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SCHOOL PROJECT WORK AS A MEANS
OF PREVENTING BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

Abstract*: school projects are considered as a mechanism for inclusion of all educational relations subjects in preventive activities: students, their parents, teachers and experts from the scientific community. The study's results of the problem of bullying and cyberbullying, which was conducted by Moscow schoolchildren, are presented. The characteristics of the causes and conditions contributing to the manifestation of bullying and cyberbullying are given. Optimal conditions of preventive activity are substantiated.*

Keywords*: bullying, cyberbullying, subjects of educational relations, prevention, conditions of preventive activity.*

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ШКОЛЬНАЯ ПРОЕКТНАЯ РАБОТА КАК СРЕДСТВО ПРЕДУПРЕЖДЕНИЯ БУЛЛИНГА И КИБЕРБУЛЛИНГА

Аннотация: школьные проекты рассматриваются как механизм включения в профилактическую деятельность всех субъектов образовательных отношений: школьников, их родителей, педагогов и экспертов из научного сообщества. Представлены результаты исследования проблемы буллинга и кибербуллинга, проведенные московскими школьниками. Дана характеристика причинам и условиям, способствующих проявлению буллинга и кибербуллинга. Обоснованы оптимальные условия превентивной деятельности.

Ключевые слова: буллинг, кибербуллинг, субъекты образовательных отношений, профилактика, условия превентивной деятельности.

Bullying and cyberbullying have become one of the problems of interaction between schoolchildren. Preventing and overcoming aggressive behavior at school is important for creating a psychologically safe environment.

School project activity as a form of research work, aimed at solving the preventive tasks of the school, becomes an important resource for the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying. At the same time, all subjects of educational relations can be included in the project activity: students, their families and teachers, experts from the scientific community. The joint solution of such an urgent preventive task is important in order to eliminate in practice the causes and conditions that contribute to aggressive behavior of schoolchildren, ways of interaction, harassment of schoolchildren.

In Moscow school №1234 high school students V. Andrianova, S. Bolshakova and A. Golikova in 2021 conducted a study of the state of bullying and cyberbullying according to a questionnaire, which had been developed by Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences R. Andrianova. The project was implemented under the guidance of an English teacher E. Krenksho and consultations of an expert from the R. Andrianova scientific field. Based on the analysis of the conducted research and consultations by R. Andrianova, the conclusions of the study were made, the optimal conditions for the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying were determined.

According to the results of the survey, which was conducted by students, 75% of the respondents (at the age of 10–18) have faced bullying at school, 58% have faced cyberbullying. Among them 54% have been the victims of bullying. Moreover, as it is seen from the statistics of the survey, the majority of the respondents, who were the victims of bullying, have been bullied in middle school, especially in the 6th form. Thus, offline bullying and cyberbullying (online bullying), as aggressive harassment, are possible in schools. Students presented their project to the classmates and teachers and proved the hypothesis that bullying is not just a conflict. Based on the experts' studies of the problem they did a research about types, participants, reasons of bullying and offered their own way of solving the problem [1–5].

According to the scientific studies, they identified two types of bullying: direct and indirect [1–3]. Direct bullying occurs when the aggressors take physical actions (for example, damage personal property, use physical force), also openly insult, threaten, verbally attack the victim. Indirect bullying means causing emotional harm and mental pressure. This type can appear as social isolation (ignore and exclude from the group), spread of negative information about the victim (compromising videos and photos which discredit the victim's reputation).

Also, students found out that scientists distinguish cyberbullying as a type of abusing, but due to the development of information technology, there is a process of convergence and cyberbullying can be considered as indirect bullying [1]. Face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying can often happen alongside each other.

In a situation of bullying and cyberbullying, there are always three sides: *the aggressor, the victim and the bystanders*. The aggressors are the initiators of bullying. They take part in abusing and commit terrifying actions against the victim in order to subjugate and humiliate him/her. The victim is the student who is facing direct or indirect abuse from the aggressors. The bystanders observe the situation, stay apart and do not participate directly but nonetheless play an important role in the development of bullying.

The initiators of bullying are the students who have received support from other students or teachers. The aggressors strive to become the leaders so they involve their classmates in joint bullying. The abusers seek the victim to gain power and frighten others. They are convinced in impunity, permissiveness and patronage of teachers and other students. Indignity of bystanders brings them joy and satisfaction.

