DAPHNE III PROJECT

"Designing evidence-based strategies and actions to face bullying by considering socio-ethnic diversities in school populations and evaluating their effects"

GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING STRATEGIES
AND
ACTIONS TO FACE BULLYING

September 2009

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CHAPTER 1: THE RATIONAL OF THE PROJECT AND
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HANDBOOK

A) The rational of the project

In the literature, bullying is primarily seen as an external threat to psychological well-being, learning and instruction. In this project that you are actively involved in, bullying is treated not only as an event disturbing learning but also as an event closely related to the learning process. Specifically, bullying is seen and treated not only as an obstacle to achieve learning outcomes but also as a variable that influences the quality of the school and the classroom environment and through that the instruction processes that take place inside and outside the classroom. By affecting the learning outcomes, bullying becomes a threat to the school learning environment, the learning process and the functioning of school. In this way, we suggest that you could try to reduce bullying by treating it as a **challenge for introducing and achieving relevant affective and cognitive aims** (i.e., social cognition, understanding of social values, emotional recognition, and positive attitudes towards peers) beyond those included in the formal curriculum.

In order to achieve our goals and have success in our efforts to reduce bullying in your school, we should all keep in mind that bullying involves not only the individual students who act as bullies, victims or bystanders which can be a large group (according to research findings up to 80% of the student body)   but is also an issue that concerns all the students and the teachers in your school due to the above mentioned argument that bullying affects the quality of the school and the learning environment , as you may have already experienced. This implies that it is up to the whole school to try to deal with this challenge and reduce bullying. Research has shown that a whole school antibullying intervention has a stronger effect on reducing bullying than interventions addressing individuals. In this context, within your participation in the project, all the members of your school (i.e., teachers, parents and students) are encouraged to take actions and significantly contribute to this attempt.

We are very hopeful for the results of this effort and for the success of the project as we believe that bullying is a problem that **can** be handled, reduced and prevented. Our research team will provide you support in order to carefully set up plans and form a clear policy for your school which will aim to:

> ➢ Raise the **awareness** of pupils, teachers, parents and supervisors.

➢ Encourage the students, the parents and the teachers to **report any bullying incident and also take appropriate actions for all students when bullying happens.**

➢ Take actions to improve the **School Learning Environment.**

We (the research team) are here to help you with your plans and to make the identification of what can be achieved easier, as well as when and how, it can be achieved, in order to deal with and prevent bullying.

In this context, the purpose/aim of this handbook is mainly to help the preparation and the implementation process of the Daphne project by the provision of **concrete** and **specific** guidelines to the teachers (the practitioners), the management team (principal and deputy heads) and the school team. Specifically, we provide guidelines in relation to **the aims, content, target groups and, most importantly, activities and actions to carry out in order to face school bullying effectively**. These guidelines will enable the development of specific strategies and actions to face bullying among students and therefore work towards the prevention and the reduction of the problem. Therefore, in this handbook specific suggestions for handling and sanctioning bullying when it occurs are included. In addition, this handbook presents the theoretical framework of the project and provides clear suggestions on how to build school self-evaluation mechanisms, including the collection of relevant data and the use of this information aiming to prevent bullying and improve the educational practices both at the school and the classroom level.

B) The phases of the project

Below you can see the phases of the project, what has already been done and what we intend to do in detail. Until now, with your approval and cooperation, we have conducted a pre-measure in your school regarding the factors at the school and the classroom level which contribute in explaining and/or facing bullying (1st phase of the project). These factors have mainly to do with your school policy on aspects related (directly or indirectly) to bullying (i.e., the school learning environment, your policy for dealing with bullying incidents, the classroom learning environment and teaching) and with your school evaluation mechanisms that you have established in order to collect data on bullying**.** The collected information about bullying can be used for the benefit of the development of your action plan.

Throughout this first investigation, resulting from the analysis of the data of your school, we have identified three basic fields-areas-domains in which there is scope for your school to improve significantly. A short report presenting these three areas has already been sent to you (October 2009).

In the second phase of the project, with your active cooperation, we intend to develop together the intervention action plan and also your school policy. We think that our suggestions concerning the fields-areas-domains for improvement can help you develop your school policy and proper strategies and actions for dealing with bullying.

At the end of the project, after the **implementation** of your strategies and actions in preventing and facing bullying, in order to find out if we managed to have success we will conduct final measures. By administering questionnaires and tests to students and teachers of your school, we will estimate together the **achievement of cognitive and affective outcomes** (e.g., social cognition, understanding of social values, emotional recognition, and positive attitudes towards peers), **the quality of school life** and the **reduction of bullying**. By comparing these final measures with the initial measures (i.e., taken before the implementation of the intervention) we will be able to measure the results of our efforts and the impact of your strategies and actions in achieving relevant affective aims and in reducing bullying.

In order to have success when implementing your plans, as you may know from your past experience, the following elements should be incorporated in your strategies and actions to reduce bullying.

➢ **Active involvement of parents and students** is needed. In this way, you will get their views and beliefs about bullying and build strategies and actions that take into account their concerns. Moreover, you can encourage them to contribute in implementing actions and strategies that are supported by the whole school community.

➢ **Researchers** involved in the project can support your attempt to reduce bullying when you design, implement and reflect on your strategies and actions. In fact they will be active participants for advice based on research evidence and interpreting data. The research team will be available to provide suggestions, exchange ideas with you and discuss any difficulties you may face during the implementation in order to facilitate your plans to develop further your policy and actions.

➢ To facilitate the communication of your school with us, we suggest that you nominate one person from the teachers or the management team to act as a **coordinator** for the implementation of the project. In this way, it will be easier to inform and help you any time you need support. In addition, as it will not be possible for us to be physically presented every day in your school, we also recommend that the coordinator keeps a **log book and any other record** which will inform us about the whole process of implementing your strategies and actions. Obviously, it is not necessary for the coordinator to put down your every day progress but to mention those events that are very crucial for the success of the project (e.g., problems that turn up, difficulties, achievements, remarks, hesitations). You can share these events with us and we can help you in your attempts to redefine your strategies and actions and make them more relevant to your context and feasible in implementing them.

➢ A **network** among the schools which participate in the project has been established during the starting conference. In this way, you will be able to exchange ideas and experiences on what is more effective when dealing with bullying in similar incidents-situations. Moreover, you can ask for suggestions on how to deal with obstacles and specific practical difficulties which will appear in implementing your strategies and actions to reduce bullying.

C) The aim and the structure of the handbook

This handbook is expected to provide you with some specific guidelines on how to design and implement your whole school strategies and actions to reduce bullying. The recommended approach is based on the assumption that factors affecting bullying are operating at class- and school- level. Thus, the handbook is organised into three parts. The first part (chapter 2) provides a critical review of the literature on bullying. Emphasis is given on providing suggestions on how to deal with bullying incidents by taking into account the characteristics of bullies and victims. The second part (chapter 3) provides suggestions on how to design strategies and actions that address factors which are associated not only with the reduction of bullying but also with the achievement of learning outcomes. Specifically, these factors are presented and actions that can be taken in order to improve their functioning are given. Finally, we provide a list of resources (see Appendix A) which you may find useful in making decisions on designing your strategies and actions to reduce bullying.

CHAPTER 2: BULLYING IN SCHOOLS: SETTING THE SCENE

Bullying is not a contemporary phenomenon in the educational setting. A quick glance at the old records of schools would reveal the longitudinal character of the problem. In this chapter, we provide some background information regarding the nature of school bulling by referring to a definition of the phenomenon, the different kinds of its expression, the different roles identified and the myths it is accompanied by. We also deal with some individual characteristics of bullies and victims, in order to enable a better understanding of the possible reasons that may lead to bullying and victimization in a particular school.

A) Definition: What is bullying?

In an incident of bullying behaviour there are many persons involved, either as bystanders or as participants. Each one of them experiences and regards bullying in a different way and, consequently, defines it according to his/her perceptions. In addition, bullying behaviour can take different forms in different environments according to the factors that determine the bully's relationships with others. However, a definition of bullying behaviour based on the common characteristics that are acknowledged by both the participants and the bystanders is provided below. Specifically, for the purposes of this project, we make use of the following definition of bullying which identify the special characteristics of bullying behaviour that help us distinguish bullying from other types of student misbehaviour.

> A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, *repeatedly and over time* to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. It is a negative action when someone *intentionally* inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another. There should also be an *imbalance in strength*: the student who is exposed to negative actions has difficulty in defending him/herself and is somewhat helpless against the student or students who harass" (Olweus, 1994).

Based on the above definition, one can see that bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour that is done intentionally by the bully over longer periods of time (sometimes continuing for weeks, months or even years). Moreover, victims of

bullying have difficulties to defend themselves. Thus, bullying behaviour is seen as an abuse of power and a desire to intimidate (Sharp & Smith, 1994).

B) Different kinds of bullying

Bullying behaviour can take different forms in different environments according to the factors that determine the bully's relationships with others. It is contextualized in three main forms:

- *physical (hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings)*
- *verbal (name-calling, insulting, repeated teasing, racist remarks),*
- *indirect (spreading nasty rumours, excluding someone from social groups)*

In the latest years a new type of bullying has been identified that it is initiated by means of technology, known as "*cyberbullying*" (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008). Cyberbullying is defined as an "intentional and overact of aggression toward another person online" (Ybarra & Mitchel, 2004).

C) Different roles identified in bullying

In an incident of bullying there are many individuals involved that hold different roles. The main roles identified in a bullying behaviour are: *the bullies, the victims, the bully/victims, and the bystanders*. However, in the identification and exploration of the different roles it is essential to keep in mind that these roles are not fixed traits of the individuals involved. Individuals, in fact, can move in and out of these roles. Thus, labelling students as "bullies" or "victims" would definitely foster a stereotype and communicate that these behaviours are unchangeable. In this section, we attempt a description of these roles in order to understand their contribution to the development of a bullying incident, keeping in mind that all individuals are capable of engaging in any of these roles.

The Bullies

Bullies are generally described as having an aggressive reaction pattern towards their peers or adults. They have a positive attitude towards violence and its use and are also characterized by impulsivity and a strong need to dominate others (Olweus, 1993). They also believe that bullying is an easy and effective way to get what they want

(Besag, 1989). In the future, they are very likely to present forms of antisocial behaviour (Sharp & Smith, 1994). Their behaviour is distinguished from other forms of violence by their sense of being in position of power in relation to others and their *intention* of causing distress or harm to others for their own gain or gratification. However, not all of them take the initiative to start bullying. Some of them participate in bullying when someone else starts bullying.

The Victims

Victims are those who are repeatedly and over time exposed to negative actions and are unable to defend themselves or to call on support from others (Olweus, 1993). Thus, they are anxious, isolated, and vulnerable. Some of them accept the role, which has been allocated to them (i.e., "passive victims") (Besag, 1989) whereas others show a combination of anxious and aggressive reaction patterns ("provocative victims") (Olweus, 1993). The latter, are usually identified in situations where most of the children or, even, the whole class is involved in the harassment. Another group of victims accept their role in order to gain acceptance and popularity (Olweus, 1978), playing the role of the class clown ("colluding victims").

The Bully/Victims

This is a dual role and refers to a group of students who are bullies in one situation, yet victims in another. For example, research has shown that students who are subjected to harsh discipline at home, to the extent of being bullied by their parents, often displace their anger, as victims at home, to their relationships with their peers at school (Besag, 1989).

