

Rettigheder og pligter i folkeskolen

Rights and duties in the Danish Comprehensive Primary and Lower Secondary Schools

Engelsk/English

Preface

The Danish comprehension primary and lower secondary school system shall further the pupils' skills. The comprehensive primary and lower secondary school system shall also familiarise the pupils with the principal values and rules of the Danish society based on freedom and democracy.

Not only the teaching of the pupils shall be built on freedom and democracy during classes but the school's daily life shall also be built on values such as equality and democracy.

As well as all citizens have rights and duties in a democracy, so both the school, the parents and the pupils have a number of rights and duties throughout the comprehensive primary and lower secondary school system. It shall thus be the joint responsibility of all to ensure the pupils' social development and vocational output in the schools.

When all parties have familiarised themselves with their rights and duties, it will also be clearer what you can and should expect from others. The foundation is thereby laid for a fruitful dialogue and a partnership which can be of substantial benefit.

This leaflet is therefore intended as a tool to further the cooperation between parents and school.

You can read more about the rules for the Danish comprehensive primary and lower secondary school system and receive more information about other publications at the back of this leaflet.



ULLA TØRNÆS

The aims of the schools

The school shall meet the provisions of the Danish Act on the Folkeskole, the Danish Primary and Lower Secondary School. For example the school has a duty:

- to organise the teaching so that the individual pupil's need for vocational challenges is met and that the said pupil makes the best possible use of his/her skills
- to prepare the pupils for active participation, joint responsibility, rights and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy
- to organise the teaching so that it is built on intellectual freedom, equality and democracy
- to cooperate with the parents to further the pupils' vocational and personal development.



I.e...

The content of the subjects is the core of the teaching offered by the Danish comprehensive primary and lower secondary schools. The teaching shall be organised so that the individual pupil's need for vocational challenges is met and that the said pupil makes the best possible use of his/her skills. The fact that children learn in different ways and at a different pace and that they have different needs at different form levels should be taken into consideration.

The aim of the school's efforts is to offer the pupils instruction and some good manners which shall prepare them for a life as active citizens in the Danish society. The aim is to ensure that the pupils will do well and have a meaningful life in a democratic society.

Therefore, it is for example important that the pupils learn:

- to understand what "active participation, joint responsibility, rights and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy" means
- to interact in a community based on intellectual freedom, equality and democracy
- to become familiar with Danish culture
- to understand other cultures.

The teaching offered shall be based on the individual pupil's skills and current stage of development so that the said pupil can develop in the best way possible both vocationally and personally.

Close cooperation between the parents and the school is essential as it will help further the pupils' benefit from the teaching offered by the school. This will give the school an insight into the pupils' interests, what they are good at and how they best learn and grasp new challenges. This knowledge will support the teachers when organising their teaching. But the above-mentioned cooperation will also enable the parents to gain insight into and an understanding of the daily life of the school. It is therefore important that the school aims to make the parents attend parents' meetings, parent-teacher meetings and other activities which the school invites parents to attend.

The responsibility of the school

The school shall:

- within the given framework offer a quality of teaching in accordance with the aims laid down for the comprehensive primary and lower secondary schools
- take care of the pupils so that the parents can feel secure when leaving their children under the remit of the school
- take action if any of the pupils are absent without permission from the head of the school
- organise teaching, e.g. at home, if a pupil cannot attend school due to sickness for more than three weeks
- ensure orderliness in the school
- contact the social authorities if it is found that the child's welfare is in jeopardy.



I.e...

The individual school shall within the given framework be responsible for the quality of the teaching in pursuance of the aims laid down for the comprehensive primary and lower secondary school and it shall make decisions on the planning and organisation of the teaching.

The school shall supervise the pupils during class hours, breaks, lunch breaks etc. Class hours include the time when lessons take place. This may either be the scheduled teaching at the school premises or the teaching organised in connection with visits outside the school at school camps etc.

The school must react if a pupil is absent from school without good reason. The school will usually contact the parents. If a pupil is absent regularly, the school may contact the social authorities to find out what the problem is. Exemption from school can only be granted upon approval from the head of the school. Exemption may for example be granted in connection with special events in the family or religious festivals, which are not part of the school holidays.

