

Module 8. Collaboration with schools, communities, and national anti-bullying frameworks



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

This module explores how parents can effectively collaborate with schools, communities, and utilize national anti-bullying frameworks to create safe environments for their children. Through understanding policies, building partnerships with educators, and learning advocacy strategies, parents will gain the tools needed to protect their children from bullying and contribute to positive school cultures.

Understanding the Importance of School-Parent Collaboration

Creating a safe, bully-free environment requires strong partnerships between parents and schools. When parents and educators work together, they can more effectively prevent and address bullying incidents through early detection and consistent messaging about respect and inclusion.

Effective collaboration begins with establishing a shared vision where both parties see each other as allies rather than adversaries. This partnership is built on mutual trust, open communication, and respect for each other's roles in children's development.

Early Detection

When parents and schools maintain open communication, warning signs of bullying can be identified sooner, allowing for prompt intervention before situations escalate.

Consistent Messaging

Children benefit when they receive the same messages about respect, inclusion, and appropriate behavior both at home and at school, reinforcing positive social norms.

Shared Accountability

When parents and schools collaborate, they create a system of shared responsibility for maintaining a positive learning environment where all children can thrive.

Building this collaborative relationship requires proactive engagement from parents through attending school events, establishing early rapport with teachers and administrators, and maintaining regular communication about their child's experiences and progress.

European Union's Approach to Combating Bullying

While the European Union lacks unified, binding laws specifically targeting bullying, it actively promotes child protection and anti-bullying efforts through various frameworks, recommendations, and indirect legal mechanisms. These policies empower parents to support and advocate for their children's rights both in schools and online environments.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC, ratified by nearly every country worldwide, forms the foundation of child protection efforts, including bullying prevention. Several articles are particularly relevant to bullying situations:

- Article 16 protects children from interference with their privacy, making cyberbullying a violation of these protections
- Article 19 establishes that governments, schools, and families are responsible for creating safe environments free from bullying and violence
- Article 37 protects children from cruel or degrading treatment, which includes severe bullying

Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7

This recommendation focuses on protecting children's rights in the digital environment, addressing cyberbullying through several key principles:

- Member states must protect children from online harassment and abuse
- Children should be educated about online safety and digital literacy
- Children should be involved in shaping policies to tackle cyberbullying
- Accessible reporting mechanisms must be available for children experiencing online harm
- Technology platforms should collaborate to improve online safety
- Children's personal information and images must be safeguarded

Parents can learn more about these frameworks at [UNCRC full text](#) and [Council of Europe recommendations](#).

European Commission Initiatives Against Bullying

The European Commission has implemented several strategic initiatives to combat bullying in schools and online environments, providing frameworks that guide national policies across member states.



EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child

The 2021-2024 strategy integrates anti-bullying measures within its broader framework of promoting children's rights. Schools are encouraged to adopt preventative measures like fostering respect and inclusivity, while establishing reporting mechanisms that empower children to safely report bullying incidents.



Better Internet for Kids (BIK)

This initiative addresses cyberbullying by promoting digital literacy and safety. It provides resources for children, parents, and educators while collaborating with tech platforms to implement content moderation policies and respond quickly to harmful behavior reports.