The bystanders

This role is undertaken by the majority of the children who witness bullying actions but they are neither involved in bullying nor provide support to the victim(s). Their participation in bullying can be seen as passive ("silent majority") (Sharp & Smith, 1994) or active. They may turn their back to a bullying incident either apathetically or they may believe that by ignoring the bullying incident, it will disappear. In addition, some of them may reinforce the bully's actions, contributing, in this way, to the sustainability of school bullying. Another group, despite their feelings of pity for the victim, are reluctant to take the initiative to report the incident to an adult as a result

of their fear of bullies or the little attention they receive from adults, when reporting about bullying. This lack of willingness to intervene has to be taken seriously into consideration when planning an intervention programme.

D) Myths related to bullying

The longitudinal character of school bullying and the different interpretations it has been subjected to over time, led to the development of certain myths that affect the implementation of the different kinds of intervention in order to prevent or face it. Below some of the most dominant myths are presented.

Bullying is irrelevant to teaching and learning

Bullying is often viewed as irrelevant to teaching and the learning processes. However, teaching and learning take place within a social context and bullying is part of it. Moreover, bullying is very likely to affect negatively the learning opportunities of students. This makes bullying a considerable component of the learning, which is strongly relevant to the learning outcomes. Our project is mainly based on this assumption and is concerned with the establishment of strategies and actions which will improve the school learning environment and the teaching practice (see chapter 3). Furthermore, for the purposes of this project, we take into account that victims are highly anxious and often present symptoms of school phobia which have negative implications for learning. On the other hand, learning difficulties and poor attendance may also lead to bullying, since some bullies are individuals with low frustration tolerance. Thus, they soon fall out of the learning procedure and consequently out of the social context of the classroom. In this way, they develop a negative attitude towards schooling, which is expressed in exercising different forms of bullying to their classmates. As a consequence, one of the major aims of an intervention programme on bullying should be focused on the (re)inclusion of both bullies and victims into the learning procedure and into the school community.

Dealing with bullying means to handle a few "difficult" students

Bullying is not simply an isolated, aggressive action between a "bully" and a "victim". It is rather a dynamic, social relationship problem (Swearer et al., 1998) which is, often, due to hectic human relations involving more participants. As such, it is influenced by peers, families, schools, and communities. Consequently, the

phenomenon of bullying should concern the entire school population and all the factors that are responsible for the quality of education (Espelage & Swearer, 2004).

Boys bully more than girls. It's in their nature…

Gender stereotypes affect bullying behaviour to the extent they determine adults' attitudes towards the bullies. Adults can be more permissive to physical bullying presented by boys rather than presented by girls, as this behaviour is considered as "natural" for boys in certain social environments. In addition, it is very difficult to identify indirect bullying attributed by girls in environments. However, research has shown that both boys and girls use and experience all kinds of bullying (e.g., Alsaker et al., 1999; Kaloyirou, 2002; Kyriakides et al., 2006; Osterman et al., 1998).

Physical bullying is the most frequent and more damaged

Physical bullying does not occur as frequently as other forms of bullying. However, its results are not usually easy to be hidden and thereby adults pay more attention to this form of bullying. On the other hand, verbal bullying is used more frequently but evidence for its use can not always be found easily. Therefore, indirect bullying can be regarded as equally damaging as the physical bullying, especially since it is often undetected by adults. As a consequence, indirect bullying may continue for years without any cost for the bully. In terms of intervention, its identification presupposes a high level of awareness of the dynamic relationships in the school.

Bullying is a "normal" component of growing up

Bullying starts from pre-school age and continues through elementary and secondary school years reaching its peak at the transition from elementary to secondary school, as this has been regarded as related to its increase (Nansel et al., 2001). Therefore, its presence cannot be isolated in one or two developmental stages. However, this behaviour is not a "normal" component of growing up but a life span problem as in the long term, victims continue to present low self-esteem and depression (Olweus, 1993) or even commit suicide (Slee, 1994), whereas bullies are more likely to be involved in anti-social behaviour during their adulthood.

E) Individual characteristics of bullies and victims

School bullying involves many factors: the teachers, the pupils, their parents, their peers and the school as an institution. In this section, the individual characteristics of bullies and victims are presented. By identifying the individual characteristics of bullies and victims in your school, you will develop a better understanding of the possible reasons that lead to bullying and victimization and this may help you to develop your strategies and actions to face bullying.

Bully's individual characteristics

Research has shown that brain functions as well as serotonin and testosterone may play a critical role in the neurological basis of aggression as they affect aggressiveness. In addition, individuals with mental health problems often show aggressive behaviour (Bru et al, 2002). In dealing with bullying behaviour that is due to physiological factors, a trusting relationship with the child's family should be developed. In this way, teachers will get the appropriate information and coordinate with other specialists that provide therapy to the child (e.g. paediatricians, clinical psychologists).

Bullies may also present aggressive behaviour for certain reasons associated with their relationship with the people around them and with the way they perceived their selves. Their intentions are mainly related to the maintenance of social hierarchy in the classroom and to their gender roles. Bullying may also take place when pupils want to attract attention or to defend their friends and supporters.

Gender may also play a role in the way bullies attempt to sustain their social status in the class. In some cases, boys can employ more physical bullying than girls, whereas girls can employ indirect ways of bullying more than the boys (Baldry, 1998; Borg, 1999; Boulton, 1993; Charlton et al., 1998; Fabre-Cornali et. al., 1999; Kyriakides et al., 2006; Ortega et al., 1999; Pateraki & Houndoumadi, 2001). If bullying is mainly understood as 'physical aggression', then it is more likely that any girls employing indirect bullying will not be regarded as bullies.

Bullies' self-perception is related to the way they are seeing others and the way they are processing social information. Bullies can show a high level of negative self-image. This is especially true for those who experience or have witnessed physical violence at home (Black & Newman, 1996; Osofsky, 1995). They are prone to depression and therefore, tease others in order to feel better. They are also more

likely to engage in externalising behaviour such as conduct problems and to report lower levels of school belonging.

The quality of family relationships is defined according to parental and parent–children relationships within a family. Family abuse witnessed by the children often leads them to create a negative opinion about human relations. Moreover, bullying may occur when children experience negativity or rejection on behalf of their parents or even feel trapped in their parent's expectations since they experience their parent's attitude towards them as a rejection of themselves. In these cases, children may transfer their aggression into their relationships within the school environment (Hollway, 1999; Parker, 1995). The way parents treat their children may also induce bullying behaviour. For example, children may become bullies due to the fact that their parents are permissive. Moreover, if parents do not permit their children to express their anger, they may then internalize it and result in developing depressive symptoms. Generally, when family relationships are characterized by negativity in terms of rejection, neglect, dependence, fear and aggression, children are at high risk to develop bullying behaviour.

Peers are integral in supporting and maintaining bullying in school. Bullies may form cliques that are usually consisted of pupils that shared the same idea about aggression (Coie et al., 1999; Poulin et al., 2000) or were afraid of the bully and so gave them the chance to be the leader (Boulton et al., 1994). In this way, bullies received emotional reward from their peer group (Sandstrom et al., 1999).

According to the attraction theory, bullies are usually attracted by individuals who possess characteristics reflecting independence (e.g., disobedience). The transmission period from elementary to secondary school requires a restructuring of primal affiliation groups and creation of new ones in a new school environment. Bullying at this stage is often used to establish control over other students and directly impact a role that children assume with their peer groups.

With regards to the way bullies interpret the behaviour of others, bullies are more likely to interpret ambiguous social cues as malevolent. Even though this may be true in some cases, the theory of mind recognizes the social nature of bullying and asserts that bullies are actively seeking out their victim (Sutton et al., 1999) and that the victims are picked very carefully. Bullies may also work deliberately to build a reputation among their peers (Salmivalli et al., 1996) and may use their ability to manipulate others in order to get to their aim. However, they do not value prosocial

behaviour and show low levels of empathy for the victims (Sutton et al., 1999). Bullies appear to understand the difference between right and wrong but they show very low sense of responsibility in respecting others. In addition, bullies employ their cognitive skills to resort to deception and self-protection with the thought of being punished.

Victim's individual characteristics

The effects of bullying strongly affect the development of the victims' individual characteristics and are manifested in terms of "stress related symptoms, low self confidence, low self esteem and lack of consideration" (Sharp & Smith, 1994). These effects are associated with short-term and long-term psychological and academic consequences.

Victims are usually different from the majority of the students. Passive victims are usually physically weaker than bullies and, thereby, they form cliques to balance their power with that of their physically stronger opponent(s). In addition, some of them may belong to an ethnic minority group presenting physical or cultural deviations from the mainstream student population. They suffer from low self esteem (Boulton & Smith, 1994) resulting in them being more anxious, insecure, cautious, sensitive and quiet, than the average students. These negative feelings may be reinforced by certain stressful life situations that the child and his family are going through during that particular time, such as immigration to another country, change of school, a new family member, health and financial problems. These events enhance their vulnerability as they request a reformation of roles and routines and an extent of adjustability to a new and an indefinite way of living in which some children are not always ready to respond.

Some victims may experience stress-related symptoms (e.g., headaches, nightmares). They may even present school phobia, as they are afraid to leave the safety of their home. They may also regard themselves as responsible for what is happening to them and this attitude affects their concentration and learning. They are also more likely to be depressed. These characteristics lead to a negative view of themselves and their situation, as they think of their selves as a failure feeling ashamed and unattractive. This makes it difficult for them to assert themselves in their peer group and it is communicated in the social context of school as a message that

they will not retaliate if they are attacked or insulted. In this case, they usually cry and withdraw.

Most of them have strong positive relations with their family members that are sometimes perceived as overprotection. However, this attitude on behalf of their family members, and especially their parents, may result from the fact that they rarely speak to them about their torture, as they do not want to break up the good picture their parents have for them. On the other hand, their parents see that there is something wrong with their child that they cannot understand and this raises their anxiety. In addition, the parents of the passive victims also feel ashamed that their child is not a social success and they are reluctant to contact the school for help. Thus, they may expect him/her to fend off attack (Besag, 1989).

Provocative victims are characterised by a combination of anxious and aggressive reaction patterns. They present concentration problems, hyperactivity and generally they behave in ways that create irritation and tension around them (Olweus, 1993). Their presence in the classroom can change the dynamics of bully/victim problems, as they provoke many students and lead to a negative reaction towards them by the majority or the entire class population. Some of them may be students with coordination problems or other physical impairments. The effort these children need to put into their school day may also make them overtired and irritable (Besag, 1989).

The description of the individual characteristics of bullies and victims help us to see how complex the phenomenon of bullying is. Several factors associated with the *physiological, psychological and social characteristics* of human beings play an important role when bullying incidents occur in schools. Moreover, *family and peer relations* and *gender stereotypes* contribute to understand bullying incidents and their implications to students well being. Thus, careful investigation of these student background factors will help you to develop your strategies and actions to face bullying. For this reason, in the next chapter, we will present suggestions on designing strategies and actions to face and reduce bullying which take into account the background information on bullying provided in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3:
DESIGNING ACTIONS AND STRATEGIES TO FACE BULLYING
AT SCHOOL LEVEL

A) Introduction

In order to design actions and strategies to deal with bullying, we should set specific and clear objectives that will help us improve the school and the class learning environment. In regard to the *school learning environment* (SLE), it is reminded that most bullying incidents occur *outside the classroom* and thereby our schools should have a clear policy of the following aspects of the SLE:

a) student behaviour outside the classroom,

b) collaboration and interaction between teachers,

c) partnership policy dealing with collaboration of school with other stakeholders (i.e., parents, school advisors, school community), and

d) provision of learning resources.

In the first part of this chapter, we do not only provide specific actions that schools may take to improve each aspect of SLE but we also explain why and how each aspect is related to bullying. Beyond the development of the SLE, we should reconsider our *school policy on teaching* especially since through this policy we can develop our curriculum and introduce new teaching aims that are associated with bullying.

