

## Update from Denmark

In Denmark, the Ministry of Education has set compulsory learning objectives for teaching health, sex education and family knowledge. These are national goals (Common GOALS) emphasizes that where children must learn about health promotion in all its possibilities and diversity in order to participate in the discussion about what constitutes and healthy and valuable to room. Health promotion is therefore not only an appendix to the teaching but a central focal point for the school's general educational task.

In 2019, the schools' compulsory health education was evaluated (Als Research ApS, January 2019)

### The evaluation shows that:

- Few municipalities choose to prioritize health education through the preparation of special strategies / action plans in relation to the subject (16%), or through the earmarking of special funds for the municipality's schools in relation to the management of health education (9%)
- Many municipalities have not implemented any kind of measures to ensure that the municipality's schools live up to Common Objectives for health education (42%) or do not know whether the municipality has implemented measures of this type (14%).
- Health education is managerially under-prioritized in many primary schools. In most schools, no clear decision has been made on how health education should be integrated into the teaching, just as no tutor or person responsible for health education has been appointed.
- In a number of points related to the organization and prioritization of health education, the free primary schools perform significantly better than primary and lower secondary schools (public schools). These include:
  - to decide how health education is integrated into the teaching
  - to appoint a rope holder for the subject
  - to make a clear division of responsibilities for the subject
  - to enroll SSF in one or more of the school's annual plans
  - as well as for the management to prioritize the topic.
- At the same time, it should be noted that smaller schools (fewer than 400 students) perform significantly better than larger schools (more than 400 students) in terms of managerial prioritization, appointment of leaders, clear division of responsibilities and decision on how to integrate health promotion in teaching. The free primary schools that have participated in the evaluation surveys have - with one exception - fewer than 400 pupils. Both the size and type of schools thus seem to have an impact on the respondents' experiences regarding the above questions.
- Both managers and educators highlight a number of specific barriers and challenges associated with the management of SSF. This is especially true:
  - that no hours have been set aside for teaching the subject.
  - that no health instructor has been appointed for their health education at their school.

- that there is a lack of a clear division of responsibilities in relation to health education at their school. Lack of education / further education in the subject (applies especially to the teachers).
- 42% of school leaders and half as many teachers (21%) experience no barriers or challenges in connection with the management of health education.

Perhaps the Corona pandemic could contribute to an increased focus on schools' compulsory health education in the future.

As national coordinator, I have contacted several political parties to have money set aside in the Finance Act for 2021 and the years ahead to strengthen the work with health education in schools.

### **What has happened in Denmark in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic?**

There are several agencies that report restrictions and guidelines.

In March 2020, when Denmark was almost closed down and the schools were closed, the Ministry of Education sent, among other things, news out and a hotline has been set up for questions etc. (sorry -it is in Danish): <https://www.uvm.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/uvm/2020/mar/200310-information-til-undervisningssektoren-om-coronavirus-covid19>

Later, the Ministry of Education offers courses to schools and educational institutions on how to plan and implement teaching in a Corona time:

<https://www.uvm.dk/aktuelt/i-fokus/information-til-uddannelsesinstitutioner-om-coronavirus-covid-19>

This autumn, when the "second wave" of pandemics is raging in Denmark, guidelines for measures to prevent infection are issued on an ongoing basis:

<https://www.uvm.dk/>

Another state authority, the National Board of Health, prepares and issues ongoing guidelines and precautions when the government has made new decisions on restrictions for the Danish population:

<https://www.sst.dk/da/udgivelser/2020/info-om-forholdsregler-ved-tilfaelde-af-covid-19-i-skoler-dagtilbud-og-andre-tilbud-til-boern-og-unge>

Also the school leaders' association has sent out information to the country's school leaders about COVID-19: <https://www.skolelederforeningen.org/nyheder-medier/saerligt/information-til-skoleledelsen-vedroerende-coronavirus-covid-19/>

All the country's municipalities continuously try to inform employees and citizens about the local restrictions that apply to the place where they live. Here is an example from the country's second largest city, Aarhus: <https://www.aarhus.dk/corona/coronainformation-til-dig-som-borger/skoler-dagtilbud-og-fritidstilbud/genaabning-af-skoler-dagtilbud-og-fritidstilbud/skoler-og-sfo/>

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