Anti bullying protocol and KiVa program (updated 2019-20)

Introduction

Bullying is a phenomenon which exists in every school and unfortunately also in ours. The school management strongly rejects every act of bullying, considers it despicable and utterly unacceptable. Every pupil has the right to a safe and secure learning environment. Everybody has to learn to accept that all human beings are different and has to learn respecting everybody's own unique personality and different cultural background.
The school has the obligation to create and maintain a secure and safe (class)setting in order for children learn and develop their personalities. Together with the parents we have the obligation to help our pupils to become responsible adults, able to contribute to society. The classroom and their peer group are their first experiences within a small scale society which allows them to grow and develop social skills. Unfortunately if this environment is contaminated by bullying and negative dynamics, personal growth becomes very difficult.

The school management has decided to fight bullying by a two level approach:
A   Prevention
B   A clear procedure for established cases
C   survey

Definition

Bullying can take different forms. Firstly we need to differentiate bullying from normal games or banter.

Bullying has the following characteristics:

-   **Planning**: Bullying is repetitive aggressive behavior, the victim is selected from the most timid and solitary classmates to minimize the risk of retaliation. Furthermore, the bully awaits the right moment).

-   **Power**: The Bully is stronger than the victim, not necessarily in terms of physical strength but also socially. The bully has a group of friends/accomplices with whom he acts, while the victim is alone, vulnerable and unable to defend him/herself.

-   **Pack bullying / mobbing:** Acts of bullying are more and more executed by small 'gangs'.

-   **Fear:** Both the victim and the classmates who assist in these acts of bullying are afraid. They are afraid that talking about it with adults will only worsen the situation because they fear retaliation from the bully. They prefer to undergo the situation in silence in the hope it will stop by itself.

Based on these characteristics bullying can take different forms:

- ✓ **Physical bullying:** aggressive acts directed to the victim (kicking, punching etc), damaging his/her personal property, intentional theft.

- ✓ **Verbal bullying**: openly directed (to mock, humiliate, devaluate, criticize, accuse etc.) or hidden (spreading false rumors, gossip, provocations).

- ✓ **Emotional bullying**: social (ostracize the victim from the group, cyber bullying etc.) or manipulative acts (interfering/breaking friendships in which the victim is involved).

Cyber bullying is becoming increasingly important in recent years. Our pupils are also active users of digital technology and present on the social networks. Several scientific studies have shown that children are very quick to copy their parents' and friends' behavior. They have excellent technical skills but at the same time do not yet think critically about the consequences of digital technology and are not aware of the risks of the digital world. This on-line playground can become a place where bullying starts or is continued. Active adult guidance, focusing on moral values and provoking critical thought helps children to become more aware of the risks, challenges and the opportunities of the digital world.

Bullying damages everyone involved, the victim, the bully, the 'observers' and the followers. In cases where bullying has become a structural and long term situation, the roles between the persons involved may change. Bullies can become victims, the 'observers' or followers can become bullies, victims ed. Vacant positions can be filled by new participants.
These situations are harmful for everybody and all are in a certain way responsible.
The difficulty of fighting bullying is that it is mostly hidden and kept far from adult view (parents, teachers). All involved are ashamed about the situation so it is difficult for them to talk about it at home or at school. That why this phenomenon requires special attention and a very close cooperation between the school and parents as well as rules of conduct for all classes.

A.   Prevention
Experience from schools abroad have underlined the importance of an integrated approach to fight bullying at school and implementing an anti-bullying policy is the strategy which is most likely to succeed.
The school's anti bullying policy is a statement of intent that guides actions and the internal school organization, stating a series of objectives that demonstrates to students, staff and parents a concrete commitment of the school to fight bullying. By implementing this policy as part of the school regulations, the school puts in place specific procedures to prevent and fight this type of behavior whenever it occurs.
In the light of all this, an effective interventional program must have the initial prerequisites to reduce and possibly end bullying problems as well as the intention to prevent the occurrence of new ones. Therefore is will become very important to promote better peer-to-peer relations and a better school environment. In order to realize these objectives we need to have a better understanding of the bullying currently going on in our school as well as to involve the school staff to turn the situation around.

Intervention can occur on the following levels:

School: Measures to improve attitude, to create conditions to lessen the extent of the problem and to prevent the development of new situations.

Class: The class objectives are as those on school level but the rules might be more adapted to the specific class situation: rules on bullying, class meetings between teachers, parents and pupils, all sorts of positive actions.

Individual: In this case the objective is to change the behavior of pupil, both of victims and of bullies alike: individual talks, meetings between parents of the students involved, group discussions, transfer to other classes or to another school.

Fundamental in the fight against bullying is that everyone endorses the values and rules of the European School:
- Mutual respect for all members of the school community and respect for the possessions of others (including the school property)
- Everybody is responsible for their own actions
- Sense of community

As written in the statutes of the European School:
 "Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, it will be borne in upon them as they mature that they belong together.

The management has chosen the following measures which regard the school/class level for the academic year 2015-2016:
1) investigating the types of bullying through a questionnaire for pupils and teachers of classes 1,2 and 3.
2) Establishment of an anti-bullying day
3) Presentation for ICT teachers on cyber bullying.
4) Investigating the possibility of organizing a 'teambuilding' day for pupils of class 1 of the academic year 2016-2017

Possible individual measures see part B of this protocol.

C. Procedure for reported cases

1 bullying signaled and reported by	← parents ← teachers ← pedagogical advisers ← students

↓

2a KiVa coordinator	→ KiVa-Team
2b collect information /verify / evaluate	

↓   ↓

3a Educational measures		**3b Disciplinary actions**	
Persons involved	KiVa-Team students parents class teacher teachers psychologist SIA/B coordinator Director Principal advisor	Persons /involved	Management Students Pedagogical advisers Teachers Parents Director Disciplinary council
measures	meetings with students involved. Meetings/discussions in class Inform and involve parents Empowerment students involved. (re)establish rules of conduct /in class Counseling psychologist (adaptation of the) SIA measures others	Disciplinary actions/ sanctions	Disciplinary letter to parents, copy in personal school records. Excuse letter from bully Home assignments on bullying Home work / cleaning work at school Suspension from school (Director /disciplinary council) Expulsion from school (Director / CdD)

↕   ↕

4 Evaluation If the problem has been resolved: stay vigilant If the situation continues: continue measures	← parents ← anti-bullying team ←pupils