



## **Absence limit for upper secondary schools – information for pupils/parents/guardians in Trøndelag**

Effective from 1 August 2021

***We want to offer all pupils the best possible education. This is why we want you to attend school. This is important for your own education, for your peers, and for the school's learning environment.***

In 2016, an absence limit was introduced in upper secondary schools. If your undocumented absence rate in a subject is greater than 10 per cent, you will, as a rule, lose the right to a final mark in that subject. You may even lose the right to move up to the next grade. If your undocumented absence rate is between 10 and 15 per cent, but the reason for this entails that it would be unreasonable for you not to receive a mark, the head teacher can decide that you will still be awarded a mark.

Absence due to health and welfare reasons is exempt from the 10 per cent rule. Such absence must be documented by a doctor or other health-care professional. Absence may also be exempt from the 10 per cent rule if you document that the absence in excess of 10 per cent is due to work as a shop steward, political work, relief work, mandatory attendance, parts of driver training, or representation at a national or international event.

Regardless of the absence limit, your teacher must have a sufficient basis on which to award you a mark.

You and your parent/guardian will receive written notice if you are at risk of not receiving a half-year assessment mark or final mark in a subject. Your parent/guardian will not be notified once you turn 18 years of age.

## All absence counts

All absence, regardless of the reason, counts towards your absence rate.

However, if you are absent due to a right pursuant to the Norwegian Education Act, this will not count as absence. Such rights include:

- counselling at school
- meeting with the Educational-Psychological Service
- scheduled study work agreed with the subject teacher in advance
- student council work etc. approved by the school
- agreed meeting with the head teacher or other members of staff

Schooling at home or at an institution due to long-term illness or similar is part of regular schooling. Therefore, it does not count as absence.

## Some absence is not counted

You may still receive a half-year assessment mark and final mark if you can document that absence exceeding 10 per cent is due to:

- Health and welfare reasons
  - Illness
  - Appointment with a doctor, dentist or Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Out-patient Clinic (BUP), appointment with the school health service etc.
  - Caring for family members, e.g., your own children
  - Serious illness in the family
  - Baptism, wedding, confirmation, funeral
- Work as shop steward
  - Representation on a municipal youth council or youth county executive board
  - Serving as a representative at a meeting or for other work in the School Student Union of Norway
- Political work
  - Attending as a delegate at a national convention for a registered political party or its youth wing
  - Membership of a municipal council
  - Membership of a political committee at the county level
  - Serving as a party representative in school debates at other schools during municipal and parliamentary elections
  - Other work for a political organisation, including organisations independent of political parties, if such work cannot reasonably be performed outside of school hours.
- Relief work
  - Relief work will typically involve work for relief agencies such as the Red Cross or Norwegian People's Aid. However, it is a requirement that you actually perform work.
- Mandatory attendance
  - Examination for military service
  - Summons to court proceedings or witness summons
- Representation at a national or international event, e.g., sports or cultural events
  - Such events may include:
    - Representation at various national or international sports championships or competitions
    - Representation at concerts, art and cultural events at the national or international level
- Parts of the absence occurring in connection with driver training
  - Absence documented as being due to parts of mandatory driver training for a Category B driving licence is not included toward the absence limit. This applies to the four-hour compulsory safety course on track circuit (stage 3) and nine-hour safety course on roads (parts 2 and 3 of stage 4). Reasonable travel time will also be covered by the documented absence.

- The other parts of the driver training, including driving tests, and types of driver training other than for a Category B driving licence, are not exempt from the absence limit.

If you are a member of a denomination other than the Church of Norway, you are entitled to up to two days of exempt absence for religious holidays.

## **You must document absence that is to be exempt from the absence limit**

Absence for health reasons must be documented by a medical certificate or documentation from another health-care professional, e.g.:

- physiotherapist
- dentist
- psychologist (including BUP)

Absence due to health reasons cannot be documented solely by the self-certification of a parent/guardian or pupils of age and legal capacity.

