

## YORK COLLEGE GOES TO FINLAND EDUCATION

**10 days**

Itinerary downloaded on: July 14, 2025

**Day 1: Oulu**

Arrival at Oulu Airport (via Helsinki), transfer to hotel. Balance of the day at leisure.

Prosperous Oulu (Swedish: Uleåborg) is one of Finland's most enjoyable cities to visit. The city centre is spread across several islands, connected by pedestrian bridges and cycleways. Oulu is also a significant technology city; the university turns out top-notch IT graduates and the corporate parks on the city's outskirts employ people from all over the globe.

Finland is known worldwide for Santa Claus, reindeer, sauna, pickled herring, and one of the world's most advanced and innovative education models. Our visit is an exploration of Finland's rigorous approach to teacher training; the new phenomenon-based learning concept; Finnish curriculum development, strategic leadership and innovations; living labs and pilot projects; the comprehensive-school approach; higher education commitments (academic & vocational); education technology solutions; the expectation that teachers possess graduate-level subject knowledge; and the encouragement of teachers as "classroom entrepreneurs".

Overnight in Oulu.

**Day 2: Oulu**

9:00 am - 9:15 am: Transport from hotel to Ritaharju School.

09:15 am - 12:00 pm: Visit of school in Ritaharju (School of the Future), new modern community centre including kindergarten, primary school (7-13), secondary school (14-16), youth centre and public library.

This public kindergarten and elementary school is notable for its use of technology and student interaction. Students learn by engaging in games and in the use of digital technology, interacting intensely with their professors via the Internet. Once they reach the 12th grade, each student has his or her own laptop. Flexible environments surrounded by movable walls make it possible for students to separate themselves into large and small groups, depending on the type of activity they engage in. The school also encourages the interaction of teachers from various disciplines and classrooms.

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm: Lunch

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm: Visit of the University of Oulu and familiarizing with university studies and teacher training in Finland; meeting with Finnish students; tour at the university.

Founded in 1958, the University of Oulu is one of the largest higher education institutions in Finland. An international science university with a focus on innovation, the university cites its research strengths in the four key areas of information technology, biosciences and health, the environment, and cultural identity. Our visit focuses on several aspects: teacher's education, preparation of students for teaching careers, the newest methods for monitoring students' behaviour in class, new technologies, among other themes.

4:00 pm - 4:20 pm: Return to hotel

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm: Traditional Finnish sauna evening and snacks. Getting to know each other presentation.

There is nothing more Finnish than sauna, and many Finns think you can not grasp Finland or its culture without bathing in a sauna. Getting invited to a sauna is an honour. Bathing in a sauna with people is somewhat of a bonding process – when you're bare in all senses of the word, you're sure not to hide anything. It is said that in Finland, more important decisions get made in saunas than in meetings. Yes, Finns go to sauna in the nude even with strangers. Don't worry – they've seen their fair share of naked human bodies

and it's not a "thing" for Finns. It's only natural, and there's no shame in being you, but if you can't get over it, Finns will understand you wanting to wear a swimsuit or a towel.

Overnight in Oulu.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and lunch

### Day 3: *Oulu*

8:45 am - 9:00 am: Transport by bus from hotel to Kastelli General Upper Secondary School.

9:00 am - 11:00 am: Visit of the Kastelli General Upper Secondary school and meeting with headmaster, Keijo Juppi.

Kastelli represents a fascinating school environment. It embodies at the forefront the unique development of learning environments to include the innovative design of indoor and outdoor spaces. It features a collection of 21st Century Learning Spaces and solutions. We'll visit its buildings and learn of its approach to classroom furnishing, acoustic design, lighting, technology embedding, and commitment to offering stimulating outdoor environments.

11:00 am - 12:45 pm: Lunch then transport by bus to Haukipudas Vocational Institute.

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm: Visit of Haukipudas Vocational Institute. Meeting with Mr. Alpo Kaisto, head of the Haukipudas Unit. Introduction into one of the most modern vocational education institute in Finland. In Finland, vocational education is actively encouraged, and generally considered to be on par with traditional universities.

