

“Gegen den Strich” (“Against the Grain”) - the Anti-Bullying Project

Information sheet for parents

What is bullying?

In this project your child learns that bullying is when a person is constantly aggravated or excluded by several children over a long period, without him or her being able to end these attacks.

Squabbles that include annoying, pushing or excluding are part of what children have to come to terms with in their time at primary school. Dealing with this is an aspect of the development of a class community.

Bullying is a form of violence that has no place in a school class, because bullying is harassing a child in a targeted way.

How is bullying done?

There are various acts of bullying, including insults, spreading rumours, repeatedly not allowing participation in games, removing objects or physical attacks.

Further acts can be added to this through the internet, such as the distribution of embarrassing photos and anonymous threats.

If such acts are repeated often and deliberately, this becomes bullying or cyberbullying.

Who gets bullied?

Every child can get into a situation where they are bullied. But there are no characteristics or ways of behaving that justify any bullying!

Who is involved? Everyone.

There is no-one who is not involved with bullying, as bullying is a problem for the whole class. As well as the child affected, the group of perpetrators and their followers, there is the large group of spectators who are aware of the bullying but don't intervene. The spectators are often afraid of becoming the offender group's victims themselves.

This is where the “Gegen den Strich” (Against the Grain) project comes in. The children learn to see through any bullying and that there are many ways to deal with it. “Getting help is not telling tales!” – it's getting justice.

Why does bullying hurt so much?

A very important requirement for children is a sense of belonging and being accepted. Those affected by bullying are afraid and no longer feel comfortable at school. These children often feel ashamed and think that they have brought it upon themselves. They often don't dare to talk about it with friends, teachers or family.

So what can you do?

Many of those affected are afraid that everything will get much worse if they talk to their class teacher. But when no-one from the group of watching children dares to intervene, then adults are required to put a stop to the bullying.

- Try to talk to your child if they seem depressed or unwilling to go to school.
- Use your patience and confidence to show that you will solve this problem together.
- Don't reproach your child or give them any premature tips, such as telling them that they should behave differently.



Plan the next steps together with your child.

- Keep a record with your child about what happens every day at the school (positive things can be noted, too).
- Tell the class teacher about it.
- Contact the school counselling service if necessary, or other contact people such as the social education worker or the teacher responsible for pastoral care in that class.
- Inform the school management if necessary.
- Should any external advice be required, turn to the relevant ReBBZ (Regional Education and Counselling Centre).
- The police should also be involved in any serious cases, such as physical injury, serious threats or blackmail.

What should you avoid?

- Talking to the perpetrators as parents. This could indicate to the bullies that your child is helpless on their own. That way parents could weaken the position of their child.
- Talking directly to the perpetrators' parents as parents. As a rule, parents will defend their children. This in turn will justify and support bullies' behaviour. If the child is punished by their parents, this generally has a negative effect on the child affected by the bullying.

Helpful internet addresses:

<https://www.klicksafe.de/themen/kommunizieren/cyber-mobbing/>

<https://www.hamburg.de/mobbingintervention/>