If a pupil cannot attend school due to sickness for more than three weeks, the school shall organise necessary teaching for example at home.

The school shall endeavour to make all pupils do well in school and to offer the pupils orderly instruction. This means among other things that the school shall intervene in case of bullying.

If pupils in the 3rd to the 10th form levels do not follow the school's house rules, the school may decide:

- to exclude pupils from school for up to one week
- to move the said pupils to parallel classes at the same school
- to move the said pupils to parallel classes at another school.

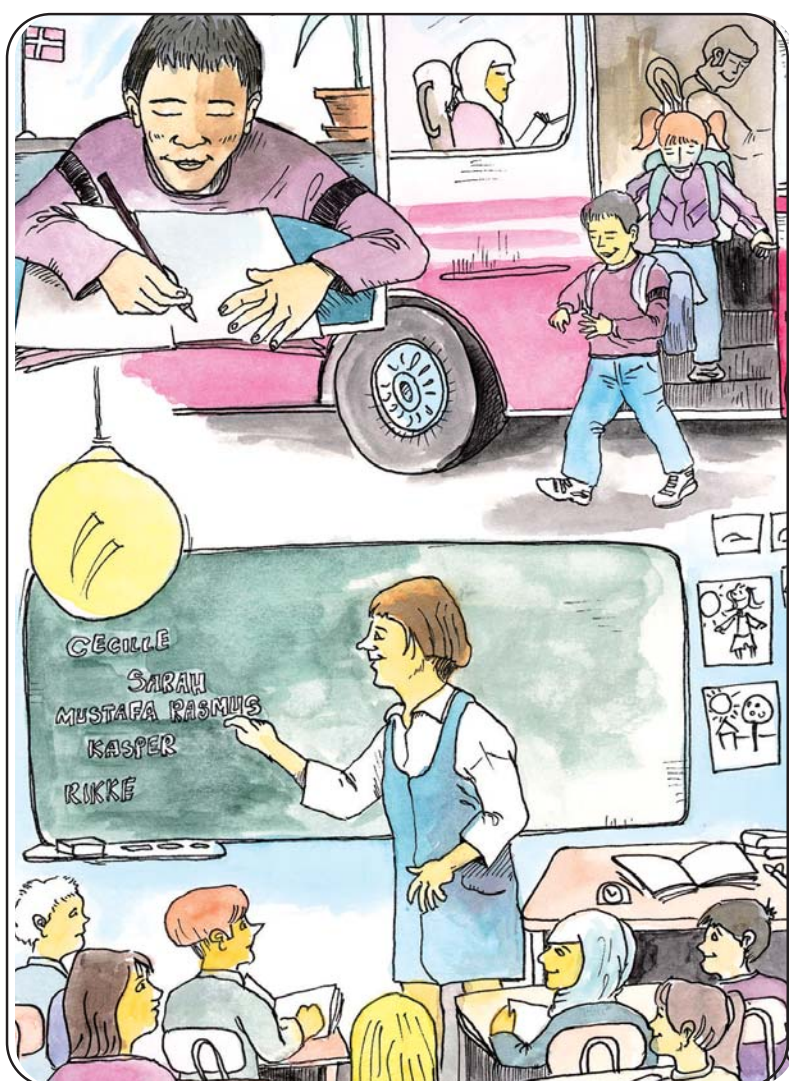
However, these measures shall only be implemented after previous meetings with the said pupil's parents or after the school has informed the parents that these measures will be implemented.

Like all other citizens, but more so, the school's staff have a duty to report any parents to the local social authorities if a child has been exposed to neglect.

The rights of school children

According to these rules any school child is entitled:

- to free tuition at the Danish comprehensive primary and lower secondary schools
- to be offered tuition in the local authority district school (specific rules apply for special education and reception classes)
- to free transport to and from the local authority district school or to any another school the said pupil may have been referred to
- to be given supplementary teaching
- to special education if required
- to tuition of Danish as a second language
- to tuition of the mother tongue (covers the teaching of children of EU and EEA citizens and children from the Faroe Islands and Greenland)
- to establish a pupils' council
- to change school during the school year.



