



CREATING A CULTURE OF RESPECT AND EMPATHY IN SCHOOLS



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TOOLKIT FOR A DEMOCRATIC AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

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AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE**

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Introduction

Welcome to the tool entitled “Creating a culture of respect and empathy in schools”. This tool is designed to equip teachers, school leaders, administrators and other school staff with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively prevent and address incidents of bullying and violence within the school setting. The tool builds on previous work of the Council of Europe in different countries and within various projects.

As educators, it is our responsibility to ensure that all students feel safe, respected and supported in their learning environments. By understanding the nature and manifestations of bullying, recognising its impacts and taking proactive measures, we can create a positive and inclusive school climate that promotes well-being and academic success for all students.

The tool can be used by individual teachers, teams of school staff or the school leadership. In this manual, you will find valuable information on recognising and addressing bullying behaviour, strategies for creating a safe and supportive learning environment and practical resources for implementing preventive and intervention measures at the school level. From developing anti-bullying conventions to fostering a positive class environment and strengthening relationships with students, this guide offers a comprehensive approach to creating a culture of respect and empathy in schools.

Throughout the manual, you will find practical tools such as intervention protocols, helpful questions for self-evaluation and forms to support the implementation of anti-bullying initiatives. Additionally, the manual offers guidance on engaging with students, parents and interdisciplinary teams to build a collaborative and proactive approach to addressing bullying behaviour.

We encourage you to use this manual as a valuable resource in your efforts to promote a safe and inclusive school environment. By working together and taking collective action, we can create a positive school culture where all students feel valued, respected and empowered to succeed.

The final section of the tool – Creating a safe learning environment – School support mentoring programme – consists of planned sessions that should be carried out during one school year. It requires a mentor or a trainer with experience in school development and thorough knowledge of bullying. To carry out the programme it is necessary to have this tool while the following Council of Europe resources can be used as background material: “Teaching controversial issues – Training pack for teachers”; “Bookmarks – manual for combating hate speech online through human rights education”; “Competences for democratic culture – Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies”; “Compass”; “Compassito”; *Living democracy*; “All different – All equal”.

Thank you for your commitment to addressing violence and bullying in schools and we hope that this manual will be a useful tool in your efforts to create a supportive and nurturing learning environment for all students.

Understanding violence and bullying

Violence

Violence in schools encompasses a range of aggressive behaviours that go beyond bullying, including physical altercations, verbal threats and, in extreme cases, the use of weapons. This issue poses significant challenges to the educational environment, affecting the safety and well-being of both students and staff. Factors contributing to school violence can include socio-economic disparities, familial instability, mental health issues and exposure to violent media. The consequences are far-reaching, often leading to disrupted learning, psychological trauma and a decline in academic performance. Violence is a form of aggressive behaviour where the perpetrator uses their advantage over the victim. It is characterised by the following.

- ▶ The occurrence of roles. In violence, the roles of victim, perpetrator and bystander are permanent, unlike in aggression where roles can be interchangeable.
- ▶ Prolonged nature. Violence is more cyclical, with periods of intensified aggressive behaviour alternating with periods of relative calmness.
- ▶ Inequality of power. There is a clear imbalance of power or force between the victim and perpetrator.

The latter can be manifested as:

- ▶ a quantitative advantage: multiple individuals ganging up on one;
- ▶ a physical advantage: a stronger individual attacking a weaker one;
- ▶ a psychological advantage: differences in intellectual, interpersonal or social skills used to demean others;
- ▶ a background advantage: a person from a negative non-formal youth group exerting influence over peers.

Bullying is an extreme form of violence. To address bullying effectively, it is essential to identify and understand the specific characteristics that differentiate it from ordinary conflicts and aggression. This understanding allows for appropriate interventions and support for those affected, ensuring that bullying is taken seriously and addressed promptly and effectively. Misinterpretations often arise when these terms are used interchangeably, leading to confusion and inefficiency in addressing bullying. Teachers and other adults must be aware of the subtle forms that bullying can take, even when not directly observable, to remain attentive to meaningful behaviours and respond appropriately. By distinguishing bullying from related phenomena and recognising its unique characteristics, educators and caregivers can better support victims and create safer, more inclusive environments. Bullying refers to harassment characterised by specific features.

Defining bullying

To accurately define bullying, it is essential to recognise five fundamental characteristics that typically characterise such situations.

- 1. Entrenched conflict:** the conflict is deeply rooted and persistent.
- 2. Outnumbered victim:** the victim is usually outnumbered, facing systematic and frequent attacks, often weekly.
- 3. Extended duration:** these attacks occur over a prolonged period, typically lasting three to four months or longer.

4. Powerlessness of the victim: the individual being bullied has minimal, if any, ability to escape the situation on their own.

5. Intent of exclusion: the attacks are often aimed at excluding the victim from a particular group, whether it be a work team, school class or social circle.

For an incident to be classified as bullying, several of these characteristics must be present simultaneously.

Differences between conflict, aggression and bullying

To effectively distinguish bullying from aggression and violence, it is crucial to understand the fundamental differences between these phenomena. Despite some similarities, there are distinct clues that can help clarify whether a situation is a conflict, aggression or violence or whether it constitutes bullying.

Conflict

Conflict is a disagreement or argument between individuals or groups where each party has equal power to influence the outcome. Both parties involved have relatively equal power and control in the situation. Conflicts arise from mutual disagreements or differences in opinions, interests or values. Conflicts can be occasional and are a normal part of human interaction. Conflicts can often be resolved through communication, negotiation and compromise. There is usually no intent to cause harm or dominate the other person; the focus is on resolving the disagreement.

Aggression

Aggression is a conscious, intentional act aimed at causing harm. It usually involves individuals who are relatively equal in terms of physical, emotional, situational or other perspectives. Aggression can be spontaneous and incidental and, if not addressed properly, it can escalate into violence.

Bullying

Bullying is an extreme form of violence in schools, characterised by systematic and long-term perpetration, humiliation or exclusion from a group of a student. It involves the intentional use of power to dominate and harm the victim. The primary differences between bullying, aggression and violence are:

- ▶ the intentionality and systematic nature: bullying is deliberate and systematic, whereas aggression can be spontaneous;
- ▶ the power imbalance: bullying involves a clear and sustained power imbalance, similar to violence but more extreme in its systematic nature;
- ▶ the duration and persistence: bullying persists over a long period, with the goal of long-term exclusion and humiliation of the victim.

Implications of misinterpreting bullying

The term “bullying” is frequently misused in everyday situations, leading to a dilution of its significance. It is vital to recognise that not all unpleasant interactions or harassment constitute bullying. Misinterpreting bullying and conflating it with everyday conflicts can lead to a diminished seriousness of the term, reducing its impact and the urgency of addressing true bullying scenarios.

Manifestations of bullying

Bullying can play out in various forms, including the following.

1. Physical bullying involves direct or indirect physical aggression such as beating, kicking, spitting, pushing or shoving. Indirect physical bullying occurs when perpetrators encourage others to harm the victim.
2. Verbal bullying includes behaviours such as teasing, name-calling, humiliating, mocking, insulting, laughing at, making derogatory jokes, threatening and using offensive gestures.

3. Relational bullying is also known as social bullying and involves damaging someone's relationships or social status without physical contact. Common examples include isolation, exclusion from a group, ignoring, non-communication and spreading gossip.
4. Material bullying focuses on destroying or stealing the victim's belongings or extorting money.
5. Sexual bullying encompasses any sexual act committed against someone without their freely given consent. This includes unwanted sexual contact and non-contact unwanted sexual experiences, which may be physically or non-physically forced.

Cyberbullying is a specific form of bullying that occurs within the realm of modern technology and uses information and communication technologies, including social media, e-mails, text messages, online games, etc. It encompasses offensive remarks, threats, the publication of unwanted pictures or videos, sending unpleasant messages, hacking accounts, identity theft, revealing secrets, publishing private materials, stalking and provoking certain behaviours for further documentation and dissemination. The criteria that apply to cyberbullying are the same as for direct bullying. However, they differ in the following ways.

- ▶ Content, photos and rumours spread extremely fast on the internet.
- ▶ The perpetrators can be from the victim's circle of friends, school or close environment but they can also be unknown.
- ▶ When bullying happens via electronic devices, it rarely takes any courage for the perpetrators to carry out and no major engagement with the victim. Therefore, the barrier to cyberbullying is much lower.

The difficult thing about cyberbullying is that it continues uninterrupted. The attack can take place around the clock. In contrast, direct bullying stops when the victim no longer faces the perpetrators, for example at home.

Recognising bullying

The most critical step in addressing bullying within educational institutions is the ability of adults to recognise the indicators of bullying and to comprehend the various roles involved in such incidents.

The dynamics of bullying are complex; the three main roles include the bullies/offenders, the victims and the bystanders/witnesses.

It is important to understand that the roles of bully and victim are not always rigidly fixed, and individuals can occupy both roles at different times or even simultaneously. Bystanders, those who witness bullying but are not directly involved as either the bully or the victim, play a crucial role in the dynamics of bullying.

Bullies/offenders

Offenders do not act spontaneously. They plan and initiate aggressive behaviour and their main aim is not to cause suffering to a victim but to feel satisfaction from domination and exerting power. They choose violence as a means of achieving their goals, which are to control and hold a meaningful position in a group of peers. The other reason for violent behaviour is that it helps offenders to release tension that is accumulated from other frustrating situations that are not connected with victims. They not only put pressure on their "victims" but also on other members of the group. For example, they threaten to exclude others if they do not participate or if they take sides with the victim. They often "engage" assistants or followers. These support the offender and, in many cases, the assistants carry out the actions for the offenders. The assistant is therefore often the "puppet" of the offender.

