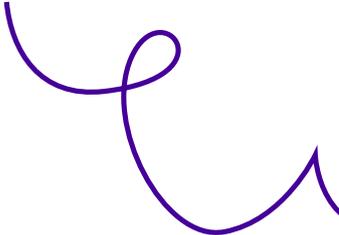


# Vantaa's anti-bullying plan

**Vantaa**  
**Vanda**

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This plan guides anti-bullying work across all service areas of Vantaa's Education and Learning Department, covering every early childhood education unit, school and upper secondary education institution. In these units of the service area, we create concrete plans tailored to our learning environment based on this plan and other documents that guide the work. We make sure that the employees, guardians and students are aware of the methods used to prevent and intervene in bullying.

The plan has been updated in Fall 2025, based on extensive assessment data collected from children, young people, guardians and the staff of different service areas as well as the latest research on anti-bullying work. Based on the above, we offer staff training to strengthen the competence in anti-bullying work.

In this text, early childhood education units, schools and upper secondary education institutions will be referred to more shortly as service units. Similarly, children, young people and adult students in these learning environments will be referred to as students.

## **Definition of bullying**

Bullying is an intentional, harmful and negative action by an individual or group that repeatedly targets one and the same person, against which it is difficult for the target to defend themselves due to an imbalance in power or authority. These characteristics distinguish it from arguing or individual cases of violence, for example. The key is each person's own experience of being bullied. Early intervention and taking the matter seriously are important, even if the roles in the bullying are unclear or the issue is an individual conflict. If hurtful behavior is not addressed, it may lead to bullying.

Bullying can be mental, physical, or social, such as exclusion from a group. It can also take place online. Bullying may involve emotional/physical abuse and/or harassment, and the acts committed may constitute a crime. Examples of these include assault, stalking, defamation and illegal threats. Bullying violates the student's basic rights to freedom, integrity and safety, and causes many negative and often far-reaching effects on development. This is why we prevent bullying and immediately intervene in cases of bullying.

Bullying is a strongly group-based phenomenon, which is largely influenced by the group's members and norms. Bullying is often a series of events that gradually build up, and it is sometimes difficult to detect. For this reason, observing and understanding the social relationships of students is key to anti-

bullying work. It is important to build a safe operational culture in which students know who to turn to when they experience and notice bullying and both dare and know how to bring the situation up.

## **Measures to prevent bullying**

### **We strengthen community wellbeing and positive interactions**

Behavior is learned through interactions. Bullying is prevented through caring interactions and the feeling of becoming part of a community. We invest in positive and respectful interaction between students, among staff and between staff and students. We build an operational culture that supports peer relationships and does not accept any kind of hurtful behavior, and in which no one is excluded from the group. We support every child, young person and adult student in joining and belonging to their own community as a full-fledged member. We pay special attention to students who are in a vulnerable position.

In primary and lower secondary schools, we use (as part of the shared plans that guide our work) the annual wellbeing plan and plan for strengthening and teaching emotional and interaction skills. We organize staff training for promoting wellbeing, emotional and interaction skills, as well as preventing and intervening in bullying.

### **We build pedagogical safety: we agree on common rules and foster group cohesion**

The prevalence of bullying is affected by the quality of interactions and the group's dynamic and hierarchy. As bullying is a phenomenon that takes root in groups and communities, influencing the norms that guide activities and group processes is key to preventing bullying.

We influence norms with the help of rules created together with the students. Participation in the creation of common rules commits the students to following them in their daily lives. Shared values and attitudes are connected to everyday practices through compiling safer space principles (["Safer space" website, vantaa.fi](http://www.vantaa.fi)) together with students. We strengthen compliance with the rules systematically in a positive way, such as through Proactivity methods (["Proactivity in Vantaa's schools and daycare centers" website, vantaa.fi](http://www.vantaa.fi)) and keep the rules visible and part of everyday life, so that they solidify at the practical level and build a safe learning environment.

It takes time and getting to know each other for the class/group to become functional and capable of cooperating. Fostering group cohesion is a continuous, around-the-operating-year/around-the-school-year process that we carry out systematically and regularly in the everyday life of the service unit. In fostering group cohesion, we consciously support the mutual safety and positive interactions of students. We pay particular attention to transitional stages and situations of change in the group structure. We also conduct group fostering sessions in cooperation with Youth Services and/or other partners. In primary and lower secondary education, student welfare services' employees meet 7th-graders and students starting in upper secondary education in groups, discussing, among other things, wellbeing, mental health, and the impacts of bullying on wellbeing.

