

# Anti Bullying Protocol

**Updated September 2020**

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## Introduction

As a school, one hopes that there will never be bullying, but in reality this isn't so. Where there are people, bullying can and does occur. Bullying in school is often hidden. In fact, it's likely to occur in circumstances which may be out of the adults' sight: before and after lessons, during the breaks, in the corridors, in the toilets, on social media... In addition, bullying can be ongoing for a long time before pupils report it or ask for help. Bullying's dynamics can be subtle and sneaky, but its social and psychological consequences can be deep and long-lasting, both for the victim and for the bully.

Preventing bullying and creating a safe environment is of great concern to our school. With this protocol we aim to create in our curriculum, a code of conduct and a preventative policy which will reduce bullying to an absolute minimum.

We also intend to establish a step by step plan of action to deal with cases of bullying which do arise.

Furthermore, this protocol is meant to support the staff and parents of our school.

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# Bullying: a definition and features

## What is bullying?

'[Dan Olweus](#)', a Scandinavian psychologist, and one of the most important researchers on the theme of bullying, has developed a widely accepted definition about it:

*"A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself."*

(Olweus, D., 1993, *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*)

According to the definition provided, bullying includes three **key components**:

- Bullying is **intentional, aggressive behaviour**;
- It involves an **imbalance** of power;
- It is **repeated** over time.

The bully can work alone or in "collaboration" with others – and the latter is actually the most common scenario. Anyway, in both cases, the role of the bystanders 'the crew' is crucial.

## The crew, the bully, and the victim

### The bullying "crew"

Bullying does not happen in a vacuum. It is supported by social dynamics, within which the bully and the victim are not the only actors at all. In an environment affected by bullying, most of the people would fall into the category of bystanders. A bystander is anyone who is present during a bullying episode of any kind. Olweus (2007) has provided a very clear model to describe in detail the different roles of those who take part in bullying, including the ones who "only" witness it.

The core of the "attack" is composed by the bully (the person who starts and leads the bullying) and his/her followers. Rather than starting the bullying, the followers accompany the bully, actively contributing to the harassment of the victim. Then, around the scene there's a whole audience, whose role is also crucial.

Within the "audience", we can find:

- supporters who, for example, laugh at the bullying or cheer it on;
- students who "silently" rejoice at it;
- the ones who are completely disengaged and don't care about doing anything about it;
- the ones who do not like what's going on.
- The ones who do not know what is going on

Feeling disapproval for the bullying is not enough to be an actual defender, since very often the witnesses are afraid of contrasting the bullies, and they do not know how to help. Taking defensive action might imply a strong dose of courage.

If you think about some bullying situation, it will be quite easy to infer which role(s) each person involved is taking up.

The involvement of the bystanders is crucial. Bullying episodes can somehow be nourished or hindered by the people who can see or know what's happening.

### Who is prone to become a bully?

According to the American Psychological Association ([APA](#)), two important and frequent correlates to bullying behaviour are:

- Academic troubles;

- Lack of social problem-solving skills.

Clayton R. Cook, professor of Educational Psychology and leader of an interesting [research](#) carried out in 2010 in collaboration with a group of scholars from University of California, says: "A typical bully has trouble resolving problems with others and also has trouble academically. He or she usually has negative attitudes and beliefs about others, feels negatively toward himself/herself, comes from a family environment characterised by conflict and poor parenting, perceives school as negative and is negatively influenced by peers."

Kids or teenagers who are more likely to start bullying are also the ones who:

- Have strong leadership;
- Feel tough and powerful;
- Want to become popular or maintain their social standing;
- Have problems they need to escape.

### **"Common" victims: the different**

Easier target of bullying could be the ones who are considered different due to:

- Sexual orientation;
- National origin;
- Special needs;
- Social belonging;
- Economic status;
- Appearance;
- Clothing;
- Interests...

The following subjects could also be at "risk":

- The "weaker": who is shy, who lacks social skills and self-esteem, who tends to be depressed or have negative thoughts;
- Newcomers into a formerly established classroom or group;
- Who arouses envy or jealousy (for example, due to good academic achievement, physical appearance etc.).

### **The consequences of bullying**

When talking about the effects of bullying, we usually tend to focus more on the victim. The bullied ones undoubtedly need to be taken care of but, perhaps unexpectedly, the bullies may also experience the negative consequences of their own behaviour.

Everybody who has exerted, received or, even, witnessed bullying attacks may have to deal with their long-lasting consequences.

### **Consequences for the victims**

- Consequences for the victims:
- they may feel afraid, angry, anxious, ashamed, helpless... and sometimes guilty;
- their self-esteem decreases;
- isolation;
- mood changes;
- they may withdraw from activities;
- deterioration of academic performances;
- they might become secretive and avoid talking about school;
- engage in absences;
- school change (enrolling in another school);
- physical consequences: headaches, changes in appetite, digestive problems, sleep troubles.

If the bullying continues for long periods of time, the consequences risk becoming more and more serious. Long-lasting effects on the victims: anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, troubles in establishing trusting relationships, and suicide attempts.

## **Consequences for the bullies**

Short and mid-term consequences for the bullies are diverse, too, and they may vary from criminal reports to school drop-out. In addition, it has to be noticed that bullies can experience a deep sense of guilt when they realise how harmful their behaviour has been.

There's often some dysfunction or difficulty behind bullying behaviour. If not properly addressed, bullies are as likely as victims to carry their problems into adulthood.

Former bullies tend to have difficulties on many levels: health, psychological, social and relational. Being a bully in childhood seems to be associated with:

- Abuse of alcohol and drugs;
- Early sexual activity;
- Abuses towards partners and children;
- Low education;
- Difficulties in finding or maintaining employment
- Antisocial, aggressive behaviour;
- Police records.

