

# Module 3. School-wide Policies and National Anti-Bullying Frameworks

This module explores national and school-specific anti-bullying policies across Europe, with a focus on implementing effective prevention strategies. Designed for educators, this document provides practical frameworks for developing clear rules, understanding legal responsibilities, and adopting the Whole School Approach to create safer learning environments. Through examining policies from Italy, Poland, North Macedonia, Turkey, and Romania, teachers will gain insights into best practices for combating bullying and fostering inclusive school communities.



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

# Overview of European Anti-Bullying Policies

While the European Union lacks unified, binding anti-bullying laws across all member states, there are significant recommendations, frameworks, and legal mechanisms that guide countries in combating bullying effectively. These operate primarily through human rights frameworks, education policies, and digital safety laws.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) forms the foundation of child protection efforts worldwide. Several articles specifically address bullying concerns:

- Article 16 protects children from arbitrary interference with their privacy, addressing cyberbullying issues
- Article 19 mandates protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, including bullying
- Article 37 ensures no child is subjected to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, applicable to severe bullying cases

The Council of Europe's Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 promotes children's rights in the digital environment, addressing cyberbullying through several key principles:

## Protection of Dignity and Security

Member states must safeguard children's dignity, security, and physical and psychological integrity, protecting them from all forms of violence, harassment, exploitation, and abuse in digital environments.

## Digital Literacy and Skills

States should ensure children have necessary skills and knowledge to exercise their rights in digital environments, including education on digital literacy and online safety to help recognize and address risks like bullying.

## Child Participation

Member states should actively involve children in creating and implementing policies related to their rights in the digital world, valuing their unique perspectives on challenges faced online.

## Protection of Vulnerable Groups

States should recognize that certain children—those with disabilities, from minority backgrounds, or in marginalized communities—may face heightened risks of online bullying and harassment, requiring tailored protective measures.

The European Commission has consistently emphasized safeguarding children from bullying through initiatives like the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child (2021-2024) and the Better Internet for Kids (BIK) initiative, which addresses cyberbullying through digital literacy and safety resources. Additionally, the Education and Training 2020 framework (ET2020) encourages member states to adopt a Whole School Approach to address bullying.

# Overview of Italian Anti-Bullying Policies

Italy has implemented comprehensive regulations to prevent and combat bullying, with particular attention to cyberbullying. The MIUR Directive No. 1455/06 establishes guidelines for schools on bullying prevention and management, promoting an inclusive school culture based on respect and solidarity.

Law 71/2017 specifically addresses the growing phenomenon of cyberbullying, establishing prevention and counter measures, introducing sanctions for perpetrators, and defining responsibilities for online platforms. Schools must train staff and students on cyberbullying risks and provide appropriate psychological support to victims.

In 2024, Law 70/2024 supplemented the previous legislation by introducing specific regulations for bullying, strengthening actions against psychological and digital violence. This law emphasizes teacher training and awareness-raising activities, requiring schools to adopt a Regulation for preventing and combating bullying and cyberbullying, along with an Internal Code for reporting and assessing cases.

Primary/Universal Prevention	Secondary/Selective Prevention	Tertiary/Indicated Prevention
Schools must implement universal prevention strategies aimed at the entire school population, creating a positive climate and promoting respectful relationships.	Targeted interventions for at-risk groups, providing additional support and monitoring for students who may be more vulnerable to bullying.	Specific interventions for identified cases of bullying, including support for victims, consequences for perpetrators, and rehabilitation strategies.

## Sanctions and Responsibilities

Sanctions for bullying perpetrators vary according to the severity of the incidents. School disciplinary measures apply in all cases, while criminal prosecution may occur for serious offenses. Law 71/2017 requires social platforms to remove offensive content and cooperate with authorities. Schools must intervene promptly and report bullying incidents to competent authorities.

Law 70/2024 introduces administrative sanctions for educational institutions that fail to implement prevention and intervention policies. It also proposes compulsory psycho-educational programs for perpetrators of bullying, aiming at rehabilitation rather than punishment alone.

# Legal Responsibilities for Italian Schools and Teachers

Italian schools have clear legal responsibilities regarding bullying incidents. According to MIUR Directive No. 1455/06 and the MIUR Guidelines (2015 and 2021), schools must take preventive measures and intervene promptly when bullying occurs.

## Prevention Responsibilities

Schools must create an inclusive and safe environment. This includes activities focused on respect, diversity education, and empathy development.

