

A model in order to improve safety and satisfaction in Ritaharju's Community Centre.

" Every school must compose a plan in order to protect pupils from violence, bullying and harassment and also execute the plan and enforce its realization. (The basic Education Act 477/2003:29.§) "

Let's build a house, where everybody can be safe and enjoy themselves. In Ritaharju we aim for that through communality. The structures in supporting the communality and opportunities to increase participation have been put together on the Ritaharju Website, behind the link: "Communality from the point of view of safety and satisfaction".

The website tries to illuminate the conventions which will support improving physical and psychological wellbeing. The conventions are part of the integrated model of preventing bullying and other mistreatment.

In addition to the Ritaharju is using the following to increase safety and wellbeing:

- A questionnaire to examine wellbeing and atmosphere, which is made every year with the children, staff and also to the parents. The aim is to intervene on mistreatment as soon as possible.
- The best way to prevent bullying and violence is to improve the wellbeing of children, work community and families.
- Building communality is based on equality and it requires educational companionship between and inside different staff groups. Also educational companionship between home and school, and in relation with the child or young person and different interest group. The keywords in building educational companionship are trust, respecting one another, equality, constructive interaction, caring, networking and co-operation.
- Increasing the awareness of staff and parents to recognize and prevent unwanted treatment and increasing the preparedness to intervene it.
- Adequate information about special needs and illnesses (diabetes, epilepsy etc.) for those staff members, who are part in the daily life of a child or young person who needs special support.

- Teaching the child to respect differences from the base principal of equality. Teaching emotion skills, ways to resolve conflicts, interaction skills and communal ways of working.
- The rules are supervised by the whole staff with children and youngsters.
- Supporting the parents and grandparents to participate the Community Centre's weekday.
- The members of community can make suggestions on how to improve safety and well-being for example through the Rita-government, parents' council and the staff of Ritaharju.
- Since the autumn of 2011 the Big Hall will have mailboxes with locks where children can leave feedback with their name on it. They can give positive feedback for the other members of community (JOYS), present their worries for example to the school curator or school nurse (SORROWS) or leave an initiative for Rita-government (SWEETHEARTS).
- All the new members of community will have an introduction to this procedure. The model will be updated as it develops.

Despite the prevention; things do not always according the rules. In such case intervention is required.

What is violence and bullying?

Bullying is a form of violence where one or several persons continuously, or over a longer period of time, use conscious and active negative behavior towards one or several persons. Bullying is therefore long lasting and systematic.

At the Ritaharju school bullying incidents are investigated at each cell at one time, by KiVa - team workers who have KiVa - education. (www.kivakoulu.fi, www.mll.fi-> kiusaamisen ehkäiseminen). At the Day care center, the KiVa-school method is been adapted so that every adult takes care of their own group members' bullying incidents. During the after school activity bullying incidents will be taken care of by worker who has been given a

KiVa-school introduction. Alternatively the worker can co-operate with the KiVa-tutor, who is responsible for the cell where this particular child belongs.

However it is important to intervene on mistreatment before it has turned into systematic bullying. Therefore putting out the fire i.e. intervening on the violence is needed less.

The structures and pedagogic principals will support the communality of the Allies project as well as prevent mistreatment and violence.

In this model violence does not referred to its serious forms which have criminal-law consequences. Here violence is defined as any action which represses or ridicules another person or others by misusing power.

This kind of unwanted treatment, which feels bad, can be for example:

- physical, verbal or sexual maltreatment
- spreading rumors
- extorting/blackmailing
- gossiping
- telling lies
- ridiculing
- spreading personal issues behind someone's back
- ridiculing others, hidden behind humour
- underrating cheating
- leaving someone out of the group
- threatening with violence

Violence can also be creating an oppressive and unpleasant atmosphere that makes a person feel uneasy or makes it difficult to study. Unwanted treatment can also occur on the internet or via mobile phones. The structures of the operational environment can also contain violence itself. For example, superiority thinking can include structural violence,

which builds unequal hierarchies between people. In practice, structural violence can be prevented by accepting and respecting difference or *eclectic* among children. But also improving equality among every occupational group regardless the educational background or socio-economic status, ethnic background, religion or sex.

How will I act if I am been treated badly or I notice someone being treated badly?

Child or youngster:

Tell about it to your group's adult or some other worker in the Community Center. If you are been bullied, tell about it also to your parents. Adults have to make sure that children are able to tell them without fear of being in an even worse situation. If the mistreatment takes place during the recess or yard games, ask the recess attendant to resolve the situation. The adult will also inform your teacher, who will take care of the ensuing settlement and follow-up. You can also report the mistreatment by putting a note into a SORROWS-box with your name on it. You can address it an adult you know. You can also ask other pupils to support you when handling this matter.