## **Consequences for the family:**

- Tensions within the family
- Panic
- Shame
- Insecurity
- Rage

Children don't often take their parents into their confidence concerning their bullying activities. This in itself is a cause for tension in a family. Practice shows that parents often knew that something was wrong but didn't know what. Sometimes parents are unaware. The behaviour of a child who is bullied changes dramatically. At home the child can display different behaviour because of the bullying. This can be the cause of tension within the family. Once parents know about it, it gives rise to different reactions and emotions. Parents often are angry and anxious; the child is often afraid about what is going to happen next and is ashamed. There are many emotions involved. At this moment the parents' reaction will determine what the consequences are for this child and this family.

## **Consequences for the group:**

- Negative group atmosphere
- Insecurity / fear to be bullied themselves
- Social 'pressure' (to be involved)
- Feelings of guilt
- Deteriorating learning performances

In a group where bullying occurs, the group's atmosphere is negative. This often means that the results are going down. Cooperating will be difficult and therefore group assignments will not be completed at the desired level. Teachers need to spend a long time trying to get the group to settle down, which means less time to explain the lessons or to do fun things together. Children who were in a group where bullying took place can be haunted by guilt long after the disbanding of the group. Sometimes the severity of what happened within the group is not felt till much later.

# How to deal with bullying?

## Prevention of bullying

Preventing bullying means favouring a healthy school climate. At the ISE we strive for a positive-climate school, our school environment should feel safe for all the people that are part of it, and everybody feels they can count on other members to collaborate, to solve problems and to grow up together.

The positive climate at the ISE:

- Provides the students with opportunities to develop their social and emotional intelligence, that is to say skills of self and social awareness, responsibility, decision making, self-management and relationships management, kindness and respect;
- Actively involves the students in the definition of the norms that favour good coexistence;
- Keeps the line of communication open and encourages everybody to feel at ease about sharing possible difficulties or to tell about negative happenings they might witness (the role of bystanders is crucial both to detect and hinder bullying phenomena!);
- Makes sure the students know that there's somebody who can support them, who they are, when and where to find them;
- Aims at teaching kids how to limit prejudice and discrimination, replacing them with positive acceptance and cooperation;
- Promotes meaningful learning activities, to teach both curricular and extra-curricular topics;
- Encourages the students to discover their talents and to do things they love; certain activities and hobbies can boost self-esteem and provide pupils with good chances to make friends

Our [Positive behaviour Policy](#) describes the approach to both the expected standards of behaviour and the management of behaviour within the ISE.

## Forms of bullying

Bullying can take different forms and happen in many ways. Here is a list of the most common ones:

### 01 – Physical bullying

That's the most evident bullying kind and it is relatively easy to detect. It involves pushing, hitting, punching, kicking, slapping and other forms of physical aggression. The aggressor often looks bigger and stronger;

### 02 – Verbal bullying

Verbal bullying uses verbal language to humiliate the victim. It can include insulting, teasing, making inappropriate comments, taunting, and threatening. Verbal bullying often happens without the teacher realising it, but it can lead to an escalation of offences and be very harmful to the victim;

### 03 – Relational bullying

Relational bullying is a very sneaky but dangerous form of bullying. It can consist of isolating the victim, excluding him/her from activities and groups, putting an end to friendships, breaking confidences, spreading rumours etc. It is often ignored by adults since it does not necessarily include obvious aggressive behaviour. It is usually more common with girls than boys;

### 04 – Personal belongings

Damaging, hiding or stealing personal belongings;

### 05 – Reactive bullying

It's when a former victim of aggressions (at school, at home or in other environments) becomes a bully

himself/herself;

## 06 – Cyberbullying

Last but not least: cyberbullying. It involves the use of the Internet and/or technological devices. It's about sending or posting negative, humiliating messages or information about someone. It can happen via text message, e-mail, on social media, apps, forums, chats, and gaming communities. Bullies are likely to be even meaner online, and they might feel "protected" by anonymity. In cyberbullying, the victim almost has no escape, since it can happen 24 hours a day, and everywhere, even in safe places and pleasant moments. [Cyberbullying](#) can involve a big audience, thus having more harmful effects on the victim, but there's also a "positive" side of online attacks. They can be easy to prove when it comes to reporting them.

Of course, bullying episodes can be a combination of the different types described above.

Research (Delver & Hop 2007) shows that it is possible to identify several risk factors which ensure that some children are bullied more quickly online:

- The extent to which they themselves bully online
- The extent to which someone is bullied in "real" life
- The use of profile sites (for example CU2 or Sugababes)
- The use of social networking/media
- Having many online contacts which they have never met
- Be active in communities (games etc...)
- Using weblogs

The annoying thing about cyber bullying is that there are no special characteristics required to be bullied. This is what is expressed by the authors of 'Pesten is laf! Cyberpesten is laffer' (Delver & Hop 2007). In cyberbullying it is even possible that victim and bully have never met in real life. It involves a very subtle combination of outer (visible) and inner (personality) factors which can earmark that child for bullying. Children who are bullied often show one or more combinations of the following factors, which are quickly recognized by the 'perpetrators':

- Be different to others
- Shy
- Quiet and withdrawn
- Isolated
- Low self-awareness and/or self-esteem
- Awkward motor skills
- Headstrong
- Gullible and naive
- Not willing to stand out
- Difficulty with social contacts
- Few friends

## Bullying or teasing?

The difference between teasing and bullying is mainly evident in the imbalance of power. Teasing is done by both children (it is an interaction). Teasing is done as a way to explore boundaries. Teasing helps to clarify one's strengths and weaknesses. Teasing is a game. Not always nice, but never really threatening. If there is an imbalance of power we call it bullying. The one child is stronger than the other and the bully misuses his power. The victim can't or doesn't dare to defend himself (and then there is an imbalance of power). In this case the same child will always win or lose. If this happens repeatedly (and it involves the same person every time) then we call it bullying. It is of the utmost importance to teach children this difference from an early age.

