

Anti-bullying Policy

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1. Objectives of this policy

This policy is part of the general well-being framework of the EEB2 and relates to our pedagogical project “8 life-skills”.

The policy outlines what the secondary school will do to prevent and tackle bullying. The policy has been drawn up through the involvement and contribution of the whole school community. Involving students, parents, and school staff, we are committed to developing an anti-bullying culture whereby no bullying will be tolerated under any circumstances.

Recognizing that bullying can have negative and long-lasting effects on individuals’ physical and mental health as well as on learning and working ability, this policy supports the school’s efforts to promote well-being. All members of the school community have the right to learn and work in a secure and caring environment free from harm or harassment. They also have a responsibility to contribute to this environment by preventing and reporting bullying behavior.

<https://eeb2.be/en/our-school-plans-regulations-policies/>

2. Facts about bullying

2.1. Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined as a behavior by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally.

Bullying involves the abuse of power in relationships. It can involve all forms of harassment, humiliation, domination, and intimidation of others.

Bullying can be:

- **physical** (hitting, kicking, pushing, forcing, unwanted touching...)
- **verbal** (name-calling, insults, threatening, racist comments...)
- **indirect** (excluding, ignoring, spreading rumors of the victim, taking or hiding person's belongings...).

Cyberbullying takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers and tablets and it can occur in text messages, apps or online in different platforms, social media, gaming forums etc. Sending, posting or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone; exclusion or peer rejection via digital devices; digital threats and intimidation; publishing information about someone else without the person’s permission are examples of cyberbullying. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

It should be noted that not all conflict situations in school meet the characteristics of bullying. Relational conflicts happen occasionally, unintentionally and usually they can be solved

between the parties involved. Assistance in resolving conflicts when needed is also important and can prevent bullying from developing.

2.2. Dynamics of bullying

Bullying typically is a **group phenomenon** including perpetrators, bystanders, spectators, and the victim(s). It often has group dynamics, where the perpetrator is motivated by the pursuit of visibility, power, and higher status in the peer group. For that reason, bullies need bystanders and spectators, who may reinforce the bully's behavior by verbal or nonverbal signals that are socially rewarding. Some peers may silently watch what is happening, without acknowledging that the bullies might interpret such behavior as an approval to their mean acts. A person who sees bullying without doing anything to stop it or to help the victim, can be considered taking part in it.

2.3. Consequences of bullying

Bullied students can suffer from a wide range of mental well-being and mood problems. Bullying can cause, for example, low self-esteem and self-worth, depression, anxiety and even suicidal thoughts or actions.

Bullying can also affect the physical health of bullied pupils, in the form of psychosomatic stress symptoms such as pain and general sickness, sleeping problems and eating disorders. In addition, bullied students are characterised by a loss of motivation to go to school and avoidance of school.

Bullying is also reflected in the way pupils are perceived by their peers at school and how they relate to other peers. Bullied students may be lonely, avoid social situations, have a negative perception of peers and fear being judged negatively.

Bullying also has consequences for the bullies. If a bully is allowed to continue bullying without intervention, there is a risk that he or she will continue to behave aggressively.

3. Responsibilities of members of the EEB2 School community

All members of the EEB2 school have a responsibility to promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity. If bullying occurs, all members have the obligation to react and offer help.

Students have the responsibility to:

- Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity.
- Reinforce the message that bullying is not accepted or tolerated.
- Refrain from bullying others.
- Help someone who is being bullied - being an active bystander
- Inform a staff member or a trusted person who can help inform the right person if they are being bullied or if they know someone else being bullied.

Parents and caregivers have the responsibility to:

- Be aware of the school's anti bullying policy and help their children recognise bullying behavior.
- Educate their children to behave respectfully towards others.
- Reinforce the message that bullying is not accepted or tolerated.
- Instruct their children to tell a trusted person if they are bullied.
- Watch for signs that their child may be bullied or is bullying someone.
- Speak to the form teacher and the educational adviser or another trusted person if their child is being bullied or is bullying someone.

