

## Plan for a good psychosocial kindergarten environment - Det Norske Veritas kindergarten

This plan describes what the kindergarten does to prevent and promote an inclusive and good psychosocial kindergarten environment and what routines / measures are initiated if violations, bullying and / or teasing are uncovered.

### Introduction

cf. Kindergarten Act §1 Purpose:

*Kindergartens shall work in partnership and agreement with the home to meet the children's need for care and play, and they shall promote learning and formative development as a basis for all-round development.*

*Kindergartens must treat children with trust and respect and acknowledge the intrinsic value of childhood. It should contribute to well-being and joy in play and learning, and be a challenging and safe place for fellowship and friendship. Kindergartens shall promote democracy and equality and combat all forms of discrimination.*

Kindergartens shall contribute to the children's well-being, joy of life, coping and sense of self-worth and prevent violations and bullying. If child experiences abuse or bullying, the kindergarten must handle, stop, and follow this up (Framework Plan for the content and tasks of kindergartens).

Chapter 8 of the Kindergarten Act gives kindergartens a clear obligation to create a good physical and psychosocial learning environment. For all children to experience safe and good days in kindergarten, it is crucial that the employees have the competence to prevent violations and bullying, recognize when it happens, and know how to address it. Efforts to promote prosocial skills and stop violations and bullying behavior in kindergarten require sensitive adults with reflective approaches and strategies.

The development of social competence requires that kindergartens and parents cooperate closely. Good cooperation is also a prerequisite if bullying behaviour is observed. The kindergarten's management is responsible for ensuring that the work is prioritised.

In our daily work in kindergarten, we use the "Action Plan to ensure children a good kindergarten environment" (Bærum municipality). The action plan will contribute to:

- all children experiencing safe and good days in kindergarten
- form a common direction for the work against bullying and other violations
- promoting good routines for interaction for parents and kindergartens
- children being seen and heard and allowed to participate in matters concerning themselves

What are violations , bullying, and teasing?

*Violations, also called offensive words and actions, are a collective term for negative words or actions that children and young people experience as offensive to their dignity and integrity, or that make them feel excluded from a community. Violations can take various forms. The term encompasses everything from individual statements or actions to repeated episodes (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017, p. 7).*

In kindergartens, bullying and violations can manifest themselves when a child has a personal experience of being excluded from play, not being accepted, receiving negative comments, being dominated, oppressed, threatened, bullied, mocked, violated, ridiculed, or manipulated, or adults seeing and experiencing 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 can develop into bullying.

### **Preventative work**

Section 41 of the Kindergartens Act

*Kindergartens must not accept violations such as exclusion, bullying, violence, discrimination, and harassment. Everyone who works in the kindergarten must intervene when a child in the kindergarten is subjected to such violations. Kindergartens shall prevent cases where children do not have a safe and good kindergarten environment by working continuously to promote children's health, well-being, play and learning.*

In Det Norske Veritas Kindergarten we work actively to prevent violations, bullying and teasing in the following ways:

#### **Zero tolerance**

Children's experience of themselves and their self-worth develops in interaction with their surroundings. Children who are subjected to abuse and bullying are deprived of both courage and dignity. Research shows that both children who bully and children who have experienced bullying have an elevated risk of developing mental health problems later.

Zero tolerance means that we at Det Norske Veritas kindergarten do not accept it when a child is subjected to violations and bullying. Everyone who works in the kindergarten intervenes when a child in the kindergarten is subjected to violations. Based on the zero-tolerance principle, we ensure that all violations are followed up with action from safe, good, and warm adults.

#### **TETT PÅ - Quality in Bærumsbarnehagen**

Det Norske Veritas kindergarten will start working with the project "Tett på" in January 2023.

This initiative helps to promote a common language and a common understanding of what a good community looks like and what characterizes it. In the learning processes, staff competence is developed by observing and assessing staff practices against a quality criterion. Guidance and reflection based on the observations contribute to developing the kindergarten's feedback culture. A good feedback culture promotes good practice and is an important prerequisite for preventing violations and bullying.

