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## **PREVENTION OF BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

The problem of bullying and cyberbullying in modern educational institutions is one of the key socio-psychological challenges faced by schools and other learning environments. In a world where interaction among children and adolescents extends far beyond the classroom and continues in the digital space, the issue of safety and psychological well-being becomes particularly urgent. Bullying, as a form of systematic violence, may manifest through physical, verbal, social, and psychological aggression, while cyberbullying appears through humiliation, harassment, the spread of offensive materials, or threats via the internet and mobile technologies. Both forms of abuse have a severe negative impact on the mental state of educational participants, disrupt learning activities, reduce academic performance, and may lead to long-term emotional consequences.

Preventing bullying in an educational institution involves not only responding to incidents but also creating a system of conditions that minimize the possibility of a hostile environment forming. One of the key directions is fostering a culture of respect, tolerance, and support within the school. Students need regular reminders about the value of each individual, empathy development, and responsible interaction with peers. Successful schools implement comprehensive social-emotional learning programs that teach children to understand their own emotions, resolve conflicts constructively, and build healthy relationships without aggression [1].

An important component of the prevention system is working with the teaching staff. Teachers must be familiar with early signs of bullying, be able to distinguish between a one-time conflict and systematic persecution, and know how to act in accordance with established procedures. Educators must create an atmosphere of trust in the classroom, where students are not afraid to report acts of aggression or ask for help. Every teacher, regardless of subject, plays a significant role in forming an environment where mockery, humiliation, or social exclusion are unacceptable. Equally important is cooperation with parents. Bullying often develops or intensifies

due to family problems, lack of parental awareness about behavioral changes in their child, or reluctance to acknowledge their child's involvement in aggression. Organizing trainings, consultations, and lectures on communication, parenting in a digital environment, and emotional competence helps parents understand their responsibilities and influence. School-family cooperation establishes a unified educational space in which children receive consistent messages about the unacceptability of aggressive behavior.

Cyberbullying is especially dangerous because it is hidden, can occur around the clock, and may reach a large audience. In addition, the aggressor can remain anonymous, which makes identification and response more difficult. Therefore, preventing cyberbullying must include digital literacy: students should know the rules of online safety, methods of protecting personal data, how to block offenders, adjust privacy settings, and think critically about information they receive or share. Modern schools increasingly introduce digital-safety lessons or invite IT specialists to conduct practical workshops. Another important aspect is building zero tolerance for any form of violence. An educational institution must develop clear rules that define bullying and cyberbullying, specify consequences for violators, and outline support mechanisms for victims [2].

A transparent policy ensures predictable responses. Students feel safer knowing their concerns will be taken seriously, while parents gain confidence in the reliability of the school. Preventive measures must be systematic and long-term. One-time lectures or activities usually have limited effectiveness, since behavioral patterns develop gradually. Effectiveness is achieved through regular classes, trainings, interactive exercises, role-playing, and discussions of real situations. Successful school programs often include creating student teams or «peer support groups» consisting of specially trained senior students. These teams help build relationships among peers, mediate conflicts, and reduce overall tension. Psychological support for victims and witnesses is also essential.

A child who has experienced emotional or physical aggression needs not only assistance in resolving the situation but also help with fears, rebuilding self-esteem, and restoring a sense of safety. A skilled psychologist helps the child regain emotional balance, develop stress-coping skills, and learn how to protect personal boundaries in the future. Witnesses, who often remain silent, also require guidance, as they can play a crucial role in stopping bullying. It is also important to consider age-specific characteristics. In primary school, the focus is on developing empathy, kindness, cooperation, and sharing. In middle school, emphasis is placed on conflict-resolution skills and effective communication. In high school, students work on responsibility, critical thinking, digital culture, and understanding the consequences of aggression for both the victim and the bully [3].

Thus, the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying is a complex, multi-level process that requires the involvement of all participants in the educational environment: students, teachers, parents, administration, and even external specialists. Only a holistic system that combines educational work, psychological support, digital literacy, and a culture of mutual respect can create a safe and supportive environment for personal development. A school that prioritizes the

mental well-being of its students not only prevents conflicts, aggression, and violence but also nurtures a generation of responsible, emotionally mature, and socially conscious individuals.

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## **THE PLAN TO KEEP STUDENTS AND TEACHERS MENTALLY HEALTHY**

The war in Ukraine has brought huge stress, fear, and sadness to all people in the educational system – students, teachers, and staff. Many people have seen dangerous things, lost their homes, or had to move to a new place inside or outside the country. This high level of difficulty and constant uncertainty means that schools must have a good, clear, and comprehensive system to help everyone with their mental health and make them feel safe again. Mental health is a key factor because when people feel stable and secure, students learn better, and teachers can do their demanding jobs for a longer time without getting exhausted or burning out.

This research says that we need a plan that works all the time and for everyone, not just when a big problem happens. The goal is to build a system that supports people who are dealing with trauma and constant worry about their future. This systematic approach must be guided by clear principles of crisis response, focusing first on safety and stability [1]. This multi-step approach helps the whole school community.