

Inspection of Tapa Special School

On 8 November 2013 advisers to the Chancellor of Justice paid an announced inspection visit to Tapa Special School. Tapa Special School is a basic school for students needing special conditions that is managed by the Ministry of Education and Research. Students are referred to the school either by a decision of the Juvenile Committee of the child's place of residence or via a court ruling.

As a result of the inspection visit the Chancellor of Justice made the following suggestions and recommendations:

- the management of Tapa Special School and the Ministry of Education and Research should immediately take measures to guarantee the safety of students and staff in the school;
- the Minister of Education and Research and the Minister of Social Affairs should develop a regulation that would permit an individual approach to students referred to a school for children who need special educational conditions and consideration of their special needs as well as the implementation of various regimes in special schools;
- the management of Tapa Special School and the Ministry of Education and Research should guarantee students living conditions that meet their individual needs and decent furnishings for bedrooms and group rooms;
- the Minister of Education and Research should consider the establishment of minimum requirements for the furnishings of the student home;
- the management of Tapa Special School should find more possibilities for students to be on their own as well as for targeted activities, paying particular attention to physical activities and spending more time in the fresh air;
- the principal of Tapa Special School and the specialists from the Ministry of Education and Research should immediately find and implement additional measures to ensure that students cannot leave the territory of the school without permission;
- the Minister of Education and Research should make every effort to guarantee that the modern living and learning environment that meets the needs of children is completed in 2015 at the latest;
- the Ministry of Education and Research should analyse whether certain employees of special schools should be given the right to carry out security checks on students under certain conditions;
- the Minister of Education and Research should give special schools clear guidelines on how to ensure that students from special schools have no prohibited items or substances in their possession for as long as employees of special schools lack the right to carry out security checks;
- the principal of Tapa Special School should organise future communication with parents and family members in such a manner that the children's right to confidentiality of messages and privacy is not violated;
- the principal of Tapa Special School and the Ministry of Education and Research should find the necessary resources to ensure that children whose parents cannot afford to pay for telephone calls could regularly communicate with their parents and family members.