Cyberbullying
-
What we know and what we can do

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- Background: law, psychology and criminology

- Researcher, lecturer, trainer in the fields of bullying, trauma and criminal psychology

- PhD on school shootings

- Board member of the Peaceful Schools project in Hungary

Who am I?

Kulcsár Gabriella

ISKOLAI ÁMOKFUTÁSOK
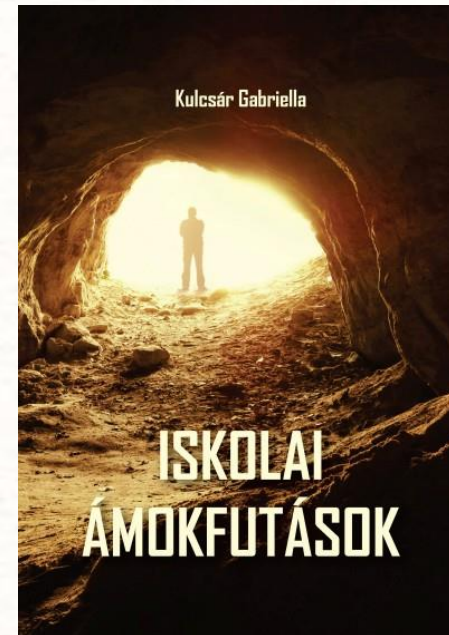
What will we speak about today? - OVERVIEW

1. **What do we know?**
   1) What is bullying? – The 3 P-s
   2) What is cyberbullying? - Forms and other characteristics
   3) Why do kids (cyber)bully?
   4) What are the consequences?

2. **What can we do?**
   1) As schools
   2) As teachers (and students)

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Source: friends.se Antibullying ad https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aZkk2iUY2k&t=0s

Defining the problem

Uniform research definition developed by the U.S. Department of Education and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – (Gladden et al. 2014)

Bullying is:
– any unwanted aggressive behavior(s)
– by another youth or group of youth who are not siblings or current dating partners
– that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance
– and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated.
– It may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including:
  • physical,
  • psyhological,
  • social,
  • or educational harm.

The 3 P's: Power, Pattern, Purpose (Signe Whitson)

# Settings of bullying: in person and online

Cyberbullying

While online bullying involves similar behaviours to bullying in person, it also differs in the following ways:

- Time and location: it can be invasive and difficult to escape — it can happen at all hours and while at home

- Harmful material can be widely and rapidly disseminated to a large audience – „imaginary audience"

- Possible anonimity of the instigator

- It can provide the person doing the bullying with a sense of distance from the other person, so there might be a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

- Might be EASIER TO PROVE

"Cyberbullying refers to intentional and repeated harm that others inflict via a digital device."
(Hinduja and Patchin, 2009)
Case from Words Wound p.20.

Source: https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatIsBullying/Pages/Types-of-bullying.aspx
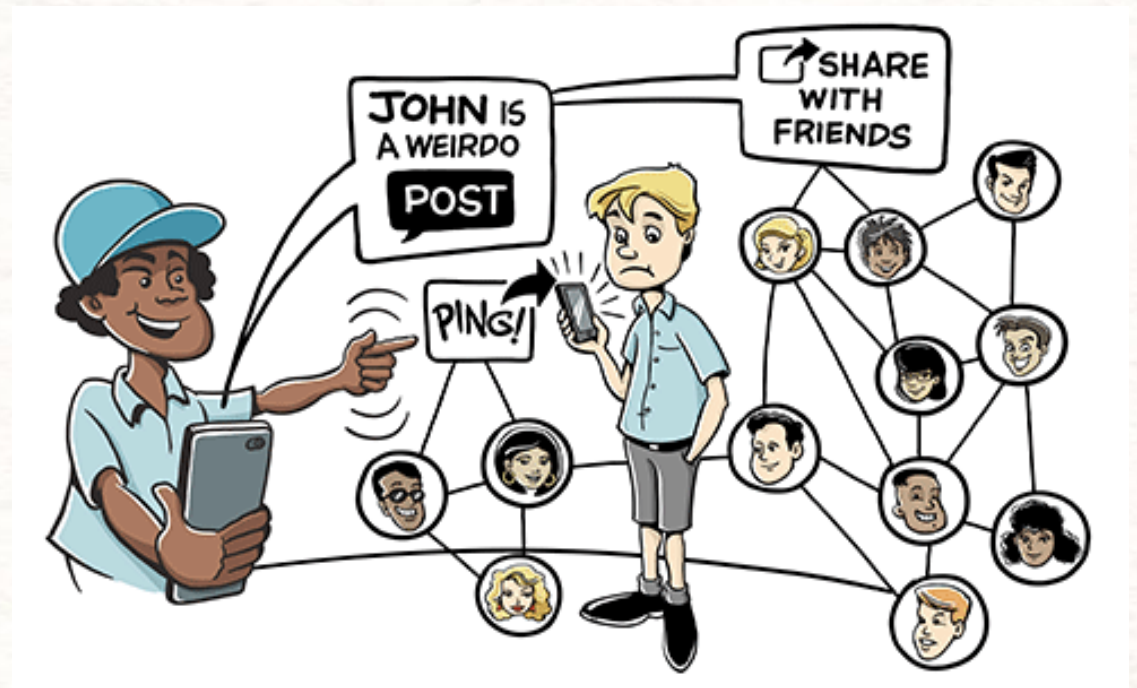
Activity