## Early Intervention

When bullying occurs, schools must intervene promptly to protect victims and address aggressors' behavior. An internal protocol must be activated for immediate action, including reporting to authorities and involving parents.

## Monitoring and Reporting

Schools must continuously monitor the situation to detect signs of bullying and prevent recurrence. They must promptly report violations to police or other competent services when necessary.

## Victim Protection

Schools must provide psychological support to bullying victims, ensuring access to adequate resources to address the psychological consequences of abuse.

## Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers have specific legal obligations regarding bullying incidents. Law 71/2017 and MIUR Directive No. 1455/06 state that teachers must:

- Report immediately: When aware of bullying, teachers must promptly inform school management
- Intervene early: Teachers must take immediate action when witnessing bullying, stopping aggressive behavior and protecting victims
- Participate in ongoing training: Teachers must attend training programs on bullying and cyberbullying to recognize signs and effectively handle cases
- Protect privacy: Teachers must respect student privacy while ensuring necessary actions are taken

## Parent Responsibilities

Parents of victims should report bullying incidents to the school to initiate intervention processes. Parents of perpetrators have a duty to educate their children and take disciplinary measures at home. In severe cases, parents may be held accountable for their children's actions.

## Student Responsibilities

Student victims have the right to report bullying to school authorities or other relevant figures. Student bystanders are encouraged to report incidents to school authorities or family members, though there are no strict legal obligations.

# Overview of Polish Anti-Bullying Policies

Polish laws and regulations emphasize creating safe and supportive school environments through several key frameworks:

- Act on the Education System (Ustawa o systemie oświaty z dnia 7 września 1991 r.)
- Act on Upbringing in Sobriety and Counteracting Alcoholism (includes anti-violence provisions)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education on Ensuring Safety in Schools

Schools in Poland must develop their own anti-bullying policies that align with national guidelines.

## Legal Responsibilities for Polish Schools

Schools in Poland have clear legal obligations to ensure safe and supportive environments:



### Preventive Measures

Schools must implement comprehensive prevention programs addressing bullying, educating students, teachers, and parents about recognizing, preventing, and responding to incidents.

# Legal Responsibilities for Polish Teachers and Families

## Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers in Poland have both professional and legal obligations regarding bullying:

- **Duty to act:** Teachers must intervene when witnessing or being informed of bullying, stemming from their broader duty of care for student safety and well-being
- **Mandatory reporting:** If bullying involves actions that could constitute criminal offenses (physical violence, threats, harassment), teachers must report to school administration and, in severe cases, to law enforcement or child protection services
- **Internal reporting:** Teachers must follow the school's anti-bullying policy and report incidents to designated authorities within the school
- **Support provision:** Teachers must offer immediate support to victims, ensuring their safety and referring them to appropriate psychological or pedagogical assistance
- **Documentation:** Teachers must document incidents they witness or learn about, contributing to the school's records

Failure to report bullying incidents, particularly those involving criminal acts, may result in disciplinary actions from the school or legal consequences under the Criminal Code.

## Parent and Student Responsibilities

### Parent Responsibilities

While parents aren't legally obligated to report bullying directly to authorities, they are responsible for their children's safety at school. They should:

- Report incidents to school authorities if their child is a victim or witness
- Cooperate with schools to address bullying, including attending meetings and supporting anti-bullying initiatives
- Support their children if they experience bullying, including seeking counseling or other resources

### Student Responsibilities

Students are encouraged, though not legally bound, to report bullying incidents they witness or experience. The Act on the Education System emphasizes student participation in creating safe school environments. Reporting helps prevent further harm and promotes positive school culture, though there is no direct legal requirement for students to report bullying.

# Overview of North Macedonian Anti-Bullying Policies

North Macedonia has established various frameworks to address bullying, particularly in educational settings:

The Law on Primary Education mandates schools to address bullying, protect victims, and conduct preventive activities. The Ministry of Education and Science oversees these reforms to ensure safer educational environments.

In October 2023, North Macedonia ratified the International Labour Organization's Convention 190 on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, providing a comprehensive framework to prevent and address workplace violence and harassment, including bullying.

## School Responsibilities

The Law on Primary Education and Ministry of Education frameworks provide clear guidelines for schools to combat bullying and create safer learning environments. Schools must develop their own anti-bullying policies that align with national frameworks while considering each institution's unique needs.

