

ACTION PLAN TO PREVENT BULLYING IN PRESCHOOLS IN BÆRUM

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Plan to ensure children a good psychosocial environment

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Purpose

The Preschool Act sets clear expectations for preschool's commitment to create a good physical and psychosocial learning environment for children.

§1. Purpose

Preschool shall, in cooperation and understanding with the home, safeguard the child's need for care and play, and promote learning and education as a basis for comprehensive development.

The preschool will meet each child with trust and respect and recognize the intrinsic value of childhood. It will contribute to the well-being of each child, and the child's joy for play and learning, and provide a challenging and safe environment for fellowship and friendship. Preschool should promote democracy and equality and work against all forms of discrimination.

The Framework for daycare states that preschools should promote positive attitudes that counteract rejection, bullying and violence (p. 23)

Preschools shall promote health and act quickly to take the measures essential to stop bullying.

The head teacher has overall responsibility for the psychosocial environment in preschools, and all staff has a collective responsibility to prevent and stop bullying and bully-like behavior when it happens.

Bærum municipality emphasizes the need for:

- ✓ Continuous, prolonged and systematic work on the child's working environment
- ✓ preschool and parents to work together on both the preventative work and changing attitudes to bullying
- ✓ clear leadership is essential to prevent, detect and deal with abusive words and actions
- ✓ all preschool employees have a duty to investigate, notify and intervene if they become aware of, or suspect that a child is being subjected to abusive behavior
- ✓ our local initiatives and our ability to communicate and cooperate are essential for the efforts to succeed
- ✓ preschool follows up the procedures in "Comprehensive schooling and transition procedures"

Bærum municipality action plan against bullying in Bærum preschool is a tool for all public and private preschools to use to prevent bullying and abusive words and actions in preschoolers.

Preschools describe how they work with preschool psychosocial environment and how they raise their employees awareness of bullying. They also have a curriculum where the institution's activities and procedures for working with social competence are stated.

Introduction

No child should bully or be bullied in preschool. A child's perception of himself and his intrinsic value develops in interaction with their surroundings. Bullying is serious because it has large personal consequences. Children exposed to bullying are deprived of feeling both courage and dignity.

Research shows that children who bully and children who have experienced bullying have an elevated risk of developing mental health problems later. Efforts to prevent bullying, marginalization and exclusion therefore begin already in preschool. The preschools in Bærum should act quickly and take the measures necessary to stop bullying.

Cooperation with parents is central in developing a community spirit and in preventing bullying in daycare. Active participation and cooperation with parents is essential if bullying occurs.

All children and adolescents have the right to a childhood and a learning environment free of bullying. UN Child Convention stipulates that children and adolescents have the right to experience development, participation, non-discrimination, care, protection and fulfillment. Bullying weakens those rights.

What is bullying?

Bullying is defined differently. The booklet 'Child welfare - adult responsibility. Preventive work against bullying starts in preschool' (Department of Education) points to the following features of different definitions:

- ✓ negative physical or mental acts committed by one or more against another
- ✓ the person being subjected to teasing, bullying or exclusion, is readily available as part of a community he or she has not chosen himself
- ✓ there is an imbalance of power so that it is difficult to defend oneself

The guideline also adds that

- ✓ action must have a certain frequency and occur over time
- ✓ actions are planned or malicious

There are three main forms of bullying:

- ✓ verbal bullying (taunting ...)
- ✓ physical bullying (hitting, kicking ...)
- ✓ exclusions (a child is excluded ...)

In a preschool, bullying can arise when a child has his own experience of being excluded from a game, not being accepted, receiving negative comments, being dominated, under pressure, threatened, bullied, taunted, insulted, ridiculed or manipulated, or that adults see and experience this type of behavior in the environment.

It can sometimes be difficult to distinguish between teasing and bullying, but teasing that takes place over time is bullying. It is thus not about isolated actions which is a part of being human, or about children who occasionally are not allowed to join a game. It's about negative patterns that take place over time and where there is an imbalance in relative strength.

Prevention

Clear and caring adults are role models for children's encounters with others. If a child does not master play and interaction with other children, they need the help of adults. Some children struggle more than others. The relationship between children and adults is central to efforts to prevent bullying in preschool.

The adults' understanding of children and their behavior is the basis for the adults to see, reflect, act and evaluate their own practice, and it is the adults' attitudes that underlie the reactions.

Bullying will not thrive in a preschool where adults dare to ask critical and open questions of themselves, whilst also working on strengthening all the relationship work that promotes good play, humor and confidence. (Ingrid Lund Bullying in preschool, p. 127).

To create a preschool free of bullying there must be:

- ✓ clear values and common attitudes as practiced by adults
- ✓ adults who facilitates a good start for the individual child (good strategies for starting preschool, predictable daily rhythm and routines for transitions between activities)
- ✓ adults who systematically observe individual children and groups, and facilitate the establishment of good relationships and friendship
- ✓ competent adults who work systematically to strengthen children's social skills and create a welcoming and friendly environment in the preschool
- ✓ Adults who know each child well and facilitate activities so that everyone experiences mastery at their level
- ✓ open and warm adults who meet the child with confidence and convey expectations of them in a clear manner so that children can easily understand what is acceptable and what is not allowed
- ✓ adults who can be the child's guide in challenging relationships and situations – by setting a good example, correcting, showing, leading and guiding
- ✓ adults who ensure that the physical environment stimulates good interaction
- ✓ engaged adults who focus on play as an important arena for the development of social skills
- ✓ Adults who have the skills to handle unwanted behavior and promote positive behaviour
- ✓ Adults who see the importance of good cooperation with the child's home

Cooperation between preschool and home

The preschool and the child's home have a shared responsibility to ensure that bullying is not allowed to develop in preschool. Preschools cannot work on values and attitudes alone. We need the cooperation of the child's home to help prevent bullying and offensive behavior. The families must therefore be involved in how the preschool works with children and social relationships and the theme of bullying, offensive behavior and prevention of this, must be discussed in parent conferences and parent meetings. This also means that parents must be informed of this action plan against bullying.