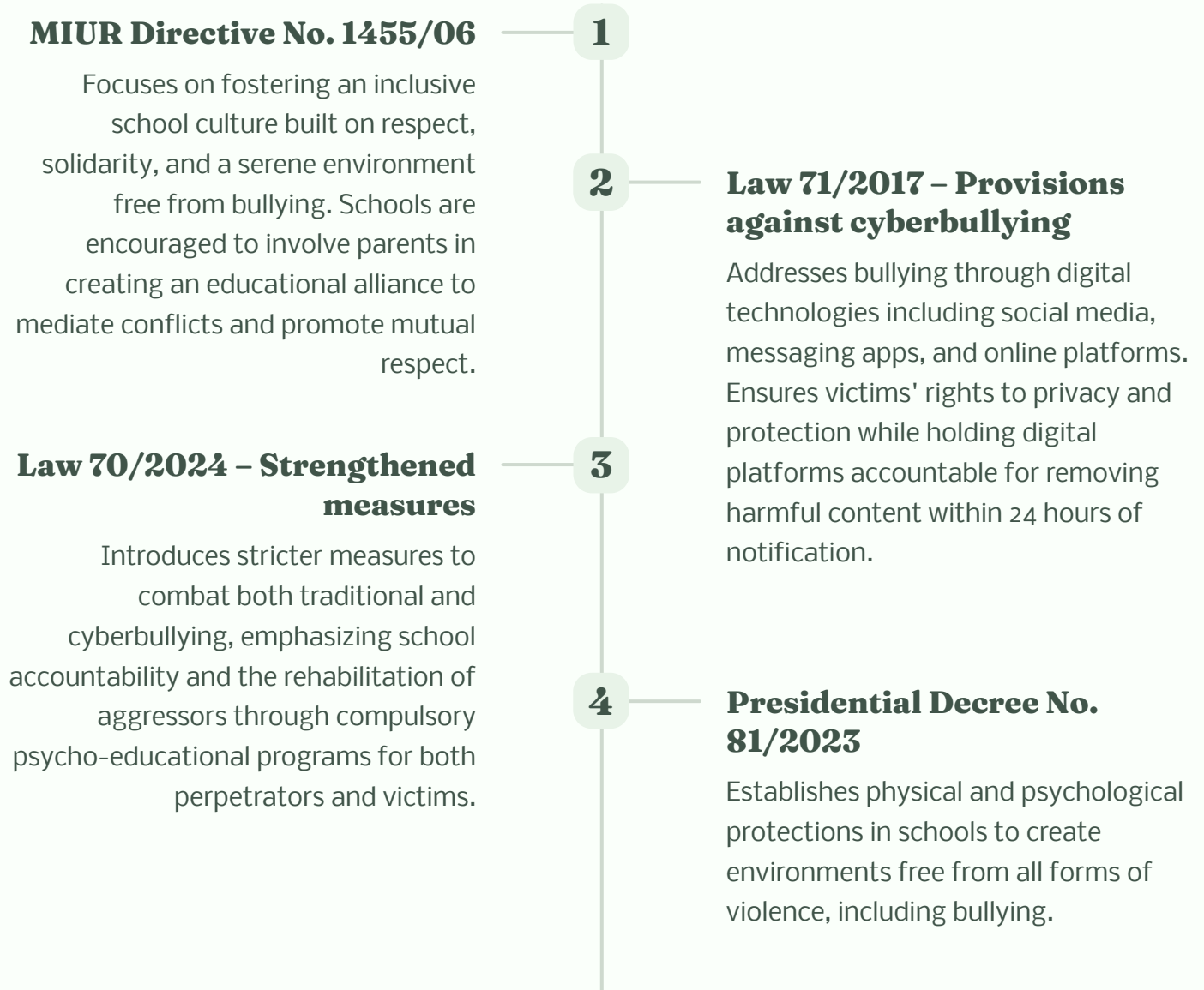
Education and Training 2020 Framework

The ET2020 framework promotes quality education and encourages member states to adopt a Whole School Approach to address bullying. This includes integrating anti-bullying policies into school governance, training teachers, and fostering student participation in creating safe school cultures.

These European frameworks provide the foundation for more specific national policies that protect children from bullying. Parents should engage with their child's school to understand how these broader policies are implemented locally and advocate for comprehensive teacher training and student-led initiatives that create respectful school environments.

Italian Anti-Bullying Legal Framework

Italy has established comprehensive legal frameworks to prevent and combat bullying, with special attention to cyberbullying. These laws provide clear guidelines for schools, parents, and digital platforms regarding their responsibilities in creating safe environments for children.



Sanctions and Consequences

Italian law establishes clear consequences for bullying behaviors:

- For perpetrators: School-based disciplinary actions (suspension/expulsion), criminal charges for severe cases, and compulsory psycho-educational programs
- For schools: Potential fines or administrative sanctions for failing to implement anti-bullying policies
- For online platforms: Financial penalties for non-compliance with content removal requirements

Parents can learn more about Italian anti-bullying policies at the [Ministry of Education website](#) and [Official Gazette](#).