In the book " Pesten, gedaan ermee!" (Deboutte, 1995) the differences between teasing and bullying are described:

## **Teasing?**

- - Teasing is innocent; happens directly and spontaneously, sometimes contains humour
- - Teasing happens intentionally (one knows quite well whom, how and when to bully another person), someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another.
- - Teasing is of short duration and occurs only temporarily.
- - Teasing occurs between equals.
- - Bullying is persistent: it happens repeatedly, systematically and prolongedly.
- - Bullying is an uneven battle: ‘the bully is always on top’
- - Teasing is mostly endurable or even nice, but bullying can be offensive or aggressive.
- - the bully doesn’t have any positive intentions; he wants to inflict pain, injury or damage.
- - Teasing occurs mostly one to one
- - Bullying happens mostly in a group (bully, followers and supporters) opposing one victim.
- - Bullying has the tendency to happen in a fixed structure: the bullies are often the same and so are the victims

## **Signs of bullying**

Children who are bullied can react in different ways. A child can display rebellious behaviour or show a withdrawn attitude for example. Therefore there are several different signs which can show that bullying happens. One important fact is that a change in a child’s behaviour can occur. As a teacher you have to be aware of changes in children’s behaviour and reflect on what could be the cause.

### **Signs of a child being victim to bullying:**

- The child seems quiet and withdrawn
- The child is fearful and insecure
- The child is structurally chosen last for group activities
- Nobody wants to sit next to him or her
- The child often plays alone during recess and seems to have no friends
- The child’s school results are not (anymore) what could be expected of him or her.
- The child’s belongings are regularly “unexplainably” lost or damaged
- The child does not like to go to school
- The child never takes friends home
- The child doesn’t like to play outside anymore
- The child often comes home with damaged possessions.
- The child often complains of headaches or stomach aches
- The child sometimes comes home bruised and with scratches
- The child sleeps poorly or has nightmares
- The child is never invited for a birthday, the child doesn’t want to celebrate his birthday or the other children don’t come to his birthday party
- The parents notice that their child no longer dares to do things or is more and more afraid

### **Signs of children who bully:**

- The child acts remarkably tough and you hear him brag about what he can do; at home she/he talks about how popular she/he is.
- The child is very recalcitrant and defiant and often tries to get his way. He is not sensitive to the effects of his behaviour on others.
- The child belongs to a fixed group, but never talks about what they do together; as a parent you suspect that the child has a secret.
- The child gossips and says bad things about other children.
- The child is remarkably aggressive towards children and adults and thinks this is normal behaviour; it is possible that this behaviour is only seen when in groups at school or in another situation
- The child wants to be in control (of his/her victim)

- The bully acts aggressive / violent: he/she can be very aggressive when opposed - Bullies often seem to be very popular in the group, and seem to have lots of friends but ultimately they aren't. They exact their popularity from the group by showing off their strength and daring. This is easily done by bullying. It looks like bullies have many friends because they are often surrounded by followers.
- They are strong: A bully is often physically stronger than his/her victim.
- They can talk smoothly: The bully often can talk well and knows how to extricate himself by smooth talking. It also happens that the bully knows how to distort the situation with his excuses so that the other (the bullied child) is seen as guilty.
- Bullies often lack a sense of guilt

### **Primary signs**

- The child is (repeatedly) in a cruel way bullied, abused, ridiculed, belittled, laughed at, humbled, threatened, commanded, dominated or subjected.
- Classmates make fun of them, laugh at them in a derisive and unfriendly way.
- They are harassed, pushed, hit, punched, pinched, beaten, kicked and they are not able to defend themselves adequately.
- They are involved in 'fights' and 'quarrels' in which they can't defend themselves and from which they, sometimes crying, try to escape.
- Their books, money and other possessions are damaged or left lying about.
- They have bruises, wounds, cuts, scratches or torn clothing which they can't have obtained in a normal way.

### **Secondary signs (school)**

- They are (often) left alone and they are excluded from the class during recess.
- They seem to have no good friends in the class at all.
- They are often chosen last when teams are formed.
- They often try to stay close to a teacher or other adult during recess, in this way they feel safe and they can often relate better to adults than to peers.
- They often find it hard to talk aloud in class and make an anxious and insecure impression.
- They look fearful, unhappy, down and tearful.
- They show a sudden or gradual decline in their school results.
- They can hardly stand up for themselves amongst peers.
- They lose interest in their school work and obtain lower marks than before. As a result, they can show unexpected behaviour, like tantrums.

### **Secondary signs (at home)**

- After school they hardly ever bring home classmates or peers.
- They seldom go to the home of classmates and seldom play with classmates at all. They don't have a close friend with whom they spend their free time.
- They seldom if at all are invited to parties.
- They are afraid or reluctant to go to school in the mornings: they have a poor appetite and (mainly in the mornings) suffer from headaches and stomach-aches.
- They sleep poorly, they sometimes have nightmares.
- It is very important for teachers to pick up these signs. Not only the signs they themselves observe, but also those brought to their attention by parents (or other children).

## **Factors that can contribute to bullying**

### **Factors at home which can contribute to the occurrence of bullying:**

Certain styles of upbringing; in particular not imposing limits - Family problems; divorce, addiction, disease, no time - Less satisfactory upbringing; little love and attention - A bad example: frequent use of power in upbringing such as bodily punishments and severe emotional outbursts.

## **Factors at school which can contribute to the occurrence of bullying:**

Within the group:

- Power struggle in the class, amongst students as well as between pupils and teacher
- Use of means of exercising power by the teacher, physical as well as verbal
- Poor contact between schools and parents
- Having to compete constantly for marks and performance Outside school:
- A non-democratic environment within the school
- No clear, general applicable rules about behaviour towards each other

## **Behaviour protocol**

Rewarding is always preferable to punishing. Acceptable behaviour is stimulated and rewarded. The teacher encourages the students to reflect on their own behaviour and suggests points that they need to work on, using the four rules mentioned above as starting points. This is closely linked with the creation of a positive pedagogical climate.

