

Orientation of Kokkola Youth Council

Youth Councils are established under the law

Provisions on the participation of children and young people and on opportunities for their views to be presented are laid down in the Youth Act (72/2006, section 8) and the Local Government Act (Local Government Act 410/2015, section 26).

Section 26 - Youth Councils

To secure the opportunity for young people to participate and exert an influence, the local executive must set up a youth council or similar group representing young people's views (youth council) and ensure the operational preconditions for it. A youth council can be shared by two or more municipalities.

Youth councils must be given the opportunity to influence the planning, preparation, execution and monitoring of the activities of the municipality's different areas of responsibility in matters of importance to the well-being, health, education, living environment, housing or mobility of the municipality's residents and also in other matters that the youth council considers to be significant for children and young people. Youth councils must be involved in the municipality's work to develop children's and young people's participation and the opportunities for their views to be presented.

Kokkola Youth Council has been active without interruption since 1999. Some type of Youth Council activity was launched as early as in 1992. The Kokkola Youth Council is one of the most longstanding youth councils in Finland.

Youth Council duties

The Youth Council promotes young people's opportunities to exert influence and, through its activities, it influences matters that concerns young people in the municipality. The Youth Council represents all young people in municipal decision making and it is tasked to make the youth's voice heard, take a stand on topical issues and submit initiatives and issue statements.

The Youth Council promotes the dialogue between young people and decision-makers. The Youth Council helps young people find ways to influence and includes them in the joint decision-making process. The aim of the Youth Council is to draw attention to young people's opinions and give young people the opportunity to exert influence and participate in the preparation of items that will be addressed and in the decision-making.

Youth Council activities

- ⊖ The Youth Council is elected every two years by organizing elections in or appointing a delegate and deputy delegate from each lower secondary school, upper secondary school and youth center in Kokkola.
- ⊖ The Youth Council is established by the City Board.
- ⊖ The Youth Council is an independent decision-making body with its own duties and budget.

22.10.2024

- ⊖ The Youth Council meets about once a month during the spring and fall term, and in the summer if necessary. The meeting is convened by the youth council secretary.
- ⊖ During the meetings the council discusses and decides on matters concerning the council’s activities, finances, representative duties and development. The Youth Council writes statements and proposals on its own initiative or at the request of city decision-makers and officeholders concerning, for example, young people’s wellbeing, studies, school meals or leisure activities.
- ⊖ In addition to official meetings, the Youth Council will, if necessary, form various teams, for example in connection with organizing events or elections.
- ⊖ The Youth Council organizes different events, campaigns and more.
- ⊖ The activities are planned for one year at a time and specified if necessary.

Partners

The Youth Council collaborates with the Youth Services in developing opportunities to make young people’s voices heard, to exert influence and to participate and in promoting different services for young people. The Youth Council also cooperates with the Children’s Council. Cooperation is also carried out with the city’s Corporate Administration and Urban Environment Department, the city’s Educational, Cultural and Sports Services, and the Wellbeing services county of Central Ostrobothnia, Soite.

Youth Council representation in the City’s decision-making

The Youth Council selects delegates from among its members to the **City Council, three committees and various working groups**. As members of the Youth Council the delegates represent all young people in Kokkola and the Youth Council. The delegates shall inform the Youth Council of items discussed in the City Council, in committees and in various steering groups and working groups, and vice versa.

The delegate shall participate in meetings as required by their representative duty and notify of their absence and their possible deputy delegate.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • City Council | 2 delegates |
| • Education and Training Committee | 2 delegates |
| • Culture and Leisure Committee | 2 delegates |
| • Urban Design Committee | 1 delegate + 1 deputy delegate |
| • Children’s Council | 2 delegates |
| • The Youth Council of the Wellbeing services county delegates | 3 delegates + 3 deputy |
| • Guidance and service network for young people | 2 delegates |
| • The City of Kokkola health and wellbeing working group (HYTE) | 2 delegates |
| • Steering group for the economic program of the City of Kokkola | 1 delegate |
| • Steering group for the Finnish model for leisure activities in Kokkola (KOHASU) | 2 delegates |
| • Nuorisopassi–working group | 1 delegate |
| • Nollapiste-working group | 1 delegate + 1 deputy delegate |

