

Nordic teacher reflections on school governance during Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

This article adds to the growing body of research on educational governance in times of crisis by examining primary and lower secondary teachers' post-pandemic reflections across the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden). Unlike previous studies that focus on individual national responses or limited cross-country comparisons, this study offers an exploration of Nordic teachers' experiences, emphasizing their reflections on trust, support, and uncertainty in relation to diverse government strategies and educational practices during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020–2022). Drawing on both survey data and qualitative insights, the article sheds light on teachers' experiences of educational continuity and institutional support. The analysis is framed by the Nordic countries' varied responses to the 'wicked problem' posed by children who, while typically exhibiting mild symptoms, represented a potential transmission risk due to high-density classroom environments. By highlighting how teachers in culturally and politically similar nations navigated a common crisis in distinct ways, the study offers a nuanced perspective that may inform future crisis-management strategies in education.

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Introduction: school governance during a pandemic

During the Covid-19 pandemic, school governance was a particularly difficult task, since children were early on identified as less likely to infect others, and at the same time only displayed mild symptoms when infected (Rotevatn et al., 2023; Størdal et al., 2022).¹ The reduced likeliness to infect other people spoke in favour of keeping schools open, whereas the mild symptoms made detection and therefore preventive strategies difficult. In other words, children constituted a dilemma – a 'wicked problem' – to governments and administrative authorities (Mormina, 2022; Rittel & Webber, 1973). On the one hand, they only portrayed mild symptoms when infected with Covid-19, and therefore constituted an 'invisible risk', neither very likely to get infected, nor very likely to infect others. On the other hand, they still constituted a problem due to close contact on an everyday basis, as well as a high concentration of individuals within the schools. The dilemma introduced a post-normal framework of decision-making that entailed coping with complexity, ambiguity, and mutually excluding perspectives (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993;

Martin et al., 2020; Rainey et al., 2021), which was stressed by the urgency of the pandemic situation.

Perhaps therefore, schools became a target of differing policies across otherwise culturally, socially, and politically similar regions such as the Nordic countries. Governments worldwide had to make difficult and swift decisions and immediately applied solutions that were available and corresponded with the political and bureaucratic traditions of each country (Cicerale et al., 2022; Erkkilä et al., 2024; Laage-Thomsen & Frandsen, 2022). Despite the cultural and political similarities, the variation in government responses to the pandemic is not surprising, since there are historically grounded differences in the practices of school governance and administration across the Nordic countries (Telhaug et al., 2006). The Covid-19 situation from 2020 to 2022 exacerbated those differences, especially in the early phase of the pandemic. Among Nordic countries, there were not only differences in terms of in-person and remote teaching but also variations in measures, testing strategies, and the initiation of vaccinations among adolescents.

It soon became widely known and discussed through media coverage that Sweden was the most

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extreme case among the Nordic countries (Hall et al., 2022; Rasmussen et al., 2023). Within the Nordic countries, Denmark and Norway initiated the most rigid measures against the spread of the virus such as a lockdown of the public and parts of the private sectors, whereas Sweden generally opted to keep society – including the schools – as open as possible within reasonable limits vis-a-vis the risk of infection. Finland and Iceland also effectuated their own specific strategies of school governance during the pandemic, and each of the five countries' different strategies will contextualize the analysis. Despite variations in policy responses, there may be patterns of similarity in how the Nordic teachers experienced the situation, such as increased workload and new methods of teaching (Jonsson et al., 2025).

Therefore, the aim of this article is to investigate Nordic teachers' reflections on institutional trust in school governance and management during the pandemic.² These responses will be interpreted in light of the different practices of school governance and bureaucratic cultures in the Nordic countries. This approach constitutes a more experience-based point of departure for investigating the 'invisible problems below the waterline (...) which tend to evade the radar of public policy' (OECD, 2020, p. 22), i.e. beliefs, motivations and fears of people who were involved in education during the pandemic. The teachers' experiences provide an opportunity to discuss the different government approaches across otherwise relatively homogenous countries and thereby the different Nordic cultures of crisis management and professional autonomy in schools (see also Qvortrup et al., 2025).

Research question:

- Focusing on the silent risk of children, how did Nordic teachers experience school governance, management and support under various politically and administratively established working conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic?

However, there is no reason to assume any direct, causal relationship between the policy level and the teacher responses, since national differences between teacher responses could be due to a variety of factors that will not be investigated (such as nationally specific professional interests, the current political 'climate' within the educational sector of a specific country, such as, for example, a recent or impending teacher education reform, upcoming wage negotiations etc.). Moreover, teacher experiences are most likely also mediated by different local management strategies (see also Nordholm et al., 2022 for an investigation of centralized and decentralized decision-making among Swedish principals, and Raae & Wiedemann, 2022 for a discussion of Danish principals' attitudes towards school administration during Covid-19). Instead, the descriptions of the different Nordic

countries' mitigation strategies provide a context for understanding differences and similarities in the ways in which the management of the Covid-19 threat was perceived by a sample of teachers in each country.

Analytically, we will remain close to the empirical material, integrating both quantitative and qualitative teacher responses to the survey with the different policy responses to the above-mentioned dilemma concerning the wicked problem of 'risky children' and decision-making under uncertain conditions. The presentation of Covid-19 school policies for the five Nordic countries focuses on the question of closing or not closing the schools in the early phase of the pandemic, as well as on how the different countries framed the problem (i.e. fear of the virus itself or fear of the consequences of school closings). Contextualized by the different Nordic school policies (Laage-Thomsen & Frandsen, 2022, Nord & Gardel, 2023; Sandberg, 2023), we will explore Nordic teachers' post-pandemic reflections on the issues of uncertainty, trust and support in light of their experiences with teaching under different politically and administratively established circumstances (Hall et al., 2022), the various types of restrictions and recommendations that were introduced across the Nordic schools (Mankki & Riih , 2025; N kleby et al., 2024), the organization of teaching under perilous and unprecedented conditions such as online teaching as well as with the invention of new teaching formats (Barfod, 2023; Qvortrup et al., 2023; Selvik & Herrebr den, 2024), and the perceived widening social inequality between students (Udd & Berndtsson, 2023).

Methodology: design and case

The investigation will be conducted in two steps. First, a policy analysis of how the Nordic countries framed and managed the problem differently, and second, a questionnaire with quantitative as well as open response categories, exploring the Nordic teachers' post-pandemic reflections.