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Any child is entitled to basic education free of charge in the Danish comprehensive primary and lower secondary schools for 200 days a year. This shall also apply for pupils at the 10th form levels. For the pupils in the pre-school classes the number of school days may be reduced to 195.

Any necessary educational material shall be made available free of charge. The parents shall not be ordered to pay for expenses incurred in connection with the general education except from boarding expenses, e.g. for school camps and excursions. A child shall be admitted to the school under the local school district in which he/she is living or residing. Any child has the right to basic education in a local district school as soon as the education in the reception class or similar is completed. Any pupil has the option to choose a school other than the local district school if the receiving school allows the said pupil to be admitted.

For pupils who have to travel long distances to the school, the district council (Kommunalbestyrelsen) shall see to transport free of charge in accordance with the following guidelines for the distance between the home and the school:

- Pupils in pre-school classes and the 1st to 3rd form levels who live more than 2¹/₂ kilometres from the school.
- Pupils at the 4th to 6th form levels who live more than 6 kilometres from the school.
- Pupils at the 7th to 9th form levels who live more than 7 kilometres from the school.
- Pupils at the 10th form who live more than 9 kilometres from the school.

The district council shall see to the transport free of charge of pupils who live closer to the school than the above-mentioned if it is considered that traffic puts their safety at risk or if they can only attend lessons if transport is provided for them to and from the school. The district council shall make a decision on the above in each individual case. The provisions for distance to school and safety in traffic on the way to school shall only apply to pupils living within the school's local district.

When a pupil changes school, the new receiving school will assess whether the said pupil needs any particular vocational support during the transitional period. In addition the school can for example offer special assistance for pupils who need help with their homework because of absence due to sickness. Any pupil is entitled to special education or any other special educational assistance, including transport if needed. In order to find the best offer available, educational-psychological advisory bodies will be included and the assistance needed will be assessed in cooperation with the school and the parents. It will then be for the head of the school to decide which assisting measures should be implemented.

In any school with 5 form levels or more the pupils are entitled to establish a pupils' council.

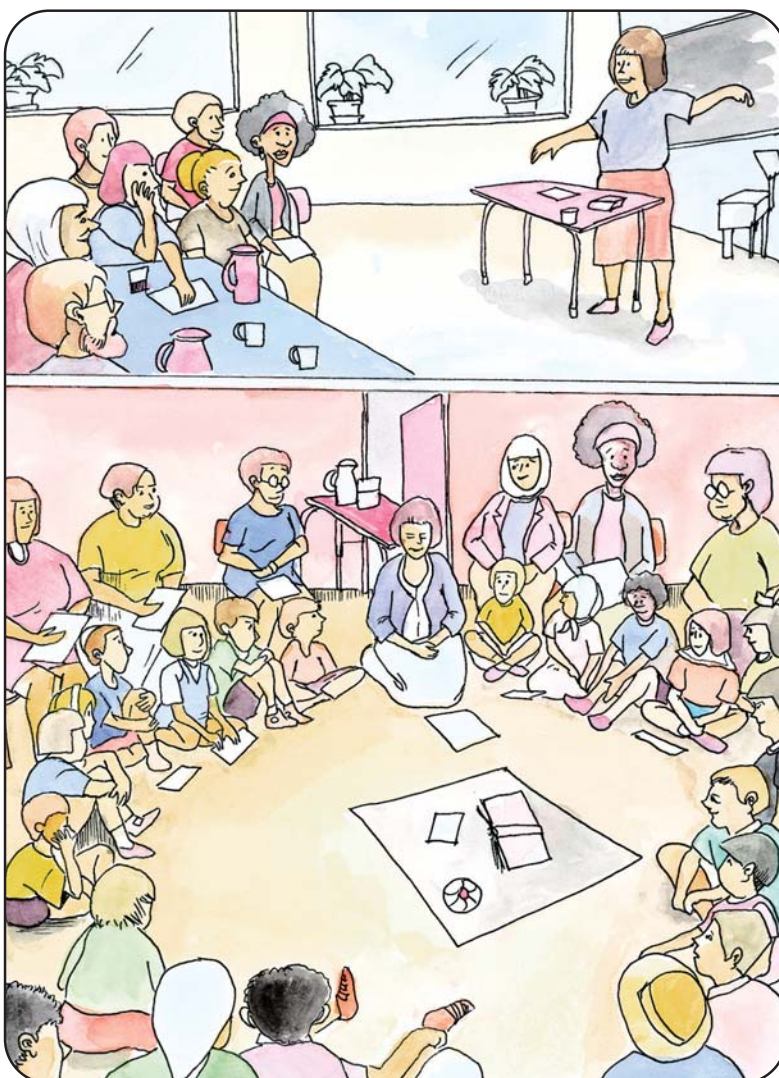
Instructions are offered in the subject of Danish as a second language for teaching bilingual pupils in pre-school classes and in the 1st to the 10th form levels, if necessary. Bilingual pupils include children whose mother tongue is not Danish and who start to learn Danish when they are admitted to pre-school or school.

