

# Youth Participation in Bullying Prevention



## BUILDING THE PROCESS OF PARTICIPATION

### 1. GATHERING DATA

#### Survey for pupils:

- Social relations at schools: teacher-pupil relations and peer relations
- Loneliness, mistreatment, bullying and peer rejection
- Experiences of support: support from adults and from peers

The aim of the survey is to make the voice of pupils heard among adults and parents, provide information about how to target the development process at school, and to facilitate discussion between pupils and school staff about wellbeing at school.

### 2. ANALYSING WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE WANT TO BE

#### A. Workshop for pupils:

- *Qualitative knowledge about the youth perspective*
- *How to interpret the results?*

The workshop gives pupils real influence on the decision-making process and allows them to participate in identifying the school's challenges ahead and the problems to focus on. It's important that pupils are allowed to discuss and interpret the results, not just participate in planning the actions.

#### B. Workshops for teachers

- Shared understanding of where to focus when promoting wellbeing and participation at school
- Dialogue between school staff and pupils

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION: ACTIONS AT SCHOOL

- Teacher training: Fostering positive relations in the classroom and online
- Peer support training: How to create a positive atmosphere for the whole school? How to foster everyone to show support through small friendly gestures?
- Activities at school: Theme days, break activities, lectures about active bystander behaviour held by peer supporters
- Parents' workshop: How parents can support friendships and social relations between pupils



### 4. FOLLOW UP – EVALUATION OF THE ACTIONS

#### A. Pupil survey

#### B. Workshops for pupils and school staff

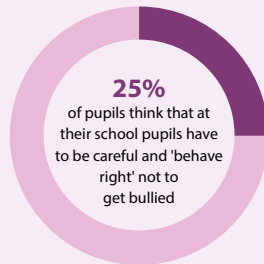
- Feedback about the actions
- Planning new actions

# FOSTERING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN BULLYING PREVENTION

## TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONS

	How many agree (n=994)?
Teachers interested in what's happening in the class	57 %
Teachers are willing to listen to pupils' thoughts and ideas	55 %
Teachers will help in case of troubles between pupils	51 %

Not only peer bystanders' reactions to bullying but also those of teachers are influential. Through their actions, teachers can affect classroom norms related to bullying-linked behaviours and the prevalence of those behaviours. Positive relations between young people and adults at school, which encourage students' participation and engagement and also provide them with social support, serve as a buffer against peer-group problems.



## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PEER RELATIONS

How many agree (n=994)?

● girls ● boys

I feel accepted by the other pupils in the class

**73%**

**81%**

In our class we support each other in our school work

**40%**

**55%**

Our class spirit is so good that I can fail without feeling embarrassed

**52%**

**67%**

*"If the teacher begins the lesson by asking how we are doing, it is so much easier to begin a conversation about any problem in the class that we should deal with together."*

Peer supporter, 9th grade

*"We should have more time to talk about for example the hidden norms we have in our school. For example, many of the girls worry a great deal about what they can wear at school."*

Pupil, 9th grade

*"Getting to know your classmates also makes learning easier. We should spend more time on creating a good learning environment."*

Pupil, 8th grade

## QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AT SCHOOL:

- How are pupils helped to get to know each other when a new group has been formed?
- What kind of structures do we have at school for making the thoughts and ideas of pupils heard?
- What kind of pedagogical measures can be used to foster positive relations in the classroom?
- How is the atmosphere in the classroom being evaluated during the academic year?

# BULLYING AFFECTS LEARNING AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT



**%** mistreated pupils

**%** other pupils

Mistreated pupils have more negative experiences of teacher-pupils relations, peer relations and academic self-efficacy, and thus feel excluded in the classroom. While learning is becoming more and more social, it is essential to pay attention to enhancing interaction and positive group behaviour in the classroom.

## AN ADULT TO TURN TO?

Is there at least one adult to turn to at school if you get mistreated by other pupils?

### IF IT HAPPENS AT SCHOOL



### IF IT HAPPENS ONLINE



## AT LEAST ONE ADULT TO TURN TO AT SCHOOL IF GETTING MISTREATED BY OTHER PUPILS



PUPILS WHO HAD BEEN BULLIED,  
AT SCHOOL OR ONLINE

VS.



PUPILS WHO HAD NOT BEEN BULLIED,  
AT SCHOOL OR ONLINE

## ARE ADULTS AWARE OF IT AT ALL?

If you have been mistreated by other pupils, is any adult at school aware of it?



No

No, and need not be

Yes, but ignored it

Yes, and helped me

*"The school should have a standard way of dealing with cases of bullying. One barrier to telling adults about bullying is that pupils can never know how big a wheel will be set in motion. Small matters are made big and big matters are perhaps not dealt with at all."*

Pupil, 9th grade

*"Teachers should always ask what is going on if they see that pupils are treating each other bad during breaks and so on. If pupils realise that the teacher has indeed seen what is happening but does not intervene, talking about bullying with adults will feel even more difficult."*

Pupil, 8th grade

*"As peer supporters we should know more about how bullying is dealt with in the school community. With a clear process to refer to, talking about these matters with other pupils would be easier."*