At the ISE we continuously work on the pedagogical climate:

- The school rules are discussed with the group/class at the beginning of the school year and are repeated on a regular basis, eg. Rule of the week.
- Besides this, each teacher together with her students, formulates class rules, which are given a prominent place in the classroom..
- The students work continuously on improving their social skills. The teacher chooses a topic appropriate to the needs of the class at that time.
- Every day the group has a circle/ group discussion.
- The social-emotional development of the children is monitored.
- A system for rewarding the children (classically and individually ) is used.
- During the snack break, students from groups 7 and 8 (the buddies) “patrol” outside and try to help children solve their problems and conflict situations. Members of staff are outside with the children.
- There is intensive contact with parents, as we feel the importance of parents is crucial in the prevention or addressing of bullying
- At the beginning of the school year each teacher discusses the class / school rules with his / her group. It is important to let the children come up with their own rules. In this way we make the children partly responsible for the group process. These drawn up rules are given a prominent place in the classroom so that they are easily referred to.
- A sociogram helps to enable the teacher to compose clear reports of the social connections, relational patterns and group cohesion in the group. A sociogram can be administered orally, via Parnassys or via an internet site (for example website: [www.sociogram.nl](http://www.sociogram.nl)). In the Dutch department the monitoring system ‘SCOL’ is used.

## **Factors which contribute to less bullying:**

- Clear rules on how people should interact
- Clear sanctions for not keeping to the agreed code of conduct
- Respect for each other and each other's qualities
- Participation of teachers, as well as students and parents
- Good contact between parents and school

According to Luk Depoort (the author of the children's book 'Een vuurpuwend monstertje'), there are five points which are important regarding prevention:

### **1. Parental involvement**

Showing interest in your children by giving them your time and attention; doing things together and being there when your child needs you.

Offer unconditional support and positive stimulus: then your children feel that you trust them.

Knowing what your child is doing; what interests them? What annoys them? What irritates them? What are their values?

## **2. Positive endorsement**

Positive social behaviour needs to be stimulated by designating, rewarding and encouraging it and led by your own example.

For a long period of time parents are the most important role models. Their appreciation has a great influence on the child's self-esteem.

Rewards are not meant to be used for black-mail. Children need to learn to live towards a reward. The greatest reward is yourself! Your time and attention are worth more than any small or big present.

## **3. Development of problem solving skills by consultation**

This too can be learned by observing behaviour: teach children to define a problem, discuss together how to tackle certain problems, decide together how to solve a problem and define every one's responsibilities.

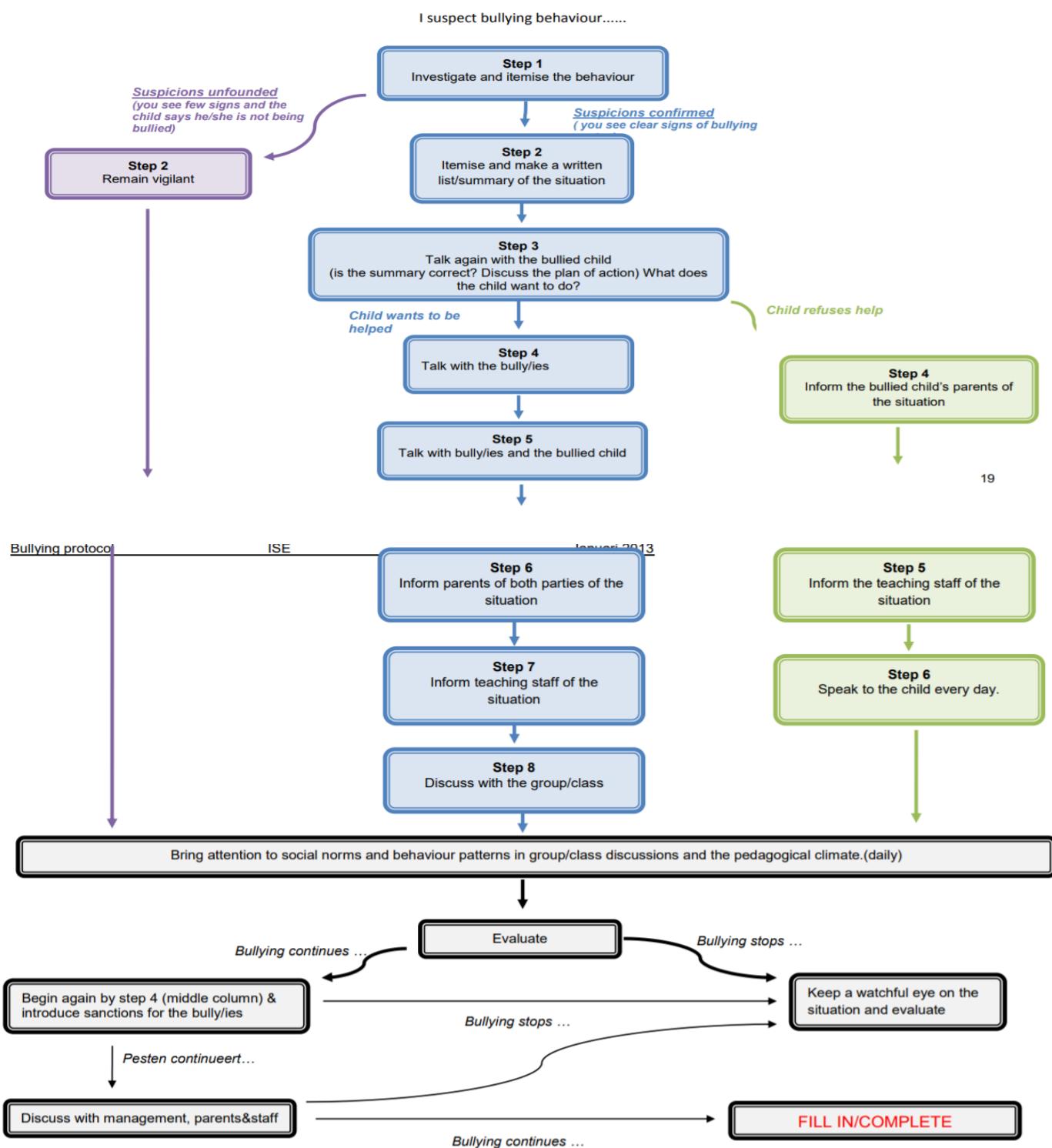
## **4. Discipline and clarity of rules:**

This is essential in every form of education and indispensable when trying to eliminate social undesirable behaviour.