Studies show that psychological profiles of school offenders include some of the following characteristics (Olweus 1997).

- ▶ Are older, stronger or more physically fit than their victims.
- ▶ Are active and energetic, try to dominate the surroundings and subdue others.
- ▶ Are impulsive, easily fall into anger, are tense or frustrated.
- ▶ Do not respect norms and rules.

- ▶ Rebel, speak out against adults, although they may be afraid of those who are stronger.
- ▶ Keep so-called “bad company”, start drinking alcohol quite early, commit theft and get into conflict with the law.
- ▶ Are regarded as “tough”, do not show shame, guilt or empathy.
- ▶ Are rather self-confident and satisfied with themselves.
- ▶ The older they become, the more of a negative attitude to school they reveal and obtain lower marks.
- ▶ Are surrounded by a group of people who admire them.

Victims

There are various causes that create situations where a student becomes a victim of bullying at school. While there are no common rules, there are several factors that might put a student at risk of becoming a victim.

- ▶ Lack of self-esteem, shyness, high level of anxiety.
- ▶ Difficulties in establishing contacts with peers and low group support.
- ▶ Tend to be physically weaker.
- ▶ Weak contacts of students’ parents with a school.
- ▶ Have sensitive and rather quiet personalities.
- ▶ Tend to be over-adapted and insecure.
- ▶ Often react explosively, aggressively and with little flexibility.
- ▶ Show avoidant behaviour (avoid conflicts).
- ▶ Have characteristics that deviate from the “norm” in the class/school (e.g., impairments, skin colour, appearance, clothing).
- ▶ Are new to the class/school.
- ▶ Are particularly hard-working or seen as “nerds”.
- ▶ Have a special talent that can lead to envy.

Victims of bullying are often hesitant to open up about their problems with adults. That is why it is difficult to reveal them. These students are most often left alone with their problems as quite often teachers and parents tend to trivialise their troubles. In addition, victims are silent about their problems because they are afraid of revenge. Finally, they feel ashamed, because victims often think that they are guilty of the situation in which they appear.

Although victims are silent about their problems, certain signals help teachers understand that somebody is a victim. Dan Olweus, a Norwegian psychologist who has been studying the phenomenon of violence in schools for many years developed the following list of signals (Olweus 1997). A victim often:

- ▶ is made fun of, humiliated, threatened, pushed or forced to perform other students’ commands;
- ▶ is called by an unpleasant nickname;
- ▶ looks for his/her things, which are hidden, scattered or broken;
- ▶ has physical traces – scratches and bruises or torn and damaged clothes;
- ▶ cries or looks sad and unhappy;
- ▶ may show unexpected changes of mood – from sadness to irritation or sudden explosions of anger;
- ▶ is isolated, not included in common activities, remains alone when peers form groups or is invited to join the group as the last one;
- ▶ has difficulties expressing himself/herself during lessons;
- ▶ loses motivation to study, his/her school results deteriorate;

- ▶ comes late to school, chooses strange routes to school or plays truant from school;
- ▶ spends breaks alone or tries to keep closer to teachers;
- ▶ does not participate in class trips and events or tries to be closer to adults during them;
- ▶ does not have friends, does not visit anybody and does not invite friends home;
- ▶ has headaches, stomach aches, problems with sleep, cries at night;
- ▶ asks for additional money from parents.

Certain victims exhibit behaviours that complicate the process of empathising with them. These individuals are often referred to as “provoking victims”. Such students are typically impulsive and hyperactive, and they are easily incited to display aggressive behaviour. At times, they may even provoke their aggressors or act aggressively towards other students, particularly those who are younger. These students often disregard social norms, imposing themselves on others, causing disturbances, interrupting conversations, failing to maintain appropriate boundaries and engaging in unpleasant habits that irritate others, including teachers.

Consequently, teachers may mistakenly perceive these students as offenders rather than victims of bullying who are in dire need of assistance. Their peers often believe that these students are the architects of their own problems, initiating conflicts or “asking for” the negative treatment they receive. However, it is a significant error not to classify such situations as instances of bullying.

Bystanders

No bystander remains indifferent to the situation; some empathise with the victims, while others support the offenders. Each bystander experiences a myriad of conflicting and intense emotions. These emotions can be as complex as feeling compassion for the victim and anger towards the offender, alongside irritation with the victim’s behaviour and a certain admiration for the offender. There is often a sense of helplessness regarding the situation and fear of the offender.

When bystanders do not observe adults responding to the situation, they begin to perceive it as socially acceptable. These contradictory feelings lead to contradictory actions. On one hand, bystanders may seek the assistance of adults because they recognise the situation as unjust. On the other hand, they may request that their parents not inform teachers or intervene, as tattling (snitching) is viewed negatively.

If adults do not respond appropriately and demonstrate effective methods of addressing bullying, children cease to confide in them. In the absence of adult intervention, bystanders grow increasingly indifferent to violence and bullying. They begin to see themselves as potential victims and seek to avoid danger.

Bystanders can be categorised into different types based on their reactions to bullying.

- ▶ **Passive bystanders** (or the spectators): these individuals witness bullying but choose not to intervene. They do not want to stand out and increasingly stay out of the conflict. They often act this way because they do not know what they can do about it. In particular, they make sure that they do not become a victim either and, therefore, tend to keep a low profile. They may feel powerless, fear becoming targets themselves or simply do not know how to help.
- ▶ **Active bystanders**: these individuals take action in response to bullying. Their actions can be either supportive of the victim or encouraging to the bully.
- ▶ **The amplifiers/encouragers**: they encourage the perpetrators through applause, cheering and other supportive gestures. Their actions can embolden the bully and exacerbate the situation.
- ▶ **Defenders**: bystanders who intervene to stop the bullying, support the victim or seek help from others. Their actions can discourage the bully and provide support to the victim. However, when the actions towards the victim of bullying come to a head and they realise that they receive too little or no support from peers or adults, they withdraw more and more and make sure that they themselves do not become a victim of bullying.

Bystanders can play an important role in addressing bullying; on the one hand they are the largest group and, on the other, although still affected by bullying, they are less affected than the offender or the victim.

Consequences of bullying

The longer bullying persists, the more challenging it becomes to resolve, and the greater the likelihood that the individuals involved will suffer physical or emotional harm. Bullying has profound consequences for all parties involved – victims, offenders and bystanders.

Victims of bullying experience feelings of humiliation, fear, despair and sadness. They feel lonely, unprotected and helpless. They are ashamed of what has happened to them and feel guilty for not being able to protect themselves. Simultaneously, they harbour anger and hatred towards offenders and bystanders who fail to intervene. Victims often struggle with concentration and academic performance. Their self-esteem drastically declines and they perceive society as hostile or indifferent. These perceptions remain constant, influencing their behaviour and relationships with society throughout their later life. Prolonged bullying leaves permanent psychological trauma and may cause somatic disorders and serious illnesses. In later life, victims of bullying often experience social problems, such as difficulty forming relationships, a tendency towards isolation and frequent suicidal thoughts.

Offenders also experience strong emotions. Primarily, they feel anger and contempt towards their victims. Concurrently, they feel proud and self-satisfied, often experiencing relief typical after the release of intense feelings of anger or envy. By using violence, they alleviate tension caused by other situations, often occurring outside of school. Additionally, they either reinforce their dominant position within a group or secure their safety by aligning with the stronger group. In this way, offenders receive psychological and social benefits, further entrenching their belief that violence is an appropriate and effective form of social behaviour.

Bystanders who are unable to stand up against bullying feel helpless, endangered, anxious and disoriented. They are dissatisfied with themselves and feel guilty for not being able to help, especially when they later learn about the severe consequences experienced by the victims. These students learn to remain silent, pretend they do not notice injustices or align with those who are stronger. They receive the message that they cannot effect positive change and practise skills to remain passive in difficult situations, resulting in a passive attitude towards life's challenges. Such students grow into adults who lack responsibility, co-operation and competence in conflict resolution.

Therefore, bullying has extensive and lasting repercussions on everyone involved, necessitating comprehensive and proactive strategies to address and mitigate its impact.

Taking action at the school level

Addressing bullying in schools requires a combination of preventive and interventive actions to create a safe and supportive environment for all learners. Here is an overview of both approaches.

Preventive actions

Preventive actions aim to stop bullying before it starts by creating a positive school culture and educating students, staff and parents about the issue.

- ▶ **School policies and rules:** develop and enforce a comprehensive anti-bullying policy. Clearly define what constitutes bullying and the consequences for engaging in such behaviour.
- ▶ **Education and awareness:** conduct regular workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents on the effects of bullying and the importance of a supportive school environment. Integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum to teach empathy, respect and conflict resolution skills.
- ▶ **Positive school climate:** promote a positive and inclusive school culture through school-wide activities and programmes. Encourage student-led initiatives, like peer mentoring and buddy systems, to foster a sense of community.
- ▶ **Staff training:** provide training for teachers and staff on recognising signs of bullying and effective intervention strategies. Encourage staff to model positive behaviour and create a supportive classroom environment.
- ▶ **Parental involvement:** engage parents through regular communication about school policies and their role in preventing bullying. Offer resources and workshops for parents to help them understand and address bullying.
- ▶ **Anonymous reporting systems:** implement anonymous reporting systems where students can report bullying incidents without fear of retaliation.