Polish Anti-Bullying Policies

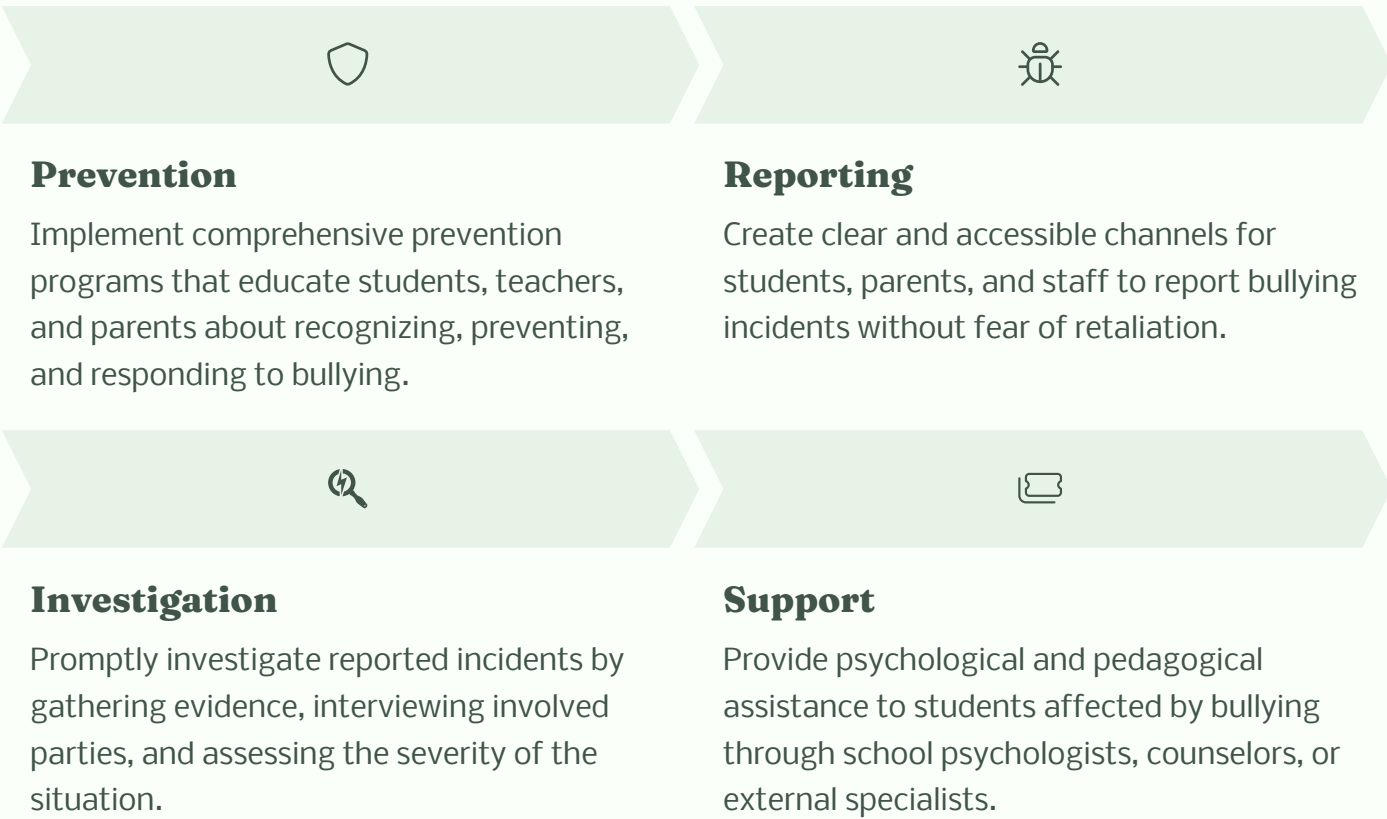
Schools in Poland are required by law to develop their own anti-bullying policies that align with national guidelines. These local policies are guided by several key regulations that establish clear responsibilities for educational institutions.

Key Legal Frameworks

- Act on the Education System (Ustawa o systemie oświaty z dnia 7 września 1991 r. - Dz.U. 1991 nr 95 poz. 425)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education on Ensuring Safety in Schools (Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej w sprawie zapewnienia bezpieczeństwa w szkołach z dnia 31 grudnia 2002 r.)
- Labor Code (Ustawa z dnia 26 czerwca 1974 r. - Dz.U. 1974 nr 24 poz. 141), Article 943 (applicable to bullying in workplaces, including school employees)

School Responsibilities

Polish schools have comprehensive legal obligations to ensure safe environments for students:



Additionally, schools must implement appropriate disciplinary actions for perpetrators, collaborate with external authorities in severe cases, and maintain thorough documentation of all bullying incidents for accountability purposes.

Legal Responsibilities in Polish Schools

In Poland, teachers have specific legal obligations regarding bullying incidents, while parents and students have different expectations for their roles in maintaining safe school environments.

Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers in Poland have both professional and legal obligations when it comes to bullying:

- **Duty to act:** Teachers must intervene when they witness or are informed of bullying as part of their broader duty of care
- **Mandatory reporting:** If a bullying incident involves actions that could constitute a criminal offense, teachers are legally required to report it to school administration and potentially to law enforcement
- **Criminal Code obligations:** Article 240 requires teachers to report knowledge of crimes such as severe abuse or violence, with legal consequences for failure to do so
- **Documentation:** Teachers must record incidents they witness or learn about, contributing to the school's records on bullying cases

Consequences for Teachers

Teachers who fail to report bullying incidents may face:

- Disciplinary actions from the school, including warnings or termination
- Legal consequences under the Criminal Code for neglecting reporting obligations

Parent Responsibilities

While parents in Poland are not legally obligated to report bullying incidents directly to authorities, they are encouraged to:

- Report concerns to school authorities (teachers, principal)
- Cooperate with schools to address bullying situations
- Support anti-bullying initiatives
- Help prevent further incidents
- Support their children if they are victims of bullying

Student Responsibilities

Students are encouraged, though not legally bound, to report bullying incidents they witness or experience. The Act on the Education System emphasizes that students should participate in creating a safe and respectful environment at school.

By reporting bullying, students help prevent further harm and promote a positive school culture, though there is no direct legal requirement for them to do so.

North Macedonian Anti-Bullying Framework

North Macedonia has established legal frameworks to combat bullying in schools through the Law on Primary Education and accompanying Ministry of Education guidelines. These laws emphasize preventive measures, immediate responses to bullying incidents, and long-term educational reforms.

Schools in North Macedonia must develop their own anti-bullying policies that align with national frameworks while addressing the unique needs of each educational institution. These school-specific policies create some differences between national and local approaches, particularly in terms of customization, implementation, and resource availability.

Prevention

Schools must implement preventive programs including workshops, awareness campaigns, and curriculum integration of respect and empathy. A clear code of conduct must outline acceptable behavior and consequences for bullying.