If you have the opportunity, ask your students to define cyberbullying.

Do their definitions match those of their peers?

Do their definitions align with yours?

Could you come to an agreed definition with your students?

Source: betterinternetforkids.eu recommendation –

https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/teacher-corner/deep-dives/Cyberbullying

Forms of cyberbullying – Examples from the book Violence in Education (Ed. By Shapiro, H., Wiley, 2018)

Form of cyberbullying	Definition
Flaming	The exchange of insults and /or sending or posting of angry, hostile, vulgar or annoying messages with the aim of provoking the target's emotions.
Online harassment	The repeated sending of insulting or offensive messages to a person.
Cyberstalking	The use of electronis messages to harass and individual by repeatedly threatening harm or significantly intimidating or annoying them.
Online physical threats	Actual threats directed at an individual's physical safety that are either posted on social media or sent in a message.
Denigration (put-downs)	The dissemination of harmful, unture or derogatory information about an individual to other people.
Tagging and untagging	The linking of a target to a photo, video, statement or link that the target doesn't want to be associated with due to its negative, embarrassing or cruel nature)
Impersonation	An individual pretending to be someone else and sending or posting negative, unkind or inappropriate information as if it were coming from the targeted individual, which in turn protrays the target in a negative light or places them in possible danger. Catfishing is a type of impersonation that involves creating a fake profile in an attempt to lure someone into a deceitful romantic relationship.
Outing and trickery	The sending or posting of private or sensitive information or photos or videos of an individual.
Exclusion	Acts that purposely omit a person from an online group.

Forms of cyberbullying - Examples from the site stopbullying.gov

https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/cyberbullying-tactics

- Nude photo sharing

- Lies and false accusations

- Bullied for being economically challenged

- False identity profile, sometimes referred to as a "Sockpuppet"