In the previous chapter, it was explained that bullying is not an isolated phenomenon independent of teaching. Therefore, reducing bullying can be achieved by providing learning opportunities to bullies, victims and bystanders to develop their socio-cognitive skills and their attitudes towards peers and schooling. Moreover, school policy on the quality of teaching should be developed further in order to help teachers develop a safe and caring classroom learning environment. This aspect of school policy is also important because it provides suggestions to teachers to deal with classroom misbehaviour and with bullying incidents that may occur during teaching.

The last factor that has to be addressed is concerned with the development of school evaluation mechanisms which enable school stakeholders to find out who are involved in bullying incidents and what are the aspects of the SLE and the policy on

teaching that need to be improved. In a later stage, the school evaluation mechanisms will provide data to school stakeholders about the implementation of the strategies and actions for facing bullying. Thus, school evaluation mechanisms are expected to help school stakeholders to redefine and improve the school policy on facing bullying.

Following the arguments made above about the three main domains that have to be addressed in facing and reducing bullying in schools, we divide this chapter in three parts addressing: a) the SLE, b) the policy on teaching and c) the establishment of school evaluation mechanisms. Although this chapter refers to all aspects of these three overarching domains that have to be addressed in facing bullying, each school has to address only those aspects of each domain that need to be improved. Specifically, it was mentioned in the introductory chapter that by taking into account the report that we have sent you, you will identify the area(s) upon which your school likes to concentrate.

When developing your school policy and designing your actions and strategies it is important to have in mind how and why each aspect of the three domains (i.e., the policy on the learning environment, the policy on teaching and school evaluation) are related with the effective implementation of your attempt to face and reduce bullying. Designed to promote an anti-bullying message throughout the school, the policy should outline the *roles, responsibilities and procedures* for staff and other adults including parents and community volunteers; steps for students and staff dealing with bullying incidents and consequences for bullying.

When developing your school policy and designing your actions and strategies, it is also very useful to take into account the following:

A) The term school policy here does not refer only to the various formal documents or letters and reports sent to different school stakeholders in order to explain the policy of the school but also to various actions that the school management team (teachers, deputy heads, and administrator) undertake in order to improve the quality of teaching and the school learning environment. It is also important that the policy when formatted has to be clear in the messages that are delivered to the teachers and the other stakeholders giving them specific directions about the role that each of them has to undertake in regard to the implementation of the various aspects of school policy.

B) During the designing of your actions and strategies to face bullying, it is advised that you take into account the abilities/skills of your teachers, students, and

parents in implementing your intervention policy. For example, encouraging teachers to visit each other's classroom to observe and evaluate the way their colleagues are dealing with student misbehaviour may not be an appropriate decision to take if a climate of openness and trust among teachers has not yet been established at the school. In contrast, more approachable actions and strategies such as the presentation at the staff meeting of successful approaches that some teachers used in order to deal with bullying could have a positive impact on the effectiveness of the intervention. Therefore, during the design of your policy on bullying, you should encourage the school stakeholders to take actions and strategies which are in line with their abilities. At the same time, you should make sure that there is willingness from the stakeholders to be involved in implementing the policy, and that the school is also able to provide them with the support (not only financial) needed in order to help them implement the policy.

Below you can find suggestions for specific actions and strategies that you could include in your attempt to design your policy on facing bullying. According to your specific needs, you can modify the strategies and actions in a way that serves your aims. Your strategies should also be in line with the skills of the various stakeholders of your schools. It is expected that our recommendations will help you take decisions on how to develop an effective school policy in facing and reducing bullying.

B) Policy and actions to improve the school learning environment

School policy concerning bullying should be announced to teachers (and if possible to all school stakeholders) at the beginning of the school year. There are many different ways to announce the school policy: a) In staff meetings with the entire school staff, b) hand out to the teachers a document/statements containing the school policy, c) inform the deputy heads and ask them to present the policy to the rest of the teachers, d) appoint a coordinator to be responsible for the project and also for the announcement of the policy. After the announcement of the policy, suggestions and ideas from the faculty are expected to come up. The teachers will present their expectations for the purposes, the objectives and the entire policy and feedback will be provided. Thus, after analyzing the proposed ideas, the final version of the school policy can be established and common expectations can be determined.

At this section you can find suggestions on the four aspects of the overarching factor included in our theoretical framework namely school policy on the school learning environment and actions taken to improve the SLE: a) student behaviour outside the classroom, b) collaboration and interaction between teachers, c) partnership policy, and d) provision of learning resources.

B.1) Student behaviour outside the classroom

Student behaviour outside the classroom is a very important aspect of dealing with bullying because most of the bullying incidents happen when students are outside the classroom (e.g., in the break time, before and after school). With the development of a clear policy on student behaviour outside the classroom, valuable information about bullying incidents and targets (bullies, victims, bystanders, isolated students) can be collected.

Regarding student behaviour outside the classroom, all school personnel (not only teachers, but also bus drivers, coaches, and after-school program supervisors) have to be trained to identify and respond to bullying as well as to motivate and reinforce positive behaviour. They should be aware of the various symptoms of victimization (see chapter 2), and be able to reach out to victims, and the protocol for contacting the appropriate staff members or a student's parent. For this reason, we provide below some specific suggestions on the content of the policy by taking into account that different activities can be undertaken in different time periods that students are outside the classroom (i.e., student behaviour in break time, student behaviour before the lesson starts, student behaviour after school hours/after lessons finish). Also, specific suggestions for the behaviour code that the school should develop in order to face effectively and reduce bullying which may happen outside the classroom are provided.

Student behaviour in break time

Schools should develop a policy concerning *effective supervision* of their students during the break. *Increased monitoring* of student behaviour during recesses and also before the start of the lessons can help to identify and intervene when bullying occurs. A carefully organized supervision plan especially in the areas of the school where it has been observed that more bullying incidents happen can help reducing the phenomenon.

Although a list of the teachers responsible for supervision is usually determined in most schools, this is not enough unless the role of each person and the places where each teacher is expected to supervise are also mentioned. In regard to the role of teachers, your school policy could recommend to them that during this supervision they should try to encourage students to seek help if they are being bullied. It is also suggested that teachers can observe student behaviour in order to detect any mental or physical health symptoms or any systematic changes in their mood. They can also conduct informal interviews with students where questions are open-ended and asked in a way to normalise the experiences and to create conditions under which students feel free to openly express their feelings.

Teachers should also be visible and vigilant in such common areas as hallways, stairwells, canteen, the gym, and the crib and in other hot spots where bullying occurs consistently. Also in the bathrooms where vandalisms, disorder and mess usually occur, increased supervision is needed. In bathrooms specific directions must be given to students (e.g., throw away any trash properly, flush toilet, keep the place tidy, and keep water in the sink). Although this action seems not to be directly related to bullying, it has an impact on the development of positive and desired behaviour that can be characterized as respectful, reliable and responsible. As long as these characteristics (e.g., respect, responsibility) are found to associate negatively with bullying, you should try to develop them (see Lane, Kalberg & Menzies, 2009).

Teachers during break time should also be encouraged to search for any *isolated students who may be victims of bullying*. For example, an isolated and sad student sitting at the break time in front of the teachers' office with no company may try to pass a message. This message can be understood as long as the teacher who supervises not only sees him/her but observes, thinks over the picture, and tries to interpret this situation. A possible explanation could be that some other students are bullying him/her and in order to obtain some kind of protection, he/she chooses a very visible place considered to be safe and secure because bullies will not dare to bully a student in a place where teacher supervision is increased. The next step for the teacher should be to discuss with the isolated child and provide support.

After such contact and communication, low profile students (who may experience bullying) may feel more confident in reporting bullying incidents. On the other hand, conclusions should not be arbitrary but to be drawn after discussion and reception of enough and appropriate information. For example, the child in the previous case could

sit there because he/she is tired and wants to rest from the game or prefers to enjoy their meal in silence. The role of the supervisors could also aim to support peer bystanders and encourage them to speak up in safe ways about bullying to tell staff what they see and hear, and to be friends with isolated peers. Teachers should also *thank and protect students who report aggressive behaviour* towards themselves or toward others. It is very important to keep in mind that *confidentiality* must be ensured and a nonthreatening way for students to report bullying of themselves or classmates must be established.

During break time, *playground activities such as playing in cooperative groups* can be preventative for bullying. In order to reduce student discipline problems, *table games* can be organized to keep students busy during the break time and also provide them with some fun. The plan for such tasks has to take into account that as many students as possible must participate. Specific directions have to be given to students (include others in their game, be active, follow the rules, use equipment appropriately, return equipment when they are done, line up when the bell rings, and respect other people's personal space). This attributes to build capacity and resilience in children and the ability to tolerate different perspectives on the same issue. In addition, a decision of the school board for offering *music during the break* can calm students' aggressive emotion as it can increase students' feelings of safety, happiness, and liking of school (see Swearer, Espelage & Napolitano, 2009).

Efforts of the school for creating a more *attractive natural environment (benches, tables)* can also be undertaken. In such case, financial support from parents or school community or sponsors (where it is possible) may be provided to school in order to obtain the budget to make the school environment as attractive as possible. In fact, by creating a more beautiful natural environment, some isolated spots can be utilized and therefore the places of the school will become safer and more secure for the students to play and spend happily their time outside the classroom.

Rewarding good behaviour not only in classroom but outside (during break time, and also before lessons start and after the end of the lessons) can be very beneficial. School can take decisions and set up a *motivation system* for the improvement of the social environment of the school by taking actions to emphasize the maintenance of the behaviour code and the promotion of appropriate and positive behaviours outside the classroom. For example students who interact and approach isolated students; show respect for peers and teachers, are responsible and give their best efforts can

earn "tickets". For the students who achieve to earn a significant number of "tickets" the school may decide that the praise should be verbal. In these cases, recognition can also be provided during assembly, in front of the classroom, or during the faculty meeting.

Using frequent descriptive praise for positive behaviour is important when an aggressive student starts to act responsibly and kindly, or even when aggression is less frequent or less intense over a period of time. Descriptive feedback ("I notice that you have been playing without fighting.") is more effective than trait-based praise ("You're so kind") or I-messages (I'm so happy you are acting better."). Praise that names the result of the improved behaviour helps student see the positive effects of their changed behaviour. Even more a praise card can be sent home and the student can win extra computer or basketball time. It is also up to the school to decide for the students to win desired items as well (e.g., a cd, sporting event invitation, candy, school t-shirt, stickers, free pass for the theatre, food coupon).

Student made-videos can be developed by the video team of the school (consisted of students of higher grades and a teacher) that can teach specific social skills and can be used as a booster by showing positive attitudes and behaviour outside the classroom (e.g., in bus, in bathroom, in the canteen, in the assembly, during a school visit). The stuff and the students can submit ideas for the videos.

A peer student supporting, counselling, and empowering a victim is also recommended. Social pressure brought by peer groups can have an important role in combating bullying. These students-counsellors can be prepared to improve their skills with special training by *developing listening, communication skills, confidentiality, acceptance and friendship skills*. During the break time older students can mentor/tutor younger students. These students will be responsible to spot isolated kids and include then in their company. In this way, a more inclusive environment in school will be created. It is stressed that peer counsellors will not handle situations alone in which there is a serious possibility of harm to the person seeking help. Peer counsellors should be supervised by teachers and ask for immediate guidance by adults when the problem is serious.