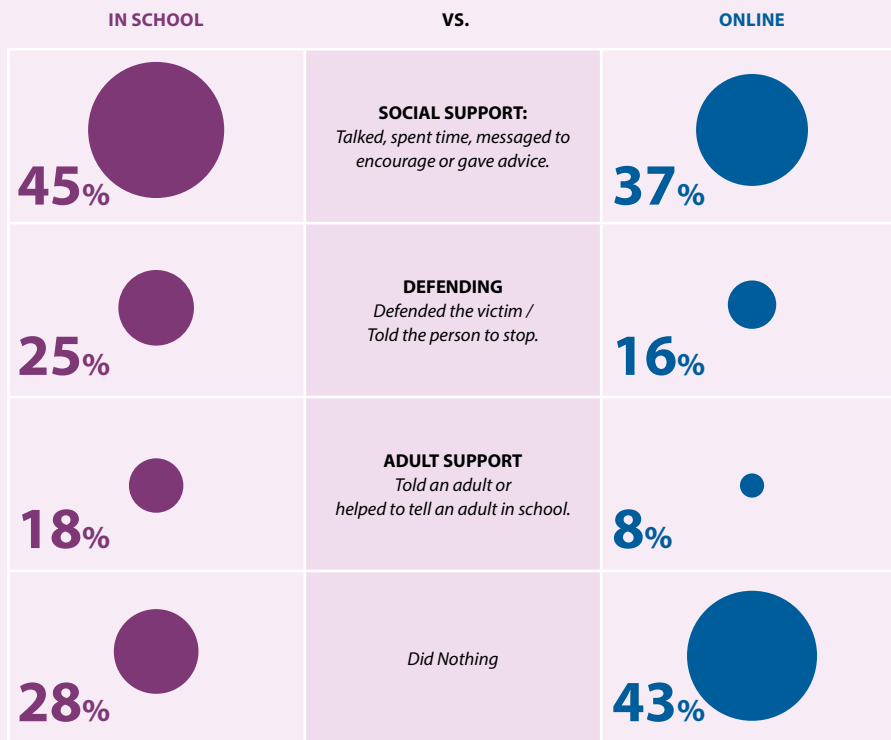
Peer supporter, 9th grade

## QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AT SCHOOL:

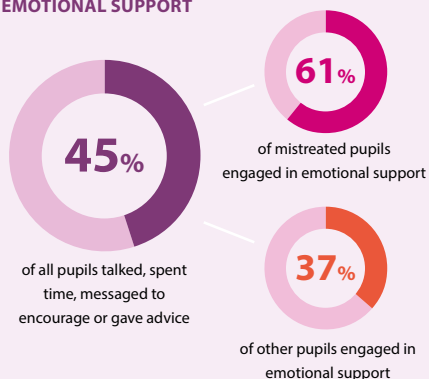
- Are employees and pupils familiar with the school's plan for preventing and dealing with bullying? In what ways are pupils and parents informed about how the school intends to intervene in cases of bullying?
- How is online bullying discussed with the pupils? What can be done to assure pupils that they can turn to adults with any kind of bullying, including that taking place online?
- Are the teachers of the school acting in a uniform manner when noticing that someone is being bullied?
- What can be done to help peer supporters become aware of the practices that the adults of the school have for dealing with cases of bullying?

# BYSTANDER BEHAVIOUR AT SCHOOL AND ONLINE\*

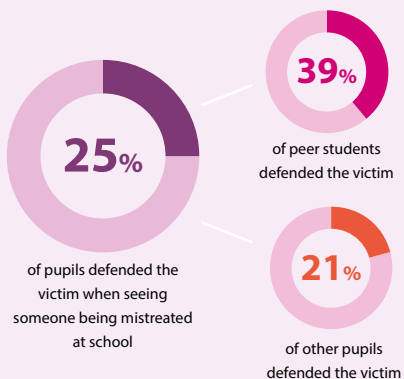
WHAT DID YOU DO WHEN SEEING ANOTHER PUPIL BEING BULLIED AT SCHOOL OR ONLINE?



## MISTREATED PUPILS ARE ACTIVE IN GIVING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT



## PEER SUPPORTERS ACTIVELY DEFEND VICTIMS



\* Based on the 2016 survey in four Finnish schools (n=500). Proportion of those who had seen mistreatment at school or online

## SUPPORT FROM PEERS HELPS MISTREATED PUPILS

Most (69%) of the pupils mistreated by their peers had experienced some kind of support from their peers. They reported that the most useful type of support was when other pupils sat down, talked or spent time with them, or just sent them an encouraging message.

**WHAT HAVE OTHER PUPILS DONE AFTER SEEING YOU BEING MISTREATED?** (N=177)

	I experienced..	...and it helped me	change during the project (who experienced it)
Talked, sat down or spent time with me.	57%	70%	+22%
Messaged me to encourage me.	53%	65%	+23%
Gave me advice.	55%	58%	+26%
Helped me get out of the situation.	51%	67%	+19%
Told the person(s) to stop.	50%	56%	+27%
Helped me to tell an adult.	41%	47%	+25%
Told an adult.	41%	39%	+21%
Did something else.	12%		+11%
Did nothing.	31%		-28%

### The subtler the type of support, the more often it is found helpful.

- Often when bystanders are encouraged to become upstanders, we think of verbal defense or other form of confrontation against the perpetrator. Of note, this was found helpful only by half of the mistreated pupils.
- Regarding adult support, only two out of five mistreated pupils reported that the bystanders told an adult about the situation. Moreover only a one-third of those found it helpful. Helping the victim to tell an adult, it was found useful more often.

*"We should talk more at school about different ways to show support and help. Not all pupils are able to intervene in bullying situations, but everyone can show support through small friendly gestures."*  
Peer supporter, 9th grade

*"Teachers should more often acknowledge pupils who help others and give them positive feedback."*  
Peer supporter, 8th grade

### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT AT SCHOOL:

- How are pupils encouraged to be active bystanders if they see someone mistreated at school or online?
- How are different ways of showing support and coping with bullying situations practiced with pupils at school?

The survey was conducted in four schools in different parts of Finland. In total, 996 14-15-year-old pupils (grades 7-8) replied to the survey in the springs of 2015 and 2016. One of the four schools was Swedish-speaking. The survey was part of the Youth participation in bullying prevention project co-funded by the European Commission.