

Glossary of criminal sanctions terminology for discussions with children

This glossary was compiled to help discussions with children on matters relating to a prison sentence. The intention was to explain the words so that children can understand them. You can continue to adjust the definitions if necessary due to the age of the child. You might learn something from this glossary yourself, and it will help you to answer a child's questions. Check the rules, guidelines and instructions of a specific prison on the rikosseuraamus.fi website or with the staff of the prison.

CRIME: When someone does something that is wrong and against the law, it is called a crime. This means, for example, doing something bad to another person, taking something that belongs to someone else or not following the common rules set by the Finnish state.

INVESTIGATION: When the police suspects that someone has committed something criminal, they start to find out what happened. The police will investigate what has happened, and if a crime was committed.

SENTENCE, JUDGEMENT: If the results of the investigation suggest that someone has committed a crime, a trial will take place at court. If the court also finds that a crime was committed, a judgement will be given. The judgement includes information on the sentence: how it will be served and for how long does the person have to be in prison.

PRISON: A place where the sentence is served. The person who committed the crime is called a prisoner when serving their sentence in a prison. There are closed and open prisons. They have different rules and activities. The rules of conduct and what prisoners are allowed to do also differ somewhat between prisons. These rules are quite different from the rules of a home.

CLOSED/OPEN PRISON: Closed prisons are surrounded by high fences and all their doors are locked. There are strict rules about what you can do and when. It is hard to

make phone calls from a closed prison, because there is usually only one telephone for all prisoners living on the same floor. When you are sentenced to prison, you usually go to a closed prison at first. You can be transferred to an open prison later.

OPEN PRISONS often look like schools or terraced houses. There is no fencing and the prisoners are allowed to move more freely in certain areas. When living in an open prison, prisoners can work outside the prison. In an open prison, the prisoners are also allowed to have their own phones, so it is easier to call home. Prison phones do not have internet or WhatsApp and you cannot send pictures with them.

SERVING A SENTENCE: A plan for activities in prison is made with each prisoner. The plan can include, activities such as, work, studies or discussions. Many prisons have a workshop, a gym and a sports hall, as well as a library, a small shop and a chapel. There is a schedule for each day in prison. The schedule includes, for example, wake-up times, meals, work hours, library visits, time for sports and visitations. More information available here: www.krits.fi/tietoa/lasten-sivut/vangin-paiva/

CELL: A prison cell means the prisoner's room. Sometimes two prisoners are living in the same cell. There is, at least, a bed, desk, cabinet and a toilet in a cell, many cells also have a shower.



OFFICER INSTRUCTOR/GUARD: There are instructors and guards in prison. They help the prisoners to follow the prison's daily schedule. The guards and instructors make sure that the rules of the prison are followed, that no-one is bullied, etc. The prisoners can ask the instructors and guards to help them and talk with them.

VISITS: You can visit your father/mother (or other person close to you) at prison at certain visitation times. The rules are stricter at closed prisons concerning, for example, things you can take as gifts. Visitors are not allowed to take any food items with them to the visits. The prisoners buy their snacks from the prison shop. Similarly, taking any sharp objects or money is prohibited. You have to walk through a metal detector at the gate, and it will beep if you have anything made of metal on you. You must show all the things you want to take to the prisoner to the guards at the gate, and they will tell you if you are allowed to give them to the prisoner. Often, you have to leave the presents with the guards who will give them to the prisoner after the visit.

There are different types of visits. Sometimes, visits take place in a **big space with many prisoners** meeting their family or friends at the same time. There are tables in the space divided with a plexiglass. There are often telephone receivers on the table that help you hear better what the other person is saying. In meetings like this, touching is not allowed, and guards will watch that the rules are followed.

There are also **"plexi visits"** where there is a separate room divided by a plex glass going up to the ceiling. There are no other prisoners or guards present.

In a parent-child meeting, a child can hold hands with their parent or hug them (if the child feels comfortable). There are also some toys and other things to do during the visit.

In a family meeting, you get to spend time with your family. The family meetings usually take place in a place that looks like a small apartment. Often, there is a bathroom, toilet, kitchen and a sofa and more toys and other things to do. At some prisons, the family meeting can last overnight and you can also go outside to play.

PRISON DOG: Sometimes there is a nice dog working at the prison gate. The dog sniffs the clothes, bags and presents that people want to take into the prison. These dogs were trained to smell things that you are not allowed to take to the prison. The dog is at work when he sniffs and uses his paws at the gate, so you are not allowed to pet him.

LEAVES: When a prisoner has been in prison long enough, they can apply for a leave. This means that the prisoner can go home for a visit, for example. In this case, the people working at the prison will telephone the prisoner's home and ask about the plans for the leave. Even when on leave from prison, the prisoner must follow the rules given. They are not allowed to consume alcohol or other intoxicants, for example, or visit places that were not agreed upon in advance. If a prisoner does not follow the rules, the prison employees will find out what is happening and determine the consequences.

PROBATIONARY FREEDOM: When the sentence is almost served, a prisoner sometimes has the opportunity to be released on probationary freedom, which means that they will serve the remaining sentence at home. During the probationary freedom, the prisoner has to work, study or take care of their matters with the authorities. The use of alcohol and other intoxicants is prohibited. If a prisoner will be living at your home during probationary freedom, sometimes employees will visit beforehand to find out what you think. After prison, a prisoner has to deal with many new things, so sometimes it is a good idea for them to stay on their own, in a separate apartment, for a while at first and learn to take care of these things.

ANKLE BRACELET: When a prisoner leaves the prison to go on probationary freedom, or goes on a leave from an open prison, they have to wear a monitoring ankle bracelet around their ankle. This device helps to make sure that the prisoner follows the rules of the places where they are allowed to go. The prisoner is also given a mobile phone and they are obliged to answer it whenever it rings. They must carry the phone with them at all times. If the prisoner breaks the rules, they can risk going back to prison. The bracelet is black and looks a bit like a sports watch. You are not allowed to remove it, but you can wear it while swimming or in the sauna.

More information for your child available:
www.krits.fi/tietoa/lasten-sivut/