Policy analysis

First, the policy analysis presents a brief overview of the different approaches to school governance vis- vis the dilemma of whether to close or keep schools open, focusing first on the extreme case of Sweden in comparison with Denmark, and secondly on the variations across Finland, Iceland and Norway. By school governance, we mean national strategic decisions and the implemented practices concerning school closings, restrictions, recommendations, organization and re-openings. This part of the investigation will be based on government communication such as government websites, press conferences, and reports as well as research literature on educational mitigation strategies and policies during the Covid-19

crisis. We reserve the use of the term administration to refer to the various bureaucratic authorities that handled the pandemic at various levels, i.e. municipal or other local school authorities. Moreover, we apply the term school management when we refer to within-school leadership and administration. Each country relied on different communication strategies and outlets, so different materials have been applied (the prime ministries' or national health services' press conferences and websites etc.). The following is therefore not a rigorous comparison, since it would rely on similar cross-national units of analysis as well as comparable materials. Instead, we will describe the different government approaches and thereby provide the context for closer analysis of how teachers perceived these working conditions across the five Nordic countries.

Quantitative questionnaire

Second, we conducted an analysis of Nordic primary and lower (i.e. compulsory) schoolteacher responses to a questionnaire, carried out between November 2023 and February 2024, focusing on the teachers' experiences in the context of the different national school government strategies, and the subsequent consequences for teaching during the pandemic. Post-Covid-19 research has demonstrated that the pandemic gave rise to different communication strategies, political decision-making, as well as administrative and crisis-management practices both across the Nordic countries (Hall et al., 2022; Johansson et al., 2023; Laage-Thomsen & Frandsen, 2022; Nord & Gardell, 2023) and elsewhere (OECD, 2020; Zhou et al., 2024).

The survey questions explore the Nordic teachers' post-pandemic reflections on the politically established working condition, government communication, municipal administration, and local conditions, i.e. the support they had from school managements and colleagues (see also Qvortrup et al., 2025). They begin with the formulation: 'Think back to the time of COVID-19. To what extent do you feel that: ...', followed by six themes: 1) 'the situation in the school was handled in the right way given the conditions at the time?', 2) 'government information was adequate?', 3) 'the politically established working conditions were acceptable in that situation?' 4) 'the working conditions offered by the municipality were acceptable in that situation?', and the extent to which they felt that they 5) 'received adequate support from school management?', and 6) and whether 'you and your colleagues at school were good at supporting each other?' (see Table 4). The teachers assessed the situation on a five-point Likert scale with the following response categories: 'totally agree' (5), 'agree' (4), 'both agree and disagree' (3), 'disagree' (2), 'totally disagree' (1), and 'I don't know/do not wish to answer' (0).

Open response categories

In addition to the quantitative responses, the survey had the following open response category: 'Please elaborate your considerations in regard to the above questions', which gave the teachers the possibility to put their thoughts into words. These responses enable us to interpret the teachers' post-pandemic reflections considering the different national mitigation strategies. The results in this section are therefore not based on empirical generalizations but examples of different teacher experiences and reflections concerning the different practices of Covid-19 school governance (see also Jonsson et al. 2025 and Udd & Berndtsson, 2023 for more in-depth approaches to studying teacher experiences during the pandemic). The answers provide a picture of how life in schools was experienced by a sample of primary and lower secondary teachers from the five Nordic countries during the pandemic and are elaborated in the section following the quantitative analyses (see also Mankki & Riih , 2025). All qualitative responses have been duly anonymized concerning personal information.

Sample

Questionnaires were distributed to primary and lower secondary (i.e. compulsory) schoolteachers across the five Nordic countries, of which responses were gleaned from a total of 50 schools. The sample includes a mix of rural and urban schools, as well as small and large schools, but only included public schools (i.e. private or independent schools were excluded). In the analysis, we did not differentiate between contextual factors, which may be considered a limitation as conditions of school leadership are known to vary significantly across different settings (see, for example, Grimm et al., 2025; Hallinger, 2011; Nordholm et al., 2022). Attempts were made in each country to select and stratify schools into low, medium, and high socio-economic status, although in practice the sampling techniques differed. As seen in Table 1 below, the number of schools (N: 50) and respondents (N: 418) varied among the five countries (including the responses of the type 'don't know/do not wish to answer'). The number of respondents to the open response categories appear in Table 2.

Nordic administrative cultures and school governance during Covid-19

The Nordic countries are traditionally portrayed as open and democratic, with administrative traditions conventionally characterized as transparent, accessible, and based on a culture of rule-of-law.

Table 1. Sample of schools and teacher respondents by country.

Schools and teacher responses	DK	NO	IS	FI	SW	Total
Schools (N)	17	10	11	5	7	50
Teacher respondents (N)	191	63	48	37	79	418

Comments: Number of schools and teacher responses across the five Nordic countries (including responses of the type 'I don't know/I don't wish to answer').

Table 2. Teacher responses to open questions.

Teacher responses to open questions	DK	IS	NO	FI	SW	Total
Responses	29	28	49	22	60	188

Comments: Teacher responses to the open questions concerning the management of the covid-19 situation for schools. Real responses have been selected, leaving out irrelevant comments such as 'I don't know' or 'no comment' etc.

Their citizens are known to uphold a considerable degree of trust in their governments, institutions as well as in each other, and generally rely on public expertise and authorities in times of crisis (Holmberg & Rothstein, 2020; Johansson et al., 2023). Societies characterized by horizontal structures of dependence, i.e. social networks, local associations etc., are more likely to develop civic cultures of social trust and democratic stability, which are subsequently extended to societal institutions, and administrative and government structures (Putnam, 1992). At the same time, when governments are perceived as fair, competent, and free from corruption, citizens are more likely to extend trust to one another and act responsibly (Dinesen et al., 2022; Martinangeli et al., 2023; Rothstein, 1999, 2011, 2013). The issue of public trust in institutions became especially prominent during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although often portrayed as culturally and politically unison in global comparative studies, the Nordic countries have different political and administrative traditions. Sandberg (2023) describes an overall, historically grounded difference between two Nordic cultures of administration, the East (Sweden and Finland) and West (Denmark, Iceland, and Norway). 'The countries have established different rules and norms based on their own traditions for the division of power between government and administration' (Sandberg, 2023, p. 33). The West Nordic tradition is based on undivided power, where government ministers have influence over activities within the scope of their department. It prompts political involvement and pragmatic solutions. By contrast, the East Nordic tradition is known historically to restrict the influence of the government by granting considerable autonomy to the administrative authorities, which encourages a culture of bureaucratic expertise and arms-length between politics and administration (see also Laage-Thomsen & Frandsen, 2022).