4:00 pm - 4:30 pm: Transport by bus to hotel; free time in Oulu city centre.

Overnight in Oulu.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and lunch

### Day 4: *Oulu*

8:30 am - 9:00 am: Transport by bus to from hotel to Tyrnävä Primary School.

9:00 am - 11:00 am: Visit at Tyrnävä Primary School and becoming familiar with open learning environments.

Fun fact: In 1948, Finland became the first country to require all primary schools to serve pupils a free daily hot meal, and remains the one of the few countries where this is true. Now about 900,000 schoolchildren eat a daily school lunch - and for some it may be their only hot meal of the day. To keep per-student costs down in smaller communities, part of every meal is locally-sourced, and at least two days per seven-week rotation are designated as local food days. Overall the municipality calculates that 86 percent of raw materials used are Finnish. In some places, parents can buy their children optional cards to buy snacks such as sandwiches, fruit or yoghurt to help them get through long school days.

11:00 am - 12:30 pm: Transport to Oulu and lunch.

12:30 pm - 3:30 pm: Visit at Tietomaa Science Centre OR creative entrepreneurship workshop at Oulu University of Applied Science OR Game workshop in Gamelabs.

3:30 pm: Transport back to hotel

Overnight in Oulu.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and lunch

**Day 5: Oulu - Pudasjärvi - Rovaniemi - Oulu**

8:00 am - 9:30 am: Transport by bus from Oulu to Pudasjärvi (100 km NE from Oulu).

9:30 am - 11:30 am: Visit of Pudasjärvi Log School, the largest school built of logs in the world.

In 2012, Pudasjärvi, a town surrounded by wilderness, decided to bring its schools and community college to one location and have a new log-structured campus built to house them. One aim in the use of timber was to prevent moisture and indoor air quality problems similar to those that the school buildings had experienced before. It was also an ecofriendly choice and provided work for a local log supplier. The Pudasjärvi Log Campus provides a healthy, eco-friendly and modern learning environment loved by the pupils and the staff alike. Although the building is the largest logconstructed school building in the world, it is comprehensible even for the smallest of pupils, as it is divided into smaller sections.

11:30 am - 1:30 pm: Transport by bus from Pudasjärvi to Rovaniemi (150 km N from Pudasjärvi); lunch on the road.

Rovaniemi is the administrative capital and commercial centre of Lapland (Finland's northernmost province). Here you are about 5 km south of the Arctic Circle. There has probably been continuous settlement in the Rovaniemi area since the Stone Age.

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm: Visit of Lappset company, indoor and outdoor playgrounds for children and seniors.

The Finnish company Lappset is a game changer in the business of play: these days the company offers products for everyone from children to seniors. The company's next project is building Santa Claus-themed parks in China. The concept of play has changed a lot within the past 40 years, but Lappset doesn't see playing as the sole right of children. The company has created the 0–100 concept that offers health-improving sports activities for seniors and adults.

3:00 pm - 5:30 pm: Visit of Santa Claus Village, crossing Arctic Circle.

Rovaniemi was almost completely destroyed in World War II. In 1950, Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, came to visit Rovaniemi to witness the rebuilding process. She wanted to visit the Arctic Circle, and Rovaniemi officials rushed to build a cabin eight kilometres north of the city. The cabin marked the birth of Santa Claus Village and still stands today next to Santa Claus Main Post Office. The Arctic Circle cuts right through the village; a white line denoting the Arctic Circle (at its position in 1865) is painted across the park. Visitors officially enter the Arctic area when they cross the line.

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm: Visit of reindeer farm and dinner.

We then head out to visit a local reindeer farm. These semi-wild animals roam free in the woods and are collected only twice a year for reindeer 'round ups'. Selected reindeer and kept are trained for sledge pulling and reindeer racing.

7:00 pm - 9:30 pm: Transport by bus from Rovaniemi to Oulu.

Overnight in Oulu.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

**Day 6: Oulu /Helsinki**

Flight to Helsinki; free time in Helsinki.