Bystanders can take the following positions:

– approval (don't take part in bullying, but support the aggressors);

– passive approval (observe the situation with interest, but hide their attitude to the bullying);

– potential defenders (don't approve the aggressors' actions, but also don't interfere in bullying/don't take part in bullying);

– «secret» defenders (hide their help to the victim);

– active defenders (they are not afraid of anyone and they are trying to stop the aggressors).

Some actions of the bystanders can support the aggressors, such as:

– indifference or silence of the bystanders is accepted as support of the aggressive harassment;

– the bystanders' fear to become another victim inspires the aggressors to further bullying;

– the desire of other students or teachers to join bullying brings the confidence to the abusers.

Signs of bullying are the following:

– a student doesn't socialize, because of being bullied by the aggressors;

– a student systematically gets laughed at and can't stand out against it;

– physical violence is shown to a student: he/she is being pushed, kicked, beaten, etc.;

– his/her personal belongings are under attack (without consent, the aggressors touch student's property, hide it or damage it);

– a student skips classes for no reason;

– he/she spends school breaks alone;

– a student sits alone in class and his/her classmates ignore him/ her;

– a student avoids communication with everyone at school (both students and teachers);

– a student is not active in the classroom and avoids participation in a general discussion;

– a student does not participate in group activities in school and outside of school (excursions, team competitions, competitions, creative events, etc.).

Students figured out that there are several facts, which can lead to bullying:

– the loneliness of a potential victim in a class or another community, and the lack of support;

– destructive competitive environment and hostile attitude to the successes of another person, causing negative emotions (envy, resentment, etc.) and desire to devalue the achievements of the opponent through the humiliation and insults;

– an indecisive reaction of the victim to the insult are perceived as a weakness of the classmate and can provoke the offenders to actively continue destructive actions;

– the victim's external distinguishing features (belonging to a different culture – national or religious), significant difference from other students in physical parameters;

– low status due to failures in learning;

– clothing, accessories, general appearance, etc. which aren't accepted in this teenage subculture;

– lack of prestigious gadgets and other similar items.

Based on the research that had been done during the preparation of the project, students proved that bullying is not just a conflict. First of all, during the bullying and

cyberbullying the aggressors' aim is to intentionally and thoughtfully persecute, humiliate and insult the victim, but not to find a compromise or mutual consent. The victim's suffering signifies the victory of the aggressors. Another reason is that bullying implies a disproportion of forces, occurs systematically and goes over a long period of time. The victim's supporters become automatically the enemies of the aggressors. Abusers reject any victim's desire to reach a compromise.

During the discussion of the project students, based on R. Andrianova's studies, came to conclusion that the main causes of bullying and cyberbullying at school are:

– lack of experience in constructive interaction;

– destructive competitive environment based on jealousy and envy;

– teachers' indifference to the psychological climate in the children's or adolescent community of the classroom or school [1].

Thus, prevention of bullying and cyberbullying at school is a system of educational work aimed at preventing and overcoming aggressive ways of interaction and ensuring a safe educational environment. It is necessary to understand that bullying and cyberbullying at school are interrelated. Moreover, cyberbullying allows bullying around the clock, so it is important to establish rules of communication, the formation of a culture of remote interaction in personal and group chats.

Important conditions for the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying are:

– early detection and continuous monitoring of a potential risk group;

– formation of constructive interaction experience on the basis of cooperation and mutual support;

– continuity of preventive work in primary and high school: prompt response to each case of aggression, individual and group work with all participants in a conflict situation, search for the optimal way to overcome a specific situation of bullying and cyberbullying.

Destructive interaction of subjects of educational relations in social networks and shared chats becomes a trigger mechanism not only for cyber aggression, but also for

subsequent aggressive ways of interaction within the walls of an educational organization, manifestations of verbal and physical harassment, which can be dangerous in its consequences and lead to tragic events.

Of course, the prevention and overcoming of bullying and cyberbullying is important to ensure a safe educational environment, and the inclusion of schoolchildren themselves in preventive activities is essential for the organization of targeted prevention of aggressive school students behavior.

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