Interventive actions

Interventive actions are steps taken to address bullying when it occurs and support the affected individuals.

- ▶ **Immediate response:** ensure that staff are trained to intervene immediately and appropriately when they witness bullying. Separate the involved parties and ensure the victim's safety.
- ▶ **Investigation:** conduct a thorough investigation into reported bullying incidents, ensuring confidentiality and fairness. Gather information from all parties involved, including witnesses.
- ▶ **Support for victims:** provide counselling and support services for victims of bullying. Develop a safety plan for the victim to ensure their continued safety and well-being at school.
- ▶ **Disciplinary actions:** apply consistent and appropriate sanctions for those who engage in bullying, in line with the school's anti-bullying policy. Consider restorative justice practices that focus on repairing harm and restoring relationships.
- ▶ **Support for bullies:** offer counselling and behavioural interventions for students who bully to address underlying issues and promote positive behaviour change. Involve parents in developing and implementing intervention plans.
- ▶ **Follow-up:** monitor the situation to ensure that the bullying has stopped and the safety plan is effective. Continue to provide support to both the victim and the bully as needed.
- ▶ **Communication:** keep open lines of communication with all parties involved, including parents, to ensure transparency and ongoing support. Inform the school community about the measures being taken to address bullying and promote a safe environment.

A practical guide to taking action against bullying in schools

School policies and rules

School policy is any set of principles, rules, measures and guidelines formulated and adopted by a school to reach its long-term goals or to address a particular issue or challenges that the school is facing.

School policies are always within the bounds of national education policies but are contextualised for the needs of the school and its particular circumstances.

Copying or using other school policies often has no positive effect on the school because effective school policies are those that have been created by participatory engagement of school stakeholders and for the specific context of each school.

As school policies are to be implemented by the whole school, all stakeholders (students, teachers, other school staff and parents) should be involved in developing and formulating the policies and not only the school administration.

School policies are not permanent, as circumstances can and do change; therefore a need to adapt policies will arise and they should be reviewed and redrafted on a regular basis (at least every two years, although an annual review is suggested).

Although bullying might be addressed in national codes and laws, each school would be well advised to formulate its own anti-bullying policies in a participatory way. The process of formulating the policy will also have the effect of raising awareness of the issue among all stakeholders and therefore improving the chances of implementing the policy.

It is of the utmost importance for both preventing and addressing bullying that the whole school has a common understanding of bullying, which the school policy should facilitate. Even more important is that there should be consistency in how bullying is treated by all involved and especially by adults.

Suggested structure for school policies and procedures on bullying

1. Rationale (*vision or belief for the school*)
2. Definition of bullying
3. Clear behavioural expectations of students (*e.g. we do not bully, we try to help those who are bullied, we try to include those who are left out, we report bullying incidents to adults*)
4. Clear expectations of the behaviour of teachers and other school staff (*e.g. we never ignore bullying incidents, we adhere to the school policy, we act as we teach*)
5. Clear reporting system for students (*include a confidential option*)
6. Intervention procedures for adults (*teachers, other school staff, parents*) specific to all involved (victims, bullies, bystanders)
7. Ways of monitoring school hotspots
8. Recording bullying incidents
9. Monitoring the implementation of the policy

Raising awareness

Awareness-raising activities aim to:

- ▶ change attitudes, behaviours and beliefs that tolerate bullying among students and schools;
- ▶ prevent students from becoming victims or perpetrators of abusive relationships;
- ▶ inform the wider public and especially victims and perpetrators about the resources available to tackle the problem.

Awareness-raising activities are recognised as the most efficient and effective means of communicating information, especially to the general public. They can meet all the above-mentioned objectives, emphasising the fact that bullying in school is not a private matter but an unacceptable violation of human rights.

Awareness raising is a two-way street, fostering communication and information exchange in order to improve mutual understanding and mobilising communities and the whole of society to bring about the necessary change in attitudes and behaviour.

Schools can help prevent violence, both during school time and in the wider community, by equipping children and young people with democratic competences.

- ▶ Start a dialogue with students about their role in addressing bullying.
- ▶ Discuss the various forms of bullying and why students bully; have students interact in the conversation.
- ▶ Discuss ways in which students can be proactive to stop bullying.
- ▶ Talk about how you can prevent bullying and cyberbullying in your school.
- ▶ Role-play bullying situations portraying how the victim feels and how the bully acts and discuss in class.
- ▶ By role-playing real-life situations with your students, you can create a real-life lesson that they can use when situations arise.
- ▶ Discuss the meaning of morals, ethics and responsibility.
- ▶ Discuss differences: cultures, weight, sexual preferences, different ways kids and teens act and dress, disabilities and other differences.
- ▶ Talk about the fact that it is okay to be different and it is not okay to make fun of or harass someone if they are different.
- ▶ Teach tolerance, kindness and acceptance and behave accordingly.
- ▶ Start a peer mentoring group at school.
- ▶ Teach friends about being tolerant.
- ▶ Create events in and for your school and community.
- ▶ Create bullying prevention posters.
- ▶ Organise open days: awareness-raising events with the participation of students, teachers, parents and community members.

Strengthening the class and group environment

Social quality. It is important to create a climate that is free of fear. It is vital that mutual acceptance and well-being are promoted in particular. Bullying causes a deterioration in the quality of relationships in the class or group. Not only does the victim suffer but it is also a difficult situation for the independent bystanders. Through the exercise of power by the perpetrators, the class environment is affected by the fear of becoming a victim.

Common attitude

It is important that everyone pulls together (teachers, class assistants, school support staff, etc.) and that they recognise the urgency together and agree that social behaviour needs to be improved.

Common values

Mutually clarify values and normative attitudes. Lay the foundations for the prevention of bullying and violence and for intervention. Adopt a constructive and solution-oriented attitude when dealing with conflicts, aggression and bullying.

Binding themes and goals

Common rules and goals are agreed upon within the class (prevention of violence). It is important that the adults involved check this again and again and remain persistent. The point is that preventive work is done, a good climate is created, there is respect for others, well-being can be experienced and, thus, positive relationship building is possible.

Activities

- ▶ Activities for the long-term realisation of the goals are defined and planned.
- ▶ Relationship building is practised so that everyone can deal with difficult situations.
- ▶ The repertoire for conflict management is constantly being expanded.

New authority means team presence

Team presence conveys security (watchful care)

Through intergroup and interclass networking among the teachers and social educators, the children and young people can be approached with a great deal of attention and sensitivity. Thanks to a well-networked system, situations can be reacted to and optimally co-ordinated.

- ▶ **Team presence as a safety net:** children and young people notice when adults talk together about the different issues and have a common attitude towards violence and bullying. This provides security. They notice that they are not alone in situations, but that adults are there and care together.
- ▶ **Team presence as an anchor:** if everyone keeps each other informed, actions can be constantly co-ordinated. In this way, the children and young people realise that they are a community.
- ▶ **Team presence as a lighthouse:** team presence sends a far-reaching message: we are there to save you from the storm.

Such teams should be made up of the different people in the institution, but also parents, relatives, etc. This sends the message that everyone wants to work together to achieve the goals. If the whole institution shows vigilant concern, the children and young people can also learn to take responsibility for each other in this model.

New authority means mobilising children and young people

When children and young people report their observations and experiences of violence and bullying, they contribute a lot to a good class atmosphere. When they are younger, they do so much more often; as they get older, this becomes more and more difficult, as they do not want to be seen as traitors.

It is important that adults take the responsibility to convey to children and young people that it is not the norm of the institution to prohibit so-called snitching.

An environment is not inherently violent but is created by the silent acquiescence of many different people.

When you keep violence and bullying a secret, you create a breeding ground for it.

This message can be integrated into the institution with a code of conduct or convention. The code clarifies how to deal with each other.

The focus is on developing together how we interact with each other, rather than prescribing a catalogue of rules and prohibitions.

Coping with and preventing violence

Prevention against violence is an ongoing task and must be continued at all times. However, it is important that prevention is dynamically adapted to social developments.

Therefore, coping with violence must be embedded into everyday life. Short-term programmes and measures against violence can be helpful and complementary, but they are not sufficient.

Violence is caused by an interplay of several influencing factors that reinforce each other at different levels. Two big and problematic factors, however, are violent educational practices and glorification of violent acts. The consumption of alcohol or other drugs increases the propensity to violence. The likelihood of a child or young person becoming violent is particularly high when the number of risk factors increases. For this reason, it is important that violence prevention works at different levels.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the rules in the playground or at home, they have to be defined together. "What are the rules of the game? How can we have a life together where everyone has their place? How can we shape everyday life together so that everyone feels comfortable?" Such questions can lead to rules that everyone supports because everyone has helped to create them.

Three principles

1. Knowledge about forms of violence: knowing, naming and being sensitive to different forms of violence.
2. Social competence: developing competence and strategies to deal with violence.
3. Taking responsibility and showing civil courage: I act when I see something, I can take responsibility for myself and for others.