Community

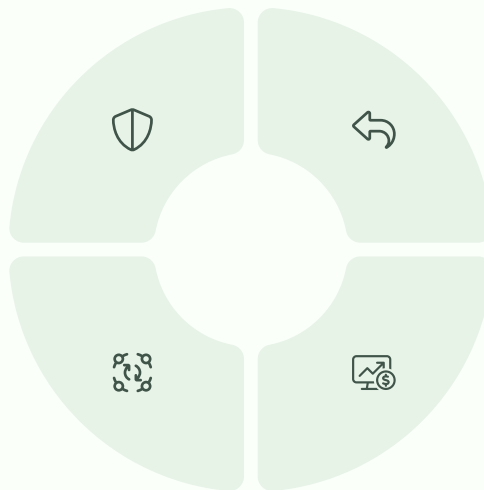
Schools must engage parents in workshops and anti-bullying initiatives while developing partnerships with local civil society organizations to amplify resources and impact.

Response

When bullying occurs, schools must establish accessible reporting systems, conduct prompt investigations, and implement victim protection measures that prioritize safety and emotional support.

Training

The Ministry of Education mandates training programs for teachers and staff to recognize signs of bullying, mediate conflicts effectively, and understand legal protocols for handling cases.



Monitoring and Accountability

The Ministry of Education monitors schools' compliance with anti-bullying policies through:

- Periodic inspections and progress reports
- Documentation requirements for bullying incidents
- Regular updates on prevention activities

For cyberbullying specifically, schools must educate students about safe online behavior and collaborate with local helplines like Alo Bushavko.

Legal Responsibilities in North Macedonia

In North Macedonia, the Law on Primary Education establishes clear legal obligations for schools and teachers regarding bullying, while parents and students have different expectations for their roles in maintaining safe environments.

Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers have a legal obligation to report bullying incidents under the Law on Primary Education, which:

- Prohibits discrimination in the educational process on all grounds
- Mandates that schools take measures to prevent and address all forms of violence and discrimination
- Requires the creation of a by-law to regulate the procedure for reporting violence and protecting students
- Prescribes fines for school principals who fail to report incidents of violence, abuse, or harassment to competent authorities

Parent and Student Responsibilities

Unlike teachers, parents and students in North Macedonia do not have specific legal obligations to report bullying incidents under current laws, but there are expectations:

For parents: While not legally required to report bullying, parents are encouraged to communicate with schools if they suspect their child is being bullied or involved in bullying. The Law on Primary Education encourages parental participation in addressing issues like bullying.

For students: Students are not legally bound to report bullying but are encouraged to speak out and seek help from teachers, counselors, or other responsible adults at school.

Schools typically foster environments where reporting is encouraged, but this reflects educational practices rather than legal obligations for parents and students. The primary legal responsibility remains with the educational institutions and their staff.

Turkish Anti-Bullying Policies

Turkey has established comprehensive legal frameworks to prevent and address bullying in educational settings, with clear guidelines for schools, teachers, parents, and students.

Key Legal Frameworks

- CIRCULAR 2024/56: Security in educational environments
- Amendments to the Secondary Education Institutions Regulation
- Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- United Nations Convention on The Rights of The Child
- Law Number 5237 (Turkish Criminal Code)
- Law Number 5651 (for cyberbullying)

School Responsibilities

According to CIRCULAR 2024/56, schools in Turkey have specific obligations:

Security Measures

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

Risk Assessment

School principals must identify risk factors that may cause violence in educational environments and take necessary preventive measures.

Support Services

Schools must provide appropriate conditions and personnel support for guidance and psychological counseling services to prevent violence.

Digital Safety

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

Additionally, schools have a prevention obligation to take deterrent measures against bullying and punish personnel who facilitate bullying within the framework of disciplinary provisions. School administrators are obligated to raise awareness to prevent child abuse and neglect and to take necessary protective measures.

Parents and students can learn more about Turkish anti-bullying policies through official resources like the [Official Gazette](#) and the [Education Policies of Turkish National Education Ministry](#).