In some cases the pupils from the EU member states, EEA countries, the Faroe Islands and Greenland can make a request that they be taught in the official languages of their native countries, i.e. Faroese and Greenlandic.

The parents' rights

The parents are entitled:

- to contact the school staff, the head of the school and the school board
- to be informed about the pupil's progress at regular intervals
- to participate in the lessons if prior arrangements are made
- to offer themselves for and vote at elections to the school board
- to bring complaints before the district council if they disagree with specific decisions made by the head of the school about their child
- to be consulted in connection with the school's work
- on request to have their child exempted from participation in the lessons on Christian studies
- to opt for a type of education other than the education provided by the Danish primary and lower secondary schools.



I.e...

All parents are entitled to contact the school staff, the head of the school and the school board if they have any questions about their child's schooling or the work performed by the school.

The parents are entitled to be informed about how their child is doing in school and the benefits from the teaching offered – both vocationally, personally and socially. The school board shall lay down the principles of how often – and how – the parents shall be informed.

If the school has agreed, the parents are entitled to participate in the lessons. It shall be arranged with the school in advance how and when such visits can take place.

The parents shall be entitled to offer themselves as parent representatives and to vote at the school board election.

If parents disagree with a decision made by the head of the school about their child, they are entitled to bring a complaint before the district council within four (4) weeks of the notification of the decision. The district council will make the final decision.

All parents have the right to take part in any discussion about how the school can approach the different needs which the pupils and their parents might have in connection with the daily life of the school.

The instruction offered in the subject of Christian studies is important because it deals with common human issues which are put forward and discussed both on Christianity and any other religions and philosophies of life. The instruction offered is not intended to have a preaching appeal but exclusively to be informative. The parents are entitled to have their child exempted from participation in the instruction in Christian studies if they submit a written request to the effect that they will personally assume the teaching of the child's religious instruction.

Parents may opt for another form of teaching for their child than the one provided by the comprehensive primary and lower secondary schools. In order to meet the regulations on compulsory education, the teaching shall be on a par with the education provided by the Danish comprehensive primary and lower secondary schools. This can for example be a private school.

The school's requirements to the pupils and the parents

Children and parents shall:

- ensure that the regulations on compulsory education are met
- co-operate with the school
- inform the school about the reasons for absence from school
- take their part of the responsibility so that the school can carry out its activities.



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In Denmark you have 9 years of compulsory education. It means that any child from the child's 6th to 7th year is subject to compulsory education in a primary and lower secondary school or other establishments offering the pupils an education which is on a par with the education generally required by the comprehensive primary and lower secondary schools.

School attendance is compulsory at all form levels during all school hours unless there are valid reasons for absence. This also applies to pupils in pre-school classes and at the 10th form level even though school attendance is not compulsory for pupils at these two form levels.

A good relationship between school and home is built on active participation by all parents and equal sharing of experience, information and views about the pupil's development. It is important that the parents and the school agree on what they can expect from each other and discuss how the parents and the school can best cooperate.

Cooperation between home and school covers a wide range of contents and form. It may be meetings between the school and the home, parents' meetings in the class and theme meetings about relevant issues such as reading, the social life of the class, alcohol etc. However, it may also be more informal meetings such as for example telephone contact, meetings when bringing the children to the school or contact in connection with excursions.