EEB2 school has the responsibility to:

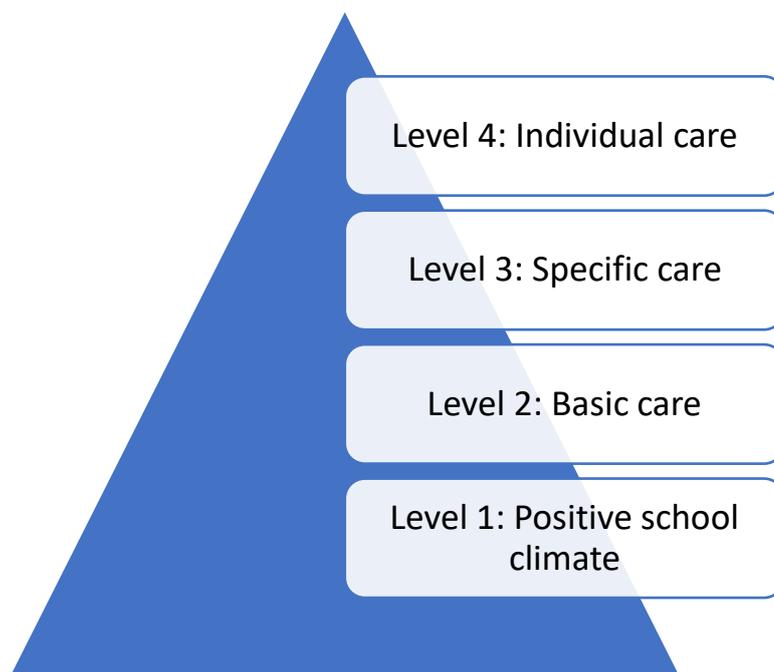
- Promote positive interactions and prevent bullying amongst school members by organising relevant workshops, Life Skill Hours, social skills training, excursions, school trips etc.
- Provide students with strategies to respond constructively to incidents of bullying behavior depending on their needs on individual and/or group/class level.
- Be transparent: provide concerned stakeholders with clear information on strategies that promote proper behavior and on the consequences of inappropriate behavior, within the limits of GDPR.
- Listen and take time to talk with school members who disclose bullying, take what they say seriously and investigate the situation.
- Be vigilant and pay attention to signs and symptoms which might be related to bullying
- Actively follow up (guidance and disciplinary level) on complaints of bullying, harassment, and intimidation within the resources available at the school.

4. School's strategies for preventing and responding to bullying

4.1. Prevention of bullying

Prevention of bullying is part of the well-being program of the EEB2. The school is working for wellbeing at four different levels:

1. Positive school climate (prevention)
2. General prevention (pedagogical projects, workshops...)
3. Guidance and care on group level (class interventions, crisis interventions...)
4. Guidance and care on individual level (individual coaching, meetings with school psychologist...)



Level 1: Positive school climate

The basis for bullying prevention lies in creating a positive and inclusive school environment. The school guides its members to a polite, respectful, non-discriminatory and tolerant behavior towards each other. The focus shall be on positive goals and problem solving. The school has clear and transparent rules available to all community members. Effective surveillance and the vigilance of each community member towards potential problems are necessary to prevent any kind of harassment. Immediate intervention and guidance can prevent problems from becoming bigger.

Level 2: Basic care

The school offers information and organises different programs, events, and subgroups to promote positive relationships and prevent bullying (these may vary over year groups):

- 8 Life Skills as a pedagogical project, integrated to learning
- Regular Life Skill Hours to each year group, including social skill training to pupils in years S1-S2
- School trips, Footfest etc.
- Pupils' Committee defending interests of pupils
- Bullying issues integrated in teaching of certain subjects (e.g. religion, ethics, L1, L2)
- Workshops against (cyber) bullying
- Tutoring workshops for internet safety
- "Active bystander" workshops to recognise and intervene in bullying situations
- Framework to protect community members from discrimination related to gender identity, sexual orientation, or other diversities (LGBTQIA+ charter)
- Campaigns for accepting diversity and difference
- Campaigns against harassment related to gender identity, sexual orientation or other diversities
- ...

Level 3: Specific care

To respond to the needs of our school community, we encourage trainings and interventions when necessary.