For each child to be seen, met, recognized and respected, requires mutual commitment between preschool and home. All children and parents must feel that they are taken seriously by the staff, if they come with a concern about a child being exposed to offensive words or actions.

Parents/guardians are the child's most important role models and they must be cautious about what they say and how they express themselves, when children are present.

Parents help prevention by:

- ✓ greeting, talking to all children, if possible, inviting children home, and facilitating new friendships
- ✓ speaking positively about other children, parents, staff and preschool. Notifying the preschool, upon discovery teasing / bullying among children
- ✓ providing feedback on the child's well-being and experiences
- ✓ following up information and cooperate closely with preschool

Unveiling bullying

Bullying and incipient bullying behavior can be difficult to detect. Staff must have a shared understanding of what bullying and offensive behavior entails.

It is important to be observant of changes in a child's behavior. It may be a sign that something is wrong. Close cooperation between preschool and home makes it easier to see changes in children's behavior.

Duty to act

All staff in the nursery have a duty to act:

- ✓ duty to investigate quickly
- ✓ obligation to notify head teacher / admin quickly (eg. using form)
- ✓ duty to intervene

The following points are important to uncover bullying:

- ✓ Staff must be "close by" the children in games and activities to see behavior which can develop into bullying.
- ✓ Staff must observe and map the interaction between children and between adults and children.
- ✓ Staff must be present, working and talking with the child about how they are doing and be sensitive to changes in children's behavior.
- ✓ Staff conducts children discussions focusing on well-being - one to one or in a group.
- ✓ Parent conferences where the head teacher address issues around the child's wellbeing, behavior and friendships.

Laws and regulations:

- ✓ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989 (CRC)
- ✓ Preschool Act § 1 and § 3
- ✓ Ministry of Education (2011) 'curriculum for preschool's content and tasks'
- ✓ Regulations on environmental health in schools and preschools § 5, documentation requirements
- ✓ Environment and health in preschool – 'Guidelines to regulations on environmental health in nursery'
- ✓ Education Directorate. 'Child welfare - adult responsibility. Prevention against Bullying begins in preschool'
- ✓ Education Directorate. 'Language in preschool. Much more a chat'
- ✓ Foreldreutvalget for preschool (fub) 'Bullying in preschool'
- ✓ Bærum municipality. Barnehagemelding (2015 - 2025)
- ✓ Bærum municipality. Quality Plan for Bærum Preschool 1 2015 - 2018
- ✓ Bærum municipality. Comprehensive schooling and transition procedures
- ✓ Bærum municipality. An action plan together for children and adolescents 2015-2019

Preschools procedures for the prevention of bullying

	Task	Timeframe	Responsibility
1	Revision of plan and discussion and documentation of preschool view of: - What is a good psychosocial environment? - What is offensive behavior? - What is the threshold to intervene and what does that entail? - When to notify the head teacher?	Start of preschool	Head teacher
2	Training and information to all new employees on "Action Plan against bullying in Bærum Preschools "	On employment	Admin/head teacher
3	Parents are informed about the plan	AGM in the autumn	Head teacher/ped leaders
4	Preschool discuss the psychosocial environment and any information given in parent conferences/ throughout the year	Twice a year/as needed	Head teacher/admin
5	preschools plans and measures for preventing bullying and changing attitudes permeate the daily work in preschool	Ongoing	Head teacher
6	Preschool evaluates its preventive and awareness-raising activities each year Evaluation and any revision to be made in staff meetings and CC meetings	Every spring	Head teacher/admin

Plan of action once bullying or offensive behavior is observed

	Task	Responsibility	Suggested documentation
1	Bullying or offensive behaviour is observed or an employee or parent has provided information	Whoever has observed the incident/been informed	Reference – bullying/offensive behaviour
2	Investigation and observation is started immediately	Head teacher/ped leader	Observation log
3	Conversation with the child who has been bullied to obtain information and provide support. Preschool must ensure that the child's own subjective experience is heard	Head teacher/ped leader	Minutes
4	Discussion with the parents of the bullied child. Preschool is responsible to facilitate cooperation with regard to measures that can/should be done	Head teacher/ped leader	Minutes
5	Individual conversations with the child/ren who have caused offence. The purpose of the conversations is to make the child/ren aware that such behaviour is unacceptable and must stop immediately. Have follow up meetings	Head teacher/ped leader	Minutes
6	Discussion with the parents of the bully. Preschool has a responsibility to facilitate cooperation with regards to any measures that can/should be made	Head teacher/ped leader	Minutes
7	Draw up an action plan and present it to the parents based on systematic observations done. The action plan must be followed by all adults	Head teacher/ped leader	Minutes
8	Follow up – the behaviour must be followed up until it stops completely. All children involved must be followed up	Head teacher/ped leader	observation/minutes
9	Evaluation meeting for staff after 1-2 weeks. Did the measures work? Does it need to continue/be adjusted?	Head teacher/ped leader	minutes
10	New meeting with parent with update. Must have close and continual dialogue until the matter is resolved.	Head teacher	minutes