Developing an anti-bullying convention together

One of the most important prerequisites for success is that such a convention is developed in a participatory manner. Taking responsibility together – from the youngest child to the head of the institution. Children and young people shape the social coexistence, help shape the common living space and help determine how we treat each other. Another aspect is that such a project is well co-ordinated, and that attention is paid to quality and commitment: carry out planned activities! The project should be thought of in the long term and remain valid over a longer period of time. This way the project becomes sustainable and can have an impact. It is recommended that an official anti-bullying day be held every year.

Presentation of a charter for sustainable prevention work

- ▶ **Zero tolerance against violence:** create a school culture where violence has no place. Show a clear attitude and remain consistent. Everyone can make his/her contribution to a good life together. Everyone is important to us.
- ▶ **Recognising diversity/culture of mindfulness:** diversity is an opportunity and an enrichment of everyday life. We position ourselves clearly that we stand for tolerance and openness. Everyone has the right to be individual: that is what we stand for.
- ▶ **Name and reject discrimination:** adopt and exemplify a straightforward appreciative attitude towards diversity. Name discriminatory language and point out other unacceptable language.

- ▶ **Strengthen educators' self, social and systems competence:** working together on our pedagogical professionalisation with further training on topics such as violence, tolerance, dealing with media and dealing with language.
- ▶ **Talking to each other:** networking between children and young people, teachers, social educators, parents and other external support systems. Planning and implementing actions together. Actively shaping participatory living spaces and living in a culture without violence.

Helpful questions for self-evaluation

- ▶ **Preventive action against violence and creating a positive atmosphere:** Do we agree in the team on how to deal with violence? Can we create a positive atmosphere?
- ▶ **Violence by and between children and young people:** How much of a burden is it on myself when violence occurs from one or more children and young people?
- ▶ **One's own behaviour in violent situations:** Can I recognise and assess the different situations of violence among children and young people, react adequately and intervene if necessary?
- ▶ **Self-efficacy:** Do I feel able to recognise violence and bullying and intervene appropriately?
- ▶ **Role model function:** Do the children and young people have enough opportunities to develop social competence together with me? Am I aware of my role as a role model?

What is important to think of when having a conversation with a victim of bullying?

A child or young person who is being bullied needs trust. It is important to listen to him/her and ensure that the child/young person can talk about what is happening and, thus, regain self-confidence and self-esteem.

Prompts to encourage a student to open up

- ▶ How are you? What are you feeling right now? What is going on inside you?
- ▶ Putting one's own perception into words: "I have noticed that you have been sick a lot in the last few weeks. I often see you alone in your free time. You don't seem as cheerful as usual lately."
- ▶ Everyone reacts differently in such situations – accept your own reaction.
- ▶ Gather information – "What has happened so far? What will follow?"
- ▶ Find out and ask if and what physical and psychological symptoms occur.
- ▶ Do not play down the situation or blame the child/young person.
- ▶ Show that it is not the child's/young person's fault that he or she is being bullied.
- ▶ Support the child/young person to find solutions. "What options do you have?"
- ▶ The child/young person can find strength in the solution and ideas they have – offer your support and help where necessary and desired.

Select a suitable room for the conversation. It is important to be undisturbed during the conversation, that it is inviting for the child and that he/she feels accepted and taken seriously. Protect the child by not letting the other children know that a conversation about bullying is taking place.

Have a conversation with the bullies

Decide in advance which intervention approach to choose for this situation. Based on the decision, choose the appropriate approaches for discussion.

The list below details some of the approaches you can take to a conversation when you have a suspicion but are not yet sure.

- ▶ Talk about the incidents, emphasising the seriousness.
- ▶ Objectively and calmly tell all you know about it.
- ▶ Find out why the child or young person is being bullied (if possible, do not blame).
- ▶ Clearly show that bullying will not be tolerated and do not allow any discussion on this.
- ▶ Offer assistance for possible behavioural changes.
- ▶ Show that the teachers and the school pedagogues exchange ideas and work together for transparency.
- ▶ Do not have a random conversation with the victim. This must be prepared with clear procedures and intervention approaches. Unplanned conversations exacerbate bullying.

Intervention chain in cases of suspected bullying

Zero tolerance against violence – We take responsibility

We stand up for a non-violent school environment. We do not look the other way; we act when we notice something. We take various indications seriously and evaluate them again and again.

Validation – We check the suspicions

We take observations seriously and check suspicious situations more closely. Initial discussions are held and clarifications are made.

Intervention planning and joint action

The process is determined jointly. Relevant persons are informed and involved. A case manager is appointed.

Review implementation and sustainability

The measures are continually evaluated within the group and, if necessary, expanded and/or adapted.

Prevention

Even if there is no bullying, further procedures and strategies are agreed upon together.

Identify the form of bullying and motives

Have you observed any of these signs of bullying?

- ▶ Intent to harm
- ▶ Power imbalance
- ▶ A repetitive aspect
- ▶ Helplessness.

What could be the possible advantages that the bullies might have over the victim through their actions?

What form of bullying is used?

Important: It is important to clarify the above points before engaging in the rest of the process. The next steps can be decisive based on the possible motive. For example, how do we proceed? What courses of action do we choose?

Once the motive for bullying has been confirmed, it is important to clarify how to proceed. At this moment it is important that a case manager is appointed.

What is case management?

Case management, or case supervision, entails one person taking over responsibility for the case. The person in charge is responsible for the whole process. There are seven steps in the process that a case manager needs to adhere to.

- ▶ **Step 1** – Organise and assemble an intervention team. Who is in the intervention team? When does a meeting take place, who is there? Take a common approach and accompanying measures.
- ▶ **Step 2** – Clarification. Who conducts what conversations with the affected persons? (bully, victim, etc.) Who talks with the parents? Who keeps the “bullying diary”?
- ▶ **Step 3** – Information interface. What information is still missing from the important groups of people? What other information should be passed on to the relevant groups of people (children, young people, professionals, parents)? Clarify: what information may be passed on and what is confidential? Does the leadership team need to be involved?
- ▶ **Step 4** – Clarification of measures. What kinds of interventions are reasonable and appropriate? What additional prevention measures should be run in parallel? Are there any violations of the legal framework? Do the police need to be called in?
- ▶ **Step 5** – Implementation of the intervention. What effort needs to be made for the implementation of the intervention (time, duration, personnel etc.)? How can these resources be made available for the effort? How is the protection of the victim ensured?
- ▶ **Step 6** – Evaluation. Were the measures feasible? Can changes be detected? If so, what types of changes? What are the next steps?
- ▶ **Step 7** – Documentation. Were the relevant steps documented? Complete the documentation.

What is important for interdisciplinary co-operation in the intervention team?

- ▶ The case manager is appointed. The responsibility remains with this person at all times, unless other arrangements are made.
- ▶ A common basic attitude and a goal are clarified and defined.
- ▶ All professionals know the young person/child well and work with him or her.
- ▶ The co-operation is voluntary and based on goodwill.
- ▶ The focus of the conversation is the problem at stake. The approach is solution-oriented.
- ▶ One’s own behaviour is reflected upon again and again. Am I still on the right path? Am I guided by emotions? Is the co-operation successful?
- ▶ Is further support needed? Through external support, such as case supervision?

Bullying protocol

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL ON BULLYING

Class/group:

Observer:

Day of observation:

Perception of the environment: Very good Good Medium Poor Very poor

Comments:

Stories, observations or information from third parties (children, parents, staff, etc.):

What has happened?

Who has seen it? Actions or statements by children and young people:

Who said what to whom?

This was observed:

Physical violence

Sexist or gender-based statements

Psychological violence

Homophobic statements

Verbal violence

Sexualised statements

Disrespectful behaviour

More observations:

Comments:

Flyer for parents

Do you suspect that your child is being bullied? Address bullying thoughtfully with your child.

Ask questions to find out more about the situation.

- ▶ "How are you? How do you feel?"
- ▶ "How are things at school?"
- ▶ "Which children do you like and are you friends with?"
- ▶ "Are there different groups in the class?"
- ▶ "What do you do during the breaks? Who are you with?"

It may be that other children frighten your child into not daring to answer questions properly.

In these moments, try to tell your child a story about another child who is constantly being teased and experiencing unkind behaviour.

Do not exert pressure on the child to fight back or tell the teacher or social worker. Usually, the child is in a situation of great helplessness and under great pressure from others.

Do not push your child if he or she does not want to tell you anything at that moment. Show him or her that you are there for him or her and stand by them. Support the child and try to offer strength to him or her and show him or her how important they are, so that he or she can talk openly about what happened.

Children often feel that it is their own fault that they are being bullied and look for the fault in themselves. Your child is not to blame for being bullied.

If the suspicion increases:

- ▶ Write a diary, about your child's bullying. Important questions to ask: WHAT exactly is happening? WHERE does it happen? WHEN does it happen? And WHO is involved?
- ▶ Make an appointment with the teacher or social worker to talk about the (possible) bullying and see what happens next.
- ▶ Observe your child to see if they experience a lot of tummy aches, feel sick a lot or withdraw a lot and are whiny.
- ▶ Help the child try to find solutions and encourage them. "How can I help you with this?"

Do not contact the parents of the bully or the bully. This makes the situation much worse in most cases. The tormenting becomes more extreme as they see your child as a traitor.

Creating a safe learning environment – School support mentoring programme

Introduction to the support programme

This school support programme is intended to create a safe learning environment in schools. It consists of planned sessions that should be carried out during one school year.