22.10.2024

- The city's Traditions Committee 1 delegate
- Carbon neutral municipals (HINKU) working group 1-2 delegates
- Central Ostrobothnia climate group 1 delegate

Meeting agendas and minutes of the City Council, committees and Youth Council are published in the information service Dynasty (mainly in Finnish);
https://kokkola10.oncloudos.com/cgi/DREQUEST.PHP?page=meeting_frames#

More information about city decision-making: [Kokkola.fi/en](https://kokkola.fi/en) > Administration and decision-making > Decision-making

Roles and responsibilities of Youth Council

Chairperson

The chairperson is the spokesperson of the Youth Council and leads the Youth Council meetings. The chairperson works closely with the Youth Council vice chairpersons, secretary and others in positions of responsibility. It is important that the chairperson treats all members of the Youth Council equally and ensures that everyone is heard and has the opportunity to exert influence at the meetings and influence the activities of the Youth Council.

First and second vice chairperson

The first and second vice chairperson supports the chairperson. The first and second vice chairperson are responsible for supporting the chairperson. The first or second vice chairperson leads the meeting or represents the Youth Council when the chairperson is unable to attend. It is important that the vice chairpersons also treat all members of the Youth Council equally and ensures that everyone is heard and has the opportunity to exert influence at the meetings and influence the activities of the Youth Council. The chairpersons of the Youth Council shall put items on the agenda approximately two weeks before the meeting.

Minute taker

The minute taker records the discussed items, votes and decisions.

Communications managers (2-4 persons)

The communications managers are responsible for communicating Youth Council activities to young people in Kokkola and through social media platforms (Instagram and TikTok). The communications managers keep the Youth Council updated on matters relating to communication of the Youth Council.

Event managers (2-4 persons)

The event managers are responsible for organizing events like the Nollapiste event with the Youth Council and partners. The event managers actively cooperate with various event teams and working groups and keep the Youth Council updated on the matters regarding events.

22.10.2024

Member

Each member of the Youth Council is responsible for representing the young people of the educational establishment or youth center they represent. The delegates will provide information on important issues between the Youth Council and the educational establishment or youth center they represent. The members of the Youth Council also represent all young people in Kokkola. Each member of the Youth Council is responsible for bringing forward their own and other young peoples' opinions, experiences and views. Each member will strive to impact matters that concern young people in Kokkola.

Each member of the Youth Council is required to attend all Youth Council meetings. Absence from a meeting is only allowed by providing a valid reason and informing the youth council secretary in a timely manner of their absence. The members are expected to attend Youth Council activities, such as orientation, development and planning days and working groups and events.

Deputy member

Educational establishments and youth centers will be asked to appoint a deputy member/deputy members, who are invited to the constituent meeting and to the Youth Council meeting if a delegate is unable to attend and notifies of their absence at least three days in advance.

When invited to a Youth Council meeting and other Youth Council activities, a deputy member commits to the same principles and practices as ordinary members.

Operating practices

Conduct of meetings

- ⊖ The meeting invitation and the agenda will be published one week before the meeting in the Youth Council's WhatsApp group, as a calendar invitation and in the Dynasty information system.
- ⊖ Each member can raise matters for discussion at a meeting. Items to be put on the agenda shall be proposed to the chairperson or secretary two weeks prior to the meeting. The chairpersons will make the final decision on which items shall be addressed. A member can raise matters for discussion under 'Other business' on the agenda (Muut mahdolliset asiat). In this case a decision can't be made in the matter, but the decision can be transferred to the following meeting.
- ⊖ The meeting is led by the chairperson or the first or second vice chairperson.
- ⊖ The minute taker writes key points and the decision that is reached in each item on the agenda during the Youth Council meeting. The youth council secretary publishes the minutes in the information system Dynasty.

Meeting attendance and absences

- ⊖ Each member shall do everything within their power to attend the meetings.