- Training for staff on bullying issues (180 degrees, Sensoa training on transgressive behavior, ...)
- Class intervention by the Guidance team interventions
- Pupils may contact their class representatives or the Pupils' Committee for specific issues. Staff members can contact their staff representatives.
- The external service for prevention and protection at work, Cohézio, has helplines available in French and English for the members of the administrative staff and the locally recruited teachers.
- It is sometimes necessary to take disciplinary measures (see scale of sanctions), including a duty of reflection.

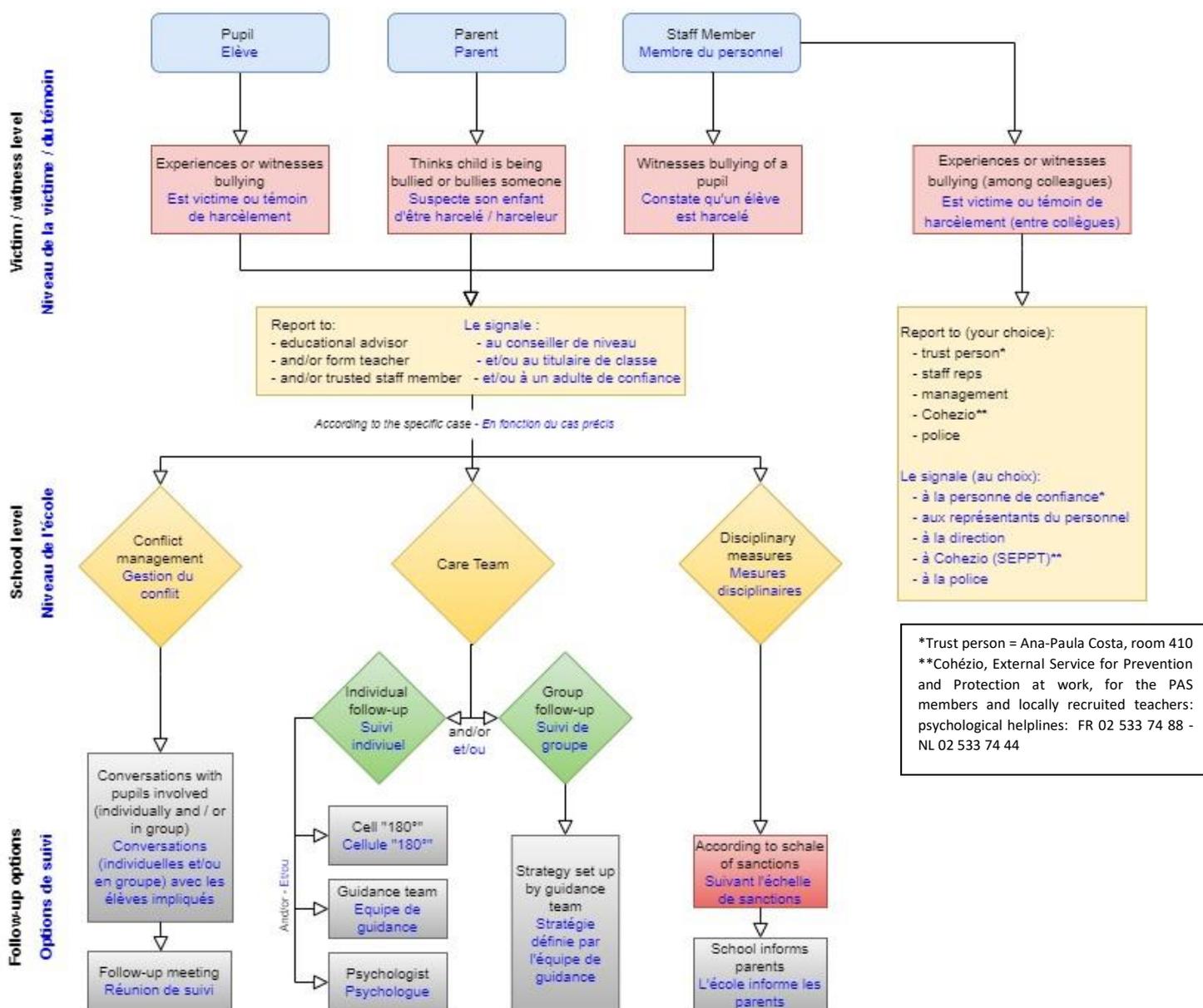
Level 4 : Individual care

Sometimes, students need a more tailored procedure. Our school psychologists, school nurses, guidance team members and members of the 180° cell are available to listen, to guide and to help. Staff members can contact the school's trust person for a possible further follow-up.