- Encouraging self-harm or suicide

- Bullied for being gay

- Jealousy bullying

- Doxing over online gaming

Forms of cyberbullying – Examples from the research study by Pozza et al. (2016): Cyberbullying among young people
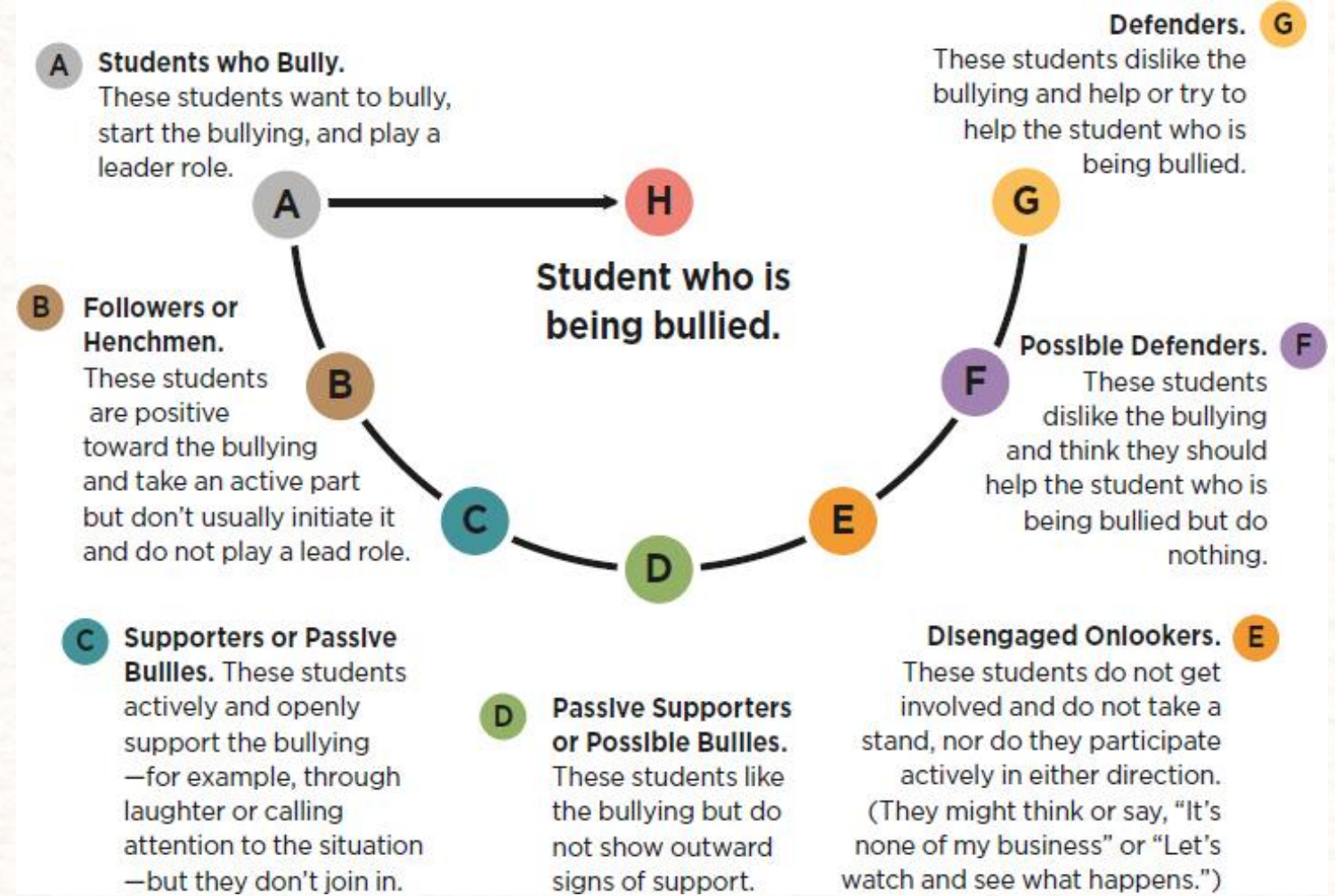(https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL_STU(2016)571367)

- Name calling (most common)

- Gossiping and spreading rumours (second most common)

- Sexting

- Submission of nasty messages or emails

- Threats through the use of ICTs

- Spreading fake information/defamation

- Posting humiliating videos or photos without consent

- Personification in the form of hacking into social network accounts

- Stalking

- Blackmailing

- Happy slapping

- Exclusion

WHY do kids bully each other?

- **Group phenomenon** - everyone is involved, that's why everyone has to be involved in the solution

- The student affected by bullying is "only" a symptom carrier of a pathologically functioning group (therefore it is not a long-term solution if someone leaves the group)

- Role of **the BYSTANDERS**!

- Importance of **not labelling kids!**

The bullying circle

A Students who Bully. These students want to bully, start the bullying, and play a leader role.

B Followers or Henchmen. These students are positive toward the bullying and take an active part but don't usually initiate it and do not play a lead role.

C Supporters or Passive Bullies. These students actively and openly support the bullying —for example, through laughter or calling attention to the situation —but they don't join in.

D Passive Supporters or Possible Bullies. These students like the bullying but do not show outward signs of support.

E Disengaged Onlookers. These students do not get involved and do not take a stand, nor do they participate actively in either direction. (They might think or say, "It's none of my business" or "Let's watch and see what happens.")

F Possible Defenders. These students dislike the bullying and think they should help the student who is being bullied but do nothing.

G Defenders. These students dislike the bullying and help or try to help the student who is being bullied.

H Student who is being bullied.

What can be some motives behind cyberbullying behaviour?

- An **extension of bullying offline**

- Seeking **'revenge'** on someone who they believed has wronged them.

- Treating someone else badly in order to **make the them feel 'better'** about themselves.