The dilemma of whether to close schools or keep them open. The cases of Denmark and Sweden

In line with the West Nordic tradition, the Danish prime minister on 11 March 2020, announced a lockdown of all unnecessary activity across all public institutions for a period of initially 2 weeks (beginning on March 13), in which she emphasized the seriousness and uncertainty of the situation.³ The lockdowns included day care centres, primary schools, upper-secondary education, and other educational institutions. All public employees, who did not maintain critical functions, were sent home with pay and instructed to work from home to the extent that it was possible (EVA, 2022). Norway and Finland implemented similar measures against the pandemic. Due to the novelty and the corresponding lack of knowledge (Piltch-Loeb et al., 2021), the Danish prime minister applied a 'precautionary principle' and took a political and personal responsibility (Prime minister, 11 March 2020):

It is our firm belief that we should act today rather than regret tomorrow. We must intervene where it is effective, i.e. where the infection spreads the most. And that is where many people are assembled – day-care centres, schools, educational institutions, leisure activities, events, public transport. (Press conference, Danish Prime Minister, March 11, 2020)

By April 2020, and due to low infection rates, the Danish government issued a reopening of the schools, prioritizing the small children. The reopening was phased, with strict hygiene protocols, staggered schedules, and outdoor classes to minimize transmission. Masks and physical distancing were not mandated in classrooms, but hand hygiene and regular cleaning were emphasized. Schools were encouraged to keep students in small, consistent groups to limit contact. The government adjusted measures based on infection rates and the health authorities' guidance. In response to a journalist's question, the Danish prime minister later explained

why the Danish government had not to a higher degree followed the advice of the Health Authorities (which initially was to keep the schools open):

In a crisis like this, of which nobody has ever known the extent and range, the government is advised from a wide range of perspectives, including of course the health authorities. But decisions made in a democracy (and I think it requires a more principled discussion what we mean by a democracy) about how a society should handle a pandemic, cannot be made by administrative authorities, i.e., public officials. In a democracy this is a political responsibility, and in the end, it is the political government, i.e., the Parliament and the government that must be held accountable for the decisions made. (Press conference, Danish Prime Minister, May 29, 2020)

Contrary to the Danish and Norwegian approaches, and in line with Sandberg's distinction between the East and West Nordic divide in administrative cultures mentioned above, the Swedish government relied heavily on the health administrative authorities to monitor the situation and communicate guidelines. Since the situation was a matter of public health expertise, it was considered to be better managed by the Public Health Authorities (Folkhälsomyndigheten) which is capable of deciding the strategy and managing such crises.⁴ Therefore, communication with the public was mainly handled by the state epidemiologist, who became the public face of the Swedish strategy, which was to monitor and meet the pandemic with recommendations instead of regulations. The Swedish Public Health Authorities always had company on the daily press conferences of the Swedish Civic Contingencies Agency (Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap, MSB),⁵ the National Board of Social Services, and occasionally a minister from the government, for example, the Minister for Social Affairs or the Minister of Education. When school issues were communicated, the National Agency for Education (Skolverket) also sometimes participated. As stated by the general director of the Swedish Public Health Agency:

The issue of schools has been highlighted and brought to the agenda, but the authorities do not consider it appropriate at present to close schools. The effect is weak, if it exists at all. We know that schoolchildren, i.e. schools, do not drive this epidemic. Schoolchildren are less contagious and only to a lesser extent spread the infection. (General director of the Public Health Agency, FHM, Folkhälsomyndigheten, March 13, 2020)

In other words, authorities were already aware on 13 March 2020, that 'schoolchildren do not drive the epidemic', which allowed the school policy area to retain its integrity and its own purposes. As stated in the following:

This agency (Folkhälsomyndigheten) is not just a public health agency. It also has the overarching

responsibility for children's health, and especially for children's mental health. We must also consider that perspective. So, we have the option [to close schools], which is not a measure primarily intended to protect children. We must consider what we should weigh it against? (...) For some children, the school is often a firm basis in their lives. This aspect must be weighed very carefully against the aspect of infection control. (General director of the Public Health Agency, FHM, Folkhälsomyndigheten, March 13, 2020)

Schools, malls, shops, and restaurants remained open, and only sports and cultural events with audiences in large numbers were closed, and gatherings were restricted. Sweden's approach to the schools was particularly notable for its reliance on voluntary guidelines and minimal restrictions, as well as trust in the local school administrations' discernment and decision making, emphasizing the importance of maintaining normalcy for children and minimizing educational disruption (cf. the Public Health Agency [Folkhälsomyndigheten] and the National Agency for Education [Skolverket], press conference 13 March 2020).⁶ From March 2020, school leaders were allowed to make exceptions from the school laws, ministerial orders, and regulations regarding time and length of school days (Regeringen [The Swedish Government], 2020). Moreover, exceptions concerning the place, content, and the design of teaching could also be made. These regulations concerned all types of schools, except pre-school and after-school care institutions.

That was the dilemma, the 'wicked problem', governments faced in the early spring of 2020, which was not only a question of public health and educational quality but also addressed the fundamental relations between science, administration, governance, and democracy. In other words, ministries in Denmark (also) have an administrative function, whereas in Sweden ministerial governance is prohibited (see also Nord & Gardell, 2023). Perhaps therefore, we saw different crisis management strategies in the Nordic countries during the pandemic, framing administrative and political responsibilities differently (Nord & Gardell, 2023; Rasmussen et al., 2023). In framing the problem, the question was whether it was the virus itself, i.e. its adverse effects on the health of the vulnerable parts of the population, or its consequences for children's learning and wellbeing, which was considered the main problem (cf. Rasmussen et al., 2023).

Variations in pandemic policy responses across Finland, Iceland and Norway

Being part of the East Nordic administrative tradition, Finland, like Sweden, relied on health authorities' expertise, which, however, assessed the situation differently. The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare expected school closings to influence

infection rates.⁷ Therefore, the Finnish government decided to provide recommendations to curb the spread of Covid-19. At the same time, the Finnish National Agency for Education issued instructions to school administrations, urging them to prepare for flexible operating forms.⁸ From March 18, ‘contact teaching’ (in classrooms) was replaced by online teaching, although already from March 23, pupils in grades 1–3 were entitled to contact teaching again, yet still recommended to continue with online teaching (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2020; Vainikainen et al., 2020). Finland’s strategy was to protect the core-values of the educational sector that learning would always continue despite exceptional arrangements (Finnish Government press conference, 18 March 2020; Vogt & Värttö, 2024).⁹

Norway, like Denmark and Finland, implemented school lockdowns, and The Norwegian Public Health Authorities (Folkehelseinstituttet) crafted a set of regulations called the ‘traffic light model’, which categorized the peril on three levels (red, yellow, and green), which was applied at the municipal level (ECDC, 2024; Nøkleby et al., 2022).¹⁰ The green level continued a normal organization of classes and groups, with recommendations to avoid unnecessary physical contact, and keeping 1 metre between staff. At the yellow level, the normal organization of classes continued with the option to uphold ‘social bubbles’ by separating, or limiting contact between, pupils in smaller groups or cohorts. Staff, at the yellow level, could circulate between cohorts, but upholding 1 metre distance, and avoiding crowds. The red level meant separating pupils and students into smaller groups or bubbles and limiting contact between cohorts. At this level, there could be only one teacher per cohort, and the schools could introduce online teaching (part-time) for older students. In the Norwegian case, restrictions could be alternated locally by the municipality, for example, by closing or limiting pre-schools or schools (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2022).