## Measures

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <div>1</div> <div>Preventive Measures</div> <div>Awareness programs, integration of respect in the curriculum, code of conduct.</div> | <div>2</div> <div>Incident Response</div> <div>Reporting mechanisms, investigation procedures, protection measures for victims.</div>         |
| <div>3</div> <div>Staff Training</div> <div>Recognition of bullying signs, conflict mediation, legal protocols.</div>                 | <div>4</div> <div>Parent and Community Involvement</div> <div>Participation in anti-bullying initiatives, partnerships with local NGOs.</div> |
| <div>5</div> <div>Monitoring and Accountability</div> <div>Periodic inspections, progress reports, incident documentation.</div>      | <div>6</div> <div>Victim Support</div> <div>Online education, collaboration with helplines.</div>   |

# Legal Responsibilities in North Macedonia

## Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers in North Macedonia have a legal obligation to report bullying incidents. The Law on Primary Education explicitly prohibits discrimination in the educational process on all grounds, including sexual orientation and gender identity. This law mandates that schools take measures to prevent and address all forms of violence and discrimination within the educational environment.

The law requires creating a by-law to thoroughly regulate the procedure for reporting violence and protecting students. Furthermore, it prescribes fines for school principals who fail to report incidents of violence, abuse, or harassment to the competent authorities.

## Parent and Student Responsibilities

In North Macedonia, parents and students do not have specific legal obligations to report bullying incidents under current laws. However, there are expectations for schools and authorities to take action:

### Parents' Role

While parents aren't legally required to report bullying incidents, they play a crucial role in supporting their children. They're encouraged to communicate with schools if they suspect their child is being bullied or involved in bullying. The Law on Primary Education encourages parents to actively participate in the educational process, including addressing bullying issues, but doesn't explicitly make reporting mandatory.

### Students' Role

Like parents, students aren't legally bound to report bullying. However, they're encouraged to speak out about bullying or seek help from teachers, school counselors, or other responsible adults. Schools typically foster environments where students are encouraged to report incidents, but this reflects educational practices rather than legal obligations.

# Overview of Turkish Anti-Bullying Policies

Turkey has recently strengthened its approach to bullying through significant regulatory changes. With amendments to the Regulation on Secondary Education Institutions published in the Official Gazette on November 15, 2022, 'Peer Bullying' and 'Cyber Bullying' are now officially recognized as disciplinary offenses in high schools.

Students who engage in peer bullying are subject to disciplinary penalties ranging from warnings to suspension. This applies to students who take and share unauthorized recordings and those who negatively affect another student's social or emotional development.

## Legal Framework

At a broader level, Law No. 5237 was designed to protect individual rights and freedoms, public order and security, the rule of law, public health, the environment, and social peace, while preventing crime. Key principles include:

- The principle of legality in crime and punishment: No one can be punished or have a security measure applied for an act that the law does not clearly deem a crime
- The principle of equality before justice and law: A penalty and security measure proportional to the seriousness of the act is imposed on the perpetrator, with no distinction between persons

The Turkish Penal Code No. 5237 regulates sanctions against violence through several provisions:

### Force and Violence

A person who uses force and violence that they cannot resist or escape is considered the perpetrator of the crime and no punishment is given to this person.

### Unjust Provocation

A person who commits a crime under the influence of anger or severe pain caused by an unjust act receives reduced sentencing: eighteen to twenty-four years instead of aggravated life imprisonment, and twelve to eighteen years instead of life imprisonment.

### Torture

A public official who acts against a person in a manner incompatible with human dignity, causing physical or mental suffering, is punished with imprisonment from three to twelve years.

### Threat

A person who threatens another by mentioning an attack on their life, physical or sexual integrity, or that of their relative, is punished with imprisonment from six months to two years.

Law No. 5651 specifically addresses electronic harassment, unauthorized use of personal data, fraping (fake account) attacks, and outing (publication of private images with intent to harm).

# School Responsibilities in Turkey

According to CIRCULAR 2024/56, schools in Turkey have specific responsibilities regarding security and anti-bullying measures:

## Security in Educational Environments

School administrations must take necessary measures to ensure security inside and outside the school and institution, cooperating with relevant institutions and organizations to maintain safe environments.

## Risk Factor Detection

School principals must identify risk factors that may cause violence in educational environments and take necessary measures against priority risk factors or violence effects.

## Guidance and Counseling Services

Schools must provide appropriate conditions and personnel support for school guidance and psychological counseling services and Guidance and Research Centers (RAMs) to prevent violence.

## Digital Security

Schools must expand efforts to develop children's safe space skills and virtual literacy in digital environments to prevent cyberbullying.