- **Displacement** – some bullies are the victim of bullying themselves and seek to displace their feelings about their own abuse by targeting someone else with the same behaviour

- Perceiving bullying to be **'fun' or a game**; being online (and sometimes anonymous) can disinhibit people to see cyberbullying behaviour as 'not real'

- A **lack of** engagement in, or **understanding** of morals, **emotions** and **empathy**

- **Joining in** with the bullying behaviour by others in order to *conform to social norms* or 'fit in'

- An attempt to **get attention** from other users

- A targeted attack on an individual or a group **motivated by** dislike or **hatred for personal characteristics** (such as race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.). In these cases, bullying would also be considered **hate speech** and (if inciting violence) possibly also a hate crime.

Digital self-harm

„When fourteen-year-old Hannah Smith committed suicide in England in 2013 after months of cyberbullying, investigators discovered that she had sent 98 percent of the abusive messages to herself." (Source: Phyillis L. Faggel: Middle school matters, p. 82.)

- **Definition:** „Anonymous online posting, sending, or otherwise sharing of hurtful content about oneself."

- About **6% of students** have anonymously posted something online about themselves that was mean. Males were significantly more likely to report participation (7.1% compared to 5.3%).

(Source: Hinduja-Patchin: Digital Self-Harm Among Adolescents, Journal of Adolescent Health, Vol. 61., Issue 6, 2017)

Possible motives behind digital self-harm: *Source: Soengkoeng, R., Moustafa, A.A. Digital self-harm: an examination of the current literature with recommendations for future research. Discov Psychol **2**, 19 (2022)*

(1) **Social developement:**

- Show others that she/he can bear it

- Get reactions from friends ("I wanted to see if someone was really my friend.")

- To start some kind of argument (especially boys)

(2) **Personal gain:**

- Make others worry

- Get the attention of others ("Because I feel sad and needed attention from others.")

- Joke

(3) **Emotional release:**

- Self-hate ("Because I already felt bad and just wanted myself to feel worse.")

Cry for help? Engagement in digital self-harm was associated with a five- to sevenfold increase in the likelihood of reporting suicidal thoughts and a nine- to 15-fold increase in the likelihood of a suicide attempt.

(Source: Patchin, J.W., Hinduja, S. and Meldrum, R.C. (2023), Digital self-harm and suicidality among adolescents. Child Adolesc Ment Health, 28: 52-59.)

Consequences of bullying and cyberbullying

- A large body of research indicates that individuals who have been bullied are at increased risk of subsequent mental, emotional, and behavioral problems, especially internalizing problems.

- Individuals who bully others are likely to experience negative emotional, behavioral, and mental health outcomes

- Individuals who both bully others and are themselves bullied appear to be at greatest risk for poor psychosocial outcomes
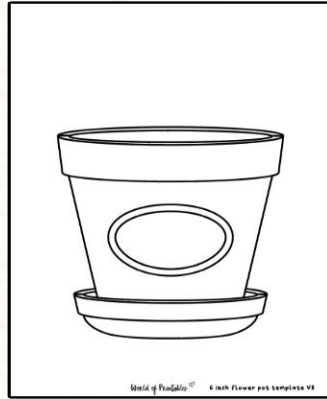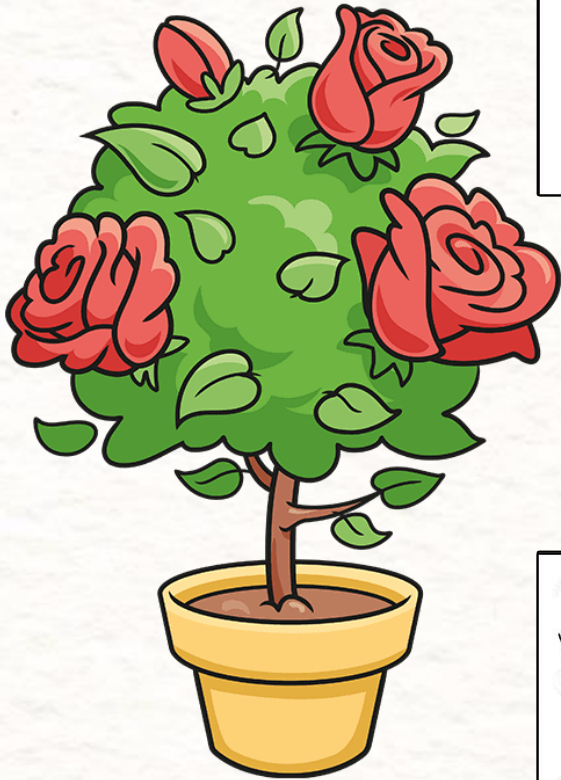
(Source: Committee on the Biological and Psychosocial Effects of Peer Victimization: Lessons for Bullying Prevention 2016)

Bullying is not only an educational challenge, but a public health issue

WHAT CAN WE DO?

