic difficulties. Discussing problems regarding bullying or other problems.
8	Parents	Parental behavior Anxiety (e.g. overprotection) Depression (how to react as parents) Behaviour (negative consequences)
9	Parents and child	Optional sessions Continue to work with the relevant methods. Continue to focus on school stepladder
10	Parents and child	Optional sessions Continue to work with the relevant methods. Continue to focus on school stepladder
11	Parents and child	Focusing on maintaining and continuing the progress Relapse prevention Planning school meeting 3
School meeting 3	School staff and parents	Planning how the school can continue to help and support the youth. Discussing relapse prevention.
Booster session	Parents and child	Maintaining and continuing the progress. Problem solving regarding relevant problems.

		Relapse prevention. Advise possible further help.
Booster school meeting	School staff and parents	Planning how the school can continue to help and support the youth. Discussing relapse prevention.

The Back2School program has now been implemented as a standard offer to youth with absenteeism in the municipality of Aarhus, Denmark. In addition, 11 municipalities in Denmark are in 2022 testing the effectiveness of the program. Also, it is tested in a pilot study in Helsinki, Finland, and it is going to be tested in several municipalities in a pilot study in Norway in 2022. It has been translated into Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian.

The following publications has been published on the program (Johnsen et al., 2022; Lomholt et al., 2020; M. Thastum et al., 2019). The randomized controlled study has not been published yet.

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