Student behaviour before the lesson starts (early in the morning)
The school should find ways to be aware of students' behaviour *on buses and on the way to and from school for students who walk or ride bikes*. A possible way could be

by obtaining information with the cooperation of the additional staff (not educational). For example, the bus driver and the school traffic warden can provide information for bullying incidents. It can also be arranged for a teacher every day to be in the school's entrance and welcome the students and their parents. In order to avoid disciplinary problems before the bell rings, the teachers can go to class as soon as they arrive to school. Another measure should be to make clear to students that as soon as they put their bag to their seats, they have to get outside the classroom. Supervision of the students should not cover only the playground and external areas but also the classrooms area. In addition, a document should be sent at home stating to the parents the exact time that all the students should be at school in order to avoid disciplinary problems and misbehaviour after the bell rings. Moreover, it should be explained to parents that the school asks for punctuality in the students' arrival in and leaving from the school in order to eliminate occurrence of misbehaviour and bullying incidents. A further reason that the school request orderliness in the time of arrival is because that when the students present to their classroom latish, they miss precious learning time and therefore the quantity of teaching is affected negatively.

Special attention should be given to providing instructions to children about their arrival-entry to school. More specifically, the school can define specific expectations concerning students' arrival-entry to the school that will be announced to all students: a) walk and not run, b) enter the school quickly and quietly, c)minimize chatting, d) arrive to class on time, d) put your bag in classroom and go to the playground, e) respect materials (e.g., posters in the hallways, e) avoid interaction with persons that you do not know outside the school and f) do not bring valuable items into school.

Student behaviour after school hours/after lessons finish

It has to be made clear to the parents that they have to arrange to take their children from school as soon as lessons finish. For the children who are supervised in school after school hours, a professional person (preferably a qualified teacher) registering the school's requirements should be appointed and not any adult without any basic qualifications on how to deal with children (e.g., a secretary or a parent with no background). For some countries it is expected and taken for granted that the school appoints a guard responsible for security of the place during after-hours. However, in a context where that measure has not already been undertaken and vandalisms do

occur in a school, in afternoon hours, it is up to the school or the community to nominate a guard for supervising the place and the school's property as soon as possible.

Special attention should be given to provide instructions to children about their exit from classroom and school. More specifically the school can define specific expectations concerning students' exit from school that will be announced to all students: a) leave the school quickly and quietly, b) minimize chatting, c) remember to take all your belongings from class, d) when you are outside the school waiting for your parents to take you, avoid interaction with persons that you do not know.

<u>Behaviour code determined by the school (with cooperation of students, teachers and parents) concerning student behaviour outside the classroom</u>

Rules should be brief and clear containing immediate consequences for aggressive behaviour and immediate rewards for inclusive behaviour. The behaviour code should reinforce the values of *empathy, caring, respect, fairness, and personal responsibility*, and must *clearly define unacceptable behaviour, expected behaviour and values, and consequences for violations*. In addition, the code should *apply to adults and students*, reflect age-appropriate language, and should be prominently placed throughout the school.

Content of the behaviour code

For the development of the behaviour code, we consider it useful to give emphasis on specific aspects that need to be taken seriously into account and can reinforce positive, acceptable and respectful behaviour from students. Particularly, the aspects that need to be addressed are as follows: a) definition of bullying, b) statements-rules to be followed by all the students, c) significance of weekly meetings with the students, d) expectations from victims and responsibilities of bystanders, e) queue in the canteen, f) students' arrival and exit from the school, and g) school assembly.

Initially, a *clear and comprehensive definition of bullying* has to be determined with cooperation of students, teachers and their parents. Ideas for *school rules* can be deboned by all the parties in order to result in brief and clear rules to include in the behaviour code. The following examples are rules formulated as comprehensive and clear-cut statements that could be included in the code:

1. We will not bully other students.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will include students who might be left out.
4. When we know someone is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

In order to assure that positive behaviour will be sustainable, *weekly meetings* to communicate with students have to be arranged. Through these meetings, teachers can raise the motivation of their students for following the rules of the behaviour code.

In the behaviour code, *expectations from victims* (what victims of bullying should do) should be stated clearly: a) tell a teacher, b) report to the principal, c) tell the parents, d) not suffer in silence, e) seek for help, f) act decisively with confidence, g) draw, write or discuss your feelings, and h) involve with reliable peers. Beyond expectations from victims, the *responsibilities of pupil bystanders*-expectations from bystanders should also be stated in the behaviour code: a) report to an adult, b) try to help students who are bullied, c) include students who are easily left out-invite the victim to join you and your friends, d) when you know that somebody is being bullied, tell an adult at school and an adult at home, e) do not gossip about what happened.

Emphasis when developing the behaviour code should be given on *queue in the canteen*. Specific appropriate, positive behaviour for students to follow must be defined: a) use a quiet voice, b) keep hands to their selves, c) use manners, d) make their choices quickly, e) stay in line and wait with patience, f) follow adults requests, g) have money ready, and h) clean any trash. Actions that can facilitate the process in canteen should be the use of different queue for younger and older students, a quick service by expert persons and different hour for the break for younger and older students. For example, younger students can have their break 10 minutes before the older students in order to be served in the canteen earlier and overcrowding to the canteen to be avoided.

Another aspect to determine in the behaviour code is *students' arrival and exit from the school* (e.g., use self control, enter and leave the school walking not running, report any problems to the teacher, keep hands and feet to self). Special attention must be given to the behaviour of students in the bus. Specific expectations concerning students' behaviour code in the bus must be announced to all students: a) be ready when bus arrives, b) use kind words towards the bus driver and other

students, c) follow the driver's rules, d) remain in seat after you enter the bus, d) speak in a quiet voice e) carry on all personal belongings, and f) share seating in bus.

Last but not least, desired behaviour during *school's assembly* has to be defined. The students have to follow their line in assembly. Younger students should be informed first to take their place. The time of the school assembly should be foresighted and arranged to take place in morning hours when the students are not tired and upset. Also, the school has to limit the time of assemblies and make their content as brief as possible. If the assembly will take more than 15 minutes, then arrangements for students to be seated must be done if not misbehaviour is likely to occur. Beyond each class's teacher, a general supervisor (not class teacher) for each assembly must be appointed. The following expectations for school assemblies should be announced to students: a) follow directions, b) control your temper c) self control and d) walk quietly in line after the end of the assembly. In case that they misbehave they would have specific consequences: a) apologize; b) discuss the incident with the teacher, principal, and/or parents; c) spend time in the office or another classroom, d) forfeit recess or other privileges.

However, in regard to the use of punishment as a means to assist bullies to realise their limits, it has to be used with caution as bullies may experience it as another form of frustration in which they are not tolerant. The attribution of physical punishment is found to be strongly related to negative relationships and may increase bullies' aggressiveness (Olweus, 1993). In order to that punishment of bullies is to be effective teachers have to take into consideration the following:

a) Bullies must be clear about the ground rules regarding bullying behaviour in their school and the sanctions of possible digressions.

b) There must be an agreed and consisted way in the use of punishment by all teachers and the bullies' parents, so that the bully gets common messages from all their caretakers regarding their behaviour and, thus, they cannot initiate manipulation.

c) Punishment should be attributed within a framework of a personal relationship between teachers and children so that it will have a personal meaning for the bullies. A serious talk with the bully before the attribution of the punishment should aim at helping the bullies to understand why they are being punished, that they are responsible for the consequences of their behaviour and that they are able and expected to change their reactions.

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d) In any case, bullies should not experience punishment as a kind of revenge or rejection on behalf of the adults and believe that being punished means resolving their relationship. This perception would enhance their emotional anxiety and insecurity reinforcing their anger and leading to a vicious cycle regarding the expression of bullying. Bullies should be clear that what we reject is their behaviour and not them, as individuals.

B.2) Collaboration and interaction between teachers

Collaboration and interaction between the teachers is particularly important because it can contribute to improving teachers' teaching skills, their every day practice and therefore it affects learning outcomes (cognitive and affective) positively. In effective schools, teachers interact on issues associated with learning and teaching in order to create a business-like environment which can promote students' learning, knowledge and consequently leads to the achievement of cognitive and affective outcomes of education (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008). Since bullying is treated as a challenge for creating a better learning environment, it is supported here that effective schools in facing and reducing bullying are those schools where teachers can interact and collaborate not only on aspects of the school policy associated with teaching but also on school policy regarding bullying. Though, some schools are characterized by collaboration and interaction between their teachers only in personal relations and social interaction without moving a step forward involving cooperation among teachers on the tasks that are expected to be undertaken in schools. For those schools, it is considered important that teachers have good relations but it is not necessarily expected by teachers to interact on issues associated with their teaching practice. Nevertheless, interaction and collaboration among the teachers can only be beneficial and could boost quality in the school learning environment when focalized on the tasks that teachers undertake in the school environment. This active interaction on issues associated with teaching and bullying is needed for teacher professional development purposes.

Content of the policy

Teachers are encouraged to learn from each other by *exchanging ideas and experiences* about bullying. For example, a teacher who has experienced a bullying problem in previous years and managed to handle it effectively can provide specific

suggestions and key elements to the other colleagues about how to make discipline effective and achieve respectful behaviour.

In the same way, teachers can reveal their ineffective strategies for dealing with bullying as well. A school climate of trust should be developed among the teachers in order to share with the rest of the teachers not only successes but failures as well. In this way, they will be able to reflect profitably on failures, avoid errors and develop further their positive experiences. However, it has to be underlined that a school climate of openness and trust is difficult to be achieved promptly. Self criticism needs time and collaborative efforts to be achieved. It is then up to you to judge when your staff is ready enough and feel confident enough to speak out on previous negative experiences.

Also, staff school wide should be encouraged to *exchange visits to each others classroom* and then reflect on effective and less effective ways and strategies to reduce disciplinary problems and bullying incidents in classrooms. During the visits, observation of teaching and effective ways to monitor disciplinary problems and misbehaviour can be carried out and the results of the observation should be discussed in staff meetings to help teachers learn effective ways to deal with bullying from each other. Specific observation instruments can be developed and these may also be in line with the school policy on bullying.

In addition, some activities as supervising students during break time can be appointed not just to one teacher but to *pairs of teachers*. By working collaboratively, teachers can discuss what they observe, exchange opinions, workout solutions and then present to the whole faculty the efforts that they found as more effective. In this way, teachers have access to appropriate *professional development* opportunities to develop and refresh skills that enable them to handle bullying in order to create and maintain a safe, caring, respectful and supportive school. Again in pairs or small groups, teachers can be reinforced by the school management team to prepare for the whole school a *presentation* on bullying regarding strategies that can be undertaken in order to reduce the phenomenon.

 A very useful strategy in this domain is the development of a *system of mentors* (more experienced teachers regarding bullying). According to the history and the skills of each teacher, the school management team can create the mentors committee. More experienced teachers and/or the head teachers can provide support to younger teachers or students who face bullying in a greater extent. Furthermore,

this group can arrange staff training, oversee the effectiveness of the program, suggest changes, and monitor the consistency of intervention.

In the development of the school policy, attention should be given to *provision of support and facilitations* to groups of teachers that face more bullying incidents in their classrooms. For example those teachers should have *a smaller number of students* in their classroom in order to have the opportunity to deal with bullying effectively. Moreover, a *second person-assistant in class* (when needed) can help them to manage effectively their classroom and their teaching time.