1. What can schools do?

The 3 pillars of prevention and intervention

System

❌ Ad-hoc solutions

➕ Whole school approach, policies, procedures

Methods

❌ Punitive Methods

➕ Restorative Methods (Cyber)Bullying Protocol

Approach

❌ „Good and bad", labeling

➕ Mentalisation, Trauma-informed approach, NVK

The place of cyberbullying prevention and intervention in school policies and procedures

Online safety policies and procedures

Bullying policies and procedures
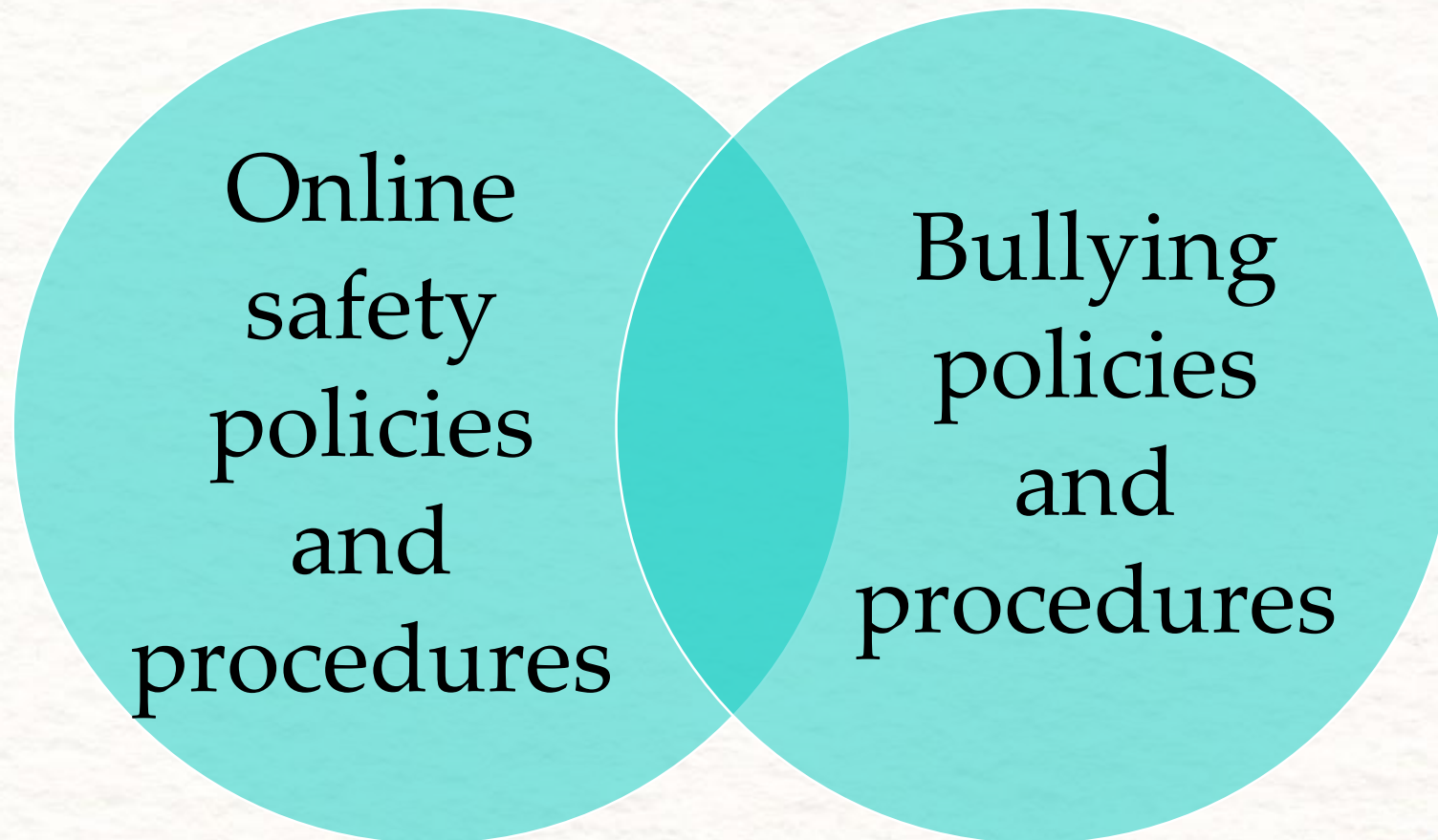
Checklist for effective school policies and procedures for *online safety*