## **5. Monitoring:**

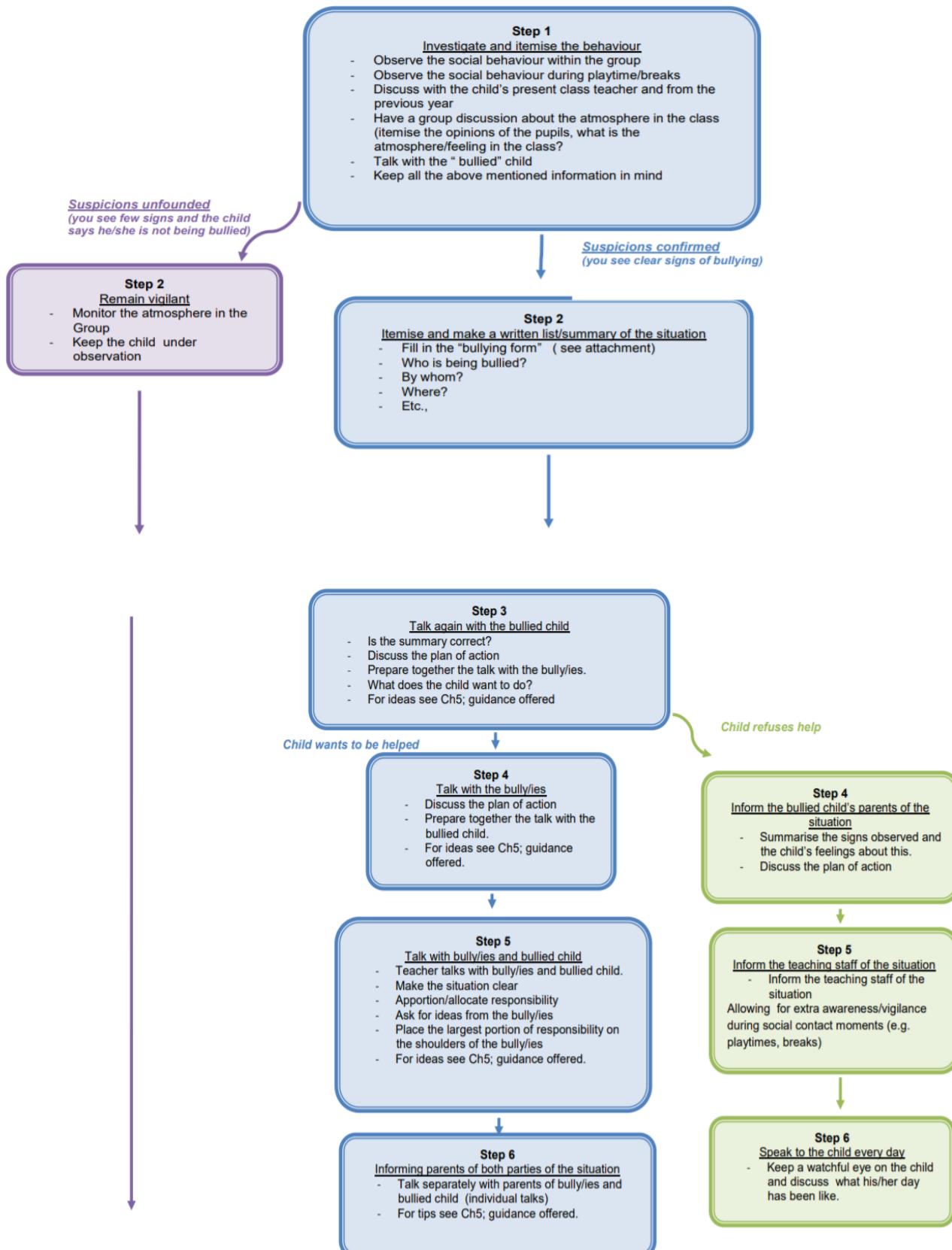
This is all about giving children some freedom. Still it is important to be closely involved to give advice or intervene when needed. Keep a watchful eye on them.