In order to carry out the programme it is necessary to have a mentor or a trainer lead the school team through the process as well as to provide background material. The mentor/trainer may be from the school that decides to take up the programme or an external expert. They need to have experience in facilitating development processes in schools and a thorough understanding of the issues of bullying. The programme can be implemented with all school staff or with a group of teachers (no fewer than eight) who will be leading the process.

Meeting 1 – Inception

Setting the scene

Aims

- ▶ The mentor/trainer learns about the school situation.
- ▶ School staff learn about the programme and expected results.
- ▶ Set up the school anti-bullying team.
- ▶ Assess the phenomenon of bullying in the school.

Expected outcomes

- ▶ The mentor/trainer understands the school situation.
- ▶ The school anti-bullying team is set up and aware of its tasks.
- ▶ The school conducts self-evaluation and a baseline is set.
- ▶ The inception form is complete.

Time: Two sessions of 90 minutes, with one break.

Instructions

SESSION 1 – INTRODUCTION

50 minutes

During the first meeting it is important to establish positive contact with the group: introduce yourself, give the participants enough opportunity to speak about themselves and their motivation to be in this programme. Select ideas for interactive presentation and integration activities from Council of Europe resources. Ask teachers about their motivation to join this project. Show the Council of Europe film *Beat bullying* (Council of Europe 2014).

40 minutes

Talk about your perspective on the problem of bullying and introduce the problem using country-wide, school or international data.

SESSION 2 – SCHOOL DATA AND EVALUATION

40 minutes

Using the inception visit report form (p. 40 below) discuss with the school leaders and other staff present the issues arising from the form.

Make sure the school leader understands the commitment the school needs to make in order to complete the programme.

50 minutes

Explain the purpose and the content of the school self-evaluation tool (below). Discuss with teachers (school team) how they will use it. Ask the teachers present to fill it in to make sure everything is clear.

Explain how to analyse the data and ask them to have it ready for your next meeting and to involve as many staff in it as possible.

Meeting 2 – Prevention and addressing bullying in schools

Aims

- ▶ Learn the basic facts about bullying.
- ▶ Learn how to recognise bullying.
- ▶ Learn how to address bullying.
- ▶ Develop skills to reveal, react to and prevent bullying behaviour.

Expected outcomes

- ▶ Teachers understand the differences between bullying, conflict, violence and aggression.
- ▶ Teachers know the different manifestations of bullying.
- ▶ Teachers understand the consequences of bullying.
- ▶ Teachers are motivated to take steps against bullying.
- ▶ Teachers know what to do to address bullying.
- ▶ Teachers understand that non-violence, respect for diversity and discussions on controversial issues strengthen students' resilience to bullying.
- ▶ Teachers know what other competences should be developed at school in order to foster learners' resilience.
- ▶ Teachers have experienced several teaching strategies and methods that can be used with learners to discuss controversial issues.

Time: 6 hours (three sessions of 90 minutes) with two breaks.

Instructions

SESSION 1 – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND ON BULLYING

20 minutes

Create a PowerPoint presentation based on the theoretical description of bullying, included in this publication.

20 minutes

Ask teachers to name five steps for addressing bullying at school. Write the steps on a flipchart one by one.

- ▶ **Step 1** – Learn about aggression, violence, bullying and its forms.
- ▶ **Step 2** – Learn to recognise or reveal violence and bullying.
- ▶ **Step 3** – Understand why we all should fight bullying together.
- ▶ **Step 4** – Be attentive.
- ▶ **Step 5** – Act.

Teachers work in two groups. Each group discusses what the needs of their school stakeholders are and if they want to take these steps.

20 minutes

Ask groups to compare their results, discuss and come up with a final product, which will be the result of an agreement between two groups. This outcome is the basis for drafting a long-term school strategy for prevention.

10 minutes

Ask the participants to select realistic goals for the current school year and plan feasible activities. Draw the attention of the participants to the fact that it is necessary to direct activities not just at students. If they include parents, they will gain the support of families; if they include peers, they will be able to reach more students with the activities; and if they look for ways to attract civil society, they might receive additional expertise, funding and other resources to deal with the problem.

20 minutes

Monitoring and evaluation is necessary to be able to assess the results of the work. In order to be able to assess the results of the planned activities, ask the participants to define what changes they want to see at the end of the school year. After that, reflect together on what methods will be used to find out whether the desired result was achieved. There could be a short questionnaire, a focus group, etc. Define the target group that will be asked to answer the questions (teachers and/or parents, and/or students). Formulate three or four questions that will be asked after this meeting and at the end of the school year. Comparing answers will provide information about the impact of the planned activities. The questions should be short, clear and simple.

Step 1: Learn about aggression, violence and bullying and their forms.
What students should know and need to be able to do?
What teachers should know and need to be able to do?
What parents should know and need to be able to do?
Step 2: Learn to recognise or reveal violence and bullying.
What students should know and need to be able to do?
What teachers should know and need to be able to do?
What parents should know and need to be able to do?
Step 3: Understand why we all should fight bullying together.
What students should know and need to be able to do?
What teachers should know and need to be able to do?
What parents should know and need to be able to do?
Step 4: Be attentive.
What students should know and need to be able to do?
What teachers should know and need to be able to do?
What parents should know and need to be able to do?
Step 5: Act.
What students should know and need to be able to do?
What teachers should know and need to be able to do?
What parents should know and need to be able to do?

Table 1. School stakeholder's needs analysis for fighting bullying (Council of Europe 2018a).

SESSION 2 – NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

30 minutes

One of the main methods of prevention of violent extremism at school is to develop the skills needed for non-violent communication. First, it is necessary to teach learners to formulate and express their own opinions on controversial issues. Second, it should be explained that many issues will remain controversial and it is natural that people will have different opinions on them. Differences of opinions are as natural as differences in everything that surrounds us. Differences are not a threat, but an enriching aspect of society if we learn to accept them with a friendly and respectful attitude. This attitude can be developed at school and it will be one of the most important forms of prevention of violent extremism. The Council of Europe training pack for teachers, "Teaching controversial issues through human rights education", contains a collection of easy and effective methods that can be successfully used at schools (Council of Europe 2020a).

Ask teachers to think individually about how they would define a "controversial issue". Use a snowball method to come up with a common definition. Show two or three definitions that you find accurate and relevant on a flipchart or PowerPoint slide. You can also introduce the definition given in the Council of Europe training pack: "Issues which arouse strong feelings and divide communities and society" (Council of Europe 2020a).

10 minutes

Divide participants into groups of three to four individuals. Ask them to discuss and suggest two or three controversial issues at global, national, regional and school levels. Draw their attention to the fact that the controversial issues should be formulated as statements.

10 minutes

Collect ideas on a flipchart, on four separate sheets. Check if the issues are formulated as statements with which one can agree or disagree.

20 minutes

Scatter chairs around the room, in pairs facing each other, one for each participant. Tell participants that they are about to hear some music. When the music starts, they should begin walking randomly around the room. When you stop the music, they should quickly sit down on the nearest chair, so everyone ends up in pairs facing each other. At this point you will read out a statement. The person in each pair who was the last to sit down has 30 seconds to tell their partner their personal views on the issue read out. During this time the partner should remain silent and not give any indication of whether they agree or disagree. Then it is the other partner's turn to express their views on the statement for 30 seconds.

Play the music and read out one of the statements formulated by the participants. Start the music again and repeat the process. Do this 7 to 10 times, choosing the statements from the flipchart.

20 minutes

Arrange the chairs into a circle for discussion. Lead a discussion on the feelings participants experienced during the exercise and what they can learn from this about handling controversial issues in the classroom. For example, what do they think about expecting students to reveal their personal opinions in class? What kind of classroom climate do they think is most helpful for discussions on controversial issues and how is it created? What do they think about having classroom or school rules to govern discussion?

Conclusion. Draw the teachers' attention to the fact that in order to teach controversial issues, it is very important to create a safe and friendly atmosphere in the classroom. That means that whatever opinion is expressed, it must not be criticised or attacked. There are no correct answers and incorrect answers. All opinions are treated the same.

SESSION 3 – TEACHING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES – COUNCIL OF EUROPE TRAINING PACK

30 minutes

Prepare two A4 cards of different colours, one saying "I agree" and the other "I disagree". Place them on the floor at opposite sides of the room. Use masking tape to mark a line that connects the two cards.

Explain that you are now going to read out the remaining statements from the flipchart. People may agree to a greater or lesser extent. Point out the two extreme positions – the cards stating, “I agree” and “I disagree”. Explain that people may occupy any point along the line, but that they should try to position themselves according to the strength of their position. You may also introduce a card that says, “I have no opinion” and place it in the middle.

Read out the statements. When the participants demonstrate their positions, ask them to explain their points of view. Remind the others that they should listen while somebody is talking and they should not interrupt or argue. The only thing they can do is ask to express their own point of view. They are not allowed to say “Yes, this is right” or “No, this is wrong”. They should start with “I think ... because ...”.

Ask participants who position themselves near the centre whether their position indicates the lack of a strong opinion or a lack of knowledge.

Allow people to move position as they listen to each other’s comments.

20 minutes

When you have gone through the statements, bring the group back together for the debriefing. Ask the participants what they learned about themselves.

Were there any questions that people found impossible to answer – either because it was difficult to make up their own mind or because the question was badly phrased?

Why did people change position during the discussions?

Were people surprised by the extent of disagreement on the issues?

Do you think there are “right” and “wrong” answers to the different statements or is it just a matter of personal opinion?