Legal Responsibilities in Turkish Schools

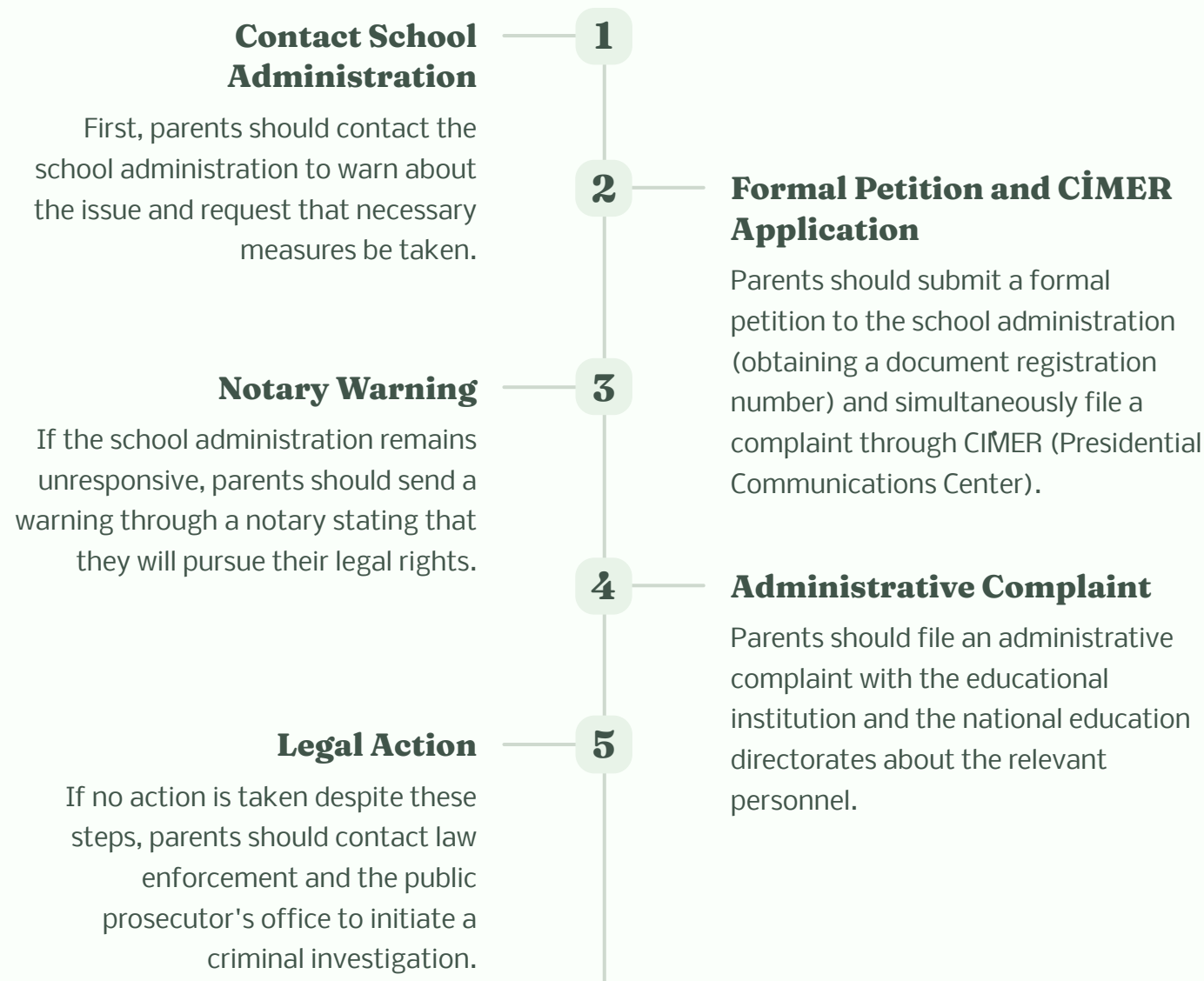
In Turkey, teachers have specific legal obligations regarding bullying incidents, while parents and students have different expectations and procedures for addressing bullying situations.

Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers in Turkey are legally obligated to report bullying if they witness or become aware of it. This obligation is both a professional and moral responsibility, and teachers are given the legal authority to intervene in such situations.

Parent and Student Procedures

While parents and students in Turkey are not legally required to report bullying, there is a clear procedure they can follow when bullying occurs:



This escalating procedure ensures that parents have multiple avenues to address bullying situations when schools fail to take appropriate action. While not legally mandated to report bullying, parents are encouraged to follow these steps to create a safe school environment for all students.

Romanian Anti-Bullying Policies

Romania has established comprehensive anti-bullying frameworks that require schools to develop and implement specific strategies to prevent and address bullying. These policies emphasize prevention, early intervention, and creating positive school climates.

School Responsibilities

At the beginning of each school year, Romanian schools must:

- Draw up strategies and plans to ensure a social climate suitable for quality education
- Apply policies to prevent and combat bullying
- Implement participatory processes involving students, parents, teachers, and auxiliary staff
- Conduct annual evaluations of the educational climate through debates, focus groups, and extracurricular proposals

Anti-Bullying Action Groups

Each Romanian school must create an anti-bullying action group that includes:

- The school principal
- The school counselor
- Three teachers trained in violence prevention
- Two or more student representatives
- A parent representative
- Representatives of the local authority

This group is responsible for preventing, identifying, and resolving bullying incidents committed among students through physical, verbal, relational, and/or cyber actions. Teachers must differentiate between accidental situations, minor harassment, abuse, and repetitive and intentional violent situations.

Prevention Activities

Romanian schools must implement various prevention activities:



School Plans

Implementing school plans to prevent and combat violence, including programs, projects, and campaigns aimed at increasing group cohesion and raising awareness of bullying consequences.



Collaboration

Carrying out information and awareness activities in partnership with other institutions or specialists with expertise in bullying prevention.



