

## Creating a strong community together Updated 6/2024

### Plan against bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination in Espoo's Growth and Learning Sector

Municipalities' student welfare plans must include a plan to protect pupils and students from bullying, violence, and harassment. This plan applies to early childhood education, pre-primary education, basic education, and upper secondary education. Where applicable, the plan can also be used in other services used by children and young people in Espoo, such as basic education's afternoon activities.

This plan describes the definition, prevention and intervention measures for bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination. It also describes measures to support the victim of bullying and to cooperate with guardians, student welfare and other authorities and actors.

#### Definition of bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination

**Bullying** is calling names, mean talk, exclusion or isolation from a group, pushing, and hitting. Bullying hurts or insults someone else. The bullied are usually unable to defend themselves or influence how they're being treated. Bullying often takes place in a group and can involve seeking to dominate someone in the group. Bullying means intentional, repeated and long-term activities. It is important to remember, however, that even one act can be harmful to someone and make them afraid of being bullied. Disputes and the arguments arising thereof do not constitute bullying unless they involve inappropriate or harmful acts against someone or harmful uses of power. (Source in Finnish: [Kiusaaminen ja väkivalta sekä niiden tunnistaminen | Opetushallitus](#))

**Violence** can be physical, psychological or sexual. Honour related violence means threats or acts of violence towards a family member to protect the family's honour if the family member refuses to follow their community's rules for social or sexual behaviour. Individual acts of physical violence are easy to spot and their traces easy to see. There are forms of violence that are difficult to identify if the person doesn't tell an adult about them. (Source in Finnish: [Kiusaaminen ja väkivalta sekä niiden tunnistaminen | Opetushallitus](#))

There are also descriptions of violence that spread on social media. Most violent acts, including those on the internet, such as sharing photos and video, are punishable by law in Finland.

**Harassment** is a situation where someone creates a degrading, humiliating, threatening, hostile or aggressive atmosphere based on someone's sexual orientation, origin, disability, or some other grounds for discrimination laid out in the Act on Equality or the Non-discrimination Act. Harassment can be inappropriate insinuations or offensive behaviour, whether it's acts or words. In addition to written or spoken words, harassment can include sharing material that is offensive to human dignity online or on social media. Being a part of a minority significantly worsens the risk of harassment.

Sexual harassment refers to verbal, non-verbal, physical or other unwanted sexual behaviour that violates someone else's mental or physical integrity, particularly by the creation of a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating or distressing atmosphere. (Source in Finnish: [Kiusaaminen ja väkivalta sekä niiden tunnistaminen | Opetushallitus](#))

**Discrimination** means to treat someone worse based on a personal characteristic or grounds for discrimination in the law. Prohibited grounds for discrimination in the non-discrimination act are age, origin, nationality, language, faith or lack thereof, opinion, political activity, membership in a trade union, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or another personal characteristic. In the Act on Equality, the grounds for discrimination are gender, gender identity and gender expression. Both also prohibit harassment under these grounds.

## 1. Together against bullying

The City of Espoo has several tools to stop, intervene, and treat victims of bullying. We work closely with children, young people, and their guardians. Espoo has several partners for support with the work against bullying. Espoo's anti-bullying activities and partners are also available on our website: [Together against bullying | City of Espoo](#)

## 2. Prevention of bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination

Every day care centre, school and upper secondary school has detailed, unit-specific measures to prevent bullying and support the wellbeing of their community. These are available in the educational institutions' plans, in early childhood education's education or pre-school plans, and the schools' websites.

Measures that support wellbeing and prevent bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination include:

- development of well-being skills,
- mutually agreed rules and guidelines visible to students and guardians (such as group rules, regulations, and at schools, plans for educational talks, disciplinary measures, and related procedures),
- promotion of group-building and social attachment,
- engagement of guardians and students,
- providing effective information on student welfare services,
- support for transitional phases, and
- methods for monitoring wellbeing (incl. bullying, violence, discrimination and harassment).

Clear anti-bullying measures and related roles and responsibilities are also essential (unit personnel, support students, tutors, Verso). Units have a clear structure for organising anti-bullying efforts, such as a designated team. Head of Unit/principal ensures their personnel have the necessary competence.

Development of well-being skills during teaching is described in the curricula. Encouragement of continuous group formation and support measures taken during the transitional phases are described in the guidance plan. The measures for monitoring the wellbeing of the unit/group are detailed in the student welfare plan. There is also support material on these subjects for the units (Support material for carrying out well-being work in accordance with the student welfare plan in the Growth and Learning Sector).

## 3. Addressing bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination

Teachers are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of each group of children, pupils or students when teaching them and when moving from one learning environment to another. The Head of Unit/principal is responsible for the safety of the workday and general wellbeing with the teachers and other personnel. The Head of Unit/principal and the education provider are responsible for preventing and stopping bullying in their learning communities or environments, and for keeping records thereof. (Source in Finnish: [Kiusaamiseen ja väkivaltaan puuttuminen | Opetushallitus](#))

Measures to stop bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination include:

**Channels for reporting bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination** In basic and general upper secondary education, all students and guardians must have an easy way to report observations of bullying, harassment and violence (e.g. QR code, mailbox). Decisions on the processing of these matters are made at the educational institution. Encourage children to tell an adult and make it easier.

