

Bullying, violence in school, harassment

Bullying is part of the normal life of a school. It is connected to the process of group formation and the distinction from other groups. A problem occurs when someone remains all alone and doesn't feel safe and secure in the school. The feeling of loneliness and humiliation can quickly lead to an alienation from school and then dropping out.

Harassment and school violence is not only the exclusion of another student but the active abuse mentally or even physically. In this case the timely intervention of a professional adult is essential to solve the problem and step this process before its escalation. As it is in many cases very much humiliating for the victim, there must be a trustful adult around.

A school harassment situation involves the very important onlookers, besides abusers and victims themselves. These are the persons that legitimate the situation with their passive presence. For this reason these kind of situation can only be solved, and more importantly avoided by the active involvement of the whole community. Onlookers have to understand their responsibility and have to be sure to have a person to turn to in case of witnessing an abuse.

Since the 1990s programs and strategies are being developed in certain countries. Many times one can hear about examples of school violence occurred in the USA and that they introduce new programs to avoid these actions. The most comprehensive model however started in Europe, Sweden, serving as a best practice all around the world.

Further literature in English:

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/CEDEFOP (2014): *Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe: Strategies, Policies and Measures*. Eurydice and CEDEFOP Report. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/175EN.pdf

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http://oktataskepzes.tka.hu/content/documents/CroCooS/Final%20research%20report_Early%20school%20leaving%20policies_Crocoos.pdf

Jelena Joksimovic, Juhász Judit, Mihályi Krisztina, Tomcsik Dóra (2014): *Early warning systems in six European countries*. Desk research report on study visit countries in the framework of CROCOOS– Cross-sectoral cooperation focused solutions for the prevention of early school leaving project. Interim report. Tempus Public Foundation, Budapest
http://oktataskepzes.tka.hu/content/documents/CroCooS/Early%20warning%20systems%20in%20six%20European%20countries_interim%20report.pdf

Department for education and skills (2013): *Anti-bullying procedures for primary and post-primary schools*. <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf>

School climate as a factor

A positive school climate is fundamental in avoiding school violence and abuse, besides bullying. Successful prevention can also contribute to a positive school climate. The school climate is influenced by several factors related to the situation inside and outside the school. For example, it may be a question of organisational conditions, social relationships, involvement, attitudes, norms and values. If a positive school climate and spirit are to be maintained, however, it must work organisationally. A possible explanation for a positive perception of the climate at the most successful schools may be that activities promoting social relationships are always taking place there. A positive school climate is characterised by creativity, stimulation, learning, competence, security, helpfulness, participation, influence and responsibility.

Further literature in English:

Jelena Joksimovic, Juhász Judit, Mihályi Krisztina, Tomcsik Dóra (2014): *Early warning systems in six European countries*. Desk research report on study visit countries in the framework of CROCOOS– Cross-sectoral cooperation focused solutions for the prevention of early school leaving project. Interim report. Tempus Public Foundation, Budapest p. 44. http://oktataskepzes.tka.hu/content/documents/CroCooS/Early%20warning%20systems%20in%20six%20European%20countries_interim%20report.pdf

A positive climate is based on a meaningful student-teacher relationship and has a huge impact on student motivation. An engaged learner is the best learner, as this person finds it important to get along with the values of the school and emotionally connected to the institution. The teacher-student communication in this case must be more than a simply instruction-execution one.

Further literature in English:

Potvin, P., Fortin L., Marcotte, D., Royer, É., Doré-Côté, A. (2001): *Teachers' attitude toward students at risk of school dropout: a longitudinal study*. Presentation, International Association of Special Education Seventh Biennial International Conference Making a World of Difference Warsaw, Poland. <http://www.pierrepotvin.com/6.%20Publications/pologne.pdf>

video on US program, Challenge Day: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wcp8x9vtyKM>

Some international experiences

Since the violent incidents during the 1990s school violence is a major issue in Poland. They developed certain programs, for instance 'safe and friendly school' which strengthens positive atmosphere by out of school activities. In 2006 with the involvement of 4000 schools the 'school without violence' program was launched with teacher trainings, best practice sharing, school days against violence, volunteer week and photo exhibitions. Pupils were asked about the most vulnerable groups with the greatest chance to be bullied and they put toadies, mediocre and coward students

on the top. Besides being physically weaker, different from others, a swot or 1st grader is also a risk factor in this sense. This shows clearly the nature of violence: it is about dominance and flaunting power. Anybody can be the subject of it that considered different from the majority.