1. Engage staff, students and parents/carers

- **Regularly identify key and emerging online safety issues**

- **Hear from a diverse range of voices so that responses are relevant to all groups** and consider the needs of all students including those who may be **more vulnerable** and susceptible to online harms.

2. Organise a team

- Establish and support a **team of staff members to champion online safety and be a first point of contact** for other staff, students and parents/carers when reporting online safety issues.

3. Embed online safety within school policies, procedures and practices and ensure school procedures are consistent with applicable national, state and territory laws

Source: https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/toolkit-for-schools/prepare

4. Develop clear and accessible procedures

• **Set clear expectations and a code of conduct about the use of digital devices** as well as online collaboration platforms and social media

• **Set clear incident response pathways** and processes

5. Communicate openly with the school community

• **Outline how the school will communicate online safety issues** with members, **students and parents/carers will be consulted** and include **what students and parents/carers can expect if an incident occurs**

6. Make procedures publicly available (at assemblies, year level meetings, in newsletters, on the school website, in high-traffic areas such as the front office, bathrooms, first aid area, library, student services area)

7. Review regularly

Checklist for effective school policies and procedures for tackling *bullying and cyberbullying*

1. Introduction of a systemic, long-term, research-based **anti-bullying program (Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, KIVA etc.)**

2. **Training** of all **school citizens** (adults, students) on the topic in order to change attitudes (with a positive message!)

3. Educating and **engaging parents**

4. Organizing an **antibullying team** and setting up **reporting mechanisms**

5. Developing a procedure for dealing with bullying situations – **(cyber)bullying protocol -** this should be clear, understandable and accessible for everyone (system and method)

6. **Regular evaluation** of the situation and the effectiveness of solution methods, modification if necessary - regular (annual) diagnostics

2. What can teachers do?

What can teachers do?

1. PREVENTION by EDUCATING CHILDREN about cyberbullying (online safety, bullying, social-emotional learning, digital literacy, digital citizenship, resilience)

2. INTERVENTION by RESPONDING to incidents of cyberbullying (online safety and bullying)

You are in a much better place if your institution implemented the previously mentioned policies and procedures.

If not, you are still not alone – there are incredible resources online (because the internet is not all bad ☺)!

1. EDUCATION

We should avoid fear-based messages!

FREE RESOURCES, TOOLKITS, CURRICULUMS:

- BIK Resources: https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/resources

- KID-ACTIONS EU PROJECT - Cyberbullying prevention tools - https://www.kidactions.eu/ and https://www.kidactions.eu/edutoolkit/

- CORE: https://core-evidence.eu/education-toolkit

- BIK Youth: https://www.bikyouth.eu/

- ENABLE - http://enable.eun.org/about

- klicksafe.de - https://www.klicksafe.de/

- esafety.gov.au - https://www.esafety.gov.au/

- telethonkids.org.au – https://www.telethonkids.org.au/

- Google – Be internet awsome - https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_us/

1. EDUCATION

FREE RESOURCES, TOOLKITS, CURRICULUMS:

- saferinternet.org.uk - https://saferinternet.org.uk/

- childnet.com - https://www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools/

- cyberwise.org - https://www.cyberwise.org/

- cyberbullying.org - https://cyberbullying.org/

- stopbullying.gov - https://www.stopbullying.gov/

- eukidsonline.net - http://www.eukidsonline.net/

- bullyingnoway.gov.au - https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/teaching-about-bullying/talking-about-bullying and https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/resources/teaching-resources-catalogue

- UNESCO – UNESDOC Digital library - https://unesdoc.unesco.org/search/195709dd-a1e8-40b9-8bdb-c08f701b206a

- Digital Strategy of the EU https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en

- BIK+ - EU - A Digital Decade for children and youth: the new European strategy for a better internet for kids (BIK+) - https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:212:FIN –

- EAN https://www.antibullying.eu/

2. RESPONSE

- **WHAT SHOULD WE AVOID?**
- **WHAT SHOULD WE DO?**

GENERAL GUIDELINES
What NOT to do if a child comes to us saying they are being bullied/cyberbullied?