## In-Service Training

All managers in the provincial organization of the Ministry must receive in-service training on preventing violence, ensuring leadership is equipped to implement anti-bullying measures.

## Law Enforcement Notification

Priority situations detected by school and institution principals regarding school security must be reported to the upper unit and law enforcement immediately.

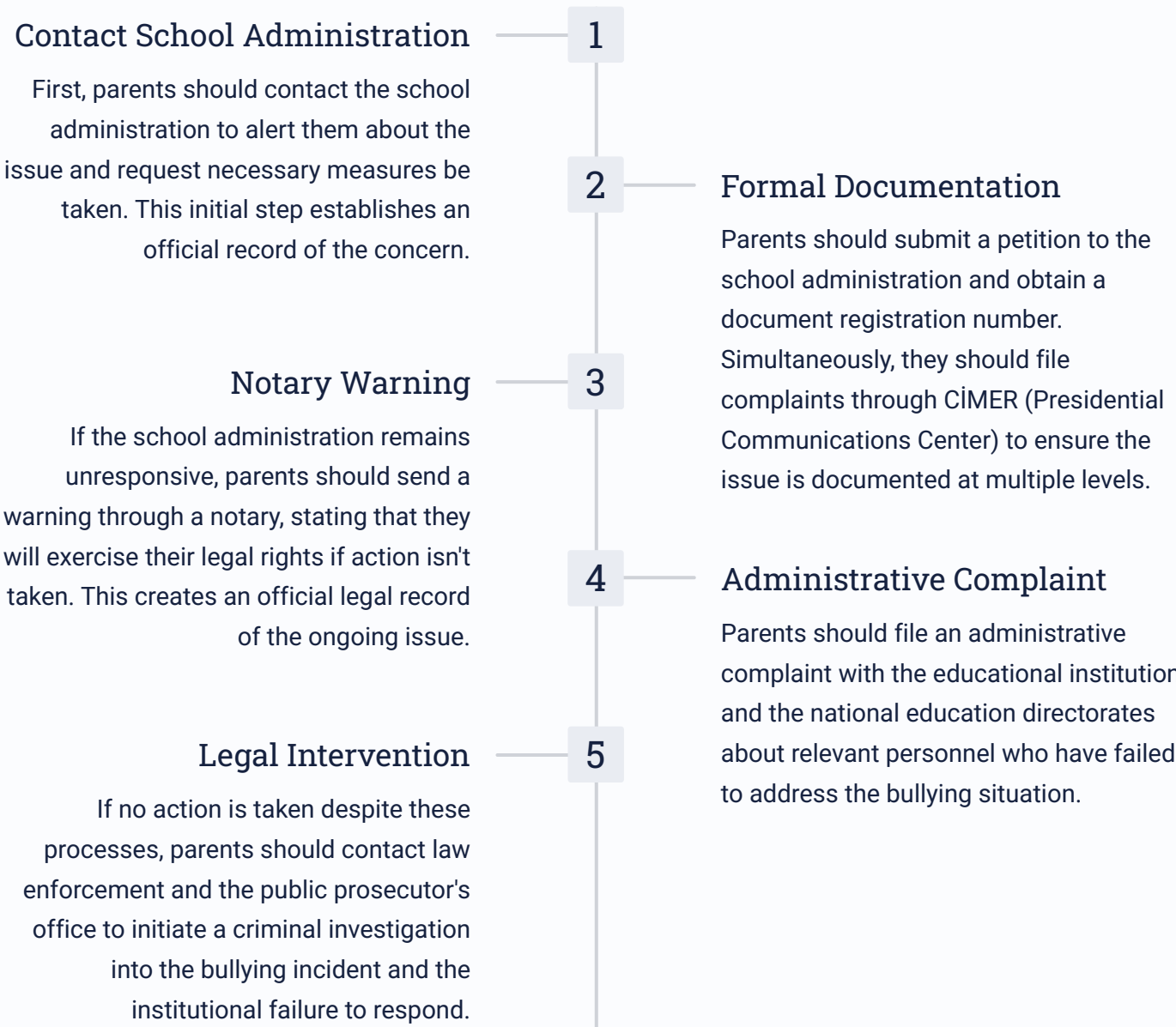
# Legal Responsibilities for Turkish Teachers, Parents, and Students

## Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers in Turkey are legally obligated to report bullying if they witness or become aware of it. This obligation constitutes both a professional and moral responsibility, and teachers are legally empowered to intervene in such situations. Failure to report or address bullying incidents may result in disciplinary action against teachers who neglect this duty.