Investigating the incidents which takes place during the recess or yard games

If mistreatment takes place during the recess or yard games, the recess attendant will solve the acute situation and inform the teachers of both parties. Adults will take care of the ensuing settlement and follow-ups.

The adult will solve minor incidents with the perpetrator and the target, and at the end alone with the target. The adult will decide is there need to have separate educational discussion with both of the parties, to guide into peer mediation (this practice has not been executed yet) or in a severe the incident is transferred to the KiVa-team.

The "peacekeeper" can be alerted if the teacher needs assistance, in solving the incident that has taken place during the recess. The "peacekeeper" can either supervise the other children or take the child in question to cool down. The mistreated child will be told that adults will intervene and they will be there for her/him. Concern about the unwanted

behavior will be expressed to the perpetrator and she/he will be given an opportunity to redeem the matter.

If the incident has required a follow-up settlements (Kake, KiVa-tiimi, jälki-istunto), the incident and the agreed issues will be informed to home by the perpetrator her/himself or by the adult; either electronically, by phone or by briefing. When it is agreed with the perpetrator how the unwanted behavior will be stopped, it is possible to have joint discussion with both of the parties and revise what has been agreed.

If these measures fail, the teacher will take the matter to KiVa-team, who organizes discussions and follow-ups. In severe incident parents of both sides are always contacted.

Follow - ups

Both in minor and severe incidents both parties will be contacted separately again after a week to make sure the unwanted behavior had been stopped. Depending on the severity this will be repeated again after a week and also a group meeting will be organized in order to establish that the situation has been completed and follow-up rules are made.

If the follow – up indicates that mistreatment has continued despite the measures:

Adult of the child group or member of the KiVa-team will contact the homes of both sides. The settlement will be decided in co-operate on with the parents.

Violence and bullying directed at employees.

According to the work safety law it is the employer's duty to intervene where there is inappropriate behavior. In Ritaharju, the aim is to prevent any harassment or inappropriate treatment at the work place. But if someone notices this kind of treatment, she/he is obliged to report it to the employer.

Defining inappropriate treatment is difficult. People experience issues and situations differently, and nobody's experience can be voided. One way of perceiving inappropriate

treatment is to constitute definitions from the point of view of legislation. (The work safety law §28)

Harassment and inappropriate treatment at work can appear in many different ways. It is behavior that complicates and underrates one's work, insults and oppresses. Inappropriate treatment can be directed *to someone's work* (for example criticizing one's work on false grounds, ignoring one's opinions, taking tasks away, withholding crucial information). Or inappropriate treatment can be directed *at somebody* (denigrating, making fun of someone isolating, shouting, name calling or ridiculing).

The harassment can occur as an inappropriate implication, which is focused on age, sex, race, opinions or conviction. Also insulting behavior using words, acts or attitudes. Harassment can also be sexual and sexual harassment can be physical as well as verbal. Making implications, pulling faces or gesturing, nude pictures and coarse language can be as insulting as slapping.

Harassment can progress in phases. It can start from an inability to solve conflicts at the work place. The situation can be strained, so mental violence can be directed at someone whose rights are being infringed upon. In later phases it will affect the whole work community.

It is crucial to remember, that not all disruptions at the work place are always inappropriate treatment. Problems occur especially, if the work place is not able to handle the conflicts. In a healthy, functioning work community issues can be solved without personifying them.

Inappropriate treatment is not for example, if

- work related decisions and interpretation causes conflicts
- work related problems are being processed among the members of work community
- Justifiable disciplinary action had been taken.

- An employer sending an employee to a test, concerning her/his ability to work after discussing with the employee about the problems that occur in her/his work.

How to act and intervene?

The target of harassment and inappropriate treatment must express clearly and simply to the harasser that the behavior of the harasser is very awkward and inappropriate and also ask her/him to stop the behavior. In harassment situations it is valuable to write down the times and places of the incidents, and also what happened and who was present. This document can be meaningful later when solving the situation.

If the situation continues it will be informed to the local superior, the superior of the harasser or the superior of your own boss (if your superior harasses or treats you inappropriately). Help in resolving the situation is also available from the healthcare of the work place. Reporting the harassment and inappropriate treatment can be made by the target her/himself or any work colleagues. The report will be given to a superior who represents the employer.

For more information:

<http://www.tyosuojelu.fi/fi/hairinta>

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