



Role of the Principal in Finnish schools

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Principal of Upper Secondary School

Helsingin Suomalainen Yhteiskoulu

Our school SYK

- independent coeducational school founded in 1886
- high academic standards; special focus on foreign languages
- 1150 students between the ages of 9 and 19
- 80 teachers, 20 non-teaching staff
- comprehensive school and upper secondary school
- the upper secondary also has an IB section
- top-performer in national context
- one of the top-performing IB schools in global context



Our school SYK

- Strong school community – many students stay with us for up to 10 years
- We focus on the well-being of our students and staff
- we offer our students a broad range of activities also outside classes – clubs, projects, trips
- Parents of especially younger students are actively involved e.g. with fundraising for trips
- We operate with partners nationally and worldwide
- Erasmus accredited school



Key roles of a Finnish principal

- Leading pedagogy and strategy
- Administrative duties
- Leading school culture and school community



Leading pedagogy and school strategy

- schools have the freedom and responsibility to make key decisions at the local level – principals lead this work
 - Pedagogical vision
 - Local curriculum, etc.
- Focus on long-term goals, such as wellbeing, anti-bullying, preventing dropouts, etc.
- Recruits new teachers and other staff members
- Supports and helps teachers to succeed
 - Standards and guidelines
 - In-service trainings
 - Trust over control!



Administrative duties

- Manages the school's budget and resources
- Handles administrative tasks like scheduling and data entry
- Makes official decisions on student matters (e.g. enrollment decisions)
- Oversees daily school operations and staff coordination
- In upper secondary schools: responsible for the smooth running of matriculation examinations twice a year



Leading school culture and community

- Promotes a school culture of inclusivity, respect, and diversity
- Leads and supports various teams to achieve their goals
- Facilitates collaboration and communication between the school, students, and parents
- One-on-one meetings with students on a regular basis



In conclusion

- Principals work actively and engage with teachers on a daily basis
- Present at school every day and the office door is open to everybody
- Days include lots of meetings (planned and unplanned) with both staff and students
- Every day is different!
- **Trust – respect – service** in order to achieve common goals
- The work is rewarding but also very demanding.



Thank you!



Contact

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