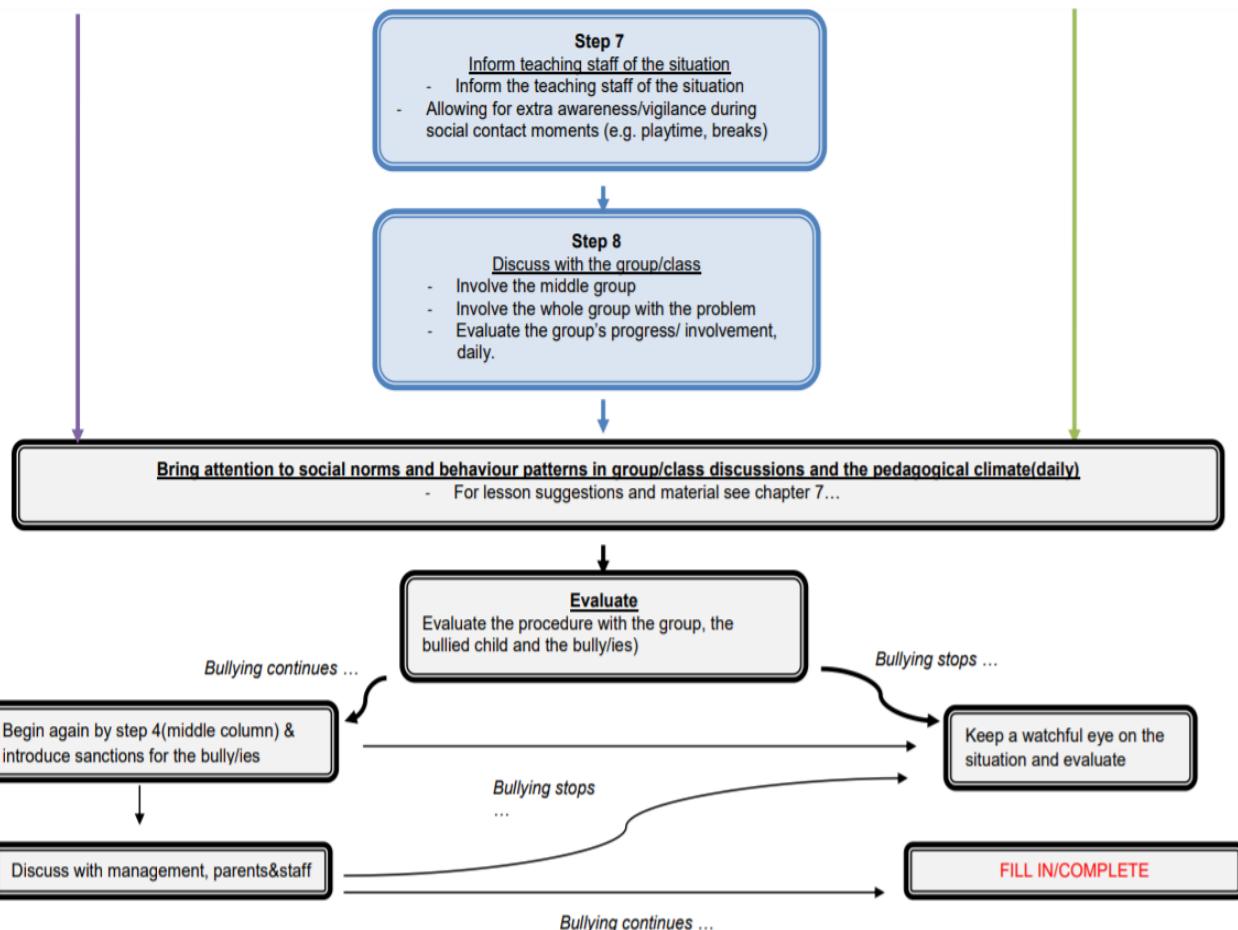
# Plan of action



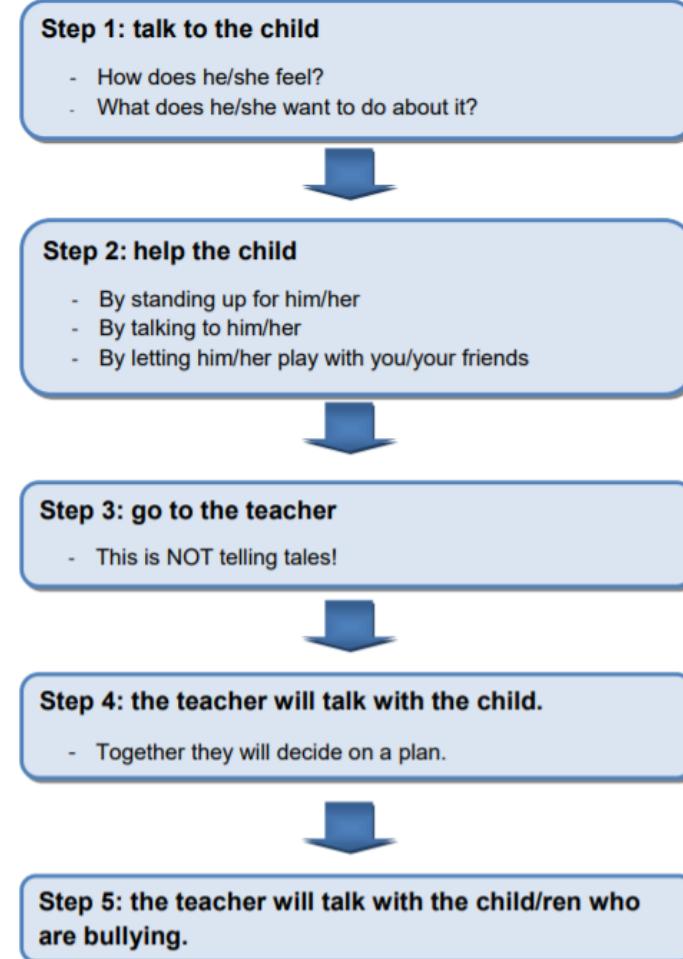
## Amplification of the Action plan:

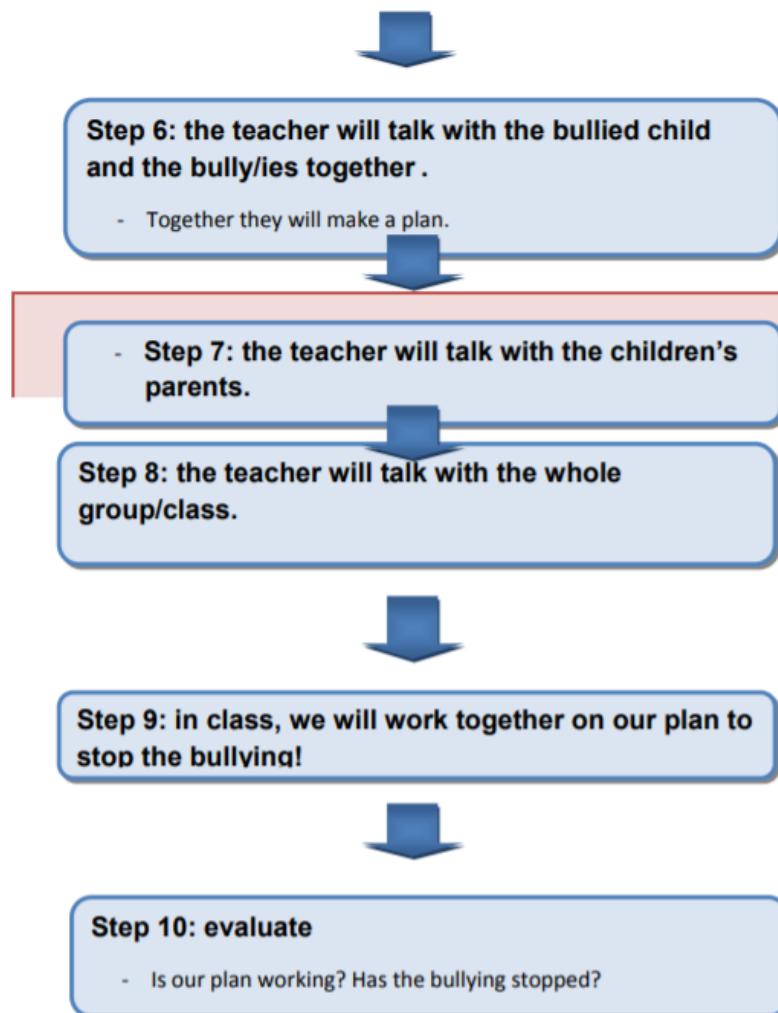
I suspect bullying behaviour.....





