

Principles for Admission to Oulu International School

Effective January 1, 2026
Dno OUKA/9480/12.00.00/2016

Summary

Changes are proposed to Oulu International School's admission principles effective January 1, 2026, concerning class sizes, passing thresholds for language tests, and criteria for admission to the Transition Class.

Decision Proposal

The Education Committee decides to amend the admission principles for Oulu International School as follows, effective January 1, 2026:

1. Class Size:

Years 1–2: maximum 23 students

Years 3–9: maximum 25 students

Current classes exceeding these limits will continue with their existing numbers. The new decision applies only to new applicants and those applying for Year 7 in spring 2027. For students transferring from the transition class to Years 1–9, the maximum class size may be temporarily exceeded if necessary.

2. Language Test Passing Thresholds:

Applicants must pass the English language test according to the percentage thresholds approved by the Education Committee. Percentages will not be rounded to the nearest whole number. Students studying the Finnish mother tongue curriculum must also pass a Finnish language test in addition to the English test to be admitted. Guardians determine the student's Finnish language curriculum when registering for the entrance test.

3. Transition Class Admission Criteria (effective January 1, 2026):

A child may be admitted to the transition class if they:

- Are not a Finnish citizen
- Were not born in Finland
- Have not previously lived in Finland
- Are residing temporarily in Finland and within the City of Oulu
- Have a home language other than Finnish or English
- Do not have sufficient English skills for mainstream classes at Oulu International School

Admission to transition classes for Years 7–9 is discretionary. The student must have the ability to learn English well enough to continue studying in English after basic education. Therefore:

- For Years 7 and 8, the student must score above 50% on the language test
- For Year 9, the student must score above 65%

The right to study in the Transition Class may be extended to a third year at the teacher's discretion if the student has made good progress in English but remains within 10 percentage points of passing after two years, or if the family is moving out of Finland within a year.

Decision:

The proposal was approved.

Background Information

Class Size

According to the Education and Culture Committee's decision on December 15, 2020 (§183), class sizes were defined from January 1, 2021, as follows: Years 1–2 max 22 students, Years 3–9 max 25 students. Admissions were organized separately for Years 1–6 and Years 7–9. Continuous admissions could increase class sizes to 25 in Years 1–2 and up to 28 in other grades.

From January 1, 2026: Years 1–2 max 23 students, Years 3–9 max 25 students. Current classes exceeding these limits will continue as they are; the new decision applies only to new applicants and those applying for Year 7 in spring 2027. For students transferring from the Transition Class, the maximum may be temporarily exceeded if necessary.

Language Test Passing Thresholds

Applicants are admitted based on entrance test results in order of merit, following city guidelines on class sizes. Passing thresholds:

Grade	English	Finnish
1	60%	70%
2	60%	70%
3	65%	70%
4	65%	70%
5	65%	70%
6	65%	70%
7	70%	70%
8	70%	70%
9	75%	70%

Transition Class Criteria

The Transition Class serves students arriving from abroad who do not have sufficient English skills to study subjects in English according to the international school curriculum. The need arises when a family comes to Finland temporarily and the child cannot pass the school's English language test. Preparatory education does not always meet the needs of families who wish to strengthen their child's English skills considering future schooling and language environment.

Previously, admission to the Transition Class was for two years and required that the child:

- Lives temporarily in Oulu
- Is not a Finnish citizen
- Was not born in Finland
- Does not have sufficient English skills for mainstream classes
- Cannot study in Finnish

From January 1, 2026, the criteria are clarified:

- Not a Finnish citizen
- Not born in Finland
- Has not previously lived in Finland
- Lives temporarily in Finland and in Oulu
- Home language is neither Finnish nor English
- English skills are insufficient for mainstream classes

Admission to Years 7–9 in Transition Class is discretionary. Students must have the ability to learn English well enough to continue studying in English after basic education. Therefore:

- Years 7–8: must score above 50%
- Year 9: must score above 65%

The right to study may be extended to a third year at the teacher's discretion if the student has made good progress but remains within 10 percentage points of passing after two years, or if the family is moving abroad within a year.

Legal Basis: Administrative Rules §8, item 1

Decision History:

- Education Committee, Dec 17, 2024 (§102): Admission principles for Oulu schools effective Jan 1, 2025
- Education and Culture Committee, Dec 15, 2020 (§183): Admission principles for Oulu International School effective Jan 1, 2021

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Implementation: Copies to preparers.

Appeal authority: Education Committee