**Peer support and named adult (basic and upper secondary)** A student who has been bullied gets to share their experience and seek support from their peers. A youth instructor (basic education) or Ohjaamotalo (upper secondary) can help the student find a suitable peer group. Targets of bullying are designated a named adult at their school to help and support them. Guardians can also receive peer support through various associations.

**Prevention and interventions of racism, harassment and discrimination** The unit has methods to prevent racism, harassment, and discrimination that is based on gender, injury, cultural, religious, sexuality or some other matter. It decisively and consistently stops hate speech, discriminatory speech and behaviour.

Units have their own equality and non-discrimination plans, which they purposefully carry out and monitor. City-level plans: [Equality committee](#) | [City of Espoo](#)

#### **Procedure to address bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination**

Early childhood education units and schools of all levels have a clearly defined procedure to address bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination. Students, guardians, and all adults at the educational unit are aware of the procedure.

### **Early childhood and pre-primary education**

**Each early childhood education unit has described:**

- Bullying prevention measures
- How adults stop an ongoing situation
  - Informing the guardians
  - Who investigates and writes reports
- Monitoring
- Cooperation with the child, guardians and possible other parties

### **Basic education**

**Each school has described the procedure to address bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination (Steps for Prevention):**

- Preventative work at the schools
- Students are told of the process both in advance and during an ongoing situation
- Stopping an ongoing situation:
  - Investigation and discussion with the parties
  - Informing the class teacher/instructor
  - Informing the guardians
  - Who prepares the records and where
- Follow-up (class teacher, homeroom supervisor, someone else)
- Cooperation with the pupil, guardians and possible other parties
- Use of disciplinary measures
- Necessary cooperation with the authorities (child protection, police)

**The Steps for Prevention procedure is available on the school's website.**

### **General upper secondary education**

**Each general upper secondary school has described the procedure to address bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination (Steps for Prevention):**

- Preventative work at the schools
- Students are told of the process both in advance and during an ongoing situation
- Stopping an ongoing situation:
  - Investigation and discussion with the parties
  - Informing the group instructor
  - Informing the guardians (if a minor)
  - Who prepares the records and where
- Follow-up (group instructor)
- Cooperation with the pupil, guardians and possible other parties
- Use of disciplinary measures
- Necessary cooperation with the authorities (child protection, police)

**The Steps for Prevention procedure is available on the general upper secondary school's website.**

Every pupil and member of staff must be required to stop bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination whenever they see it. Teachers or the principal must report harassment, bullying or violence at school or on the commute between home and school to the guardian or other legal representative of the offender and the victim when they learn of it.

### Example of the Steps for Prevention model in basic education.

Each school has its own Steps for Prevention operating model.

| Preventive work in school   | 1. Immediate adult intervention in suspected bullying between pupils  | 2. Bullying continues   | 3. Bullying continues despite prior measures  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Methods/exercises that improve wellbeing skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KiVa</li> <li>• Arvokas (social skills)</li> <li>• Positive pedagogy</li> <li>• Strength skills</li> <li>• Continuous group formation</li> </ul> <p>Questionnaires used to plan teaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying, atmosphere, and KiVa questionnaires</li> <li>• Pupil questionnaires</li> <li>• Wellbeing questionnaire</li> <li>• School Health Promotion study</li> </ul> | <p><b>First time teacher learns of bullying:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher finds out if the actions constitute bullying.</li> <li>• Teacher talks to both sides as soon as possible. Agree on how the pupil must change the way they act.</li> <li>• Teacher can consult the anti-bullying group or a student welfare professional.</li> <li>• Teacher informs the guardians of both sides (telephone, Wilma).</li> <li>• Agree on at least one follow-up talk with both sides. If this stops the bullying, intervention measures can stop as well.</li> </ul> | <p><b>If bullying continues:</b><br/>If the bullying does not stop, the matter is handed over to the anti-bullying group. The group goes through its review procedure regarding the matter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify guardians and invite them to a meeting at school.</li> <li>• The anti-bullying group can refer pupils to student welfare services when necessary.</li> <li>• The communal student welfare group can agree on a classroom survey or classroom intervention. This may include the school social worker and/or psychologist, for example.</li> <li>• The principal talks to the bullies if necessary.</li> <li>• The teacher/principal imposes a disciplinary educational discussion or detention.</li> <li>• Agree on at least one follow-up talk with both sides.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the pupil and/or their guardian's consent, convene the multidisciplinary expert group for a meeting.</li> <li>• The principal/school social worker consults with the K0+ personnel and agrees on further measures, if any.</li> <li>• Principal decides on disciplinary measures (written warning, detention, temporary expulsion).</li> <li>• Consider other operating models (work with child welfare services and the police).</li> <li>• Sufficient monitoring</li> </ul> |