B.3) Partnership policy-Collaboration with other stakeholders:

When developing the school policy and designing policies the relations of school with community, parents, and advisors are very important as they can provide moral and material support to the school's efforts. Structures based on authentic partnership and collaboration with other stakeholders can contribute to the implementation of the actions to reduce and manage bullying and develop a safe, caring, respectful and supportive school environment. By informing all the parties involved (e.g., the parents, the school community) they can all voice their opinions and expectations and find ways to improve the school learning environment. Involvement of the wider community, especially parents and students in the school can be achieved by establishing a committee that involves the school principal, representatives from parent councils, teachers, other school staff, and students. By including staff, students, and parents in the creation and implementation of anti-bullying policies, the school management team receive valuable input from all those directly affected. Research evidence shows that this factor is one of the most important school factors found to be strongly associated with the effectiveness status of the school (Fan & Chen, 2001; Kyriakides, Creemers, Antoniou & Demetriou, in press; Waterman &Walker, 2009). By establishing good relations with the parents and the school community and encouraging them to be actively involved in the implementation of school policy, we make use of all available human and other learning resources not only to achieve the learning aims (cognitive and affective) but also to deal with various challenges that the school has to face such as the bullying incidents.

Content of the policy

In the following sub-chapter, specific guidelines for policy on partnership with various stakeholders are provided. More specifically, we focus our attention on the development of school policy for the roles and responsibilities that *parents, psychologists (clinical and educational) and the police* can undertake in regard to the reduction of bullying.

Collaboration with parents

This section is concerned with the establishment of close collaboration with parents on dealing with bullying. It is important to note that with the term parents we do not mean only the parents of bullies, victims and bystanders but the parents of all the students of your school. As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, bullying affects and involves not only the children who act as bullies, victims or bystanders but it is an issue that concerns all the students in your school. This implies that it should also be a concern of all the parents to try to deal with this challenge and reduce bullying.

Cooperation of the school with the parents in facing and reducing bullying and especially in sharing information and taking actions inside and outside the school to face bullying can be very helpful for implementing your school strategies and actions to face bullying. Parental involvement is very crucial and parents can be involved actively in your initiative to reduce bullying.

At the beginning of the school year, it is important for the school to *announce* to parents the school policy on bullying, to analyze it and ask them to provide feedback and suggestions. At the initial stages of the efforts, the school has to raise parents' awareness and provide all the information for the action plan. The school community has to *convince* parents that the program is going to work and that they are able to make a difference**.** During the implementation, *specific positive feedback* to parents about declining rates of aggression helps them continue their efforts to implement the school policy on bullying. Parents also need to be given accurate information on bullying and how to deal with it, along with encouragement to contact the school if they suspect incidences of bullying.

The school can also increase *parents' knowledge and skills* to help their children to cope adaptively with bullying. Feedback about what they can do to make a difference is also important. The school has to inform the parents about how to

recognize if their child is being bullying and to expect feedback from them. The parents can help the school in identifying victims of bullying by reporting worrying behaviour of their child at home. Some of the *signs that a child is being bullied* can be recognized out of the school hours at home when suddenly the parents observe changes in the behaviour of their children {e.g., an unwillingness or refusal to go to school feeling ill in the mornings, doing poorly in their homework, crying themselves to sleep, having nightmares, asking for money or starting to steal (this is probably done in order to pay the bully), becoming withdrawn, starting to stammer, lacking confidence, refusing to talk about what's wrong}. Also it has to be made clear to the parents that they have to report *all incidents of bullying* to the school, not just incidents that happen to their own child. Guidelines should be provided to parents about how to encourage their child to report any further bullying incidents to a teacher they trust at the school.

The school should help parents find roles in the school's intervention (for example, praise or reward at home for positive behaviour) and give them credits when things change. Parents can also be invited to suggest better interventions ("What would you like us to do next time?") rather than reacting defensively when they criticize the strategies that have already been designed.

Parenting style and family issues often contribute to bully and victim behaviours. *Training workshops* for parents/carers on effective responses should be provided in order to *rehearse effective strategies* at home. For example, any type of bullying at home should be avoided, and respect for others should be modelled and encouraged. Parents should also be encouraged to let their child know how much they disapprove of bullying and why. *Sustained student and family counselling* may be necessary to help parents learn new approaches to discipline, communication, and positive interactions with their child.

School can develop their policy in order to explain to parents *when they can meet* the teachers and be informed about the progress and the behaviour of their children When there are consistent issues between parents and the school, meetings with parents regularly (not just when there is a crisis) can strengthen working relationships. The school has to assure parents that they can share all of their concerns with their child's teachers. If they do not want to involve the teacher for any reason, they can ask for the *school counsellor* to become involved *or the coordinator*. These common meetings of teachers and parents can be focused on issues concerning the

behaviour code and how parents can provide support to schools in order to reduce bullying.

Because there is always difficulty in accommodating parents' schedules, a *protocol with details for contacting the appropriate staff members must be developed*. This protocol should refer to convenient ways of contacting the teachers / the school management team or the school coordinator for bullying. For example, parents who have settled working hours and cannot leave their job and be present at school before the time teachers leave, can be notified that they can contact the school by phone or by email. In addition, a conference or a series of seminars to parents on issues concerning bullying can be arranged in afternoon hours.

The school may also invite parents (and especially those whose child may be a victim or a bully) to *visit the classrooms of their children* or the school more often and observe teaching in order to limit such bullying incidents. Meetings at the classroom level help build connections among parents and teachers. In this way, the parents can learn how to support the efforts of the school and what is expected from them to do in order to help effectively their child. The teachers may also invite parents to take an *active role* such as helping students and monitoring students who are not getting together so well to carry out a group positive task.

It is also very important to *thank parents* who reinforce their role in ensuring a safe school environment for all students.

The organization of *"parent circles"* in schools, for the bullies' and victims' parents, can become a means of breaking parents' silence regarding bullying and their children. Parent circles should focus in enhancing healthy communication with parents characterized by trust, authenticity, genuineness, honesty and openness. These can be achieved through the following steps that the coordinator of the group has to keep in mind: a) establishing ground rules for the group (e.g., confidentiality), b) make sure that each person participates and that they speak one at a time, c) participants are encouraged to use "I" statements, d) avoid/prevent personal attacks, e) reflect on other's opinions, d) check for understanding, e) discuss problem solving solutions, and f) agree to see if the problem is resolved. The coordinators should also be tolerant to different opinions sometimes aggressively expressed by the parents and ready to take others' perspectives and develop them within a productive dialogue. To avoid becoming defensive, as some parents may attribute the blame for bullying to the teachers, the coordinator may calmly ask for further clarifications or suggestions on

behalf of the parent. In any case, the parents should feel safe to raise their voice and express their own anxieties regarding bullying, as well as their participation in terms of intervention.

Possible topics for discussion in order to prompt parents to be more actively involved are family rules and their influence in bullying behaviour, the use of praise and punishment, the importance of consistency in the way the child is dealt with by both their parents, helping the child to find less aggressive or more appropriate reaction patterns. Parents of bullies and victims are often distanced from school, each group for their own reasons. Parent cycles can be an opportunity for parents to be involved in further school activities, and volunteer work, fostering in this way, their sense of belonging in the school community.

Collaboration with psychologists

The school community should develop collaboration with *mental health workers and clinical psychologists* concerning clinically significant problems for special, individual cases of students. For example, some students may suffer from depression, present abnormal behaviour or have attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). In such cases, where serious and difficult clinical problems exist on individual situations, communications with the clinical psychologists can decrease the problem. For example, the clinical psychologists and mental health workers can provide useful information concerning the medication dose if a student has to follow such therapy. Moreover, clinical support can explain to teachers the complexity of some abnormal behaviours and offer valuable suggestions and remarkable information to teachers on how to confront the mental health needs of their students.

Teachers can be *trained by educational psychologists* regarding critical educational issues associated with bullying and certain cases which are difficult to be handled. The school may invite educational psychologists to provide guidelines for helping teachers to deal with bullying when individual cases need to be addressed. Psychologists may also be asked to offer *school based courses* on issues associated with the tasks that teachers are undertaking in the school to address attitudes and behaviours targeting thoughts, attitudes, as well as interpersonal and emotional skills. These courses may concern critical issues like *anger management and emotion regulation skills, good listening skills, empathy, non-judgemental attitude, ethnic*

identity and anti-prejudice, coping strategies for post-traumatic stress reaction, trust building and communication skills.

Collaboration with the police

In addressing the issue of bullying and especially vandalisms, *collaboration with the police and the community services* is needed. The school can design a clear school policy regarding communication and collaboration with local police forces in order to eliminate feelings of insecurity and vulnerability. *Security measures* are taken in cooperation with the police after clear information of the fears and anxieties concerning bullying and vandalisms. Finally, a teacher can undertake the responsibility to contact the police in case of vandalisms.

B.4) Provision of learning resources

This aspect, which refers to the policy on providing resources for learning (human resources are also included), is important in developing your strategies and actions to face and reduce bullying. The availability and especially the good use of learning resources in schools have an effect on student learning (cognitive and affective outcomes). By providing the knowledge and the appropriate educational resources that the school needs in order to put the intervention program into practice, bullying prevention efforts are facilitated and sustain their effectiveness. In addition, learning resources are associated with bullying because their limited existence (e.g., in case that specific recourses and teaching means which are used in teaching are not adequate for all the students) can cause conflicts among the students for their accession. For example, a computer with access to the internet as an educational tool in teaching a specific unit may be useful for all the students in undertaking their project. However, the fact that there is only one computer with access to the internet and the students are twenty or even more may cause a lot of fights between the students. This implies that teachers should organize their classroom learning environment and offer tasks that can be delivered by the students using the available resources without any practical difficulties. The above example shows that the provision of learning resources and the good use of the resources by the teachers prevent misbehaviour in the classroom and in similar occasions in school when whole school projects or extra-curricular activities (e.g., festivals) are undertaken. Below, specific recommendations on the

provision and the proper use of learning resources in terms of developing school policy on facing and reducing bullying are provided.

Content of the policy

Schools must develop a policy for the use of visual material and technological equipment in teaching in order to improve students' learning and achieve cognitive and affective aims that are likely to lead to reduction of bullying. Teachers should also be strongly encouraged by the school management team to use the available recourses. By encouraging teachers to use these learning resources not only the teaching practice may be improved but also teachers may be encouraged to identify good ways of using these resources. This action is expected to contribute to the professional development of teachers and can contribute to reducing bullying. Furthermore, a plan must be designed for the fair allocation of the resources between the teachers (and in some cases among students of different age groups).

The ways of taking advantage of the resources in order to develop strategies and actions for facing bullying are plenty. Taking advantage of several educational tools available by the school, (i.e., maps, software), learning and affective outcomes can be achieved. That is the reason why schools should develop a policy on how to identify appropriate software and other teaching aids that can be bought by the school and help in reducing bullying. In addition, the various stakeholders can sponsor conferences to help increase awareness of bullying.

A decision can also be taken for the organisation of school based seminars for facing bullying that can also be very beneficial for improving knowledge concerning bullying. Enrichment of resources that are especially attractive for the students (e.g., computers, physical education equipment, musical instruments) can help the school to a resolution of conflicts for the resources and therefore bullying incidents due to inadequacy of the resources could be limited. It is very important for the teachers to remember that distribution of the resources to students should be fair and right to avoid assertion and complaints.

Another point to help develop the policy on the provision of learning resources is that educational resources include the use of human resources. Some schools may decide to appoint extra personnel for supporting their needs and helping them deal with bullying. For example, the school can appoint an expert for a certain time period to help teachers deal with children who face mental health problems. Providing

human educational resources (e.g., teaching aids, educational assistance, and new posts) mainly in schools operating in less centralized educational systems can be a very considerable practical support in facing and reducing bullying.