For a pupil to be exempted from participation at school, the head of the school shall grant the permission. The school shall therefore always be advised of the cause of the pupil's absence. The school may request a medical certificate if the pupil has been absent due to illness for more than two weeks.

Not only the school is responsible for the education offered and the pupils' daily life in school – the parents as well as the pupils have responsibility too.

Parents' influence

The parents can influence the daily life of the school through:

- The school board.
- Conversations with the teachers and the social educators.
- Parents' meetings.
- Parents' councils.
- School parties, information meetings or theme meetings for all the parents whose children are enrolled in the school.

I.e...

The school board at the individual school shall lay down the principles for the cooperation between home and school. These principles may include a minimum target for meetings between school and home and social events in each class. Most schools invite the parents to a meeting at the school once or twice a year. The aim of these meetings is to give the parents, the teachers and the social educators, if needed, an opportunity to talk about their views on the personal, social and vocational development of the individual pupil – and how each of them can support the said pupil's continuous development.

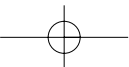
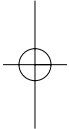
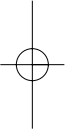
At the annual parents' meetings parents can have a direct dialogue with other parents and the teachers about essential themes regarding the progress in the class. These issues could for example be on how the class interacts socially, the aim of the teaching offered, the form and content and also on how to obtain a fruitful cooperation between parents and teachers in the class. A parents' council will be set up in the individual classes in many schools. The above council may organise parents' meetings together with the headteacher, discuss areas which are of general interest to the class, such as for example class events, common arrangements about children and young people's consumption of alcohol, crime etc. The parents' council may also offer to arrange excursions and parties for the pupils. Both the school and the school board may take the initiative to arrange various parties, information meetings or theme meetings for all the parents at the school. It may be the annual school party when the pupils, the parents and the school staff have a party together. It may also be open meetings about issues which the school would like to discuss with all the parents. E.g. presentations to all about the school's values, children's conditions and development or meetings at which the daily life and development of the school is discussed.

The parents can also influence the children's development when they make their own expertise available to the class, e.g. as guest teachers or in connection with information meetings about educational, commercial or labour market related issues and when they offer to provide traineeships for the pupils.

The parents cannot directly influence the general laws and regulations which the comprehensive primary and lower secondary schools are subjected to. The laws and regulations etc. are laid down as follows:

- The Danish Parliament shall enact the Act on the Folkeskole, the Danish primary and lower secondary school, which applies for all primary and lower secondary schools in Denmark.
- The minister of education issues binding rules which apply to all comprehensive primary and lower secondary schools in Denmark.
- The municipalities and the county authorities shall lay down the targets and the framework for the activities of the schools under the above-mentioned Act on the Folkeskole, the Danish Primary and Lower Secondary School.
- The school board shall lay down the principles of the activities of the individual school.

The district council shall lay down the framework of and the guidelines for how the schools must be run under the above-mentioned Act on the Folkeskole, the Danish Primary and Lower Secondary School. I.e. for example that the school board shall lay down the principles for the organisation of the school hours for the individual form levels.



Examples of themes for cooperation between school and home

“Besides, the headteacher has already been contacted by four other parents who have also asked for permission to allow their children to be exempted from school due to skiing holidays during the month of January. The effect of this is that the consistency of the teaching will be disrupted both for the pupils themselves and for the pupils with whom they are to cooperate.”

Exemption out of school holidays

In mid-December Line gives her contact book to her headteacher. At the request of Line's parents Line is asked to be granted permission to be exempted from school during the first week after the Christmas holidays because the family is going on a skiing holiday to Norway. The headteacher delivers the contact book to the head of the school who will decide whether the pupil can be granted permission to be exempted from school.

He asks the headteacher if there is anything special which should be taken into account. She indicates that the class will be starting to work on a new theme after Christmas and that the introduction for that theme is scheduled for the first week. This means that Line will miss the group session on information, the film, the guest teacher and the visit. Besides, the headteacher has already been contacted by four other parents who have also asked for permission to allow their children to be exempted from school due to skiing holidays during the month of January. The effect of this is that the consistency of the teaching will be disrupted both for the pupils themselves and for the pupils with whom they are to cooperate.