## **We involve students and guardians in building community wellbeing**

We help students actively participate in planning, implementing, developing, and assessing community wellbeing work. By strengthening participation and cooperation, we influence the community's norms and help students gain positive experiences of helping each other and influencing opportunities for building a safe shared learning environment. We include students in our own operating environment in suitable ways: for example, prefect, peer support and tutor activities are forms of cooperation and participation that promote wellbeing, prevent bullying and help in resolving minor conflicts. We support the participation of students in everyday life by building a safe learning environment (e.g. through common rules and fostering group cohesion) in which everyone can make their voice heard. Service units may also use some form of peer mediation model. [Vantaa's "Youth work at schools" website \(vantaa.fi\)](#) provides, among other things, an introductory video and training recording on Crew activities.

We also build community wellbeing in cooperation with guardians. Guardians know their children best, notice many things and, through their own attitudes and behavior, influence their children's behavior, including bullying behavior. Guardians' participation and visible presence in everyday life (for example, participation in creating the ground rules) builds a community that, together, prevents exclusion from the group and bullying. [The "Cooperation between home and learning" website \(vantaa.fi\)](#) provides information on the objectives and practices of cooperation.

## **We measure wellbeing**

We regularly track wellbeing data with the help of surveys. We analyze the gathered data and utilize it in our work to prevent and intervene in bullying. Examples of surveys: [School health promotion study \(vantaa.fi\)](http://vantaa.fi), [Finlapset \(vantaa.fi\)](http://vantaa.fi), KiVa School survey, and units' own surveys.

## Measures for intervening in bullying

### We intervene in accordance with jointly agreed operating models

Anti-bullying work is more effective when based on clear, shared procedures. Shared procedures are built as follows:

1. **Vantaa's anti-bullying plan** provides a foundation for shared procedures at the city level.
2. **The plan for protecting students/children from violence, harassment and bullying** (attachment to the student welfare plan) provides more detailed instructions for the processes of prevention and intervention in primary and lower secondary education, upper secondary education institutions and pre-primary education.
3. **Every service unit's own plan for preventing and intervening in bullying** is based on the above documents. In it, we record the jointly agreed concrete procedures and responsibilities in our service unit. In the plan, we take into account the significance of guardians' active participation. We make sure that the employees, guardians and students are aware of the methods used in the unit to intervene in and resolve bullying. In primary and lower secondary education, we record these procedures visibly on the service unit's website.

### We intervene immediately and strengthen our skills for noticing bullying

In early childhood education units, schools and educational institutions, we always intervene in any disrespectful, inappropriate and hurtful behavior that comes to our attention. We take conflicts between students seriously, and we resolve and monitor them in accordance with the jointly agreed procedures (see previous paragraph). In situations where the bullying committed at the school constitutes a crime, we will file a child protection notification as well as a police report.

It is important that the experienced bullying does not go unnoticed by the staff. We observe the group and the interactions within it. We address bullying as a phenomenon and strengthen both the students' and the community's understanding and ability to intervene. We make sure that every child, young person, guardian and adult student knows the different ways that bullying can be brought up in our unit; for example, through mailboxes where students can submit a report on bullying. In primary and lower secondary education, we use the online Someturva service for reporting bullying on social media and asking for help. For addressing the matter, the service units' staff can utilize [support materials for challenging discussions \(vantaa.fi\)](#).

We strengthen our staff's skills for intervening in bullying both within the service unit as well as through city-level training and information.

### **We monitor, influence the group's dynamic, safeguard the student's day and offer support after the situation**

Effective anti-bullying work means persistent everyday actions, which pedagogical safety is built on. Professionals who work with the class/group play a key role in building this safety. When intervening in bullying, it is important to hold regular follow-up meetings with the parties involved and cooperate closely with the guardians until it is confirmed that the bullying has stopped.

In primary and lower secondary education, the bullying intervention team is responsible for/providing support in resolving cases of bullying and monitoring as well as anti-bullying work in accordance with the agreed procedures. The team cooperates with teachers, guardians and the required multiprofessional parties and utilizes unit-specific plans and, when required, crisis cards in its operations.

As bullying is a phenomenon that involves groups and group norms, we intervene in bullying at the group level by carrying out necessary changes in, for example, the learning environment and group divisions. We strengthen the group's students' understanding of the phenomenon and their ability to act against bullying.

We appoint adult support persons for the target of bullying and the person(s) who committed the bullying. The child, young person or adult student can have an influence on who the adult support person will be. If needed, we will create a plan to safeguard the bullied person's day at school/the early childhood education unit, with the involvement of the student in question.