Iceland – like Sweden – opted to keep schools open. While keeping schools open, the health authorities adopted a robust test-and-trace strategy from the outset, which helped manage and contain outbreaks (Grout et al., 2023). Once the first case of Covid-19 was detected, a four-week assembly ban of 100 people was introduced, which included various restrictions that required teachers to change their teaching methods and organization. Primary and lower secondary schools (age 6–15) remained open under limited conditions (Icelandic Ministry of Health, 2020a). They operated partly online, with considerable variation between schools and student age. Even though primary and lower secondary (i.e. compulsory) schools remained partly open, there were no common guidelines for implementation of restrictions within schools from the Icelandic Ministry of Education, so schools

and municipalities implemented the restrictions in various ways. The school day became a mixture of home-schooling and in-class attendance with variations depending on student age and school resources (Gunnþórsdóttir et al., 2021), and emphasis was placed on core subjects (Björnsdóttir & Ásgrímsdóttir, 2020; Icelandic Ministry of Health, 2020a, 2020b). Most of the compulsory schools remained open during the first wave of the infection but with some restrictions (smaller groups and shorter attendance, both days and hours). Table 3 below provides an outline of the various Nordic Covid-19 mitigation strategies at the school level (see Hall et al., 2022 for a fuller picture).

Summary of government responses to the pandemic across the five Nordic countries

Although the Nordic countries have a long tradition for co-operation as well as similar social welfare policies and legislation, each country developed its own strategy towards the Covid-19 crisis (Thualagant et al., 2023). Despite these differences, the goal across the Nordic countries was to balance public health with the educational and social needs of children and young people. In various ways, the strategies aimed to ensure that students continued to receive quality education while protecting their health and well-being. Denmark, Finland and Norway prioritized reducing the spread of infection and considered schools to be important loci for virus control, whereby the problem was framed according to the health risks of particularly the most vulnerable parts of the population. Iceland and Sweden, on the other hand, prioritized keeping primary and secondary schools open and framed the problem with a view to the consequences of the pandemic for the students, since closing schools would have detrimental effects not only on learning outcomes and the wellbeing of children but also on the role that schools play for the functioning of society. For example, Rotevatn et al. (2023) argue that the role of schools as sites of virus transmission is minimal compared to their significance for young people’s learning and wellbeing. These various policy approaches were based on different assessments of the uncertainty of the situation (Ljungdahl, 2025). As demonstrated above, all countries based their recommendations and restrictions on appeals to solidarity and trust in institutions and fellow citizens (Nord & Gardell, 2023). In all five countries, schools remained open (i.e. emergency teaching) for children with special needs (see also Selvik & Herrebrøden, 2024) and for children whose parents worked in critical jobs.

As the pandemic proceeded, the nationally specific practices gradually converged, and the Nordic countries returned to a more decentralized approach of school management during the crisis. Focus shifted to

Table 3. Summary of the five Nordic countries' school management approaches to the pandemic.

	West			East	
	DK	NO	IS	FI	SW
<i>School lockdown</i>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
<i>Spring 2020:</i>	Closed: Grades 0–5 March 13 – April 20 Grades 6–10: March 13 – May 18	Closed: Grades 1–4: March 13 – April 27 Grades 5–10: March 13 – May 11	Schools remained open for children under 16 with restrictions and some online teaching	Closed: All schools March 18 – May 14 From March 23, grade 1–3 were entitled to contact teaching	Schools remained open for children under 16
<i>Winter 2020–2021</i>	Grades 0–4: Dec. 21 to Feb. 8 Grades 5–10: Dec. 21 to Feb. 28	The “traffic light” model was applied.	Schools remained open for children under 16; with restrictions and some online teaching	Schools remained open, but switched to online teaching during local outbreaks	Schools remained open for children under 16 with no online teaching for this age group
<i>Online teaching</i>	Yes, periodically from spring 2020	Yes, periodically from spring 2020	Varied between schools, but mostly in grades 8–10 in combination with school attendance	Yes, all schools shifted to remote teaching by March 18	Yes, but not until fall 2021, when schools were required to have an emergency plan for virtual teaching during local outbreaks
<i>Restrictions in schools</i>	Hand wash, 1-metre distance. Limited contact between cohorts and periodically smaller groups (social bubbles) – administered locally at the school level	Hand wash, 1-metre distance. Limited contact between cohorts and periodically smaller groups (social bubbles) – administered locally at the school level	Groups of no more than 20; not allowed to mix at recess or mealtimes administered locally at the school level (and specific to age groups)	Hand wash, social distance, requirements to wear face masks in higher grades. By Dec. 2021 stricter guidelines to limit the mixing of classes and groups.	Hand wash, social distance when possible. No restrictions to keep students apart. Advise to keep smaller groups at school if possible

Comments: The table distinguishes between school lockdowns during the early period, spring 2020, and the later period from winter 2020–2021. Moreover, it specifies the onset and extent of online teaching, and the kinds of restrictions or regulations in schools.

maintaining educational continuity and minimizing disruption (OECD, 2020). Generally, high vaccine uptake among adults and adolescents across the Nordic regions during 2021 enabled a return to in-person learning (Rotevatn et al., 2023). Infection prevention measures included regular testing, contact tracing, targeted quarantines, and hygiene protocols. These measures were designed to minimize transmission within schools while allowing students to benefit from face-to-face education.

In the following, we will explore in more detail how Nordic teachers experienced the uncertainty of the pandemic, the politically established working conditions, the support they received and contextualize these reflections by the different national approaches to crisis management.