20 minutes

After the debriefing, remind the participants that regular exercises allowing students to discuss controversial issues, showing them acceptance and giving them the possibility to learn how to accept different points of view with respect and friendliness is an efficient method for the prevention of violent extremism.

Ask the participants what they think about the methods for dealing with controversial issues that they learned during the meeting. Is it possible to use these methods with students? Introduce the “Teaching controversial issues” training pack for teachers and mention that it contains the theoretical background and practical activities that can be included in everyday school life.

Emphasise to the participants that there are two very important aspects to this exercise. One, to be effective, these activities should be done regularly (at least several times a week and incorporated in normal classes). And two, debriefing is a compulsory element that should follow after each exercise. Teachers should ask students how they felt, what they learned and what conclusions they have drawn.

10 minutes

Give the participants a task to do between the meetings:

- ▶ Study the pack individually.
- ▶ Prepare for an internal peer-learning event based on the pack.
- ▶ Organise at least one activity for students on controversial issues. It might be a part of a lesson or an extracurricular activity.

20 minutes

Finish the training session with a discussion with the participants.

Meeting 3 – Inclusive environment

Aims

- ▶ Facilitate the exchange of experience and networking between schools.
- ▶ Support the development of an inclusive environment in partner schools.
- ▶ To address cyberbullying and hate speech online with the Council of Europe manual “Bookmarks”.
- ▶ Learn about the Council of Europe’s Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC).

Expected outcomes

- ▶ Teachers from three partner schools have established personal contact with each other.
- ▶ Teachers have defined the concept of an inclusive school environment.
- ▶ Teachers have exchanged experience and examples of good practice concerning practical activities that help to establish and develop an inclusive school environment.
- ▶ Teachers have exchanged experience of revealing cases of bullying in their schools.
- ▶ Teachers have exchanged examples of good practice for addressing issues of violence, bullying and violent extremism in their schools.
- ▶ Teachers understand the connections between bullying and violent extremism, online and offline.
- ▶ Teachers are acquainted with the Council of Europe’s manual for combating hate speech online, “Bookmarks”.
- ▶ Teachers are prepared to use the manual with students.
- ▶ Teachers are acquainted with the concept of “competence”.
- ▶ Teachers have explored the Council of Europe’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC).
- ▶ Teachers have applied the Council of Europe’s RFCDC to their specific context.
- ▶ Teachers understand why CDC should be developed transversally.

Time: 8 hours (session 1: 90 minutes; session 2: 110 minutes; sessions 3 and 4: 80 minutes) with three breaks.

Instructions

SESSION 1 – INTEGRATION AND EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE AMONG SCHOOLS

45 minutes

Presentation of participants, team-building activities. Allow participants to get to know each other. Organise some icebreakers and integration activities. Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to present their name and school and to speak about their motivation to fight bullying and violent extremism through everyday school life.

45 minutes

Prepare three sets for group work that will include: some scissors, five or six colourful magazines or newspapers, glue and a sheet of white paper, made of four sheets of flipchart paper. Add colourful cards, 10 cm by 20 cm in size. Write one human rights value on each card: freedom, dignity, respect, diversity, solidarity, co-operation, equality, responsibility (you may decide to add some spare cards to the set).

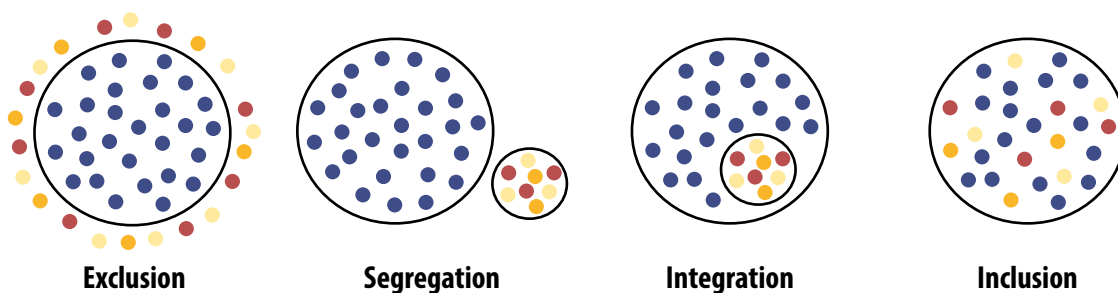
Start with showing the group four pictures, representing four different ways of dealing with those who are different: exclusion, segregation, integration and inclusion (Picture 1). Invite the group to share their impressions about the picture. Ask why the participants think that inclusion is the most effective way to prevent violent extremism and bullying. Group the participants into three groups of 10 people. It is

important that each group consists of representatives from all three partner schools. Ask the participants to discuss and agree on their common understanding of the concept of “inclusive school culture”. The participants will have 15 minutes for discussion and making a poster. They will need to present the outcomes of their discussion in the form of a collage, titled “Inclusive school culture”.

Give each group five minutes to present the results of their work. Put the posters on the walls.

Summarise the work, paying attention to the most important aspects of an inclusive school culture:

1. school documents and procedures;
2. relations among school stakeholders;
3. school traditions and the sense of belonging;
4. school infrastructure;
5. relations between school stakeholders and the wider community.



Picture 1. Exclusion, segregation, integration and inclusion (Council of Europe 2018a).

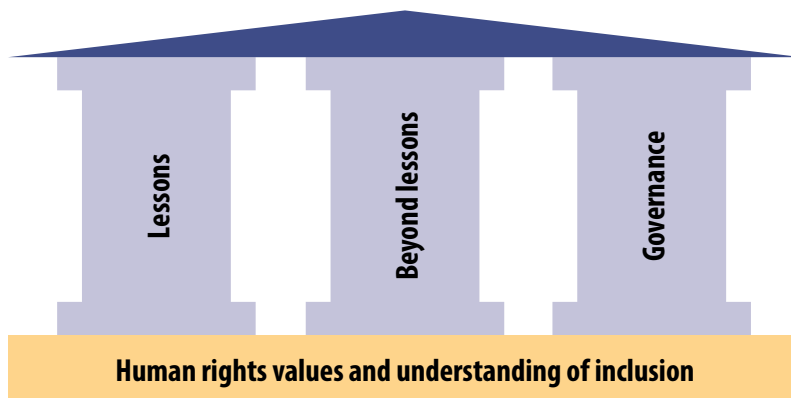
SESSION 2 – CREATING AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

10 minutes

Mix the groups again with another fun and short activity and make six groups of five. There should be at least one representative from each school in each group.

10 minutes

Tell the participants that during the next session they will exchange their experiences and share examples of good practice, but also think creatively together in order to answer the question “How do you create an inclusive school climate?” Explain that this is a complex and constant everyday activity, done primarily by all teachers and school leaders in three spheres of a school’s functioning: in lessons, outside lessons and the way in which the school and classrooms are governed. The way an inclusive environment is built in each school might be different. It depends on the age of students, their needs and the context in which a certain school is functioning. But the foundation of an inclusive school climate is the same – human rights values. Show the drawing of a school (Picture 2) and read aloud the values that you see on the posters.



Picture 2. Model of a school (Council of Europe 2018a).

Explain that each group will concentrate only on one sphere of a school's functioning. Prepare cards for drawing (two cards saying "lessons", two saying "outside lessons" and two saying "governance") and invite a representative of each group to draw a lot. When the group know which sphere they will focus on, give the groups coloured A4 paper and markers. Explain that in order to ensure effective discussion each group member will have a particular active role in the group work: as a moderator, a timekeeper, a speaker, a critical friend or a secretary. Group members should decide between themselves which role they would like to play.

30 minutes

First teachers should share their experience and the effective practices from their school that help to create an inclusive culture. The moderator facilitates discussions, the timekeeper watches the time. During these discussions, the participants can tell each other how they revealed and addressed specific examples of bullying and violence, how they teach learners to manage their emotions, solve conflicts, value diversity, etc. Following this, group members should think about which approaches they want to select for presentation. The critical friend tries to find weak points in the approaches, while the other group members try to improve ideas. When the ideas are selected for presentation, the secretary describes the idea simply using two or three short sentences and writes down each idea on a separate piece of A4 paper (horizontally). The aim is to write down examples of a specific activity, behaviour or practice that is relevant to the sphere that was selected by the group.

40 minutes

Assemble a model of a school on the wall, using the coloured A4 pieces of paper on which the groups worked to represent the different spheres of a school's functioning. Invite speakers from each team to present the ideas from their groups (a maximum of five minutes each). Comment on each presentation, highlighting positive examples and clarifying uncertainties.

20 minutes

Conclude the activity, explaining that this is a vision of an inclusive school. It is not possible to achieve everything at once, but if we want to achieve change, we need to have a big vision and make regular small steps. Explain some methods for how schools can decide on priorities for work and suggest that the participants select one priority for their common network co-operation. For that purpose each participant receives three votes and places her/his vote next to their preferred idea for co-operation. The idea with the biggest number of votes will be the area chosen for network co-operation.

SESSION 3 – BOOKMARKS: THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE EDUCATION PACK

20 minutes

Explain that during the previous session the participants selected one area for network co-operation and the exchange of experience. In this session, you will present one more area of co-operation that is recommended for all schools involved in the project. It is addressing extremism, violence, intolerance and ethnocentrism online, which is expressed in a phenomenon called hate speech.