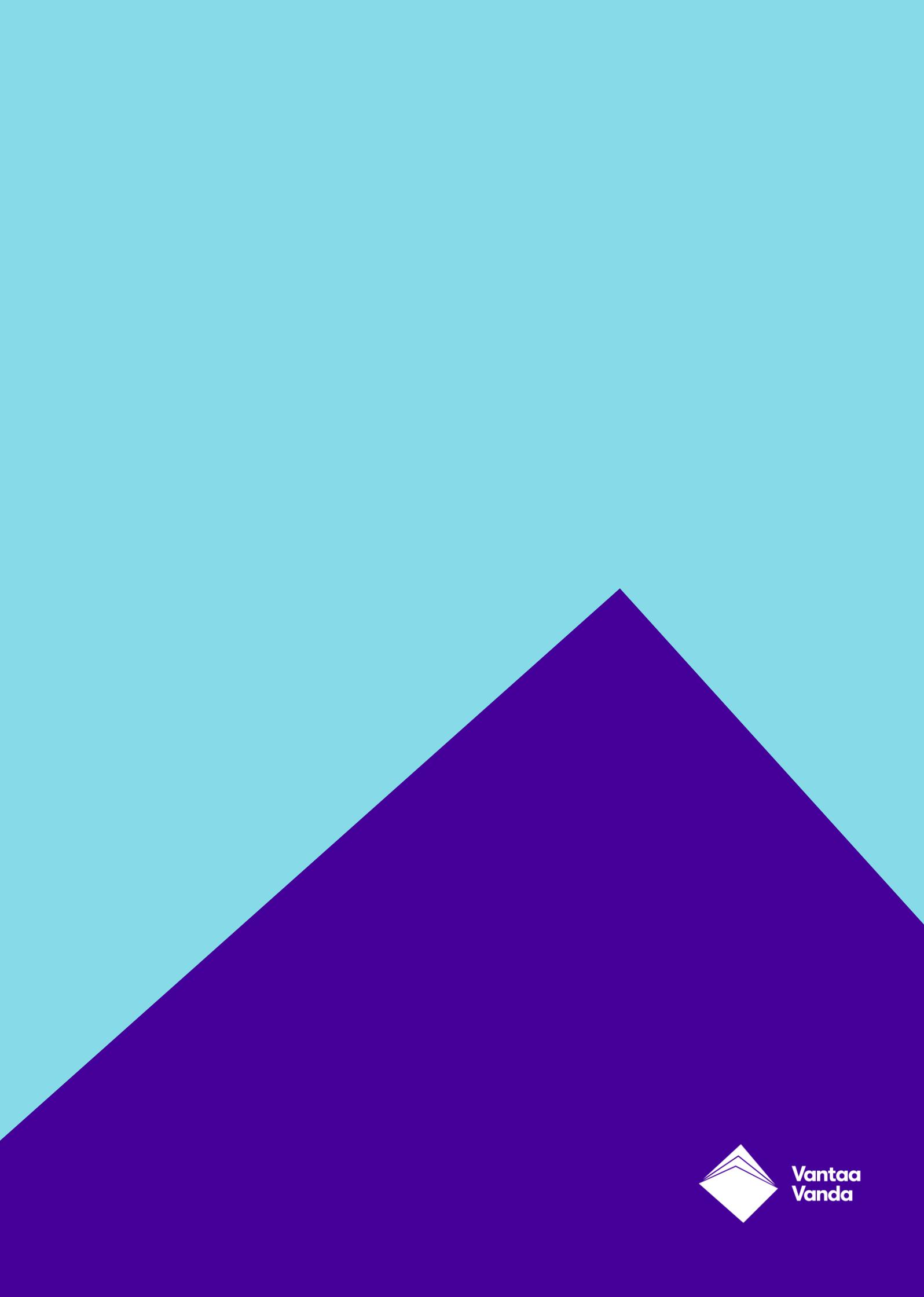
Intervening in bullying often requires multiprofessional cooperation. We offer support for the bullied person as well as those who participated in the bullying and direct them to student welfare services. We will establish a multidisciplinary team of experts if concerns are raised about a student's wellbeing. The family can also receive support for processing the feelings arising from the bullying from a family counseling clinic and the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare's Uusimaa district (mll.fi).

## **We work together and request help/support if necessary**

In prolonged and challenging cases of bullying, the service unit may request a consultation with a specialist in intervening in bullying. Watch the video and read more: Safety factors: "There are always ways to solve bullying" (vantaa.fi). In primary and lower secondary school, Vantaa's employees with K-0 training can be brought in for support in handling the matter, with the specialist in intervening in bullying coordinating their work.

In Vantaa, the preventive policing of the Eastern Uusimaa police works closely together with schools. Schools receive support from the police in resolving situations that involve criminal acts. Schools also have the opportunity to consult the police in unclear situations, for example regarding police reports.

For resolving disputes and conflicts between guardians, the Mediation Office can be asked for help when the school or educational institution's own means are not enough, or when outside help in handling the situation is required. The Mediation Office can also be asked for help in mediation for incidents that occur outside the school day. Cases that meet the criteria of a crime may be directed to mediation by the police. If the matter's eligibility for mediation is in doubt, you can contact the Mediation Office ([sovittelutoiminta@vantaa.fi](mailto:sovittelutoiminta@vantaa.fi)) and address the matter with a mediation professional.



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