Nordic teachers' responses to school administration during the Covid-19 situation

In Table 4, the overall results for the five Nordic countries on each of the six statements are shown, including the mean, standard deviation (st.dev.), frequency distribution given in percentages, and the number of respondents (N), excluding the 'I don't know/I don't wish to answer' responses (which reduced the number of respondents from 418 to 364–371). We have combined the response options 'Large' and 'to some extent' into 'agree' and 'No' and 'small extent' into 'disagree'.

The results show that on average there is a relatively high degree of agreement on the six statements among the Nordic teachers, which indicates a high level of trust in the various levels of school governance, municipal administration, and local management (questions 1–5). Between 60% and 76% of the teachers agree with the statement they are asked to evaluate, while between 12% and 20% of the teachers disagree. This distribution reflects the findings from a similar analysis of teachers' evaluation of educational continuity and government support among 59 OECD member states (OECD, 2020, pp. 16–17). The Nordic teachers agree the most on statement 6 about how the teachers supported each other, which indicates a high level of horizontal dependence (see also Jonsson et al., 2025). Here, 94% responded that they agree to a large or some extent, while only 2% disagree. The least agreement appears to be on statement 3 about whether 'politically established working conditions were acceptable in that situation', where 60% agree and 20% disagree.

To examine the extent of the differences between the countries, we calculated Cohen's d. Moreover, we calculated the weighted averages for each of the five countries across the 6 questions to see if the teachers' experiences of the way the pandemic was handled differed across the Nordic countries, but found no statistically significant differences between countries, which is most likely due to the small national sample

Table 4. Frequency analysis of Nordic teacher responses to Covid-19 school administration.

Statements	Nordic Countries					
	Mean	St.dev	Disagree	Neither nor	Agree	N
Think back to the time of COVID-19. To what extent do you feel that:						
1 The situation in the school was handled in the right way given the conditions at the time.	3,78	1,03	14%	15%	71%	364
2 Government information was adequate	3,85	1,01	12%	15%	73%	367
3 Politically established working conditions were acceptable in that situation	3,52	1,14	20%	20%	60%	367
4 The working conditions offered by the municipality were acceptable in that situation	3,56	1,10	18%	18%	63%	365
5 You received adequate support from school leaders	4,01	1,12	13%	12%	76%	366
6 You and your colleagues at school were good at supporting each other	4,56	0,68	2%	4%	94%	371

Comments: Overall results for the five Nordic countries on six statements concerning school administration during Covid-19, including the mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution (in percentages), and the number of respondents (N).

sizes. Therefore, we examined the whole sample of Nordic teachers taken together as one group and examined whether there are differences between the total group of teachers' responses. The differences in the average results from the selected teachers in the various Nordic countries are small, with only one statistically significant difference (statement 6), which indicates a real difference rather than a chance occurrence. The other statements are not statistically significant, which may be due to the small sample size.

Thereby, the analysis reflects a group of teachers across the Nordic countries (94 percent), who felt that they were good at supporting each other (cf. question 6). Moreover, a high proportion (between 60–76 percent) of the Nordic teachers in this sample are generally satisfied with the way the pandemic was handled (question 1), with the level of information provided by the governments (question 2), with the politically established working conditions in the situation (question 3), the working conditions administratively established by the municipality (question 4), and with the support provided by the local school management (question 5). However, there is also a small number of Nordic teachers across this sample (between 12 and 20 percent), who indicate dissatisfaction, which reveals that teachers in the total sample were divided within the national and local school levels.

In the following, we will interpret the Nordic teachers' (qualitative) post-pandemic reflections on the open questions in light of the dilemma identified above, i.e. the wicked problem of school management during a pandemic and how the teachers handled the situation in light of the uncertainty and the nationally different conditions. As indicated above, there is often more variation within the responses from one country (locally divided opinions) than in comparison between countries. Therefore, we mainly treated the whole group of 188 open Nordic teacher responses as one group of reflections (since the differences between the teacher experiences are recognizable across all five countries) and secondarily identified the characteristics that are specific to the different national government responses.

Protection of the population versus retaining the school policy area intact

Beginning with the national differences, some teacher responses to the open questions differed saliently depending on whether schools had been open or closed. Some of the teachers' reflections concern the lockdown and how it changed the situation dramatically. Especially some of the Danish teachers' considerations express a concern with the political prioritization of health issues over educational matters, but also a general understanding that – although unfortunate – it was a necessary reaction to the threat of the pandemic:

In my opinion, the Covid-19 situation and its management took priority. It had some unfortunate consequences for schools, teachers, and students, but this must be considered a result of the overall situation. (DK teacher)

This position was also prevalent in some Finnish and Norwegian teacher reflections, expressing the attitude that that students should have been allowed to attend school throughout the pandemic.

Looking back, it was completely absurd to shut down the entire society, but people did what they thought was right. We teachers worked harder than ever, day and night. (FI teacher)

Moreover, comments suggest that social distancing rules were often ignored by students outside of school, and that measures such as frequent hand washing and distance requirements were exaggerated and sometimes ineffective. A small handful of specifically Danish teacher responses express a distressful attitude towards the lockdowns, which by these teachers were regarded as totalitarian, 'violating people's right to liberty' (DK teacher), which might indicate an awareness that the government strategy was considered a result of political decisions rather than bureaucratic expertise. The teacher quoted below encouraged students and parents to work against the regulations on social gatherings:

I am still waiting for a huge apology for the completely insane lockdowns that disregarded many liberty rights. Absolutely pointless. I deliberately

worked against it - met with students despite the ban on gatherings, encouraged contact parents to establish social life for the young, let my own children live as before. Collegially, it became awful, as everyone with a different view than the prime minister was regarded a terrorist. Several teachers also spoke to students with contempt if they broke the rules and said things like: 'Do you want to see your grandmother die?' It was such a horrible time, which has colossal, negative late effects. (DK teacher)

Another teacher reports that their principal 'forced the teachers to work against the restrictions' (DK teacher) and facilitate student interactions in larger groups, thereby ignoring health regulations, which caused distress and conflicts among the colleagues, who wanted to abide the regulations.

In contrast, and as already mentioned, the Swedish schools remained open, and activities continued almost as usual despite the drastic changes in the world outside. As this teacher reports:

There was no difference in the school during the pandemic, except for the presence of hand sanitisers scattered across the school. (SW teacher)

However, the open questions also indicate some disparities between the Swedish teachers. Some responses indicate that some schools were indeed closed for shorter periods, which was allowed during local outbreaks or when many teachers were ill. Many of the decisions, such as closing schools for shorter periods, were left to school managements in Iceland and Sweden. Generally, most Swedish and Icelandic teachers expressed satisfaction and trust in the way their own school management handled the situation, and most comments suggest that the political decision to decentralize decision-making about whether and how to close schools and implement restrictions was good.

