

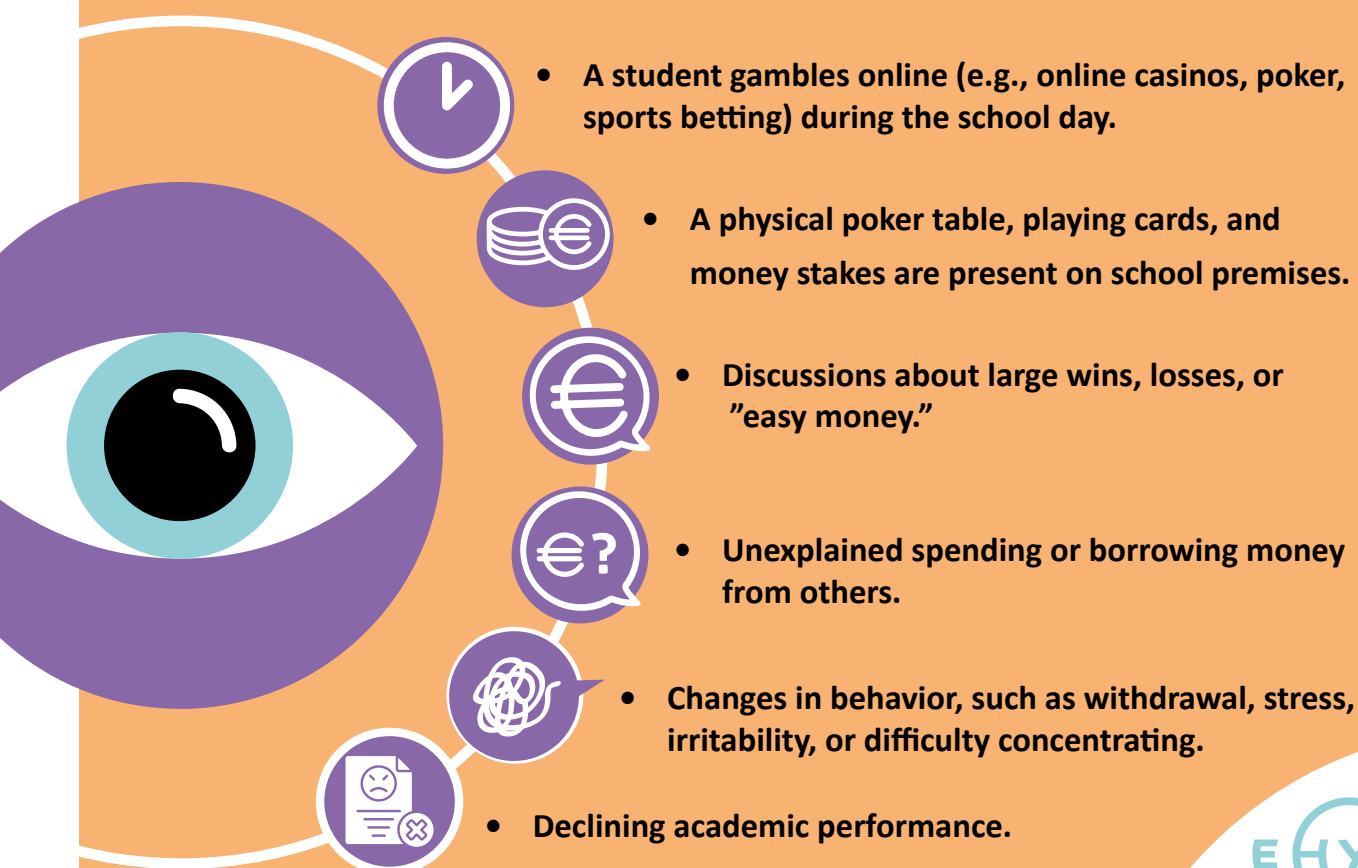
Guidelines for Identifying and Preventing Youth Gambling in Educational Settings

What Is Gambling?

Gambling refers to activities in which money or something of monetary value can be won or lost. Gambling activities include lottery games, sports betting, scratch cards, slot machines, roulette, and online casinos. Gambling also includes privately organized games, such as card games played for money.

Problem gambling is excessive or uncontrolled gambling that can negatively affect a young person's well-being, relationships, and financial situation. Gambling products are designed to be engaging and potentially addictive. Fast-paced games that encourage continuous play, such as online slot machines, increase the risk of gambling-related harm. The earlier gambling begins, the greater the risk of developing a gambling disorder, as the adolescent brain is still developing. In particular, the brain's reward system and impulse control mechanisms are not yet fully mature, making young people more vulnerable to addiction.

How Can You Recognize Gambling?



Tips for Starting the Conversation

1.

Choose a calm moment and private setting.

I noticed that you have been talking a lot about online casinos lately...

2.

Ask, don't assume.

Have you been gambling recently?

How does it usually make you feel?

3.

Listen without judgment.

Give the student space to share their own perspective. Genuine interest helps build trust.

4.

Listen without judgment.

Gambling is prohibited by law for people under the age of 18.

Young people are at particularly high risk of developing gambling-related problems.

Take Action When Necessary

- If the student is under 18, inform their parent or guardian.
- If gambling occurs on school premises, report it according to the institution's substance use policy and follow any required procedures.
- Consider referring the student to student welfare services, mental health services, or substance use support services



Under Finland's Lotteries Act, minors are not allowed to gamble, and private individuals are not permitted to organize gambling activities. Educational institutions may include a gambling prohibition in their rules and regulations based on this legislation. It is also important that gambling prevention is included in the institution's substance use policy.



Whether you address gambling with a group of students or an individual, your tone and attitude matter. A neutral and understanding approach encourages open discussion and builds trust. It also lowers the threshold for seeking help.



Educational institutions should establish clear procedures for identifying gambling, intervening when necessary, discussing concerns, and providing support.



Consider the example you set through your own attitudes and behavior related to gambling.

For more guidance on identifying gambling and talking about it with young people, visit:
Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Peluuri.fi, and
Peluuri Helpline: 0800 100 101