*What to do when you know someone is being bullied...*





# Actions to eradicate bullying

## Approach by signs of bullying

"The Five Track approach" from Bob van der Meer (Bullying at school 2002) is a precise method and is widely used. It creates a sphere where discussion is possible and encouraged, support is offered and /or possible ways of tackling the problems of bullying.

### 1. Support for the child who is being bullied.

- Listen to the child. Take his/her problem seriously.
- Discuss possible solutions with the child.
- Work together with the child to find a solution..
- If necessary, facilitate professional help e.g., social skills training.

### 2. Support for the child who is the bully.

- Discuss with the child what being bullied can mean for that person/child.
- Help the child to find a positive way to establish and maintain relationships/friendships with other children.
- Help the child to keep the rules and maintain the agreements.
- If necessary, facilitate professional help e.g., social skills training.

### 3. Involve the class group in finding solutions for the bullying problems.

- Discuss with the children what bullying is and their role herein.
- Discuss with the children possible solutions and what they can contribute to solving the problem(s).
- Work together with the children to find solutions, in such a way that they are actively involved.

### 4. Support the rest of the school ( or club, youth club, sports school ect.,)in tackling bullying.

- Collect information and discuss the topic of bullying in general and the possible ways of tackling this in their own class/group and own school.
- Work within the school to develop a general school policy on safety and on bullying in particular.

### 5. Support for the parents

- Parents and their concerns about bullying should be treated seriously.
- Provide information and advice about bullying and the ways in which it can be approached and dealt with.
- Create a situation for cooperation between parents and school in tackling the problem.
- If necessary, refer parents to professional support organisations.

## Plan of Action for children

### **What to do when you know someone is being bullied...**

#### **Step 1: talk to the child**

- How does he/she feel?
- What does he/she want to do about it?

#### **Step 2: help the child**

- By standing up for him/her
- By talking to him/her
- By letting him/her play with you/your friends

#### **Step 3: go to the teacher**

- This is NOT telling tales!

#### **Step 4: the teacher will talk with the child.**

- Together they will decide on a plan.

**Step 5: the teacher will talk with the child/ren who are bullying.**

**Step 6: the teacher will talk with the bullied child and the bully/ies together .**

- Together they will make a plan.

**Step 7: the teacher will talk with the children's parents.**

- Together they will make a plan.

**Step 8: the teacher will talk with the whole group/class.**

**Step 9: in class, we will work together on our plan to stop the bullying!**

**Step 10: evaluate**

- Is our plan working? Has the bullying stopped?

## **Support and supervision to be offered in bullying situations**

### **Support for the bullied child**

Support/supervision for the bullied child:

- Listen to the child and always treat the problem seriously.
- Discuss together with the child (possible solutions and steps to be taken.)
- Work with the child on these solutions.
- If necessary, seek professional help for the child, e.g. social skills training. Never blame the child for the bullying!
- Be careful not to project feelings /opinions on to the child (let everything come from the child self)
- A talk/conversation with a bullied child: During a talk with a bullied child it is important that the following points are discussed:
  - The situation and the feelings of the bullied child - It must become clear who is bullying, how, when etc...
  - Those involved must be clearly identified - It is very important to let the child know that bullying is wrong/shouldn't happen and that you (together with the class) will ensure that it doesn't happen again. - In some situations, a child will not want you to talk to the bully/ies and absolutely not with the class. In this case, it is important to clearly explain why this is an essential step (try to convince them). However, if a child is still against this, another route in the bullying plan of action can be followed. Namely, the parents will be informed, extra attention will be paid to the atmosphere in the group and the general "climate". Also daily talks will take place with the child. However, if the bullying continues, the original steps in the plan of action (talking to the bully/ies etc.) will be implemented.  
N.B. The reason it is important to follow the wishes of the child in the first instance is to nurture the feelings of trust and create a bond. The child needs to have the feeling that he/she has something to say in the matter. Together with the teacher, he needs to be able to think about the following steps to be taken. If this doesn't help ( or the situation gets out of hand) then the teacher needs to use his/her discretion and consult with the child before reverting to the original plan.
  - You and the child should seek out together the possible ways to solve the problem.
  - You should make it clear to the child that he can always come to talk with you (offer him security). If he doesn't dare to do this, he can always express himself by drawing or writing ( using the letterbox).
  - Evaluate regularly with the child (and the parents).

### **Resources to use:**

- Improve the self confidence of the child using activities e.g..
- Approach the child positively in the group, let him do jobs, talk frequently with him etc..

- Give the child a drawing pad or writing book to allow him to express what he experiences and feels. This can be used eventually (with child's consent) in the talks with the bully/ies. Couple a creative assignment with a talk (certainly useful if a child finds it difficult to talk about the bullying).
- Professional help for a child (social skills training etc...)
- Work sheets (about social and/or bullying situations) that a child can do at home with his Parents.