I thought that the school during Covid worked well. We aimed at finding solutions and tried to get pupils to attend school as much as possible so that they could maintain social relationships and would not drop out of school. The staff was organized in teams, and I could work on projects that suited me very well. (IS teacher)

The Swedish and Icelandic qualitative responses in this survey generally express trust in the governments' decisions to delegate responsibility to local schools to decide their own course of action, although some indicate disappointment with the authorities' administration of schools and feel that teachers were disadvantaged compared to other professional groups that had the opportunity to work remotely and thus protect themselves from infection.

Experiences with online and alternative organizations of teaching

Teachers from countries that closed schools and initiated online teaching (Denmark, Norway and Finland) were mainly divided on the topic. In the beginning, they faced significant challenges with the rapid transition, which generally had its drawbacks, for example, that they lacked interactive learning materials, that many pupils turned their cameras off and were not active in online classes. The most common opinion among these teachers was that remote teaching was difficult, partly because the transition happened too quickly:

Everything happened so fast. Many teachers and students were caught off guard. Nobody was really prepared for schools to close and for teaching to move online. Many challenges arose, such as unstable home internet connections and issues with submitting assignments. (FI teacher)

Most teachers describe a general sense of concern with finding solutions in an unprecedented situation. They had to learn fast, use quickly evolving technology, and develop materials and methods with little guidance or training. Some teachers report that they were supported by colleagues and administrators, while others raise concerns about having no support from administration for developing and implementing online teaching (see also Jonsson et al., 2025). Consequently, the situation was perceived as uncertain and unpredictable, which was also due to the frequent changes in guidelines, which caused stress and required significant adaptation from both teachers and students.

I lacked supervision on everything from working hours to what could be expected of the students. I saw students lying in bed under their duvets and attending online meetings, and I had no sense of their well-being or lack thereof. (DK teacher).

Due to the lack of general guidance on how to implement new rules and restrictions, Nordic school teachers found themselves having to improvise ('to think outside of the box', 'to lay the tracks while driving the train' etc.).

In other words, Covid-19 presented challenges that required inventive solutions, creativity, and solidarity at all levels. Teacher responses reflect the attitude that everyone had done their best to keep the schools going, whether working with restricted class hours and group sizes in school or through online teaching and home schooling. Consequently, some teachers therefore thrived during Covid-19. As this Icelandic teacher noted: 'I thought this worked out incredibly well. This job is based on finding solutions and Covid-19 was no exception'. (IS teacher). The transition to online teaching offered opportunities for

getting acquainted with new technological teaching methods, despite the increased workload and difficulties in monitoring student wellbeing (see also Selvik & Herrebrøden, 2024).

The remote teaching in my subject went well (...). Never has subject teaching been so consistent and uniform. I still receive feedback from parents about how good the assignments were during the pandemic. (FI teacher)

I think we managed online teaching well and had fun with the challenge. (...) [It] provided completely different opportunities compared to a normal schedule. So, I actually think that the Covid period was a fun and educational time for me as a teacher. (DK teacher)

All students and teachers had PCs, and online meetings were set up and ready for each cohort, both class and group rooms, which was also the case for meetings in teacher teams, etc. It just worked. (DK teacher)

The pandemic was consequently a time for professional development for many teachers, specifically regarding online teaching tools (see also Korte et al., 2023 for a comparison of Finnish, English and Norwegian teachers' experiences of online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic), but also with outdoor teaching (Barfod, 2023; Qvortrup et al., 2023). Additionally, some teachers noted that their roles and responsibilities became clearer as the pandemic progressed.

If the same thing happened again, I would personally organize my teaching differently than I did in the spring of 2020. (FI teacher)

Once the organization of teaching on new pandemic terms was implemented, i.e. the division of students into smaller groups and partial online teaching etc., some teachers began to feel at ease with the situation. Many Danish and Norwegian teachers report that the practice of dividing students into smaller groups (and in the Norwegian case, increasing resource use in schools) led to a calmer school day and more stability for the students. One of the teachers describes it as follows:

The students gave feedback that they were very satisfied with being divided into smaller groups, and the school day also became calmer. There were fewer teachers in each student group, more stability. The use of resources in schools was increased to the students' benefit. The period of homeschooling was short, and I also found that it worked academically for the students. Socially, it is never positive to be isolated from others. (NO teacher)

However, many teachers found it harder to keep track of student groups when teaching remotely, and it is generally mentioned that student age differences impacted learning practices and outcomes due to online teaching. As a Danish teacher put it, 'It was hell teaching 3 or 4

graders online' (DK teacher), whereas others emphasize that 'older students benefitted from being able to focus on the tasks' (DK teacher). Some students thrived in the online environment, finding it easier to focus, while others struggled with concentration. Moreover, teachers report that there was a significant variation in the support that children received from their parents, and it is highlighted by some that it was crucial for especially the vulnerable children to be able to come to school (see also Nøkleby et al., 2024; Selvik & Herrebrøden, 2024). Remote teaching was devastating for weaker students and those with low motivation:

Many students did nothing while others did a lot, and the gap between students increased more than during regular schooling. (SW teacher)

Students should not be left alone with learning. Not all students managed to learn effectively with teacher support only through a screen. Their social skills did not develop. (FI teacher)

These experiences led some teachers to worry about a widening social gap among the students and led some teachers to have preferred the open schools: 'students learn best on-site'. (SW teacher). Generally, teachers across the Nordic schools highlight that some students' social and mental well-being suffered during remote teaching, but also that students' subject knowledge suffered (see also Mankki & Räihä, 2025). This teacher notes that 'time lost with subject teachers is still felt' (DK teacher).

Health risks and professional recognition

Generally, there are opposing views regarding teachers' health risk, both within each country and when comparing across countries. Distress was felt by teachers across all countries, either due to the uncertainty and lack of clear instructions regarding the organization of emergency and online teaching and because the everyday routines were challenged on many levels, but also because of the perceived danger of the virus. The uncertainty of the situation raised the question: Who ought to be protected, and from what? Some teachers felt that they were exposed to the threat of being infected with a life-threatening virus, and that they were put in danger at the expense of other groups:

These were challenging circumstances, it took a long time before we switched to online teaching (and protected the teachers). On the other hand, most young people could easily handle getting infected. (DK teacher)

The uncertainty of working in overcrowded classrooms while other workplaces shut down was tough. It felt like we were sacrificed so that the rest of society could function, i.e., that parents could stay on their jobs and have their children in school. (SW teacher)

The teachers felt that their situation was not sufficiently considered, and some felt that focus had been on the pupils, i.e. to maximize their opportunity to attend school and protect them at the cost of teachers' health and wellbeing. Other teachers preferred to have stayed in school instead of being sent home. Moreover, some teacher reactions indicate concern with how online teaching spread the workload unevenly across different groups of colleagues. It is generally noted that differences depend on, for example, subject and student age.

