



Life Stance Education

et-opetus.fi



**Information for parents
of nursery and primary
school students**



Life Stance Education in a nutshell

Life Stance Education (Ethics, Elämäkatsomustieto, ET) is primarily aimed for those students that do not follow any religious denomination.

ET has the second biggest number of ethical studies' students in Finland - around 20 000 [nation wide](#), and the numbers are on the rise.

ET has its foundations in the [everyday life of the child](#). The curriculum is not dictated by an institution or based in any belief system.

Studying ethics [encourages the young in creating their own worldview](#), controlling their life rationally and setting their own goals. Life Stance Education promotes critical thinking and an openminded outlook on life.

Life Stance Education is by definition an [interdisciplinary subject](#). It contains cultural, religious and philosophical elements as well as concepts familiar from social sciences and psychology.

The students of ET will discuss values, the concepts of right and wrong and makings of a good life. They will also look at the [world around us](#), our place in it and differences in world cultures and religious beliefs. This is all done in a purely objective way.

Looking at the pedagogical principals and syllabus, ET is [suitable for all children](#), regardless of denomination or the lack thereof. However, according to current legislation, members of the Finnish Lutheran church cannot take Life Stance Education, but need to participate in lutheran religious education.



Life Stance Education in primary school

from National board of education's syllabus

Human relations and moral growth

Telling apart right and wrong; friendship; justice; freedom of thought, freedom of belief and worldview, tolerance and discrimination; values and norms, responsibility and freedom from it.

Self awareness and cultural identity

Who am I and what can I do, life and hopes; different ways of life, tolerance and multiculturalism; Finnish culture and cultural minorities, the cultural heritage of the world, belief, knowledge and understanding, different beliefs and worldviews.

The community and human rights

The basics of living together, rules, agreements, promises; trust, honesty and fairness, the golden rule; The rights of children, justice and duty, human rights; equality and peace, democracy, the world of future; basics of ethics, moral justifications for actions, cause and effect, ethical problems and solutions in everyday life.

Me and my planet

The environment and nature, appreciation of living and inert objects, the beauty of nature; how life began and evolved, legends about the origins of life, the Earth and universe; different forms of life, life and death in nature; the future of environment, sustainable development; concepts of time and their meaning to man; world heritage.





Life Stance Education in Finnish legislation

Basic Education Act, translated by et-opetus.fi
Perusopetuslaki (628/1998)13 §

The city or other organiser of education is required to offer Life Stance Education (ET) to any such student who does not belong to a religious organisation.

Life Stance Education (ethics, ET) is the primary choice for non-denominational children: Unless their parents or guardian otherwise request, such students shall take ethics studies.

The city or other organiser of education is required to offer a choice of Life Stance Education if there are at least three students who do not belong to any religious denomination.

The guardian or parent can, however, choose the religious studies of the majority even for a student of non-religious persuasion.

A student not belonging to any religious organisation can always switch from religious studies to Life Stance Education. Only a notice from the student's guardian or parents to the school principal is required.

If the student is a member of the Finnish Lutheran church, they cannot take Life Stance Education, but according to current legislation, they need to take part in Lutheran religious studies without exception.

Students belonging to other than the majority's denomination will be given religious education according to their own beliefs when possible. Such members of minority religions can take Life Stance Education instead on their parents' or guardian's request.

More info

et-opetus.fi/en - Site dedicated to Life Stance Education in Finland
feto.fi/in_english.htm - The union for Philosophy and ethics teachers
oph.fi/english - Finnish National Board of Education

This flyer is published by et-opetus.fi in 2010.
You can freely use this flyer to inform about Life Stance Education.