

Core curriculum – values and principles for  
primary and secondary education

## Contents

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

## ABOUT THE CORE CURRICULUM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## THE PURPOSE OF THE EDUCATION

The objectives clause in the Education Act states:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Section 1-1 of the Education Act)