It was very different depending on whether you were in the lower or upper school. Lower schoolteachers got 2 weeks off at the start, while the upper school taught. Lower schoolteachers taught from 8:00 to 12:30 every day – then had the rest of the day off, even though they normally had to teach more. Upper schoolteachers had split workplaces and working hours without getting any extra pay. (DK teacher)

Several teachers felt that they had to work much more than usual to take care of the students. Some teachers report that they had to communicate with parents from morning till evening, while others noted that this was a good time:

... without the external pressures associated with schooling, I could concentrate on teaching, there were no [school] events, and the atmosphere was relaxed". (IS teacher)

Several responses suggest that it was difficult to manage situations in school, especially when teacher absenteeism was high. Although there were recommendations (in Iceland and Sweden) and restrictions (in Denmark, Finland, and Norway after the reopening of schools) to maintain social distance and not have too many students simultaneously in the same room, many teachers across the five Nordic countries wrote that such measures were impossible to maintain with young students in school. In several Swedish responses, it is mentioned that students were crammed into small classrooms, and one of the respondents wrote that groups could be even larger than usual because others in the teaching staff were home with symptoms of illness.

We teachers were put in a situation where we had to solve [problems with] education on different levels. We did not have the time and tools for it. We double-worked without getting anything for it, and we were in a risk zone all the time. I missed being acknowledged for what we did. It is sad that we teachers are just expected to solve the school issue without access to any resources or tools. (SW teacher)

This sentiment is echoed across the other Nordic countries, regardless of how the schools had been organized during the pandemic. Several teachers

mention that they took a risk for the rest of society, although their efforts were not sufficiently appreciated, and one response reflects disappointment that teachers, unlike other professional groups, were not prioritized when the first vaccines came.

Summary and discussion of teacher responses

The investigation was based on the expectation that we would find country-specific differences in teacher responses depending on whether schools were closed or mainly open during the pandemic, and due to the two different administrative traditions across the Nordic countries. Possibly due to small sample sizes we found no significant results other than the fact that Nordic teachers felt most support from their colleagues during the pandemic (question 6), which underscores the horizontal structures of dependency among teachers, i.e. the importance of collaborating with fellow teachers and to exchange ideas on how to deal with and design the teaching (see also Jonsson et al., 2025). The same patterns in attitudes towards the other questions concerning the overall government decisions (question 1), communication (question 2), politically established conditions (question 3), local school administrative authorities (question 4) and local school management (question 5) during the pandemic are found across the whole sample of Nordic teachers, although not as a statistically significant result. However, the reflections shared by the teachers in the open response category reveals a pattern of different experiences and attitudes towards the open and closed schools, online teaching, the perceived risks of the situation, as well as professional support and recognition.

The rapid switch to distance teaching in some countries left many teachers feeling disoriented and underscored the importance of preparing teachers to manage uncertainty, as both the nature of the challenges and the strategies to address them became clearer over the course of the pandemic. However, for certain teachers, navigating the challenges of the pandemic strengthened their self-efficacy, enhancing their resilience, adaptability, and confidence in managing uncertainty (Mankki, 2024). Some teachers (across all five countries) mention that school closure was a terrible idea, that students fell behind socially and academically, and that online teaching was challenging, especially with younger children. Monitoring students' wellbeing online was difficult, and students missed in-person support (Qvortrup & Lykkegaard, 2023). Teachers also identified gaps in their digital competence and stressed the need for additional training and improved access to digital resources to effectively support their teaching (Mankki & Riih , 2025). But the situation also offered opportunities to

develop new teaching methods, to explore different approaches, and to use new learning technologies (Gunnþórsdóttir et al., 2021; Selvik & Herrebrøden, 2024), and – for some – to take a break from the daily routines. The differences among students became more pronounced, as vulnerable students had an even more difficult time (Slotte et al., 2021), whereas others thrived with the opportunity to focus and work independently. Some teachers concentrated on supporting students and fostering a sense of safety by adapting their teaching practices (Mankki & Riih  , 2025), for example, through smaller group lessons. Risks were a concern, but online teaching provided some protection. Many teachers felt their efforts were underappreciated. A lack of clear guidelines left some teachers uncertain about expectations and workload. However, some country-specific attitudes are occasionally found, for example, the few Danish teachers' qualitative responses that indicate a concern with what was perceived to be an example of authoritarian governance, which is not found in the other countries. Perhaps because of the situation being framed as 'political' by the Danish government rather than 'technical-administrative' as in the case of Sweden, some of the Danish teachers' responses were more politicized, expressing strong emotions for or against school lockdowns and restrictions (Nordholm et al., 2022).

An important limitation of the study has to do with the sampling strategy and method since we did not differentiate between contextual factors such as geography etc. School leadership is known to vary significantly across contextual factors such as rural and urban areas (Grimm et al., 2025; Hallinger, 2011; Nordholm et al., 2022). We did not find systematic patterns in the teacher responses between countries other than those referring to the national strategies of closing or keeping schools open, respectively (except the few Danish teachers' more aggressive responses towards the government). Therefore, we do not make any strong conclusions with regard to the influence of such conditions. We expected to find more salient patterns between countries but must ascertain that differences between teachers' experiences also occurred at the national and local school level (for example, in the case of the teachers who refer to internal disagreements among colleagues).

Therefore, the above investigation raises more general questions of how to balance various paradoxical concerns such as the conflict between students' and teachers' health and well-being during a pandemic. Also, it raises the question of institutional trust in situations of uncertainty, and whether and how to include professionals and institutions (i.e. teachers and local school managements) in decision-making during times of crisis (Ongaro, 2021). School closures in

Denmark, Norway, and Finland were an unprecedented situation. It showed what happens when this institution – that most people take for granted – no longer provides a solid foundation for children (and indirectly for their parents). Last, it raises the question of the level of decision-making and administration. Is it better to leave responsibility to the local school management or the local administrative authorities, which are more capable of responding flexibly and appropriately to a new situation, or to have national or regional political or administrative authorities take responsibility and set the course in an uncertain situation? Moreover, it questions the relation between political responsibility and administrative expertise (Johansson et al., 2023; Rasmussen et al., 2023).