The head of the school thus decided that Line would not be granted permission to be exempted from school and recommended to Line's parents that they take their holiday during the school's winter holidays instead.

**“The school camp
is a part of the teaching,
which creates an opportunity
for the pupils to gain hands-on
experience. The pupils are taught
in a secure environment – under
the guidance and supervision
of the teacher.”**

School camp - another form of education

The pupils in the 6th form level is planning a school camp together with their teacher. They are going to an island named Fur for three days. The aim of the school camp is to further the pupils' knowledge about and understanding of the material "soil". The aim of the journey is to challenge the pupils' curiosity and give them a sense of wonder and to encourage them to ask questions which they would like to investigate further and to find answers.

They will see how the different strata of earth are deposited on the cliffs of clay and how the Ice age has shapen the natural environment. They will feel the differences between several types of soil and they will see that they can collect the clay directly from nature and work with it. At the museum on the island they will be looking at fossils which have been excavated from the cliffs of clay. They will be provided with a general understanding that the earth contains much evidence about the past.

The school camp is a part of the teaching, which creates an opportunity for the pupils to gain hands-on experience. The pupils are taught in a secure environment – under the guidance and supervision of the teacher.

The practical questions about food and accommodation are discussed in advance with the parents so that everyone feels secure about sending their children on the journey.

“The aim is to enlighten all the pupils on the common theme; partly through their own work and partly through insight into each other’s work.”

Education inside and outside the classroom

The pupils in the 5th form level are examining their local district. They have asked a number of questions to which they would like to find answers, e.g.:

- How will it affect the town that a motorway has been planned around the town and who has made the decision?
- How can the authorities afford another church when they cannot afford a sports centre?

The pupils will be working with the problems of their concern. Then they will be asked to describe where they will find the answers to their questions and how they will communicate their knowledge to other pupils in their class. The aim is to enlighten all the pupils on the common theme; partly through their own work and partly through insight into each other's work.

This type of work demands a great deal from the pupils. The teacher will of course be responsible for the teaching but the pupils will learn to take part in decision-making processes and to feel that they have a share in the responsibility both to themselves and to each other.

The teaching offered gives the pupils ample opportunities for working in many different ways and dealing with many different issues at the same time. The teaching shall be based on the individual pupil's skills and current stage of development.

**“They talk for
a while about what
they can do about it.
They come up with a
number of solutions
after a while.”**

Bathing

Hanardi is upset after the PE lesson. When the teacher asks her why she is upset, she explains that she is not allowed to undress and take a shower together with the other children. They talk for a while about what they can do about it. They come up with a number of solutions after a while. For example, Hanardi could use the teacher's bathing facilities, she could take a shower ten minutes before the other children have a shower, she could keep her underwear on when she takes a shower (and bring a spare set of underwear) or a curtain could be hung up in front of the cabinet showers?

The teacher has a discussion with the head of the school and Hanardi's parents about the above solutions. They agree that it would be a good idea to install a curtain in the cabinet showers.

“The teacher needs to know which things to consider in connection with the teaching of this subject. She needs to know what foods to avoid and which can be substituted for traditional food products.”

Home economics

The subject of home economics will be added to the class curriculum after the summer holidays. The headteacher has realised that there are certain things which must be considered in this class: Gitte is allergic to gluten. Due to Michael's religion he is not allowed to eat foods containing blood plasma. Lene is a vegetarian. Babak is not allowed to eat pork.

It will therefore be necessary to discuss these issues at a parents' meeting. The teacher needs to know which things to consider in connection with the teaching of this subject. She needs to know what foods to avoid and which can be substituted for traditional food products. She has to have insight into the parents' knowledge to be able to differentiate the lessons so that all pupils can benefit from the teaching.

Various agreements are made with the parents on who takes care of what. Gitte's mother will make sure that Gitte brings some special ingredients so that she can cook her own food. All she needs to know in advance is what the other pupils will be cooking. Babak's mother would like to participate in some of the classes when the children will be taught about Arabic cooking.