Positive Climate

Promoting an educational climate that encourages positive, non-violent attitudes, empathy, and mutually beneficial interactions among students and adults.

Legal Responsibilities in Romanian Schools

In Romania, teachers and school staff have specific legal obligations regarding bullying incidents, while parents and students have different expectations for their roles in maintaining safe school environments.

Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers in Romania have clear legal responsibilities when bullying is identified:

- The teacher or school counselor who identifies a bullying situation is responsible for initiating intervention to rehabilitate the victim
- Teachers must report situations of violence against students according to the law
- Reports must be made to school management and the county-level general directorate of social assistance and child protection
- For immediate support, teachers must report to the public social assistance service at the community level

Student Responsibilities

Students in Romania have specific reporting obligations:

- Students must verbally and urgently inform the principal about cases of bullying among students
- If there is suspicion of a criminal act and emergency services haven't been notified, students should alert school authorities

School Administration Procedures

When bullying is reported, Romanian school principals must:

1. Verbally and urgently notify the Police if there is suspicion of a criminal act
2. Immediately inform parents/legal representatives of involved students and request they come to the school
3. Verbally inform the School Inspectorate about serious cases of violence
4. Request support from Educational Resource Centers if the school lacks a counselor

Immediate Response

School staff delegated by the principal must:

- Isolate victims from bullies
- Guide students to safe spaces to reduce stress
- Inform parents about the condition of students upon their arrival
- Reunite parents with their children (both victims and bullies)

Case Study: Effective Parent-School Communication

The following case study demonstrates how proactive communication between parents and schools can create a supportive environment for children facing social challenges.

Establishing Early Communication

Lisa, mother of 16-year-old Ethan who started at a new school, made an effort to establish strong communication with school staff from the beginning of the academic year. She attended the school's open house event, introduced herself to Ethan's homeroom teacher (Mr. Andrews) and the school counselor (Ms. Patel), and expressed her interest in being involved in Ethan's school life.

Mr. Andrews suggested using the school's online parent portal for routine updates and email for direct communication. Lisa promptly set up her parent portal account, which provided access to progress reports, teacher notes, and upcoming events.

Addressing Early Warning Signs

When Lisa noticed Ethan becoming quieter at dinner and reluctant to discuss his day, she emailed Mr. Andrews: "I've noticed Ethan has seemed quieter than usual and wanted to check if you've observed anything at school. I'd appreciate any insight or advice on how I might support him better."

Mr. Andrews responded within a day, noting that while Ethan was adjusting well academically, he tended to sit alone during lunch. He offered to speak with other teachers and encourage classmates to include Ethan, suggesting they check back in a week later.

Collaborative Problem-Solving

Lisa followed up with Ethan at home, learning he felt unsure about approaching new classmates. Together, they brainstormed conversation starters and practiced social interactions. A week later, Mr. Andrews reported that Ethan had begun sitting with a group during lunch and seemed more engaged in class discussions.

Lisa expressed gratitude and attended the upcoming parent-teacher meeting, where she thanked Mr. Andrews in person and discussed Ethan's social strengths and challenges. This ongoing communication created a supportive network that helped Ethan navigate his transition to a new school environment.

This case demonstrates how early, proactive communication between parents and schools can identify and address potential issues before they escalate, creating a supportive environment where students can thrive socially and academically.

Advocating for Your Child Within the School System

Advocating for your child in the school system is one of the most impactful roles a parent can take on. Research shows that schools with active parent participation are more successful in reducing bullying and creating inclusive environments. As an advocate, you protect your child's rights, collaborate with educators to find solutions, and empower your child to eventually voice their own needs.

The Importance of Parent Advocacy

When parents advocate effectively, they create positive change not only for their own children but often for the entire school community. Advocacy involves speaking up for your child's needs while working collaboratively with the school system to ensure they have access to a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment.

Prepare Documentation

Keep detailed records of bullying incidents, including dates, descriptions, and any evidence (screenshots, photos, witness accounts). This documentation provides concrete information when discussing concerns with school officials.

Request Formal Meetings

If your child experiences bullying, request a meeting with appropriate school administrators. Clearly outline your concerns and desired outcomes, bringing your documentation to provide specific examples.

Understand School Policies

Familiarize yourself with your school's anti-bullying policies, reporting protocols, and Code of Conduct. Knowing these policies helps you navigate the system effectively and hold the school accountable to its own standards.

Follow Up Consistently

Schedule regular check-ins with teachers and school counselors to discuss your child's progress and ensure that agreed-upon interventions are being implemented effectively.