22.10.2024

- ⊖ A member shall inform the youth council secretary if they're unable to attend and the reason for their absence.
- ⊖ The guideline set by the Youth Council for non-attendance: if a person is absent three times in a row, the matter shall be discussed with them, at the Youth Council meeting and their spot shall be reopened if necessary.

Youth Council communications and social media accounts

- ⊖ Youth Council agendas and minutes are published in the information system Dynasty: https://kokkola10.oncloudos.com/cgi/DREQUEST.PHP?page=meeting_frames
- ⊖ The Youth Council uses their WhatsApp group as their main internal communications channel.
- ⊖ Information about Youth Council activities is published on Instagram and TikTok (@kokkolan_nuva). The Youth Councils communications managers are responsible for updating the accounts on social media.

Attendance fees

- ⊖ Each member of the Youth Council who attends the meeting will get an attendance fee. The amount of the attendance fee is decided at the last meeting of the term office in consideration of the Youth Council budget.
- ⊖ The attendance fees are paid after each meeting.
- ⊖ To receive the attendance fee, each delegate is required to complete a personal information form and attendance fee form as well as give their tax card to the youth council secretary before the end of the given deadline.

Kilometre allowance

- ⊖ It is possible to receive kilometre allowance, if the drive to the meeting venue is more than 5 kilometers in each direction. Youth Council meetings are mostly held at the youth centre Vinge (Puutarhakatu 2, 67100 Kokkola).
- ⊖ The kilometre allowance complies with the annually fixed kilometre allowance. The kilometre allowance was 0,53 €/km in 2024.

Travel and representation expenses

- ⊖ The Youth Council decides in advance on travel expenses or costs included in the trip when the trip is made by the Youth Council as a group or by individual delegates of the Youth Council. A trip may involve, for example, taking part in a training course in another city.

Travel permit

- ⊖ For every trip that Youth Council delegates go on, they need to fill in a separate travel permit required by the City of Kokkola in order for the trip to be regarded as the city's activity and covered by the city's insurances. The youth council secretary handles matters related to travel permits.
- ⊖ If someone who is under the age of 18 participates on the trip, a supervisor who is over the age of 18 must accompany them on the trip.

22.10.2024

- ⊖ Before travelling, Youth Council delegates who are under the age of 18 must have verified consent to attend the trip from guardians.

Permission to be absent from school or work-based learning program

- ⊖ Each delegate of the Youth Council shall make their own arrangements if they need to be absent from school or a work-based learning program.
- ⊖ If necessary, the youth council secretary will write an official excuse letter for separately agreed representative duties or training courses to explain the reasons for their absence to their educational establishment or work-based learning unit.

Youth Council plan of action

At the beginning of their term of office, the Youth Council will examine the annual plan for the term and make a more precise plan of action for the current year. Youth Council activities are Youth Council meetings, the meeting between young people and decision-makers, presentation of Youth Council activities before Youth Council elections and organizing the Nollapiste event with partners.

Youth Council finances

- ⊖ The Youth Council's budget is included in the budget for Youth services and inclusion activities.
- ⊖ The Youth Council's annual budget is about 15 000 €.
- ⊖ The Youth Council determines how to spend the budget per calendar year. Compulsory expenses include meeting fees and kilometre allowances.
- ⊖ The Youth Council Secretary (factual verification) and the Director of Youth Services (approval) oversee the Youth Council budget.

Youth Council values and principles

The Youth Council follows the principles for a safer space in the City of Kokkola:

- We are polite and considerate to one another.
- We respect each other's self-determination. We respect what people say about themselves.
- We make space for each other. We do not disturb others by, for example, making noise, inappropriate touching or getting too close without permission.
- We pay attention to our choice of words. We do not use offensive language.
- We can make mistakes and ask questions, because we cannot assume that everyone knows the same things.
- We listen and encourage. We can also disagree constructively.
- We protect each other from disrespectful behavior.

22.10.2024

Additional information

Youth Council Secretary

Satu Kinnunen

Targeted Youth Work Coordinator

Kokkola Youth Services

044 780 9266

satu.kinnunen@kokkola.fi

Youth centre Vinge, Puutarhakatu 2, 67100 Kokkola