**Canada/USA**  
**1-800-665-3998**

**United Kingdom**  
**0114-247-3400**

Helsinki is situated right at the arrowhead of a peninsula, surrounded by an archipelago of over 300 islands. Affectionately known as the 'Daughter of the Baltic', this city is perfectly- placed between its two great trading cousins, Stockholm and Moscow. In a European perspective, Helsinki is relatively young (450 years), yet it is Finland's sixtholdest town. The Swedes, who extended their empire into Finland in 1155, founded the city of 'Helsingfors' (the name still used by the Swedes) in 1550 when King Gustav Vasa needed a site for a strategic, competitively placed trading port. It languished as a coastal backwater until Imperialist Russia invaded in 1809.

Overnight in Helsinki.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

**Day 7: Helsinki**

Today we will enjoy a sightseeing tour of Helsinki, including a comprehensive walking tour taking in the most important and interesting parts of the city.

We will see the historical centre and the diplomatic quarters, the Presidential Palace, City Hall, the Parliament building, Finlandia Hall and the Opera House. We will also be sure to stop at Senate Square, the Sibelius Monument and the Temppeliaukio Church (Church of the Rock). Helsinki's relatively young "Old Town" presents us with a tidy tangle of Art Nouveau and Neoclassical streets.

In the afternoon we will enjoy a boat excursion to the Suomenlinna Fortress. Situated on a group of islands off Helsinki, Suomenlinna was built during the Swedish era as a maritime fortress and a base for the Archipelago Fleet. Work on the fortress was begun in the mid-18th century; today it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Suomenlinna has played a key role in many turning points in Finland's history, and the site has always been much more than just a part of Helsinki -- it is a town within the town. Nowadays there are about 900 permanent inhabitants on the islands, and 350 people work there all year round. This is one of the features that make Suomenlinna unique: the fortress is not simply a museum, but a living community.

Overnight in Helsinki.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

**Day 8: Helsinki**

8:30 am - 9:00 am: Transport from hotel to National Board of Education by bus.

9:00 am - 11:00 am: Visit to National Board of Education. Introduction to Finnish Education System, Development, and Implementation of New Curriculum 2016.

11:00 am - 11:45 am: Transport by bus to Kasavuori Dream School.

11:45 am - 1:30 pm: Lunch at the school.

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm: Visit of secondary school Kasavuori Dream School.

An electronic portfolio called the Learning Diary allows students and teachers at Kauniainen's Dream School to store materials, track progress, and build on prior experiences. It shows how education is evolving in Finland. Development of the Learning Diary started with the needs of the teaching staff at the school; using a multitude of net-based tools and the need to incorporate video, pictures, and sound files made it necessary to create a place that could display and store work produced in various file formats and with a multitude of tools. Nothing else quite like it exists in education – in Finland or elsewhere. The Learning Diary itself is a consequence, not the source of change. The actual source of change is a remarkable inversion in education, envisioned by the community and the school together.

3:00 pm - 3:30 pm: Transport by bus to hotel or Helsinki city centre. Free time.

Overnight in Helsinki.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and lunch

**Day 9:      *Helsinki***

8:30 am - 9:00 am: Transport from hotel to Siltamäki School by bus.

9:00 am - 11:00 am: Visit of primary school Siltamäki.

A few years ago, it was reported that Finland would replace subject-based learning with topic based learning in schools. While not precisely true, Finnish schools have moved to creating at least one study period focused on studying certain phenomena, or topics, that are of special interest to students. The emphasis is on generic competences and collaborative classroom practices where pupils may work with several subject teachers simultaneously during periods of phenomenon-based project studies.

11:00 am - 12:00 pm: Lunch.

12:30 pm - 2:30 pm: Workshop focused on the new methods in pedagogy, "Phenomenon and enquiry-based learning"; "What kind of leadership enables innovations & development in schools?"

2:30 pm - 4:00 pm: Closing the study tour – discussion and time to reflect.

4:00 pm: Transport back to hotel.

Overnight in Helsinki.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and lunch

**Day 10:      *Helsinki***

Departure from Helsinki.

HYVAA MATKAA! (Bon voyage!)

Meal Plan: Breakfast