## Parent and Student Responsibilities

When dealing with bullying incidents in Turkey, parents should follow a structured approach:



# Overview of Romanian Anti-Bullying Policies

Romania has established comprehensive regulations to address bullying in educational settings. Two key orders form the foundation of the country's anti-bullying framework:

## ORDER no. 4.343/2020

This order approves the methodological norms for applying the National Education Law no. 1/2011 concerning psychological violence – bullying. Its primary purpose is establishing rules and procedures for preventing and combating bullying in schools, ensuring safe and healthy environments where students can develop harmoniously and reach their potential.

Key objectives include:

- Preventing bullying through information and training for students, teachers, and parents
- Combating bullying through procedures for managing and resolving cases
- Informing and involving the community through debates and inter-institutional collaboration
- Monitoring and evaluating anti-bullying measure effectiveness through periodic reports and data analysis

A significant provision is the creation of anti-bullying action groups in schools, including teachers, parents, and students aged 12 or older. The Student Council appoints "anti-bullying ambassadors" who work to raise awareness, identify bullying situations, mediate conflicts, encourage support for victims, and empower students to report incidents.

## Order no. 6235/2023

This order establishes procedures for managing cases of violence against students and educational staff, as well as related situations in the school environment and suspected violence against children outside school. It provides standardized protocols for identifying, reporting, and addressing violence cases to ensure the safety and well-being of all school community members.

### Prevention Requirements

Schools must include anti-bullying measures in Internal Regulations, create anonymous reporting mechanisms, and inform children and parents about these procedures.

Schools must eliminate risks, call emergency services when necessary, and restore students' sense of physical and emotional safety.

### Victim Protection

To prevent revictimization, repeated interviewing of victims is prohibited. Depending on case severity, interviewing involved parties is conducted by police, child protection departments, or school representatives. Communication with parents must occur in the victim's absence, with counselor presence, in confidential spaces.

# Romanian Anti-Bullying Sanctions and School Responsibilities

Romanian legislation stipulates that schools must establish support measures and legal sanctions for individuals involved in bullying incidents. Support measures may include:

- Group and/or individual counseling for affected students
- Organizing and recommending participation in thematic support group meetings
- Activities to develop socio-emotional skills and emotional self-regulation strategies
- Referral for psychological and psychotherapeutic intervention
- Identifying resources for hiring therapists to assist victims or aggressors over time
- Activities to combat hate speech, discrimination, marginalization, and harmful social norms
- Conflict mediation through restorative approaches (except for gender-based violence victims)
- Transfer to another class/program for bullying victims at parents' request

Failure to comply with reporting procedures and anti-bullying measures by school staff constitutes a disciplinary offense and is sanctioned according to the Pre-University Education Law no. 198/2023.

## Teacher Responsibilities

- The teacher or school counselor who identifies a bullying or cyberbullying situation is responsible for initiating intervention to rehabilitate the victim
- All violence against students must be reported to school management, the county-level general directorate of social assistance and child protection, and the public social assistance service at the community level
- Teachers must participate in case investigations, confirmation processes, and implementation of rehabilitation plan objectives
- Teachers are required to organize age-appropriate activities with students to help them understand violence and its impact on both children and adults

## Parent and Student Responsibilities

While Romanian law doesn't mandate that parents report bullying incidents, it establishes clear procedures for when incidents occur:

### Student Responsibilities

Students must verbally and urgently inform the principal about bullying cases among peers. This creates an immediate reporting channel that allows for swift intervention.

### Parent Involvement

When bullying occurs, school principals must verbally and urgently inform parents/legal representatives of involved students and request they come to school to help manage the situation in the child's best interest.

# Introduction to the Whole School Approach (WSA)

The Whole School Approach (WSA) represents a comprehensive, systemic strategy that engages all members of the school community—teachers, students, staff, parents, and local stakeholders—in preventing bullying and fostering a positive school environment (UNESCO, 2017).

This approach goes beyond addressing individual bullying incidents to promote a culture of respect and inclusion throughout the entire school community.

## Core Principles of the Whole School Approach



WSA recognizes that bullying is a complex social issue impacting the entire school community. Everyone—teachers, staff, students, and parents—shares responsibility for preventing and addressing bullying.