At this meeting they agreed on a solution which satisfied all the parties. It was a solution which was inspiring for the teaching and provided new angles for cooperation between the parents.

The aims of the Danish comprehensive primary and lower secondary school system

The aims of the Danish Primary and Lower Secondary School are in cooperation with the parents to further the pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills, working methods and ways of expressing themselves and thus contribute to the all-round personal development of the individual pupil.

The comprehensive primary and lower secondary school system shall endeavour to create such a framework for experience, industry and absorption that the pupils develop awareness, imagination and an urge to learn so that they acquire confidence in their own possibilities and a basis for forming personal judgments and taking action.

The comprehensive primary and lower secondary school system shall familiarise the pupils with Danish culture and contribute to their understanding of other cultures and of man's interaction with nature. The school shall prepare the pupils for active participation, joint responsibility, rights and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy. The teaching of the school and its daily life must therefore be built on intellectual freedom, equality and democracy.

The comprehensive primary and lower secondary education is a matter for the municipal authorities. It shall be the responsibility of the district council to ensure that all children in the municipality are provided with free primary and lower secondary education. The district council shall lay down the targets and the framework of the activities of the schools under the above-mentioned act.

The individual school shall within the given framework be responsible for the quality of the education in pursuance of the aims and objectives laid down for the teaching in the comprehensive primary and lower secondary schools and it shall make decisions in relation to the planning and organisation of the teaching.

The pupils and the parents shall cooperate with the school with a view to meeting the aims of the Danish comprehensive primary and lower secondary school system.

See also

The Danish Ministry of Education's homepage at www.uvm.dk with indepth links to literature

Under "Love og Regler" and "Folkeskolen" the following issues will be covered

Bekendtgørelse af lov om folkeskolen (Folkeskoleloven)

Acts containing provisions pertaining to among other things:

Bekendtgørelse om formålet med undervisningen i folkeskolens fag og obligatoriske emner med angivelse af centrale kundskabs- og færdighedsområder

Bekendtgørelse om tilsyn med folkeskolens elever i skoletiden

Bekendtgørelse om befordring af elever i folkeskolen

Bekendtgørelse om foranstaltninger til fremme af god orden i folkeskolen

Bekendtgørelse om valg af forældrerepræsentanter til skolebestyrelser i folkeskolen

Bekendtgørelse om sygeundervisning for elever i folkeskolen og visse private skoler

Bekendtgørelse om folkeskolens undervisning i dansk som andetsprog

Bekendtgørelse om folkeskolens modersmålsundervisning af børn fra medlemsstater i Den Europæiske Union, fra lande, som er omfattet af aftalen om Det Europæiske Økonomiske Samarbejdsområde, samt fra Færøerne og Grønland

Bekendtgørelse om folkeskolens specialpædagogiske bistand til småbørn

Bekendtgørelse om faget tegnsprog i folkeskolen

Bekendtgørelse om folkeskolens specialundervisning og anden specialpædagogiske bistand

Guidelines for:

Vejledning om tilsyn med folkeskolens elever i skoletiden

Vejledning om foranstaltninger til fremme af god orden i folkeskolen

Vejledning om ekskursioner, lejrskoler og skolerejser mv. i folkeskolen

Vejledning om folkeskolens indsats over for elever, hvis udvikling kræver en særlig hensyntagen eller støtte

Under "Udgivelser", "Online publikationer" and "Grundskolen" the following issues are addressed

Elever der forstyrrer undervisningen for sig selv og andre i folkeskolen.
Redegørelse til Folketinget

Faghæfter om samtlige fag i folkeskolen www.klaremaal.uvm.dk

Handicappede elever i idrætsundervisningen

Heldigvis er vores folkeskole for alle

Læsning – hvordan får vi godt begyndt?

Mobning skal ud af skolen

Skolebestyrelsen – i alt 8 hæfter

Skolebestyrelsesvalg 2001. En håndbog

Skolen og specialundervisning – om at lave individuelle undervisningsplaner

Tosprogede børn og unge – 4 års skoleudvikling

Undervisning af elever med læsevanskeligheder

Undervisning af elever med synshandicap

Undervisning af elever med tale/sprogvanskeligheder

Kulør på skoleudvikling

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