For illness of a nature where it is difficult or impractical to attend a professional for each individual instance, this may be documented by way of self-certification in conjunction with other forms of documentation. Other documentation includes a declaration from a professional confirming that you have a chronic illness, or documentation showing that you are being assessed or monitored for an undiagnosed condition.

For welfare reasons, such as funerals, a declaration from parents/guardians or from a pupil who is of age and legal capacity is usually sufficient.

Absence for political reasons, relief work, work as a shop steward, representation at a national or international event, and mandatory attendance must be documented by a letter from the organisation for which the work is being carried out.

You must provide documentation or other notes regarding your absence no more than ten days after the end of your absence. If there are special reasons that you are not accountable for, the head teacher may decide that such documentation can also be provided after this ten-day period.

## **In exceptional circumstances, you can still be awarded a mark in case of undocumented absence up to 15 per cent**

In rare, exceptional circumstances, the head teacher may decide that you can receive a half-year assessment mark or final mark even if you have an absence rate exceeding 10 per cent and insufficient documentation. The reason for the absence must be of such a nature that it is clearly unreasonable for you not to be awarded a mark, and your undocumented absence rate in the subject cannot exceed 15 per cent. Exceptions to the 10 per cent rule therefore apply only in exceptional circumstances, and it is the reason for the absence that determines whether the head teacher can grant such an exemption. The mark you stand to receive, or the consequences of being unmarked in a subject, is irrelevant to the assessment. In all circumstances, your teacher must have a sufficient basis for assessment in order to award you a mark.

## **Alternative school days**

On school days where several subjects are taught simultaneously (subject days, school trips, interdisciplinary project work, etc.) the subject teachers will inform you in advance of subjects where absence will be recorded. Unless you are told otherwise, absence is recorded for the subject or subjects on your regular timetable for the period in question.

## Absence in general subjects

There are some subjects for which a final mark is not awarded every year, such as Norwegian and physical education. Absence in these subjects is not counted for all lessons in the subject over two or three years but separately for each school year.

### If you are not awarded a half-year assessment mark

If you are not marked for your *half-year assessment* due to absence, this does not necessarily mean that you will not receive a *final mark*. When you have been absent for more than 10 per cent of the lessons in a subject *for the school year as a whole*, and this absence is not exempt, you will not receive a final mark.

### If you exceed the absence limit

All pupils have the right to assessment, regardless of whether they have lost the right to a half-year or final mark. This means that you are entitled to take part in lessons and to regular assessments in the subject.

### Non-awarding of a final mark in a subject is an individual decision subject to appeal

Individual decisions are made as soon as you have exceeded the absence limit and have been given reasonable time to provide relevant documentation. If you wish to appeal, the time limit for doing so is ten days. You must submit your appeal to the school, which will handle further case processing in relation to the County Council, which is the appeal body.

In principle, pupils must be registered for exams. If you have taken an exam in a subject for which you are not awarded a final mark, the exam will be annulled. If the right to appeal has expired before the exam, the school should not register you for the exam.

### The rules for applying for absence of up to ten days in the school year to be written off, and guidelines for self-certification within the school rules apply in addition to the absence limit

The school rules regarding the use of self-certification apply independently of the absence limit. Absence that has not been agreed or notified in advance, or for which you have not submitted self-certification or other documentation, could affect your mark for orderliness.

You must apply separately for absence of up to ten days not to be recorded on your certificate of upper secondary education (cf. Section 3-45 of the Regulations to the Norwegian Education Act). You should submit this application towards the end of the school year on a separate application form prior to the time limit set by the school. Relevant documentation must accompany the application and must be submitted independently of any documentation you have submitted during the school year in connection with the absence limit.

See also the school rules.

This letter is only an excerpt of our guidelines. You can read more about the absence limit on the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training's website, as well as on the website of the County Council: <http://trfk.no/reglement>.