- AVOID telling the victimized child to „Ignore the bullying"! (*If he could, he would have done it already.*)

- AVOID telling the child to „Pull yourself together, don't be overly sensitive"! (*The child's "sensitive" reaction is the adequate behavior.*)

- Do NOT expect him to solve the situation alone! (*Leaving children in these situations alone increases their sense of hopelessness.*)

(he/him is used as a general pronoun)

GENERAL GUIDELINES
What NOT to do if a child comes to us saying they are being bullied/cyberbullied?

• AVOID telling him to „Stop tattling!" (*tattling is telling on someone*)

• Don't blame the child! DON'T tell him that if he changed his behavior/if he was different, the others wouldn't hurt him! *(No matter how strange, annoying, disturbing, aggressive, too quiet, too loud etc. a child is behaving, abuse is never an appropriate response. We can work with the child on how he can fit in more successfully, but never blame him for being abused.)*

• Do NOT sit down with the bullied child and the one who was bullying together to discuss the problem, rather listen to the children separately! *(If we listen to them at the same time, we won't be able to have a real conversation because of the power imbalance.)*

(he/him is used as a general pronoun)

GENERAL GUIDELINES
What to DO if a child comes to us saying they are being bullied/cyberbullied?

1. **MAKE it clear to the bullied child**:

- that he is **not to blame** for the abuse,

- that his safety and well-being are important to you,

- **not take revenge** or retaliate and make clear **what steps will you take** or advice him to take to stop the abuse (in cyberbullying cases: saving evidence, reporting, blocking) and

- that you will do several **follow-up conversations**,

- if he agrees (together with his parents), **you can help find him a professional** who will help him process his negative experiences (e.g. a psychologist) and tell him about **helplines and hotlines** available

(he/him is used as a general pronoun)

GENERAL GUIDELINES
What to DO if a child comes to us saying they are being bullied/cyberbullied?

2. **Collect all available data/documents** and assess the situation (is it bullying/cyberbullying or some other problem)?

3. If there is a **bullying protocol** in place, take the recommended steps (notifications, consequences, documentation, communcation with parents, other students etc.) If there is no bullying protocol in your school, still remember, that **the main goal at this point is: to stop the abuse and to restore a sense of security**

4. Check at appropriate intervals (a few days, a week) to see if the situation has been resolved! (**Follow-up**)

5. **Restoring relationships and community** with the involvement of those involved by using restorative tools after proper preparation and if all children agree

Steps to making a cyberbullying report by students/parents/teachers

1. **Collect evidence** – copy URLs or take screenshots of the material (Do not take screenshots of nude or sexual images of others under 18!)

2. Report the cyberbullying material **to the social media service first**

3. If the content is not removed within 48 hours, report it to your **INHOPE or SAFER INTERNET hotline**!

4. You can call a helpline if needed (also as a supporting adult) – **Child Helpline International – In EUROPE you can call: 116-111** https://childhelplineinternational.org/helplines/116-111-eu/

WHO CAN WE REPORT TO?

- Directly to **SOCIAL MEDIA SITES**

- **INHOPE – Network of Internet hotlines (NON-EU countries as well)**
  https://www.inhope.org/EN
  - In Hungary:
    - Internet Hotline **https://nmhh.hu/internethotline/**
    - Biztonsagosinternet Hotline https://www.biztonsagosinternet.hu/hu

- **INSAFE Safer Internet Centres (EU)**
  https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/hu/policy/insafe-inhope
  - In Hungary: https://www.saferinternet.hu/
    - -Biztonságos Internet (Safe internet) hotline
      https://www.biztonsagosinternet.hu/hu
    - Országos Gyermekmentő Alapítvány (International Children's Safety Service) https://www.gyermekmento.hu/
    - Kék Vonal (Blue Line) helpline - https://kek-vonal.hu/ -

What can be done about sexting incidents?

As an adult:

• Be open and supportive

• **Try not to judge**

• Seek help

• Be careful with evidence

• **Take prompt action**

Source: Better Internet for Kids – Sexting https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/en/teacher-corner/deep-dives/sexting

Thank you for your attention!

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions:

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