



### About Finland

Finland is one of the Nordic countries located in Northern Europe, on the Baltic Sea, bordering Sweden, Norway and Russia. Finland is part of the European Union and the EMU. Finnish and Swedish are the official languages of Finland. Most people in Finland also speak very good English. Finland's population is 5.5 million and the majority of the population is concentrated in the southern region. Finland is quite sparsely populated country with a beautiful and clean nature. The whole of Finland lies in the boreal zone, characterized by warm summers and freezing winters.



### Basic Country Information

- Population: 5,5 million
- Capital: Helsinki
- Language: Finnish and Swedish

### Why choose Finland?

Finland is a perfect country for an exchange year because it ranks one of the top performing school systems in the world and has also very happy and satisfied students. Finland is a beautiful country full of forestlands, thousands of lakes, and amazing views of the Northern Lights. The outdoor activities available are endless and the natural landscape is pristine. You can pick and eat berries almost anywhere. The refreshing air of Finland is clean and the weather is not as cold as you might think. Additionally, Finland is a very safe country with an efficient public transportation system, that is safe and easy to use. We also must not forget, that the Santa Claus is from Finland and an exchange year in Finland will provide a unique opportunity to meet the one and only Santa Claus and experience the magical winter wonderland of Finnish Lapland!



### About the Language

Finnish and Swedish are the official languages of Finland, but Finnish is the language of the majority of the population. In Finland, we have many dialects. This however does not effect the ability to learn Finnish. Finnish can be a challenging language to learn. That is why we encourage exchange students to study Finnish online before they arrive. All students are also required to take Finnish lessons during their exchange year. There are several language apps that we recommend the students to utilize prior to and during their year abroad. Not speaking Finnish upon arrival is not a problem though, because most Finns can speak English fluently.

### National traits

The Finns may appear a bit quiet at first, but once you get to know them, you will actually find them to be quite outgoing and adventurous! The Finns enjoy all kinds of unusual events. Some of these include The Swamp Soccer Tournaments, Mobile Phone Throwing, Wife Carrying, and the Air Guitar World Championships. The Finns are also known for their love of the sauna. Almost every household and summer cottage in Finland have a sauna. After enjoying their time in the sauna, Finns go for a swim in a lake regardless of the weather. Even in the snow and ice! Finns like challenges and they have a lot of *sisu*. The "Finnish *Sisu*" is a Finnish concept and a fairly close translation is "To have guts". Ice hockey and Formula 1 are among the favorite sports of the Finnish, and they are very proud of their professional athletes. Finns are also very proud that their country is the home of the Moomin characters.

### Age and other eligibility requirements

- Age minimum 15 years max 18 and 0 months at the time of arrival
- Students must have studied English for three years

### Program start and end

Recommended arrival is August, as it is the start of the academic year. January start date is around 7.1. Program end date is June 10th.

### Student support

Each student has a local coordinator who contacts the student at least once a month. The student can also contact the Inbound manager if necessary.

### Application Procedure

- April 1st and Oct 1st Application Deadlines
- Online Applications in Zapp
- Finnish Residency Permit needed for non-EU students
- Acceptance Letter provided by Explorius

### Visa situation / Residency permit

The application for Finnish Residency Permit takes approx. 3-6 weeks. Students under 18 years of age are required to visit the Finnish embassy in their home country for a personal interview. Students older than 18 years of age from visa free countries like for example US, Canada, Japan or Taiwan, may enter Finland before the Residency Permit is granted and finish the application after arrival.

### Soft Landing Camp

- No Soft landing Camp available



### Host Family Information

Most host families represent Finnish middle-class. There are many types of families, families with teenagers or younger children, with no children, couples, single parents. There are families all around the country, typically in smaller towns and/or countryside. Finnish (or Swedish) is the primary language spoken at home and at least one family member does speak English. Students are given privileges but also expected to take responsibilities such as keeping one's room tidy and helping out with household chores. Double placements are possible. Families are volunteer. Some host families may get a small stipend to partially cover expenses.



### School Information

All tuition is in Finnish. The exchange student doesn't need to know Finnish prior to arrival, but they will need to study Finnish during their exchange year. Students may get grades and participate in exams if they have learned enough Finnish to be able to attend exams. Certificate of Attendance by request.

16-18 year old students are placed in high school on the 2nd grade and 15 year olds students are placed in comprehensive school on 9th grade. The Finnish academic High School year is divided in to five terms and each term ends with an exam week. Exchange students usually study languages, mathematics, PE, Music and Arts. There are very few, if any, extra-curricular activities. Information technology is widely used in Finnish schools and the schools are well equipped with different devices. All the schools serve a hot school lunch for free.

### Student Support system

Each exchange student has a local coordinator in their area who is there to support the student and the host family. Approximately 2-3 weeks after the student's arrival the local coordinator will meet with the student and the family to have the student orientation meeting. During the exchange year the local coordinator is in contact with the student and the host family at least once month. They will meet in person at least two times each semester. The local coordinator also organizes some activities for the student. In addition, the student can contact the Inbound Manager in necessary. If there is an emergency after office hours, the student can call the emergency number.



### Free Time Activities

In Finland the students like to go to movies, cafes, restaurants and shopping. The students also use a lot of time pursuing their hobbies. Exchange students can seek for free time activities at the local sports clubs or the community colleges. All the exchange students are required to take Finnish language lessons outside of school.

*"My first impression of Finns was that Finnish people are really shy and reserved and it does take a long time to get along with the Finnish community. But the fact is that Finns are actually nice and friendly."*

– Analeigh from Taiwan

*"After one year experiencing the Finnish school system, I have to admit that the system itself is pretty good. Students have many choices and can decide which subjects to put more effort in."*

– Alessandro from Italy



### Trips offered

Every year there is three to four student trips arranged by Explorius Helsinki. If the students wish to attend other trips, we have a cooperation in the Nordic countries with a company that annually arranges trips in Europe.

### Contact Information

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