C) School policy for teaching

At this section you can find suggestions for the three aspects of the domain mentioned at the beginning of the chapter concerned with school policy on teaching and actions taken to improve teaching. The three aspects of this domain have to do with: a) *provision of learning opportunities*, b) *quantity of teaching*, and c) *quality of teaching*. In order to reduce bullying, we need to create not only a safe school learning environment but also teachers should develop a safe classroom learning environment. The latter can be achieved by developing your school policy on teaching in relation to the above three aspects of teaching. Below, it is made clear how the development of each of these aspects is associated with the reduction of bullying and suggestions for taking actions to improve your policy on each aspect of teaching are also provided.

C.1) Provision of learning opportunities

Provision of learning opportunities to students is the most important aspect of school policy on teaching when dealing with bullying. Beyond addressing the aims included in the formal curriculum, the development of this aspect of policy on teaching may encourage teachers to introduce new cognitive and especially new affective aims targeting to reduce bullying. Particularly, school policy on opportunity to learn should refer to aims associated with bullying such as social cognition, understanding of social values, emotional recognition, and development of positive attitudes towards peers (e.g., respect each other, sharing responsibilities in collaborative projects). This project is based on the assumption that instead of addressing bullying independently from teaching, schools should introduce and achieve affective and social aims not included in the formal curriculum. By achieving these learning aims, a productive and safe learning environment can be developed in your school. Specifically, it is supported that effective schools in facing and reducing bullying are those schools where teachers can stimulate their students by providing appropriate and well-designed learning opportunities targeting the achievement of relevant affective and cognitive aims (Kyriakides, Creemers & Charalambous, 2008). Below, you can find

specific activities regarding the development of actions and strategies on the provision of learning opportunities.

Content of the policy

As it is stressed above, schools should develop a policy concerning the introduction of learning aims beyond those included in the official curricula that are expected to contribute to the reduction of bullying. These prosperous for reducing bullying aims could either be cognitive (e.g., *social cognition, understanding of social values*) or affective - emotional (e.g., *emotional recognition, positive attitudes towards peers*).

In terms of providing learning opportunities to the bullies the development of the following extracurricular affective objectives could also be determined*: a) listening skills, b) assertiveness training, c) conflict management, d) anger management, e) emotion regulation skills, and f) respect, cooperation, and empathy.* Beyond the specification of the above affective aims, a very helpful cognitive aim that should be achieved by introducing relevant teaching tasks is the *understanding of social values*. As far as victims are concerned the following affective aims could be introduced: *a) self esteem development-resilience skills, b) decision development, and c) communication skills.* Cognitive aims for the victims should be *the better understanding of their feelings and the feelings of others (emotional intelligence) and self-expression skills*. But beyond introducing the above aims, relevant teaching activities should be undertaken to help students gradually achieve these aims.

Initially, the school should announce the policy to teachers and make clear to them that carrying out activities for the implementation of the cognitive and affective aims regarding bullying is important, meaning that bullying is considered by the school to be an important reason for offering such activities during school time. Therefore, teachers should be strongly invited by the school management team to be involved in the development of such activities.

At the next step, in order to meet the objectives mentioned above, you should inform your faculty that they can undertake activities that are not exclusively associated with the reduction of bullying but can also help students achieve the formal aims of the curriculum. For example, teachers may modify their teaching materials in teaching reading comprehension beyond the achievement of the reading aims, the reading texts could raise issues associated with bullying (e.g., through a relevant story). By using such a reading text, relevant affective aims could also be achieved.

Teachers will be encouraged to modify their teaching materials and lessons in order to address the aims related to bullying but it is important to acknowledge that this approach can not be implemented in each lesson taught in the school. Associations with activities regarding the reduction of bullying can be held whenever each individual teacher judges that it is useful and feasible to be done in his/her classroom. At the same time, it should be stressed that this will not be done only in a certain period (e.g., a week for bullying). Since such an approach may not have any impact on learning since systematic engagement of students with these aims is needed. Extra curriculum activities (e.g., festivals, events) associated with the aims mentioned above should also be undertaken to help students achieve these aims. Some suggestions on creating conditions at the school level that will encourage teachers to be involved in these two types of activities are offered below.

Firstly, it has to be noted about activities in classroom level that in order to facilitate and empower the undertaking of such activities for all the teachers, principals should consider the possibility of encouraging teachers to work in groups in order to create and develop teaching materials for each subject supporting the aims that have been determined. For example, a teacher (or a group of teachers) can be responsible for the language lesson and should create some units of lessons with the appropriate texts and poems that forward anti-bullying messages and can be used for promoting not only the aims associated with the reduction of bullying but also the achievement of specific aims of the language curriculum.

A good strategy is for the school management team to empower their teachers to come up with creative ideas regarding ways and activities that correspond to the achievement of the above aims. In order to stimulate you to search and come up with new and creative ideas in classroom level, we propose examples for activities in classroom that can be assigned to students. However, we want to explain, that these activities should enrich the aims that you already have (e.g., language aims), boost your teaching and also be in line with the age of the students (i.e., the developmental stage at which each group belongs) implying that different activities should be offered to different age groups of students.

In the language lesson, the teacher can enrich the learning of the students by choosing to teach not only any reading comprehension text but one promoting the determined objectives aiming to reduce bullying. When feasible and according to the grade of the students, poems can also be written in groups of two on titles given by

the teacher related to the aims mentioned above (e.g., poems concerned with respect, fear, and friendship). An anti-bullying poetry competition can be also organized either in the class level or for all the students of the school.

During the music lesson, the students may be invited to listen to songs referring to children that are bullied, feel insecure, and alone. Children can be invited to express their feelings about the content of these songs. In this way, useful anti-bulling messages based on the feelings expressed by the children, may arise. The students can also cooperate in order to take part in a competition on composition of a song with an anti bullying message.

In the arts lesson, the students can produce a poster with an anti-bullying message. In fact, this task can be carried out in terms of an anti-bullying poster competition that can be also announced by the principal. Another idea could be after the teacher reads a story about a victim of bullying, the students to be assigned to portray the isolated child as they imagine him/her trying to express the feelings of victims of bullying. In the next lesson, the teacher can ask the students to tell how that child could become happy and joyful, feel secure, and after discussion the teacher can assign to students to create a picture with the conditions they think are necessary for the child to become happy (e.g., friends, no conflicts, respect, beautiful natural environment, interesting lessons).

In the maths lesson, students of the 6th grade can search the internet and present data on bullying to other students by making use of their knowledge in data handling (e.g., in creating different types of charts). Statistical figures can be estimated (e.g., mean of incidents of bullying taken in schools in their own region) in order to help them present the problem to their audience and also make relevant comparisons searching for trends into how often bullying used to exist in schools and how often is observed nowadays.

Last but not least, theatre can be a useful tool for increasing awareness about bullying and victimization and that is why teachers could use role-playing activities. Theatre and role playing helps children to develop emotional (as well as cognitive) intelligence, negotiating skills, and the ability to transfer ideas to a new situation. Beyond role playing, another task could be, for the students to compare the feelings of the heroes after watching an anti-bullying play, in order to find relationships and connections between such emotions and feelings of possible characters in a bullying situation.

We would like to emphasise here that the cognitive and affective aims associated with bullying can be achieved in teaching any of the subjects included in the formal curriculum and not only in subjects more closely related with the development of social cognition. It is equally easy to design activities addressing these aims which at the same time are relevant with the teaching aims of language and social studies as it is easy to identify such activities in teaching mathematics, music, art or Physical Education. Therefore, we should encourage teachers to organise lessons in each subject that offered learning opportunities aiming to reduce bullying.

As far as extra-curricular activities are concerned, training days (or an anti-bullying week) can be arranged in order to develop further the provision of learning opportunities and the up growth of the aims through the conduction of anti-bullying events at school level. A school bullying conference day can be organized in order for the students to be informed about bullying holistically. The conferences can be of two types: a) small group individual conferences which can be confined to a small group of students or an individual student and perhaps teacher(s) who have been involved in a less serious incident. Typically small group conferences might be used to deal with low-level bullying before matters escalate (see Lane, Kalberg & Menzies, 2009). b) Classroom conferences to involve the whole class in addressing issues which have affected teaching and learning in the classroom and student wellbeing, such as classroom bullying and more generally, classroom disruption. A good task during these conferences could be for the teacher to think of one idea to tackle bullying, which they write down on a piece of paper. After the teacher collects all the answers, a document that includes their actions can be presented to the students.

Regarding extra-curricular activities that promote the reduction of bullying, the organization of an anti-bullying festival can engage all the students in achieving the cognitive and affective aims in order to face and reduce bullying. Teachers can assign a variety of groups of students within the school the designing/creation of a different kind of experience about bullying that can be presented in the school during the festival. The event can be foresighted to include presentation of work on the following aspects: a) anti-bullying poems and songs, b) anti-bullying stories, c) anti-bullying films d) anti-bullying posters and e) a drama performance on bullying. In addition, the exercises of the students at classroom level, regarding competitions in the different lessons can be presented in the festival. Each student will have to choose the exercise

he/she considers being the best (e.g., poem, or story, or poster) and present it. In order to make the day extra special the parents can also be invited to attend this festival.

In the development of school policy on provision of learning opportunities, it is very important to stress out that victimization lends itself to a particular psychological type, e.g. in the case of students who are excluded from the groups. In this context, some students are at risk of being subject to bullying and can become easily bullies' targets. Particularly migrants, minority students, newcomers, foreigners may suffer. Moreover, as foreigners they have not learnt to speak the new language fluently and unfortunately they can become easily victims of exclusion and racism. Consequently, special attention should be given to these children with the appointment of extra teaching hours in order to catch up in the achievement of language skills. In addition, differentiation of teaching aims should be encouraged in order to enable teachers to respond to the different learning needs of different socio-ethnic groups of students.

In some schools, additional teachers provide support to children with special needs during the school hours in order to facilitate and promote their learning and their inclusion in groups in the regular classrooms. Parents of the other students should be informed (with a document-statement) that it is their responsibility to contribute to the development of positive attitudes of their children towards their classmates who are at risk of being bullied or have special needs. However because we expect that all the parents will not act positively, the school has to target the parents who do not embrace the policy of the school for inclusion. Such cases of parents who may challenge their children to exclude other students and make fun of them, they can cause a lot of problems and "headache" to the school. As far as the rest of the students are concerned, we can use praise to help them connect their positive behaviour towards these special groups of students with positive outcomes. You can help them discover the positive effects of inclusion of their actions on others through observation and reflection.

In regard to this aspect of school policy of teaching, we finally like to stress that preventing bullying is also **a human rights issue**. The implementation of activities that enhance awareness of democratic citizenship and human rights can also help towards enhancing values of equality, respect of others, acceptance of difference/different views, sharing, anti-racism attitudes and co-working. Such activities are found in various internet sites (e.g. www.citized.info) and influence the ethos and culture of the school. The application of these activities can be a way to

deal with power relations and redistribute authority within students in a way that victims also get their own space and are empowered to sustain their position and feeling of belonging in the broader school context. Some of the activities could be the following:

a) Student forums for the students to play a part in decision making and provision equal opportunities to participation.

b) Organisation of volunteer groups in which all students take part of responsibility.

c) Active involvement in classroom debates and discussions about bullying and victimization.

d) Empowerment of victims to voice their opinion and assert them selves in the peer group during debates.

e) The realization by both bullies and victims of common positive activities (e.g., involved in a charity activity), under supervision, will enhance their self-esteem and modify their negative perception about their self, promoting in this way their prosocial behavioural patterns.