Thereby, the findings can also be interpreted in light of the broader context of high institutional trust, which has a long cultural history in the Nordic countries. As highlighted in the introduction, high levels of trust in government and public institutions are associated with greater civic responsibility and social unity (Dinesen et al., 2022; Rothstein, 1999). It likely played a role in shaping both the national and local administrative responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and the ways in which teachers perceived and adapted to those decisions. The only statistically significant finding was the 94% feeling of support from colleagues across all five countries, indicating a high level of horizontal dependence and trust during the pandemic. In countries like Sweden and Iceland with more local school autonomy, the high institutional trust may have facilitated acceptance of decentralized decision-making, even when it led to feelings of being left alone with responsibility. Likewise, in Denmark, Norway and Finland, where political and eventually local authorities took more responsibility, the government approach may have contributed to more divided opinions, and concern or frustration among some teachers with the lack of independent decision-making. These dynamics emphasize the importance of institutional trust not only in creating enforcement and cooperation during crises, but also in shaping how frontline professionals experience and respond to the national and local administrative decisions during a crisis.

However, and as previously mentioned, we do not mean to explain the different policy approaches across the five Nordic countries by the two historically established administrative traditions since there could be personal, political or geographical (or other) reasons for the different government approaches (for example, the internal political situation in each country, the relative popularity of the governments, and population density etc.). Nor do we mean to explain the teacher responses as a direct consequence of the different government decisions across the Nordic countries. The patterns of variation in the qualitative teacher

experiences are found at the local level within schools and within each country. Across borders, some teachers were anxious due to the threat of infection, others' worried about the uncertainty of the situation and lack of clear instructions, while still others felt the online teaching to be an exciting, professional challenge. However, some of the open responses from the teachers can meaningfully be interpreted in light of the different government responses to the pandemic since, for example, Swedish and Icelandic teachers were in school, whereas the Danish, Finnish, and Norwegian schools were closed periodically, which created different working conditions for Nordic teachers during the pandemic. The open teacher responses reflect these national differences since, for example, some Danish teachers were concerned with the lack of independent decision-making and with negative effects on children's learning, whereas Icelandic and Swedish responses to a higher degree reflected concerns with being left alone with decision-making and with being put on the front line in the face of a pandemic.

Conclusion

The investigation has integrated different Nordic government strategies with analyses of Nordic teacher retrospective post-pandemic reflections. Denmark, Finland, and Norway, on the one hand, periodically closed schools during the pandemic, either decided by the national government, or by regional or municipal authorities. On the other hand, Iceland and Sweden's responses to the Covid-19 situation were similar, since they kept schools open. Interestingly, and in light of the East Nordic administrative tradition, Finnish and Swedish health authorities assessed the uncertainty of infection control and educational consequences differently. The Danish and Norwegian health risk assessments, and consequently their approaches to school management during the pandemic, were very similar, although Norway provided a flexible (and locally applicable) 'traffic light model' for handling infection control at the municipal level. Iceland kept elementary schools open but continued an already established tradition for online teaching at the upper secondary and further education levels.

The teacher responses to the survey – the quantitative responses as well as the responses to the open questions – reveal a higher degree of local rather than cross-national differences among the teachers, although some country-specific responses remain at the qualitative level. Some teachers found that the management of the situation was satisfactory given the conditions at the time and enjoyed being able to develop new teaching methods, whereas others found it highly stressful, lacked guidance, and clear instruction, and found that resources were unevenly distributed. Likewise, the Nordic teacher responses indicate different risk assessments since some were afraid of the virus itself, i.e. to be

put on the front line without necessary protective measures, while others expressed concern with the derived societal effects of the policies meant to manage the virus, such as the effects of school closure and online teaching on children's social and academic losses, and the widening social gap.

Finally, while this article has focused on the Nordic context, it is worth noting that school administration during the Covid-19 pandemic varied significantly across the globe. In contrast to the Nordic emphasis on trust, professional autonomy, and relatively decentralized decision-making, countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom often experienced more fragmented responses, with greater variation between states or local authorities and more politicized debates around school closures. Germany, with its federal structure, also saw significant regional differences in school policy and implementation (Reimers, 2022). Drawing these comparisons highlight how administrative traditions, quality in governance, and public trust shaped the national responses to a shared global crisis. Future research could benefit from deeper cross-national comparisons to better understand the relationship between governance models and educational resilience in times of crisis.

Notes

1. See the Danish Prime Ministry's press conference, March 6, 2020 (<https://www.stm.dk/statsministeren/taler/>) and the Swedish Public Health Agency (FHM) press conference, March 13, 2020.
2. The data analysed in this article is a smaller sample of the larger NordForsk-project (INSPECT, investigating the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on Nordic schools. Project website: <https://www.nordforsk.org/projects/inspect-societal-security-after-covid-19-inquiring-nordic-strategies-practices-educational>).
3. Transcriptions of the Danish Prime Ministry's press conferences can be located on the Ministry's webpage (<https://www.stm.dk/statsministeren/taler/>).
4. Cf. the General director of the Public Health Agency (FHM, Folkhälsomyndigheten), Johan Carlsson, who gave a speech regarding measures towards Covid-19 in Swedish schools at a press conference, March 13, 2020.
5. <https://www.msb.se/>.
6. Folkhälsomyndigheten (n.d.). *När hände vad under pandemin?*. Link: <https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/smittskydd-beredskap/utbrott/utbrotsarkiv/covid-19-pandemin-2019-2023/nar-hande-vad-under-pandemin/>.
7. Assessment of school closings by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, March 18, 2020: <https://thl.fi/-/koronaepidemia-mallinnus-ihmiskontaktien-rajoittaminen-vaikuttaa-epidemia-kestoon-ja-paivittaisten-tartuntojen-maaraan>.
8. Finnish government recommendation for teaching: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/sv/-/1410845/uppdaterade-rekommendationer-for-forebyggande-av-coronaepidemin-inom-smabarnspedagogik->

undervisning-och-utbildning?languageId=en_US and safety instructions in schools: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/1410845/ohjeita-tueksi-lahiovetuksen-turvalliseen-jarjestamiseen-ja-tilojen-kayttoon?utm>.

9. Press conferences from the Finnish Valtioneuvosto (Statsrådet). <https://video.valtioneuvosto.fi/fi?videoId=37d6eb75-00090325-48ffc8fa>.
10. See the following timeline with administrative decisions concerning Covid-19 published by the Norwegian government: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/helse-og-omsorg/folkehelse/tidslinje-koronaviruset/id2692402/>.

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