



BULLYING

In the Belgian law

BASED ON The Convention on the Rights of the Child

·Ratificated on september 2nd 1990, by 20 UN-member states

- You need to be protected from violence or abuse , so against all forms of neglect or abuse .
- You have the right to protection against sexual abuse.
- You have the right to protection from abduction or child trafficking.
- You have the right to protection from all forms of exploitation or punishment.
- You have the right to protection from all forms of discrimination.

The Belgian law considers

- Bullying as a form of abuse

The law prohibits child abuse, violence and neglect.

(Note: parents cannot be penalized for a 'pedagogical tick' as a form of punishment. However when the child is seriously injured, the government may intervene and it is up to the court to decide whether the parents should be prosecuted.

Corporal punishment is prohibited outside the family (for example at School, where a 'pedagogical tick' given by a teacher will be prosecuted.

Injuries (due to bullying) will be prosecuted as well,

The Belgian law makes

- grooming (abuse via the Internet)
- sexting (communication with sexual content via SMS, smart phones and social networking sites) and
- cyberbullying (sending negative , malicious messages via Internet) punishable by one to five years in prison.

Five characteristics to define cyberbullying:

- Cyber bullying should be designed and/or experienced as hurtful.
- The harassing has to repeat itself (online and/or offline) .
- This harassing behavior occurs within a relationship characterized by an imbalance of power (actual and/or linked to the ICT knowledge) .
- The harassing behavior is committed within the context of an existing social (on/offline) group.
- The harassing behavior is directed against a specific person.

BUT....BULLYING IS PART OF IT....

The thin line between

- bullying
- teasing
- arguing

Therefore the Flemish educational department focuses on
prevention

They wrote out the following guidelines

TEACHERS BE ALERT

- Often bullying still remains under the radar
- 4 on 10 pupils tell it happens without the teacher knowing it
- Be alert, vigilant, observe and take responsibility
- Seeing the problem early means the damage and impact remains limited

SANCTION

- Let there be a consequence to the unwanted behavior
- Learn bullies that this behavior can not be tolerated.
- Call external professional assistance or police if the bullying does not stop

AVOID THE PILLARY

- Don't put bullies publicly pilloried
- Sharing messages and videos on social media potentially creates a tolerance to violence and can lead to an escalation of violence and retaliation.

USE THE POWER OF THE NUMBER

- Work not only with the bully and the victim, but use the power of the number .
- Call bystanders to action.
- Call kids who witness bullying (the middle group) to assist and / or pass it to an adult.

TACLE THE PROBLEM INTEGRALLY

(also work with the bully)

- Teach children the difference between arguing, teasing and bullying , and between funny and offensive.
- Teach them to say 'no' .
- Teach them to remain calm and not to respond to challenges.
- A good response is to let the bully know that it hurts and ask to stop .