## Support for the bully

Support/Supervision for the bully:

- Discuss with the child what bullying means to another person.
- Help the child to find a positive way to maintain relationships with other children.
- Help the child to keep the rules and agreements made.
- Ensure that the child feels safe. Explain what you, as the teacher, intend to do to stop the bullying.
- Observe/investigate the origin(s) of the behaviour

When having a talk/conversation with the bully/ies, the following points are important in this talk:

- Make it clear to the child how a bullied child feels. This can be emphasized using letters/drawings from the bullied child. The teacher does not refer to specific incidents or details; no accusations or blame are apportioned.
- The teacher makes it clear to the bully/ies that bullying will not be tolerated.
- You talk with the bully/ies about the situation (try to ascertain what they think about the situation). Do they realise that they are hurting someone?
- Make it clear to the bully/ies that they will get the chance to put things right (and to stop it happening again)
- Discuss the plan of action with the bully/ies. Prepare the talk with the bullied child beforehand.
- During this talk, it is important for the teacher to get a clear picture of why the bullies exhibit this bullying behaviour. Let the child/ren think about the following points:
  - Why do I bully
  - Why do I hurt others and /or make them unhappy?
  - Does bullying make me happier?
  - What can I do in order to feel good in another way?

## Resources to use:

- An account or drawing (about the bullied child) This can help to improve the empathizing ability of the bully and make him aware of what he causes and how the bullied child feels. Always after consulting with the bullied child.
- A creative activity (sometimes helps if a child finds it difficult to talk about the situation)
- Create and discuss a similar case/ situation.
- Try not to influence the emotions (let these come from the children themselves.)

Eventual sanctions: If a child still exhibits bullying behaviour after the first implementation of the plan of action, then certain sanctions could be introduced to curtail this behaviour. For these sanctions, see the [2021 Positive behaviour Policy](#).

A talk between the bully/ies, the bullied child and the teacher: After separate talks with the bullied child and the bully/ies (see plan of action) it is important to have a talk with both parties together.

The following points are important in this talk:

- Make the situation clear to the children
  - - The teacher introduces the problem and emphasises how the bullied child feels.
  - - He/she apportions no blame or accusations.
  - - He/she names specific behaviour and the feelings that causes by the bullied child. - The children need plenty of space/time to say what they think about the situation. - The teacher should try to describe the situation as clearly as possible ( a concrete, specific

"picture" for the children).

- The responsibility must be shared out
  - - Although no accusations will be made, the teacher will emphasise that the bully/ies is/are responsible for making sure that the bullied child feels happy and secure again.
- Exchange of ideas:
  - - Each child is now asked to offer ideas which could help the bullied child to feel better at school and in the group. A few examples: I will play with the child, I will protect the child, I will choose the child for my team, I will say I'm sorry etc.....
- The bully gets the biggest share of the responsibility
  - - The talk ends with the teacher placing the biggest share of the responsibility for solving the problem with the bully/ies. A follow-up talk is planned to discuss what has changed. Also the plan of action (the talk in the group and activities) is discussed.

## Support for the group

### Guidance for the group (those not directly involved):

It is important to talk openly about bullying within the group . - Discuss how children should behave towards one another. - Considerable attention should be paid to the social skills of the pupils. - Talk about bullying and their role in this. - Discuss with the children possible solutions and what they can do themselves. - Work together on these solutions. - Ensure that everyone has an active role .

Ensure enough attention is given to the problem (both preventative and curative) through group activities. For suggestions see chapter 7... - Involve the children in the plan-of-action ( see plan of action for the children.) This can be displayed in a clearly visible place in the classroom.

## The parents

### A talk with the parents:

The first appointment/discussion: The parents of all the pupils who are directly involved in/with the bullying should be invited separately to talk about this.

The situation will be discussed with the parents of the bullied child and help will be offered by the teacher. This could be in the form of tips (for the child) and/or tips for facilitating talks with the child(at home). The teacher should listen carefully to the parents in order to work with them to find suitable remedies for the situation. In some cases it might be advisable to approach external resources. (social skills training; a psychologist etc.) The steps to be taken and the monitoring of the procedures and progress should be agreed upon with the parents . This should also include the plan of action for the group.

The situation will also be discussed with the parents of the bully/ies , separately. The plan of action will be discussed with these parents and the possible consequences for the bully/ies explained.

## Parents

How should you approach the parents?

The parents of the bullied child: When parents get to hear that their child is being bullied, it is usually a real shock. Often a child keeps this well hidden at home (not always of course). They often come up against different reactions from other parents and don't always feel that their point of view is understood. It is important to take this into consideration. It is also important to gather as much information as possible about the home situation during your meeting. What is the child like at home? Are there often arguments? How does he/she show emotions? Does he/she go to a club(s)? Does he/she often play with other children at home? Has he/she any brothers or sisters? If so, how does he/she get on with them? ... You should try to get as clear a picture as possible of the home situation. This can help with advice and suggestions for the parents. E.g., joining a club or arranging play-dates more often with classmates Of course, this advice

depends on the individual situation and the child in question. The teacher must be able to assess/ judge this for him/herself.

Most parents find the fact that their child is being bullied, much worse than if their child was doing the bullying. In general, aggressive behaviour is judged more positively than an oppressive situation.

The parents of the bully: Generally speaking parents do not like to hear that their child is bullying other children. Some parents don't want to believe this and can set up a "brick wall" to block out the information. It is important to remain calm and present the signs and concrete evidence. E.g., from observations, also from talks which have taken place with the bully him/herself. This usually helps, but sometimes parents are aware that their child is bullying other children and actively encourage this. They sometimes use the argument that society is getting tougher or that the other child "asks for it". In your role as teacher, it is important to bring to the parents' attention the school's policy. You must clearly state that this sort of behaviour is not tolerated at the ISE. You can also offer/suggest appropriate help in the form of an external organisation.

### **Important points in talks with both parties:**

- Take the parents seriously
- Listen carefully to what they wish to tell you about the situation
- Listen carefully to (ask extensive questions about) what happens at home.
- Give information and advice about bullying and the ways in which it can be tackled.( see 6.2: tips for parents).
- Approach the problem together with the parents ( involve them in the problem and the solution).
- Point the parents in the direction of professional help/organisations if necessary.
- Keep the parents informed! You need the parents' involvement to get the problem solved.