Further literature in English:

Jelena Joksimovic, Juhász Judit, Mihályi Krisztina, Tomcsik Dóra (2014): *Early warning systems in six European countries*. Desk research report on study visit countries in the framework of CROCOOS– Cross-sectoral cooperation focused solutions for the prevention of early school leaving project. Interim report. Tempus Public Foundation, Budapest p. 9.
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Janowski, A. (1999). Poland. In: Smith, P.K., Morita, Y., Junger-Tas, J., Olweus, O., Catalano, R., Slee, P. (1999): *The Nature of School Bullying. A Cross-National Perspective*.
<http://books.google.de/books?id=4kNpAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA264&lpg=PA264&dq=polish+education+bully&source=bl&ots=DprOfalw5c&sig=SNMEKaaVBxnvqCI8iLg8gdgZE88&hl=hu&sa=X&ei=dUpuVPigKsTcPZHcgYAI&ved=0CEAQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=polish%20education%20bully&f=false>

Eurydice (2012): *Strategies to counter bullying*.
http://www.nfer.ac.uk/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uid=09F2CF13-C29E-AD4D-0855-E0C5DD51968F&siteName=nfer p. 11.

German data claims that one in ten high school students is involved in one side of bullying weekly. Programs there started likely to the Polish one: when a former dropout student killed 16 lives in Erfurt, in 2002. To avoid these incidents in the future ministries accepted a common strategy.

There is a remarkable initiative tackling online harassment, a very new and sadly escalating form of abuse. The German program is designed for 7-9 graders and tries to deal with online mocking and even abuse. Prevention however is especially important in this case: the student has to be aware of how much and what content does he or she shares about him or herself. Students has to be informed as well about whom to turn in case of being abused, how can they be sure that their case is handled thoroughly and with privacy.

Further literature in English:

Professor Herbert Scheithauer from Freie Universität Berlin http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/kooperationen/vorgestellt/scheithauer_schulen/
http://www.ewi-psy.fu-berlin.de/einrichtungen/arbeitsbereiche/entwicklungswissenschaft/Medienhelden_Daphne_III/

Präventionsstrategien zur Gewalt- und Deliktbereitschaft von Kindern und Jugendlichen (Strategy for the Prevention of Violence and Crime among Children and Young People) (2004). <http://www.mbjis.brandenburg.de/sixcms/media.php/5527/TOP%2010%20-%20Anlage.15475630.pdf>

Gewaltprävention in NRW (Prevention of Violence in North Rhine-Westphalia - abstract) (2007). See:

<http://www.schulministerium.nrw.de/BP/Erziehung/Themen/Gewalt/Gewaltpraevention/>

Jelena Joksimovic, Juhász Judit, Mihályi Krisztina, Tomcsik Dóra (2014): *Early warning systems in six European countries*. Desk research report on study visit countries in the framework of CROCOOS– Cross-sectoral cooperation focused solutions for the prevention of early school leaving project. Interim report. Tempus Public Foundation, Budapest p. 16.

http://oktataskepzes.tka.hu/content/documents/CroCooS/Early%20warning%20systems%20in%20six%20European%20countries_interim%20report.pdf

The Swedish model

First initiatives came from Sweden where since then complex programs are performed with the involvement of research results, since 2009. According to a 2012 report, bullying was a leading reason behind leaving school early. They use different methods for boys and girls, the most important element of their approach is however something else: they use so called whole school approach. It literally means the involvement of every person in the school from teachers and other professionals till cleaning and maintenance staff, and of course the students themselves. They have to agree on the approach of the school concerning violence and bullying, and protocols and limits are understood the same way by all people.

Further literature in English:

Jelena Joksimovic, Juhász Judit, Mihályi Krisztina, Tomcsik Dóra (2014): *Early warning systems in six European countries*. Desk research report on study visit countries in the framework of CROCOOS– Cross-sectoral cooperation focused solutions for the prevention of early school leaving project. Interim report. Tempus Public Foundation, Budapest p. 42.

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http://oktataskepzes.tka.hu/content/documents/CroCooS/Final%20research%20report_Early%20school%20leaving%20policies_Crocoos.pdf

Skolverket (2011): *Evaluation of anti-bullying methods*. Sweden.

http://www.skolverket.se/om-skolverket/publikationer/visa-enskid-publikation?_xurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww5.skolverket.se%2Fwtpub%2Fws%2Fskolbok%2Fwpubext%2Ftrycksak%2FRecord%3Fk%3D2849

tags: distress signals, support at risk student, getting to know the student, reasons behind dropout, harassment, bullying, teacher-student relationship, non-violent communication, conflict resolution, helping relationship, observing behaviour, outcast

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