Introduce the Council of Europe manual for combating hate speech online, "Bookmarks" (Council of Europe 2020b). Present its objectives, structure, content and approaches to running the activities.

45 minutes

Lead one activity from the manual. "Confronting cyberbullying" is a recommended activity. However, you may decide to choose another activity from the manual.

15 minutes

Allow some time for questions and answers. Ask each participant to study the manual and to run at least one activity with their class. Ask the participants to complete a short evaluation questionnaire after they conduct an activity from "Bookmarks" with their class.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Are you satisfied with the lesson? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially
Please explain your opinion.
To what extent did you reach the goals of the lesson?
What did your students learn?
Describe the extent of students' active participation during the lesson.
What are you satisfied with?
What will you do differently next time?

SESSION 4 – THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE REFERENCE FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

20 minutes

Prepare two sets of cards in two separate envelopes. Each set should contain 20 cards measuring 3 cm by 5 cm featuring the names of competences for democratic culture (CDC) and 20 cards of 3 cm by 15 cm with definitions of the CDC. Give a short introduction about the importance of socio-emotional and behavioural skills not only for the prevention of bullying and violent extremism but for the personal success of each individual in general. Introduce the concept of “competence” as “the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or critical understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by a given type of context” (Council of Europe 2018b). Explain that competences consist of specific individual resources (i.e. specific values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding) that are mobilised and deployed.

20 minutes

Participants work in two groups of five individuals and try to match the names of the competences with their definitions. Do not debrief this exercise and go directly to the next one. Give the groups a sheet of flipchart paper, divided into four spheres: red, blue, green and orange (Picture 3). Title the red sphere “Values”, the green one “Skills”, the blue “Attitudes” and the orange “Knowledge and critical understanding”. Ask the groups to place competences and their definitions in the relevant sphere. Although each competence consists of values, attitudes, skills and knowledge with critical understanding, one of the components is usually more prevailing.

20 minutes

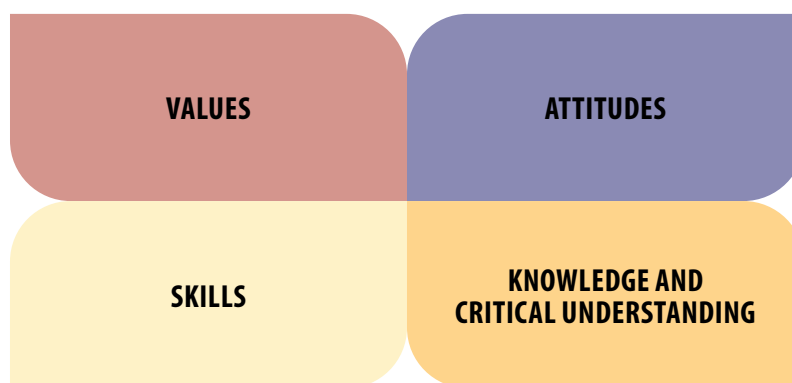
Give the participants an overview of the RFCDC and ask them to compare their opinion with the opinion of the authors of the framework. If there are differences in opinions, participants should decide whether they want to change definitions and their position or if they would like to express a different point of view. If the participants decide to express a different point of view, they should formulate an argument, justifying their decision.

20 minutes

Ask groups to formulate their opinion about the set of competences they have explored. The structure of the opinion is as follows: their general impression, things they do not agree with and why, and things that were most important for the group. Each group chooses a speaker to express their point of view.

The executive summary of the CDC framework is a separate publication from the Council of Europe, which has been translated into several languages and published on the Council of Europe's education website.

Conclude the session by repeating that these competences were selected as the competences that are necessary for successful functioning in a diverse democratic society. These competences were selected by a group of educational experts, working under the auspices of the Council of Europe, after they had studied 101 frameworks of competences. In 2015, the competences were tested in most of the 47 member states and received feedback from practitioners working in schools, research centres and civil society organisations. It is recommended to include activities that develop competences for democratic culture in lessons, outside lessons and in the governance sphere of the school's functioning. We will not be able to include all competences at once. That is why in the next session we will select competences that we regard as most important for our particular school context.



Picture 3. The RFCDC Butterfly (Council of Europe 2018b).

Meeting 4 – Policies, procedures and sustainability

Aims

- ▶ Develop skills to formulate and monitor school policies and classroom rules.
- ▶ Learn about participatory methodology for developing school policies and classroom rules.
- ▶ Learn about effective anti-bullying policies and procedures.
- ▶ Evaluate the results of project activities at school.
- ▶ Plan activities for the next year.
- ▶ Ensure the sustainability of project results.

Expected outcomes

- ▶ Teachers understand the value of school policies.
- ▶ Teachers have analysed their existing school policies from the perspective of bullying.
- ▶ Teachers understand that participatory policy and procedure development is the only way to ensure implementation of policies.
- ▶ Teachers know how to formulate anti-bullying policies.
- ▶ Teachers know how to work with students to formulate classroom rules.
- ▶ Teachers have formulated a draft anti-bullying policy for their school.
- ▶ Teachers are prepared to implement and monitor the implementation of the anti-bullying school policies.
- ▶ Teachers have evaluated their progress.
- ▶ Teachers have formulated recommendations from the evaluation.
- ▶ Teachers have defined areas for further development in the following year.
- ▶ Teachers have analysed the problem sphere defined for the next year.
- ▶ Teachers have formulated the aim of the programme.
- ▶ Teachers have formulated the expected results of the project for the next year.
- ▶ Teachers have planned project activities.
- ▶ Teachers have planned the evaluation of their school project for the next year.

Time: 8 hours (four sessions of 90 minutes) with three breaks.

SESSION 1 – DRAFTING AN ANTI-BULLYING SCHOOL POLICY

30 minutes

Presentation of what school policies are and why they are important. School policy is any set of principles, rules and guidelines formulated and adopted by a school to reach its long-term goals or to address a particular issue or challenge that the school is facing. School policies are always within the boundaries of national education policies but are contextualised for the needs of the school and its particular circumstances.

Outline effective policies for tackling bullying, including the following.

- ▶ A clear reporting system (for students), including confidential options.
- ▶ Clear behavioural expectations (we do not bully, we try to help those who are bullied, we try to include those who are left out, we report bullying incidents to adults).
- ▶ Intervention procedures for adults (teachers, other school staff, parents) specific to all involved (victims, bullies, bystanders).
- ▶ Monitoring where bullying occurs (school hotspot maps).
- ▶ Recording bullying incidents and monitoring procedures.

45 minutes

Provide teachers with an example of an anti-bullying school policy and ask them to work in two groups. Group 1 will be asked to highlight all the sections needed for their school while group 2 will be asked to mark all irrelevant polices for their school.

Report of the group discussion to the plenary. Trainer gives feedback.

15 minutes

Teachers are asked to draft the structure of their school policy, the sections it will contain and the main principles it will follow.

Check the suggested structure and guidelines for drafting the school policy in the resource pack, section III – School policies and procedures.

SESSION 2 – INVOLVING OTHERS IN FORMULATING POLICY

30 minutes

Plan how to involve students, other teachers and parents in formulating the policy. In two groups teachers will be asked to think of at least one way in which they can involve different target groups in policy formulation. Some ideas can be found in the resource pack, section III – School policies and procedures.

10 minutes

Present each group's plan and create an action plan to be followed up after the session to consult on and verify the policy.

30 minutes

Setting up classroom rules is an effective way of encouraging the engagement of students in addressing bullying. It should answer the following questions.

What do we want? What do we not want in our classroom?

It should set a positive tone and create a feeling of belonging and should be done in co-operation with students and from the perspective of students.

Divide the participants into two groups.

Group A receives a printed-out example, as follows.

1. Be in your assigned seat/location, ready to work when the school bell rings.
2. Bring paper, pencils, books and all necessary supplies every day.
3. Keep hands, feet, body, objects to yourself.
4. Follow directions.
5. Respect others. Swearing, rude gestures, cruel teasing or put-downs are prohibited.

Group B receives a printed-out example, as follows.

IN THIS CLASS

We are kind	We laugh often	We show respect
We listen to others	We say please and thank you	We learn from Miss Amanda
We make mistakes	We say I'm sorry	We do our best
We have fun	We share	We love to learn

The task for both groups is to spend 10 minutes analysing the following questions.

1. Do these statements help us decide what we want and what we do not want?
2. From whose perspective were they written?
3. Were students involved in writing these statements?
4. Do these statements help address bullying?

Each group reports their analyses and the trainer moderates. Following this, in pairs, participants discuss how they could draw up classroom rules with students. Suggestions are written on the flipchart and recorded.

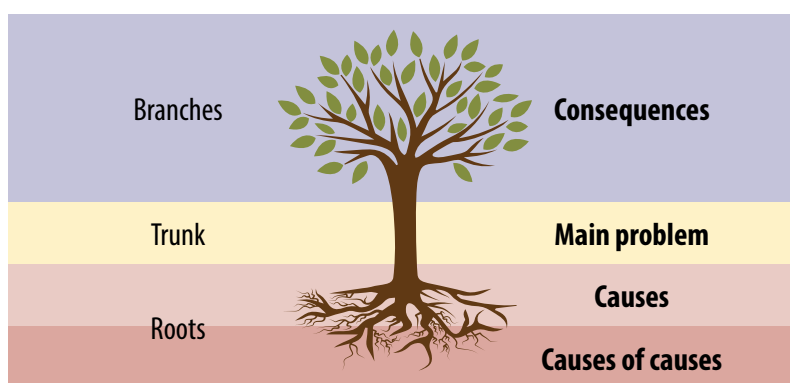
15 minutes

Moderated reflections on the day and task division among team members to draft the first school policy on bullying.