# Elements of the Whole School Approach

## Inclusive Environment

Schools implementing WSA hold regular inclusion workshops and establish peer-support systems that encourage students to mentor and support classmates from diverse backgrounds.

These initiatives help create a school culture where differences are celebrated rather than targeted.

## Community Extension

WSA encourages schools to extend anti-bullying initiatives to the broader community by engaging local organizations, government agencies, and community leaders.

This creates a wider support network for students and reinforces that bullying is not tolerated anywhere.

## Collaborative Partnerships

Schools partner with local NGOs, community centers, and law enforcement to develop joint programs aimed at preventing bullying both inside and outside school grounds.

These partnerships leverage diverse expertise and resources to create more effective interventions.

## Consistent Messaging

All stakeholders—from teachers to bus drivers to cafeteria staff—receive training on the school's anti-bullying policies and how to respond to incidents.

This ensures students receive consistent messages about behavioral expectations throughout their school experience.



# Implementation Framework

Implementing the Whole School Approach requires systematic planning and coordination:

## Assessment

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current school climate, including surveys of students, staff, and parents to identify specific bullying issues and areas for improvement.

## Policy Development

Create clear, comprehensive anti-bullying policies with input from all stakeholders. Policies should define bullying behaviors, outline reporting procedures, specify consequences, and describe prevention strategies.

## Capacity Building

Provide training for all school staff, including teachers, administrators, counselors, and support staff, on recognizing, preventing, and responding to bullying. Ensure students receive age-appropriate education about bullying.

## Environment Modification

Make physical and cultural changes to create a more positive school environment, such as increased supervision in bullying hotspots, classroom arrangements that promote collaboration, and school-wide positive behavior initiatives.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Regularly collect data on bullying incidents, policy implementation, and school climate to assess effectiveness and make necessary adjustments to the approach.

# Practical Steps

## Phase 1: Foundation Building

### 1 Form a Coordinating Committee

Establish a diverse team including administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents, and community representatives.

This committee will lead the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the WSA initiative.

Ensure the committee has clear leadership, regular meeting schedules, and defined roles for members.

### 2 Conduct a Comprehensive Assessment

Gather data about the current bullying situation through anonymous surveys, focus groups, and review of incident reports. Identify patterns, hotspots, and specific forms of bullying prevalent in your school.

Assess existing policies, procedures, and prevention efforts to determine strengths and gaps.

### 3 Develop a Shared Vision

Based on assessment findings, create a clear vision statement for what a bullying-free school looks like.

Ensure this vision aligns with the school's broader values and mission.

Involve all stakeholders in developing this vision to build ownership and commitment.

### 4 Create a Comprehensive Action Plan

Develop a detailed plan with specific goals, strategies, timelines, responsible parties, and success indicators.

Ensure the plan addresses prevention, intervention, and ongoing monitoring. Include both short-term actions for immediate impact and long-term strategies for sustainable change.

## Phase 2: Implementation



2

### Policy Development

Review and revise school policies to ensure they clearly define all forms of bullying, outline reporting procedures, specify consequences, and align with national regulations. Ensure policies are age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, and address both traditional and cyberbullying.

### Staff Training

Provide comprehensive training for all school personnel on recognizing, preventing, and responding to bullying. Include specific guidance for different roles (teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff) and ensure new staff receive training during onboarding.



### Curriculum Integration

Incorporate anti-bullying education, social-emotional learning, and digital citizenship into the regular curriculum. Use age-appropriate lessons, activities, and discussions to build students' skills in empathy, conflict resolution, and positive relationships.

### Student Engagement

Establish student-led initiatives such as peer support programs, anti-bullying clubs, and awareness campaigns. Empower students to take leadership roles in creating a positive school culture through mentoring, conflict mediation, and bystander intervention training.

## Phase 3: Sustainability and Evaluation

- **Regular monitoring:** Collect data consistently to track bullying incidents, intervention effectiveness, and changes in school climate
- **Continuous improvement:** Use evaluation findings to refine strategies, address emerging issues, and strengthen successful approaches
- **Celebration and recognition:** Acknowledge progress, highlight successes, and recognize individuals and groups contributing to positive change
- **Institutionalization:** Embed anti-bullying practices into school routines, traditions, and organizational structures to ensure sustainability
- **Community connections:** Maintain and strengthen partnerships with families, community organizations, and local authorities to extend impact beyond school

Remember that implementing WSA is not a one-time project but an ongoing process of cultural change. Success requires patience, persistence, and flexibility to adapt strategies based on emerging needs and evaluation findings.