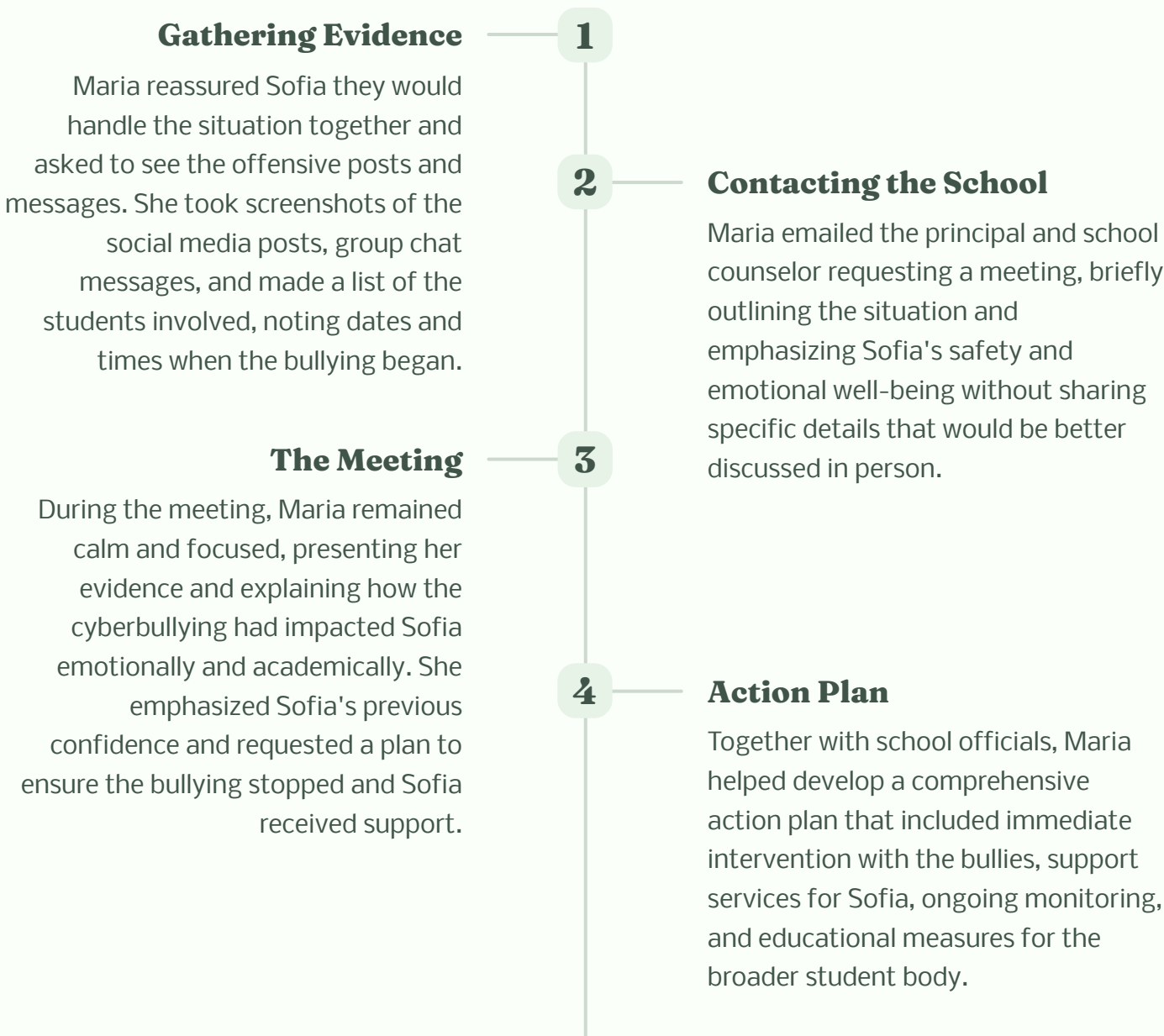
Beyond individual advocacy, consider participating in broader school initiatives by volunteering for committees, supporting anti-bullying workshops, or advocating for programs that teach empathy and conflict resolution.

Case Study: Effective Parent Advocacy

The following case study demonstrates how a parent effectively advocated for her child who was experiencing cyberbullying, working collaboratively with the school to create a comprehensive solution.

The Situation

Maria noticed changes in her 16-year-old daughter Sofia's behavior. Once outgoing and enthusiastic about school, Sofia had started skipping meals, avoiding her phone, and isolating herself in her room. When gently questioned, Sofia revealed that classmates had been cyberbullying her by sharing edited photos with hurtful captions on social media and spreading rumors in group chats. Sofia was afraid to go to school and begged her mother not to tell anyone, fearing it would make the situation worse.



The Comprehensive Solution

The action plan included multiple components:

- **Immediate intervention:** Notifying involved students and their parents, contacting social media platforms to remove offensive content
- **Support for Sofia:** Weekly counseling sessions, peer mentor assignment to reduce isolation
- **Monitoring:** Discreet teacher observation, implementation of anonymous reporting tools
- **Educational measures:** School-wide digital literacy and anti-bullying workshops

At home, Maria continued supporting Sofia by encouraging her to reconnect with enjoyable activities like painting and playing guitar, scheduling family activities, and maintaining open communication about her experiences and feelings.



Collaborating with School Counselors and Psychologists

School counselors and psychologists are valuable resources for addressing bullying situations. These professionals have specialized training in child development, mental health, and conflict resolution, making them ideal partners for parents concerned about bullying.