Following the session the team will draft the school policy within 30 days of the training. Once agreed and adopted by the school, the policy should be piloted in school and reviewed the next school year if necessary.

SESSION 3 – SETTING GOALS FOR THE NEXT YEAR

45 minutes



Picture 4. Problem tree (Council of Europe 2018a).

Write down the main sphere of change for the next year, which has been selected by the participants, and explain to them that in order to plan an effective change strategy, they first need to achieve a deep understanding of the problem that they want to solve. Explain the method that can be used for problem analysis. You can choose a “problem tree” for that purpose. A sample problem is shown in Picture 4. Form two groups and ask each group to draw a similar tree. The participants should start with writing down the problem that they wish to tackle in the middle of a sheet of flipchart paper, as the trunk of a problem tree. Underneath, as the roots of the tree, the participants should write all the factors that contribute to the problem. After that, each root at a time should be focused on and the group should think of its causes, drawing in the factors that contribute to the problem. Each root should be discussed until the cause (reason) is such that it can be dealt with. The tree might have very deep roots and the causes might be unexpected on first thoughts. The next step is to illustrate the branches of the tree and to extend them in the same manner as you did with the roots. Branches represent the consequences of the problem, which is found in the trunk. At this point, the participants may find out that their main concern is actually the root or branch of a different tree.

20 minutes

When the trees are finished, the groups should present their vision of the same problem to each other and decide by common agreement whether they should tackle the task they originally set themselves or one of its contributing factors first.

25 minutes

Help the participants to formulate what they want to achieve in the next year in terms of fighting bullying and violent extremism. Ask the participants to look at their posters once again and suggest all possible ways of tackling this problem. Write down all the suggestions on a flipchart.

SESSION 4 – ACTION PLAN FOR THE NEXT YEAR

20 minutes

Read aloud what the teachers decided to achieve next year. Ask the teachers how they will measure whether they have been successful. They may find it useful to go back to the problem tree and use it to identify concrete solutions. In general, attacking the roots will lead to solutions further up the tree. The group needs to be realistic about what can be hoped for. Remind them that even “a small result” can be a valid contribution to resolving a larger problem. Encourage the group to be as specific as possible.

50 minutes

Demonstrate the annual action plan template and help the group to complete it. They will need to decide the following.

- ▶ What do they want to achieve?
- ▶ What tasks need to be carried out?
- ▶ When are they going to be done?
- ▶ Who is going to undertake the different tasks?
- ▶ What resources will they require?
- ▶ How will they measure results and know they have succeeded?

Make sure that everything is written down to keep a check on how the plans are going and to ensure that everyone is clear about the question being discussed.

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN					
GOAL – Reduce incidents of bullying and extremist hate speech in school					
Objectives	Activities	Timeline	Responsibilities	Resources	Monitoring and evaluation
<i>What do you want to achieve?</i>	<i>What are the key activities that will produce the results?</i>	<i>When will each activity occur?</i>	<i>Who will be responsible for the various activities? Who else needs to be involved?</i>	<i>What resources will you require?</i>	<i>How will you measure results and know you have succeeded?</i>

Add rows, if necessary.

20 minutes

Divide participants into two groups and ask each group to write a short informative text about the activities planned for the next year. One text should be addressed to students; another text should be addressed to parents. Encourage participants to write short, clear and interesting texts for the target group.

Forms

INCEPTION VISIT REPORT

Expert		
Date		
School name		
School type		
Location		
Information about the visit	According to the checklist <input type="checkbox"/> With variations. <i>Nature of variations:</i>	
Dates of school visits	School visits:	Open days:
Peer-learning activities and open days	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. Peer learning: Internal: External:

School anti-bullying team	Name	Gender	Age	Subject/role
Role of school director	Informs, supports, is actively involved, other:			

SWOT of the school	Strengths of the school	Weaknesses of the school
	Opportunities for the project	Threats to the project
Current situation in the school		
Recommendations		

SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION TOOL

Dear colleagues,

The aim of this questionnaire is to help you to assess the phenomenon of bullying in our school. At the beginning of the programme, it will help you to describe the starting point. At the end of the programme, it will help you to see and evaluate your progress.

Data collection and use of self-evaluation tools should engage the school in an in-depth evaluation of its policies and practices regarding bullying and violence. Self-evaluation helps a school to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

Read the statements on the following pages and mark them from 1 to 4 according to the rating scale that you see below:

- ▶ 1 = not in evidence at our school; not considered to be important.
- ▶ 2 = sometimes in evidence; although it is considered important, we pay attention to it sporadically.
- ▶ 3 = usually in evidence; we pay attention to this on a regular and frequent basis, but sometimes it is put aside for other priorities.
- ▶ 4 = consistently in evidence and embedded in the school culture; this is an important and integral part of "the way we do things around here".

Follow the three-step procedure

- ▶ **Step 1** – Score them individually (provide specific examples for evidence), use individual score sheets (see annex).
- ▶ **Step 2** – After you have scored each item individually, collect the sheets from the others (at least the anti-bullying team, but try to involve as many school staff as possible), fill in the group score sheet (see annex).
- ▶ **Step 3** – Meet as a school team to analyse and discuss the findings with your school mentors.

Team leader	
Number of school staff consulted	
Remarks	

1.	The school has clear policies and procedures for cases of bullying and/or violence.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	According to school policies, school staff are obliged to act and report all cases of bullying and/or violence.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	All school staff, students and parents are familiar with anti-bullying and/or violence policies and procedures.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	The school has a code of ethics/conduct that refers to bullying and violence.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	The school collects, analyses and archives data on reported cases of bullying and violence in their school.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	The school has developed support activities for victims of bullying and violence and provides support to the victims.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
7.	The school has developed effective intervention for students who bully others based on restitution and non-punitive measures.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
8.	All students are taught about the phenomenon of bullying, its consequence and how to behave in a bullying situation.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
9.	The school offers extracurricular social and emotional learning activities to students.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Students are taught that a diversity of views and opinions is natural between people.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Students are taught to respect points of view that are different from their own.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
12.	There are no standards of femininity and masculinity in behaviour, clothes and/or appearance at school that students are expected to follow.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
13.	School staff regularly discuss issues of bullying and violence in their school.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Professional development (training) of school staff includes issues of bullying and violence in their school.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Teachers are aware of which forms of bullying are more typical for boys and for girls.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
16.	The school organises awareness-raising events on issues of bullying and violence for parents and local communities.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>

INDIVIDUAL SCORE SHEET

There are 16 indicators that you should score. When scoring, take into consideration what each score means. Score it based on your experience but try to be as objective as possible. Even if you think the indicator should get a higher score, if you cannot think of a single example to support it you should score it with 1. Remember this tool is to be used to support your school in development.

	Score (1 = not in evidence at our school; 2 = sometimes in evidence; 3 = usually in evidence; 4 = consistently in evidence and embedded in the school culture)	Specific evidence (name examples of documents, events, etc)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		

GROUP SCORE SHEET

Once you have collected the individual score sheets from your colleagues, enter in each row an individual score per indicator. Should you have more individual responses than 15, then add as many columns as you need. Calculate your total and average score (see the example in grey in the table below). You will analyse and discuss these scores with your school mentor in the next meeting.

	Score (Columns for individual responses)	Total score	Average score	Comments
Indicators 1-16 (add a line for each indicator)	(add a column for each participant and a line for each question)	(add up all scores in all columns and lines)	(total divided by the number of staff)	

STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL POLICES

- ▶ Rationale (vision for the school).
- ▶ Definition of bullying.
- ▶ Clear behavioural expectations of students (e.g. we do not bully, we try to help those who are bullied, we try to include those who are left out, we report bullying incidents to adults).
- ▶ Clear behavioural expectations of teachers and other school staff (e.g. we never ignore bullying incidents, we adhere to the school policy, we act as we teach).
- ▶ A clear reporting system for students, including confidential options.
- ▶ Intervention procedures for adults (teachers, other school staff, parents) specific to all involved (victims, bullies, bystanders).
- ▶ Ways of monitoring school hotspots.
- ▶ Recording bullying incidents.
- ▶ Monitoring implementation of the policy.

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Further reading

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The tool “Creating a culture of respect and empathy in schools” is designed to empower educators, school leaders and staff with strategies and resources to effectively prevent and respond to bullying and violence in educational settings. It highlights the principle of a “welcoming and enabling environment” and the critical role of educators in cultivating safe, respectful and supportive learning environments. The tool provides comprehensive insights into recognising and addressing bullying behaviour, creating a positive class climate and implementing effective preventive measures. It offers practical tools and strategies for developing an inclusive and safe school culture, including intervention protocols, self-evaluation questions and guidance on developing school policies to aid the implementation of anti-bullying initiatives. Additionally, it features a comprehensive school support programme, which outlines structured sessions to be conducted throughout the academic year that support schools and teachers to create a culture of respect and empathy in schools, focusing on fostering strong relationships between students, teachers and parents. The tool reinforces the transformative approach needed in schools to develop an inclusive environment where all students feel valued and empowered to succeed and that effectively addresses violence and bullying.



TOOLKIT FOR A DEMOCRATIC AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

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