



Upper secondary school absence limit – information for pupils/guardians in Sør-Trøndelag

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

An absence limit was introduced in upper secondary schools on 1 August 2016. If your absence rate in a subject is greater than 10 per cent, as a rule you will lose the right to a final grade in that subject. You may then even lose the right to move up to the next stage. If your undocumented absence rate is between 10 and 15 per cent, but the reason for this means it would be unreasonable for you not to be given a grade, the principal can decide that you will still get a grade.

Absence due to reasons of health and welfare 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 absence in excess of 10 per cent is due to work as a union representative, political work, relief work, or mandatory attendance or representation at a national or international event.

Regardless of the absence limit, the teacher must have a sufficient basis on which to give you a grade.

You and your guardian will receive written notice if you are at risk of not getting a half-year assessment grade or final grade in a subject. Your guardian will not be notified once you turn 18.

You can read more about the absence limit on the following pages.

All absence counts

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

However, if you are absent due to an entitlement under the Norwegian Education Act, this will not count as absence. Such entitlements include:

- counselling at school
- pedagogical psychology meeting
- scheduled study work agreed with the subject teacher in advance
- student council work etc. approved by the school
- agreed meeting with the principal or other member of staff

Schooling at home or at an institution due to long-term illness is part of regular schooling and so does not count as absence.

Some absence does not count

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

- reasons of health and welfare
 - illness
 - caring for family members, such as one's own children
 - baptisms, weddings, funerals
 - an appointment with a doctor, dentist, paediatric psychiatrist, or similar
- union representative work
 - representation in a municipal youth council or youth county executive board
 - being a representative at a meeting or for other work in the School Student Union of Norway
- political work
 - participation in a national convention for a registered political party or its youth wing
 - membership in a municipal council
 - membership in a political committee at county level
 - being a party representative in school debates at another school during local and national elections
- relief work
 - participation in search operations via humanitarian organisations
 - participation in mandatory exercises for relief work training in humanitarian organisations
- mandatory attendance
 - examination for military service
 - summons to a court case, witness summons
- representation in a national or international event
 - Such events include:
 - representation at various national or international sports championships or competitions
 - representation at national or international concerts and art and cultural events

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

NB: driving lessons count as absence.

You must document absence exempt from the absence limit

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

- health visitor
- physiotherapist
- dentist
- psychologist (pedagogical psychologist).

Absence due to health reasons cannot be documented with only the self-certification of a guardian or of pupils of full age and legal capacity.

For illness of a nature where it is difficult or impractical to visit a health-care professional for each instance, this can be documented by way of self-certification and another form of documentation. Other documentation includes a declaration from a health-care professional confirming that you have a chronic illness, or documentation showing that you are being investigated or monitored for an undiagnosed condition.

For welfare reasons, such as funerals, a declaration from a guardian or pupil of full age and legal capacity is usually sufficient.

Absence for political reasons, relief work, union representative work, representation in 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.

In exceptional cases, you can still be graded for up to 15 per cent undocumented absence

In a few exceptional cases, the principal may decide that you can receive a half-year assessment grade or final grade even if you have an absence rate greater than 10 per cent and insufficient documentation. The reason for the absence must be of such a nature that it is clearly unfair for you not to be graded, and your undocumented absence rate in the subject cannot be higher than 15 per cent. Exceptions to the 10 per cent rule therefore apply only in exceptional cases, and it is the reason for the absence that determines whether the principal can grant such an exception. The grade you stand to get, or the consequences of being ungraded in a subject, is irrelevant to the assessment. In all cases, the teacher must have a sufficient basis for assessment in order to give you a grade.

Lateness or absence for an entire lesson

If you turn up less than 15 minutes late for a lesson, this is classed as lateness.

If you turn up more than 15 minutes late for a lesson, this is classed as absence for an entire lesson.

Alternative school days

On school days where several subjects are taught simultaneously (subject days, school trips, interdisciplinary project work, etc.) the subject teachers will tell you in advance of subjects where absence will be recorded.

Absence in general subjects

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

If you are not given a half-year assessment grade

If you are not graded for your *half-year assessment* due to absence, this does not necessarily mean that you will not get a *final grade*. 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 grade.

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 grade. This means that you are entitled to take part in lessons and to regular assessments in the subject.

Individual decisions and appeals

The decision not to give a final grade in a subject is an individual decision for which the principal is responsible. These individual decisions should not be made until you have had an opportunity to submit relevant documentation.

You may also appeal decisions not to give you a final grade. There is a ten-day deadline for appeals. The administrative appeals board for education is the appeals authority. You must submit your appeal to the school, which will handle further proceedings with the appeals authority. If you do not get a *half-year assessment grade*, this is not considered an individual decision.

Students must initially report to the exam. If you have taken an exam in a subject for which you are not granted a final grade, the exam will be annulled. If the right to appeal has expired before the exam, the school should not enrol you for the exam.

The rules governing the use of self-certification and applications to have absence of up to ten days during the school year disregarded apply as before

School rules regarding the use of self-certification still apply, regardless of the new absence limit. You must submit self-certification to your tutor immediately following a period of absence in the case of absence due to illness lasting from one lesson up to three calendar days at a time. Unagreed or unnotified absence, or absence that has not been self-certified or for which documentation has not been submitted, could have consequences for your grade for orderliness or conduct.

In addition, you must continue to apply for absence of up to ten days not to be entered on your leaving certificate (cf §3-47 of the regulations to the Norwegian Education Act). Such an application is to be submitted towards the end of the school year on a separate application form before the deadline set by the school. Relevant documentation must accompany the application and be submitted independently of any documentation submitted during the school year in connection with the absence limit.

See also the school rules.

The absence limit referred to in the last paragraph of §3-3 of the regulations to the Norwegian Education Act. You can read more about the absence limit on the website of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training.