C.2) Quantity of teaching

School policy on quantity of teaching should also be developed as by extending the time of learning with the proper strategies for good management of the teaching time, the cognitive and affective aims determined by the school in order to face and reduce bullying can be achieved more easily. This aspect of school policy for teaching refers to the ability of the school to face problems that may reduce the time for learning and therefore schools which effectively deal with these problems manage to make good use of teaching time. In this way, time which is available in order to accomplish the activities which respond to aims associated with the reduction of bullying is increased. Except for identifying ways to regain the lost teaching time (or part of it), ways for persuading school stakeholders to avoid reducing productive teaching time can increase the time for teaching and learning even more. Quantity of teaching includes also the absenteeism of students which is related with the policy that the school should develop. When students are not presented in time in classroom they miss their lesson and therefore cognitive and affective aims concerning bullying cannot be easily achieved. Below you can find practical suggestions for developing

your policy in regard to three main aspects of the quantity of teaching aspect: a) *Absenteeism of students and teachers, b) management of teaching time, and c) policy on homework.*

Content of policy

Initially, the school has to develop a policy for students' absenteeism. The second step should be to announce the policy to parents and students and make clear to them that quantity of teaching time should not be put in danger, meaning that there should be a very serious reason for which students do not attend school. In addition, students who missed lessons or school day for an acceptable reason (e.g., illness, participating in competitions, representing the school in events) should provide information to school staff who is responsible for his/her absenteeism. This is expected to be done on time and, if necessary, the reasons given should be evaluated by the teachers. Students who missed lessons or school days without any acceptable reason are addressed individually and measures should be taken to avoid absenteeism in the future.

Most schools keep records for student absenteeism. Yet, simply keeping records for managerial reasons is not helpful enough in reducing student absenteeism. Presentation of the data on student absenteeism is an important issue that has to be considered. The various ways used to present results on student absenteeism should be helpful in revealing general trends about absenteeism. Thus, the results can be discussed during staff meetings and be utilized appropriately in order to bring to light trends regarding student absenteeism (and in no case in order to expose individual cases). For example, the records can reveal when most of the students are absent. If for instance, you observe that most absences are held on Friday or Monday, then the reasons for this tension could be discussed too. It may be due to the fact that parents arrange weekend vacations. The following step in this example should be to address the parents, discuss with them and explain why it is important for their children not to miss lessons. Another tension that could be revealed by going through the records on student absenteeism is that students seem to be absent from one particular lesson (e.g., PE). Then the reasons for this attitude have to be examined and specific measures must be undertaken to reduce the phenomenon.

Also, by keeping records on a systematic basis it will be possible to find out whether some students are absent because they are victims of bullying and like to avoid to get in touch with bullies because they are afraid and feel insecure in school.

However we should be very careful and work out what systematic absences mean and not be suspicious before getting enough information. Conclusions should not be arbitrary but be drawn after discussion and reception of enough and appropriate information. For example, if a student was very systematic in attending the school and suddenly starts to miss out on lessons without giving a reason why and for long periods of time or leaves repeatedly the school repeatedly in the middle of the school day and also presents some of the signs of a victim, then we have a serious reason to check over this situation in more detail.

In order to support students who missed lessons with acceptable reasons, the teachers can undertake the responsibility to support them to catch up. In addition, each student may have some classmates (or a partner) who are (is) responsible to inform him/her on what happened during the lesson (and also about the homework assigned) when she/he was absent.

Regarding teacher absenteeism, the policy should be announced to teachers and make clear to them that quantity of teaching time should not be put in danger, meaning that there should be a very serious reason for which teachers do not attend school. Teachers who know in advance that they will be absent should be asked to prepare teaching materials which can be used during their absenteeism by replacement teachers. Another possibility (even in cases that absenteeism can not be predicted) is to exchange teaching time with other teachers who are available or to appoint replacement teachers to offer the lesson (even if supporting materials for teaching are not available). The school should also keep records for teacher absenteeism and present the results in the teacher room (again without exposing individuals). Targets to reduce this phenomenon should also be determined. Teachers who missed lessons or school day(s) for an acceptable reason (e.g., illness, participating in an in-service training course) should provide information to the head teacher or deputy head who is responsible for his/her absenteeism. This is expected to be done on time and checked if necessary. Obviously, teachers who missed lessons or school days without any acceptable reason are addressed individually and appropriate measures are taken to avoid absenteeism in the future.

Regarding *management of teaching time* (e.g., lessons start on time and finish on time, no interruption of lessons for announcements), the school has the responsibility to develop a policy and announce it to teachers, parents, and the students. The school board takes decisions concerning the duration of lessons and the

accurate time that lessons start and finish. In this way, if lessons start on time and finish on time then misbehaviour is more unlikely to occur. Also, records can be kept for students who are not on time to attend the lesson.

As it was mentioned above (see behaviour code), a document should be sent at home informing the parents the exact time that all the students should be at school in order to avoid disciplinary problems and misbehaviour after the bell rings. Moreover, it should be explained to the parents that the school asks for punctuality in the students' arrival in and leaving from the school in order to eliminate occurrence of misbehaviour and bullying incidents. If students present to their classroom latish, the teachers should communicate with parents (for disciplinary reasons) or ask them to take action (e.g., bring children on time in the morning). These students who come to the classroom late are obviously allowed to enter the class but the teacher should keep relevant records. Moving a step forward to increase arrival on time, latish students can be asked to stay during the break time to discuss with the teacher on how to compensate for the learning tasks they missed.

Another measure to increase the teaching time in order to achieve cognitive and affective aims related to bullying could be the agreement between the teachers and the school management team that lessons will not be interrupted by anybody (e.g., other teachers, deputy heads or the headteacher) for any managerial reason in order not to loose valuable teaching time and to avoid disciplinary problems that may occur during the period that teaching is interrupted. Also, some principals may decide at some stage to extend the break time in order to make a meeting with the faculty and take an important decision. However, during the extension of the break time, misbehaviour may occur, especially when supervisors are asked to leave their positions to follow the staff meeting. This practice should be avoided since it is very rare that head teachers cannot wait to take a decision at the end of the day when all members of the staff can meet in a time when they have no teaching responsibility.

C.3) Quality of teaching

For the purposes of this project, quality of teaching mainly refers to the contribution of teachers in creating the learning environment of their classroom. More specifically, five elements of the classroom as a learning environment are taken into account: a) teacher-student interaction, b) student-student interaction, c) student treatment, d) competition between students, and e) classroom disorder. When developing your

school policy in order to face and reduce bullying, you should pay attention to this factor as many bullying incidents arise due to specific negative conditions in classroom during teaching. For example, if a teacher has not developed good time management skills or does not handle misbehaviour and disorder effectively, then he/she will face disciplinary problems in the classroom. In contrast, if the teacher creates a businesslike and supportive environment for learning, misbehaviour may not occur very often. Therefore, effective schools in facing and reducing bullying are those which develop clear, specific, and concrete policy on quality of teaching and encourage teachers to create the appropriate positive conditions for learning and instruction in classroom. In the context of our project, school policy and actions taken to improve the quality of teaching is expected to emphasize the contribution of teachers in creating the learning environment of their classroom in such ways in order to prevent and reduce bullying. Below you can find our suggestions for developing your policy in regard to the five main aspects of the quality of teaching factor which were mentioned above.

Content of policy

The school management team should encourage teachers to undertake activities in order to promote quality in their teaching and therefore to face and reduce bullying. Initially, you could inform the teachers during staff meetings about the importance of the five aspects of the quality of teaching in creating a safe and productive learning environment. Then ideas and views on the contribution of the teacher in producing classroom climate supportive for learning that stimulates positive and proper behaviour by the children can be exchanged. You could determine that certain staff meetings will take place not only for dealing with administrative issues but also for establishing your policy on quality of teaching. In these meetings, issues concerned with quality of teaching and its aspects should be discussed and suggestions should be provided to teachers concerning classroom strategies that can be used in order to improve the quality of their teaching practice and deal effectively with misbehaviour problems that may occur during teaching. However, it should be acknowledged that each teacher could develop his/her own strategies on dealing with misbehaviour that respond to the context of his/her class and the learning and emotional needs of his/her students. Below we provide some suggestions on practices that can be used to create a safe and learning environment in the classroom.

First, we recommend to teachers to avoid the negative aspects of competition among the students in classroom especially since this phenomenon may become a source for exercising violence among students. Namely, competition can produce a sense of being "looser" and that she/he will never accomplish anything among students who are particularly unsuccessful among a range of valued classroom activities . This feeling may cause frustration and even worst an incentive to bully the winners. Alternatively, failure in a range of competitive activities may also result in a loss of self-esteem and discouragement. A student with such feelings may then become a target for bullies (see also chapter 2).

Also, the principal should engage teachers in positive student-student and student-teacher interactions and mobilize them to promote those interactions actively in the classroom. Teachers should assign to students cooperative activities where students can work together in small groups to achieve mutual learning goals. Such strategies that contribute to the common good when carried out can accomplish inclusion of migrants, minority students, newcomers, and of different socio-ethnic groups of children. When teachers think that they need to strength interactions between their students, they should try to create cooperative experiences in classroom. Such experiences can indicate values as commitment to the common good, well being of other members, a sense of responsibility to contribute to the partners' work, respect for the efforts of others, behaving with integrity, compassion and appreciation of diversity. Teachers should also manage their classroom focusing in promoting mutual goals that require self-regulation and productive interactions. Students can be invited by the teacher to engage in activities that promote aims associated with the reduction of bullying such as attendance in decision making, and acceptance of difference.

The school management team could also give directions to teachers on how to deal with classroom disorder effectively and how to treat the students in order to cope with misbehaviour and reduce incidents of classroom bullying. Special attention should be given by the teachers to differentiation of punishment according to the different groups of students and the different characteristics of individuals. In addition, clear rules, routines and consequences of misbehaviour should be created within the classroom and be stated in the classrooms' behaviour code. Discussion of the behaviour code and adaptation to the specific needs of each class is necessary. It is important to be stressed in staff meetings that teachers should be flexible when dealing with classroom disorder. For example, sometimes the teacher can succeed in

managing disorder by just ignoring it deliberately. However, in cases that disorder is serious, severe consequences and punishment is needed to deal with the situation.

Students' treatment by the teacher should aim to change apathetic attitudes and enhance children's sensitivity towards the victims in order to foster a safe learning environment for all the students. Children in this way can be encouraged to understand their emotions and reflect on them and foster empathy for victims. The teacher should also provide praise and reinforcement to students who display school wide expectations and should also give differentiated feedback to all the students in terms of their work and their behaviour as well.

Another aspect that the school management team should seriously take into account is the lack of direct teaching skills for some teachers. It is observed that some teachers are insufficient concerning skills of the direct teaching approach, such as classroom management skills, application, management of time, structuring of the lesson, monitoring students behaviour, organization of activities (e.g., preparation, distribution of materials) and discipline. Therefore, the school management team should diagnose teaching needs for professional development and support them in order to upgrade their skills.

D) Building school self-evaluation mechanisms

Evaluation in the literature is seen as one of the most important factor for improving the effectiveness status of schools. More specifically, effective schools have to develop continuous self-evaluation mechanisms to measure the effects of their strategies and actions in facing bullying and using the results of these evaluation mechanisms for formative rather than summative reasons aiming at the further improvement of their actions and strategies to reduce bullying. In fact, the development of formative evaluation mechanisms at the school level will also help school stakeholders identify priorities for improvement.

Effective schools are also expected to review the impact of their strategies and actions developed and identify the errors that take place. In this way, they can define new actions and strategies and also modify and redesign their policies. It is also important to note that evaluation should be treated as a continuous process. In addition, effective schools are expected to review their own evaluation mechanisms and adapt them in order to collect relevant and appropriate data at each stage.