4.2. Strategies to tackle bullying at school

School members who experience or witness bullying should contact a trusted person: their staff representative, class teacher, educational adviser, guidance team member, school psychologist or the Assistant Deputy Director, for example. This way of working allows to tackle the situation, following the school procedures.

The following flow chart gives guidelines to the school community members as to how to proceed in a bullying situation. This flow chart is also published on our website and included in the pupils' agenda.



Procedure in case of bullying

Each case is different and needs tailored support and follow-up. The procedure detailed below is one possible approach that will be adapted to the specific situation.

- All reports of bullying in the school community will be investigated and every effort will be made to stop bullying.
- **The staff members in charge of conflict management** (later referred as *they* - For students this is most often the educational adviser in cooperation with the form teacher) listen to different parties and collect information from the various stakeholders.
- They speak with the students involved individually and/or in a group.
- They make a report of the conflict and inform the necessary staff members.
- They decide upon possible reparatory and disciplinary measures to be taken (see sanction scale).
- They inform parents of the pupils involved, with respect to GDPR.
- They organise necessary support for the victim and the bully when appropriate.
- When necessary, the Care Team (composed of 2 school psychologists, 2 nurses, one Educational Advisor, the Assistant Deputy Director of the Secondary Cycle and the Deputy Director) will be consulted.
- If the problem persists, members of the Guidance team¹ may be invited to help solve the conflict.
- The Care Team may decide to call on members of the 180° cell² to further empower the victim.
- If bullying persists despite the actions taken, more severe disciplinary measures will be adopted following the School Regulations (sanction scale).
- When necessary, the police or other authorities will be informed.
- For bullying on social media or other platforms outside of the school context, parents will be contacted and asked to act. In severe cases, they will be recommended to file a complaint at the police.
- In each bullying case, a follow-up will be organised with the school community members involved.

¹ The Guidance team is a group of voluntary teachers and educational advisers who listen to and coach pupils

² The 180° cell is a group of staff members trained to better arm pupils against bullying, according to the Palo Alto approach.

- Staff members experiencing bullying are advised to contact:
 - a. the trust person
 - b. their staff representative
 - c. the school management
 - d. Cohezio (External Service for Prevention and Protection at Work)
 - e. and possibly the police or other authorities.

4.3. Empowering the victim: 180° cell

Bullying often is a complex interactional phenomenon and sometimes efforts to prevent and stop it are not enough. The school has therefore trained a team of volunteers among the staff members to accompany students who are victims of bullying, according to the 180 degrees method, under the guidance of a school psychologist. This method was developed by Emmanuelle Piquet, based on the systemic and strategic approach of the Palo Alto School.

The 180 degrees method aims to better equip the bullied pupil against bullying, to strengthen his/her self-confidence, and to enable him/her to confront the aggressor in a new way, tailored for the student after a thorough analysis of his/her situation. The main idea is to teach children and adolescents to defend themselves, but not without help.

5. Further reading

- 23 Great School Anti-Bullying Policy Examples: <https://helpfulprofessor.com/anti-bullying-policies/>
- KiVa program: <https://www.kivaprogram.net/>
- Violence Prevention works:
https://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/olweus_bullying_prevention_program.page
- Enable: empower children, eliminate bullying: <http://enable.eun.org/report>
- How to prevent and tackle bullying and school violence:
<https://nesetweb.eu/en/resources/library/how-to-prevent-and-tackle-bullying-and-school-violence-2/>
- 180°: TEDx Better arming children Against Bullying at School
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMGLy-juSxw>
and webpage in French: <https://a180degres.com/blog/>
- Piquet, Emmanuelle : Te laisse pas faire ! (Payot, 2014)
- Piquet, Emmanuelle : Je me défends du harcèlement (Albin Michel, 2016)
- Piquet, Emmanuelle : En finir avec le harcèlement scolaire : Conseils et solutions pour apprendre à se faire respecter (J'AI LU, 2020)