The Role of School Counselors and Psychologists

These professionals serve multiple functions in bullying prevention and intervention:

- Providing individual support to students who have experienced bullying
- Working with students who engage in bullying behaviors to address underlying issues
- Implementing school-wide prevention programs and awareness campaigns
- Training teachers and staff to recognize and respond to bullying
- Mediating conflicts between students when appropriate
- Connecting families with additional resources when needed



When to Seek Support

Parents should consider reaching out to school counselors or psychologists when:

- Their child reports being bullied or witnessing bullying
- They notice significant changes in their child's behavior, mood, or academic performance
- Their child expresses reluctance or refusal to attend school
- Previous attempts to address bullying with teachers haven't resolved the issue
- Their child needs emotional support to cope with bullying experiences
- They want guidance on how to support their child through a difficult social situation

Engaging with School Administrators

School administrators, including principals, vice principals, and deans, play crucial roles in establishing and enforcing school-wide anti-bullying policies. When bullying issues aren't resolved at the classroom level, or when situations are particularly serious, engaging with administrators becomes an important step in advocacy.

Understanding Administrative Roles

School administrators have specific responsibilities related to bullying:

- Developing and implementing school-wide anti-bullying policies
- Training staff on bullying prevention and intervention
- Investigating serious bullying complaints
- Determining appropriate disciplinary actions
- Communicating with parents about bullying incidents
- Creating a positive school climate that discourages bullying

When to Involve Administrators

Consider escalating concerns to administrators when:

Serious Incidents

The bullying involves physical harm, threats, harassment, or other behaviors that might violate school policy or law.

Persistent Problems

The bullying continues despite previous interventions at the classroom level with teachers or counselors.

Multiple Students

The situation involves students from different classrooms or grade levels, requiring coordination beyond a single teacher's authority.

Policy Violations

You believe the school's anti-bullying policy isn't being properly implemented or enforced in your child's situation.

Effective Communication with Administrators

When meeting with school administrators about bullying concerns:

Before the Meeting

- Request a meeting in writing, briefly outlining your concerns
- Prepare a concise summary of the situation, including dates and specific incidents
- Review the school's anti-bullying policy to reference relevant sections
- Bring copies of any documentation, including previous communications with teachers

During the Meeting

- Begin by acknowledging the administrator's role and expressing your shared goal of student safety
- Present facts calmly and specifically, avoiding emotional language
- Ask about the investigation process and timeline
- Request specific actions and follow-up communication

After meeting with administrators, send a follow-up email summarizing your understanding of the discussion and any agreed-upon actions. This creates a record of the conversation and helps ensure accountability for next steps.



Participating in School Anti-Bullying Initiatives

Beyond advocating for your own child, participating in school-wide anti-bullying initiatives allows parents to contribute to creating a safer environment for all students. This involvement demonstrates your commitment to positive school culture and often gives you greater insight into the school's approach to bullying prevention.

Types of Anti-Bullying Initiatives

Schools implement various programs and activities to prevent bullying and promote positive behavior:



Awareness Campaigns

Events like Anti-Bullying Week or Unity Day that raise awareness about bullying through assemblies, poster contests, pledges, and special activities designed to promote kindness and inclusion.



Social-Emotional Learning

Curriculum-based programs that teach students empathy, conflict resolution, emotional regulation, and other skills that help prevent bullying and create positive peer relationships.



Peer Support Programs

Initiatives like peer mentoring, buddy systems, or student-led anti-bullying committees that empower students to support each other and create positive social norms.

Ways Parents Can Participate

There are numerous opportunities for parent involvement in anti-bullying efforts:

Volunteer Opportunities

- Join the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) or similar organization
- Serve on school safety or climate committees
- Help organize or staff anti-bullying events
- Volunteer as a playground monitor or lunchroom helper
- Assist with after-school programs that promote inclusion

Advocacy and Support

- Advocate for evidence-based bullying prevention programs
- Support funding for anti-bullying initiatives
- Share relevant resources with school leadership
- Help translate materials for diverse families
- Connect schools with community resources or speakers

Engaging with the Broader School Community

Creating a bully-free environment extends beyond individual classrooms to the entire school community. When parents engage with this broader community, they help foster a culture of respect and inclusion that benefits all students.

Building Connections with Other Parents

Relationships with other parents create a network of support and information:

- Attend school events, parent meetings, and social gatherings to meet other families
- Join parent groups on social media or messaging platforms to stay connected
- Participate in parent education workshops or book clubs focused on child development
- Organize informal gatherings like coffee meetups or family picnics
- Volunteer alongside other parents for school activities and events

Collaborating with Community Organizations

Many community organizations offer resources and programs that complement school anti-bullying efforts:



Nonprofit Organizations

Local and national nonprofits often provide anti-bullying curricula, training, and resources that can be implemented in schools. Parents can help connect these organizations with school leadership.



Mental Health Services

Community mental health centers may offer counseling, support groups, or educational programs for children affected by bullying. Parents can help compile and share these resources with school counselors.



Youth Programs

After-school programs, sports leagues, and community centers often emphasize positive social skills and inclusion. Parents can advocate for coordination between these programs and school initiatives.