The main aim of the school evaluation process is to identify general trends associated with the strengths and weaknesses of your policy for the school learning environment and teaching. Particularly when dealing with bullying, evaluation should be a major aspect of the intervention as there are schools which even ignore the existence of the phenomenon. In order to collect valid and reliable data and because of the special nature of bullying, you need more than one source of evaluation data. This is because you cannot simply "trust" just one source of data and rely only on the stakeholders' opinions. The use of systematic observations should also be considered especially since using different sources of data enables you to test the validity of the school evaluation data. School and classroom observation is a technique that is usually more valid (but sometimes less reliable) than the use of different survey techniques especially since victims may not confess their problems due to their fear. Moreover, different and opposite views of the different stakeholder about bullying in schools can also cause confusion. Below you can find a variety of suggestions concerning the development of self-evaluation mechanisms at school level.

Content of the policy

Firstly, you should decide how many times during the school year you will collect evaluation data concerning your policy for teaching and the school learning environment and the actions taken for improving teaching and the School Learning Environment. Emphasis should also be given to the sources of evaluation data which are used. The school should employ a multidimensional approach in collecting data on policy for teaching and the school learning environment since using various sources (e.g., external observation, student ratings, and colleagues' views) might increase the internal validity of the evaluation. Multisource assessments that tap the collective wisdom of supervisors, peers, students, parents, and others provide the opportunity to more effectively improve teaching and the school learning environment.

In addition, the quality of the instruments used to collect data should be evaluated (questionnaires, observation instruments). Special attention should be given to the investigation of the validity (the extent to which a measurement instrument or test accurately measures what it is supposed to measure) of these instruments. Obviously schools are not expected to use advanced statistical techniques to test the

construct validity of their instruments but the use of triangulation (i.e., searching for the extent to which different instruments provide similar data) is recommended.

Another issue that has to be taken into account in designing your school evaluation mechanisms is concerned with the need to establish continuous formative evaluation mechanisms. These mechanisms are expected to help the school modify its own strategies and actions according to the circumstances and specific needs of different groups of the school population. For example if after the evaluation of the data you find out that a child, who had already been identified as a bully, behaves violently due to pathological reasons then you have to redesign your actions. In this way, you can decide that more cooperation with the clinical psychologist or mental health workers is necessary. In addition, if the parental involvement does not meet the expectations of the school (e.g., parents do not attend the meetings with the school administrative team) then the policy concerning the collaboration with the parents has to be modified. The needs of the parents (e.g., concerning their timetables or their interests) have to be accommodated in modifying the school policy and you should redesign the actions and strategies undertaken in order to reduce bullying. For example, a meeting of parents with the teachers concerning the school policy can be rearranged in late afternoon hours (when it is easier for most of the parents to come to the school) and you can also encourage parents to express their doubts about the school policy. Beyond criticising openly the current policy, all stakeholders should be invited to give suggestions on how school policy can be redefined. In this way, a climate of openness is gradually developed in the school and at the same time each stakeholder is encouraged to be actively involved in the designing of school policy.

In addition, the purposes for which the evaluation data are collected should be explained to all stakeholders. The stakeholders should also be aware that the school evaluation is done for formative and not for summative reasons. This implies that evaluation is a natural part of the improvement efforts that the school tries to develop. The school management team should make clear and guarantee that the school will make use of the information gathered from evaluation in order to meet their students' and teachers' needs and thereby give more emphasis to the formative purpose of evaluation. Thus, in presenting the results of the evaluation, general trends will be identified and thereby instead of exposing individuals, suggestions on how the school policy could be modified will emerge. In addition, during the presentation of the results, personal data will not be revealed. Comparisons between classrooms (e.g.,

students of this class are more often involved in bullying incidents than students of the other class of the same grade), individuals or groups must not be undertaken because this comparison could destroy our effort to create a climate of openness and trust and is not helpful in taking actions to reduce bullying. The only end-product is the labelling of individuals or groups of students which is also likely to encourage those individuals which are exposed to exercise violence against others.

Moreover, all the participants involved (schools, parents, children) should be informed that confidentiality will be ensured and kept throughout the procedure. To achieve this, the teachers who will be responsible for the school evaluation must use specific software with restricted access so as to prevent anybody to enter the data files. Code numbers will also be assigned to students, teachers, schools to ensure confidentiality. A non-threatening way for students to report bullying of themselves or classmates should be established in order to avoid tendencies to underreport bullying incidents for fears of retaliation. There should be repeated efforts to convince all the stakeholders for the confidentiality of the evaluation and the anonymity of the answers.

Last but not least, by means of the school evaluation, general trends (e.g., when, who, where, by whom bullying occurs) should be derived as these could help in redesigning the policy. However, it is important during evaluation to keep a balance between evaluation of specific cases (individuals) and general tensions and not refer only to general trends but assess individual cases as well.

Concluding Comments about the designing of actions and strategies to reduce bullying

In order to have success and achieve your goals regarding facing and reducing bullying except for undertaking a significant number of actions, you should also bear in mind that these actions have to be well allocated in time and provided throughout the year. The actions/strategies need to take place over a long time period in order to have results. Also consistency and flexibility in redefining the school policy and in the implementation of your actions is needed (this recommendation is described in the framework used to develop this project as the stage dimension of measuring the functioning of school factors associated with bullying). For example, many schools when developing their policy undertake a lot of their actions during the beginning of the year (e.g., October, November) when there is helpfulness for the intervention.

However, this is a wrong approach as the efforts will end up in failure because the actions were constrained in a small period. Achievement of your aim to reduce bullying partly depends on the extent to which activities associated with each school factor mentioned above are provided *throughout the school year*.

Moreover, during designing your school policy and your actions, you have to keep a balance between those actions that are too specific and those that are too general. For example, in the case of school policy on parental involvement, the policy could either be more specific in terms of concrete activities that are expected to take place (e.g., the school policy may refer to specific hours that parents can visit the school) or more general (e.g., it informs parents that they are welcome to the school but without giving them specific information about what, how and when). General instructions to the parents or the teachers can help them undertake initiates, but when the problem is serious and they are not ready to face it, we have to be more specific on what they can do to solve this problem. Our activities, actions, and strategies should not always be either too specific or too general but sometimes give the opportunity to teachers and the other stakeholders to design their own actions whereas in other cases specific suggestions addressing a serious problem should be given (this principle is called focus and it is treated as another measurement dimension of the functioning of the school factors).

Finally, you have to be flexible and modify your actions according to the specific needs of each student/teacher and each stakeholder. For instance, activities do not need to be implemented in the same way for all the teachers involved. For example, some teachers may need support to confront misbehaviour, whereas other teachers are able to handle it by themselves. In addition if you find out that some parents instead of helping the school to implement its policy on bullying, their behaviour to their children is problematic (e.g., exercise violence at home) most of the suggestions given in the section on partnership policy are not appropriate for this group of parents and we should treat them in a completely different way. It is expected that adaptation to the specific needs of each school stakeholder will increase the successful implementation of our strategies and actions to reduce bullying (this issue reveals the importance of treating differentiation as a dimension for measuring the function of the school factors)**.**

E) Steps that you have to undertake as a school

In this handbook, we have provided you with suggestions on actions that can be taken in order to face bullying. These policies and actions are located in three different domains which will contribute in creating a safe and businesslike learning environment at the classroom and school level. Obviously, none of the schools is expected to address all these domains and their aspects. Priorities for improving the school learning environment and the teaching practice have to be identified and address the specific needs of the school.

At this stage, you need to take a *decision on which aspects of school policy you like to concentrate*. The information you need to base this decision upon is already available. Based on the results of the pre-measure about bullying that was carried out in your school, a report was given indicating how well your school is functioning in regard to the three domains. Data were also collected on bullying and indicate how frequently each type of bullying occurs. It is strongly recommended that decisions about the areas that you like to concentrate on as a school are taken not only by the teachers and the school management team. Students and parents should not only support this decision but should be actively involved in the decision making itself. For this reason, you can establish a committee with representatives of parents, students and teachers to discuss the results and gradually reach consensus about the school priorities and how to deal with them. *The final decision can be announced to the whole school community and feedback could be provided.*

At the next step, you will *develop action plans* that address specific aspects of the domains that you are focusing on. In your action plan, it is important not only to *specify activities* that can be taken but also to indicate *who is supposed to do it*, what the *time-schedule* is and what *resources* are needed. In order to specify activities that will take place, you can make use of the suggestions provided in this chapter and also identify further suggestions by looking at additional reading sources provided in Appendix A. Obviously you can divide the work for developing action plans by appointing different groups or committees to design their action plans for specific areas. At all stages and especially in developing your action plans, members of our research team can also be invited to support your effort to develop your action plans. It is important to note that beyond designing your action plans, decisions about the monitoring of the implementation have to be taken in advance. For this reason, we like you to keep a log-book which can have the format shown below.

Developing strategies at school and class level aiming to prevent and reduce bullying

Name school:
Name DAPHNE-coordinator:
Period:

- ▪ Focus of strategies is on (mark X):

Policy on school learning environment	
o Student behaviour outside the classroom	
o Cooperation between teachers	
o Collaboration with other stakeholders (parents, researchers, …)	
o Provision of resources	
Policy regarding teaching	
o Quality of teaching	
o Quantity of teaching	
o Provision of learning opportunities	

PLAN	DEVELOP A PLAN
	a) Brief description of the priority your school has chosen/strategy your school is developing or will develop (in general):
DO	EXECUTE THE PLAN
	b) More specifically, at what stage are you as concerns your strategy/priority?
	c) Who is involved at this stage? - in your school (besides yourself): - from outside (e.g., parents, in-service trainer, …): d) What is your time frame for this?
CHECK	EVALUATE THE EFFECT OF THE PLAN
	e) When and how will you evaluate your priority/strategy? - between times: - at the end of the project:
ACT	GUARANTEE OR ADJUST THE PLAN
	f) As a result of the evaluation, and if it is the case, what needs to be adjusted?

The next step involves the implementation of your strategies and the monitoring of this implementation. We advise you to *announce the start of the implementation officially to parents and students* and explain them the rational of your intervention and the kind of activities which will be carried out.

Through monitoring the implementation of your intervention, it is very likely that you will identify practical difficulties and probably weaknesses in your action plans. It is essential that *immediate actions are taken to improve and redefine* your action plans in order to achieve your goals. You will find out that in some cases you have to make changes in your plans even four times during the school year. This does not necessarily imply that your original action plans were insufficient but merely that they are not fit for long time periods due to the fact that bullying is a dynamic phenomenon that might change due to the intervention. On the contrary, we will be surprised to experience that a specific action plan developed at a certain period of time can remain the same over a long period of time. If this is the case, it might be an indication that the monitoring system does not provide you with valid data (e.g., everybody likes to please you by indicating that all the actions are implemented sufficiently and major progress is made). The timely changing of your action plans will contribute to achieving your aims and reduce the chance to find out at the end of the school year that no progress was made due to the fact that your action plans were either not implemented properly or could not contribute to the reduction of bullying.

The above procedure stresses the importance of a share responsibility of the whole school community in developing and implementing strategies and actions to face bullying. However, it should also be acknowledged that the role of teachers and their active involvement is crucial for the success of this intervention. Therefore, we like to recognise that the successful implementation of this project depends on the active involvement of teachers and their contribution in designing the action plans by bringing their knowledge and experiences in dealing with bullying.

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Appendix A: Further resources on bullying

A) Reading

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http://www.bullyonline.org/schoolbully/school.htm

http://www.doe.in.gov/sservices/pdf/bully_manual.pdf

http://www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing/

http://www.kenrigby.net/

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http://www.moec.gov.cy/edu_psychology/evopaiko_prog_dafni.html

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/

http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/bully-en.asp

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/bullying_helping_your_child.html

http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/

http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/

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1824
The University of Manchester