## **Cooperation between kindergarten and home**

The kindergarten and the home have a joint responsibility to ensure that bullying does not develop in the kindergarten, and parents are expected to cooperate with the kindergarten on the prevention of offensive behaviour and bullying. The topic of violations, offensive behaviour and bullying is addressed at both parent conferences and parent meetings. Parents are informed about the kindergarten's action plan for a good psychosocial environment.

Parents are their children's most important role models and must be thoughtful about what they say and express when children are present. Parents contribute to prevention by:

- greeting, talking to all children, inviting children home, and facilitating new friendships
- talking positively about other children, parents, staff, and kindergarten
- reporting to the kindergarten if offensive behavior / bullying / teasing is discovered among the children
- giving feedback on the child's well-being and experiences
- following up on information and having a close cooperation with the kindergarten

All children and parents in Det Norske Veritas kindergarten should experience that they are taken seriously, are seen, recognized and respected. This implies a mutual commitment between the kindergarten and the home.

## **Psychosocial environment among employees**

Children take after adults – in kindergarten the employees are important role models. It is therefore essential that we work with the staff environment in the kindergarten. To promote our staff's ability to be good role models, we have established separate communication rules for our employees:

1. I speak for myself
2. I talk to and not about
3. I say what I need instead of criticizing

We work actively to promote the psychosocial environment among our employees by:

- prioritizing getting to know each other. We go on a trip together once/twice a year.
- raising any disagreements with the person in question
- communicating with each other based on the belief that others want us well
- finding out how to make each other good

We have our own routines in the kindergarten that ensure that any conflicts among staff are handled in the right way.

## **Cooperation with other agencies**

In some cases, it may be natural to contact other agencies. Bærum municipality has an interdisciplinary collaboration with the following agencies: Competence team kindergarten, Resource team for kindergarten, Kindergarten office, health center, Pedagogical Psychological Service (PPT), child welfare or school.

In Det Norske Veritas kindergarten, we follow routines for preventing violations and bullying as described in the Action Plan for a Good Psychosocial Environment (Bærum municipality).

### **Activity obligation**

**Section 42 of the Kindergarten Act-** Duty to ensure that kindergarten children have a safe and good psychosocial kindergarten environment (activity obligation)

*Everyone who works in the kindergarten must monitor how the children in the kindergarten are doing.*

*Everyone who works in the kindergarten must notify the kindergarten's manager if they suspect or learn that a child does not have a safe and good kindergarten environment. The manager must notify the kindergarten owner in serious cases.*

*If there is suspicion of or knowledge that a child does not have a safe and good kindergarten environment, the kindergarten shall investigate the matter as soon as possible.*

The staff in Det Norske Veritas kindergarten have knowledge and understanding of what offensive behaviour and bullying entails. Staff are observant of changes in children's behaviour and work closely with parents to make it easier to identify any changes.

To detect offensive behaviour or bullying, we at Det Norske Veritas kindergarten work with the following:

- the staff are "close to" the children in play and activities in order to identify behaviour that may develop into bullying.
- the staff observes and maps the interaction between the children and between adults and children (the psychosocial environment in the department is assessed every autumn and spring)
- staff are present, playing and talking to the children about how they are doing and are aware of changes in children's behaviour.
- The pedagogical leader conducts parent conferences where children's well-being, behavior and friendships are addressed

When children violate children, we follow the routine as described in the Action Plan for a Good Psychosocial Environment.

According to section 43 of the Kindergarten Act, employees also have an activity obligation if someone working in a kindergarten violates a child.

*If someone who works in the kindergarten suspects or becomes aware that someone else working in the kindergarten is violating a child with, for example, exclusion, bullying, violence, discrimination, or harassment, he or she must immediately notify the kindergarten's manager. The manager must notify the kindergarten owner.*

This is counteracted by creating a good feedback culture in kindergartens. Every year, kindergarten employees are reminded of this activity obligation and measures that apply when employees violate children.

When employees violate children, we follow the routine as described in the Action Plan for a Good Psychosocial Environment.

## **References and sources**

Kindergarten Law

Regulations relating to the framework plan for content and tasks of kindergarten

Action plan for a good psychosocial environment - Bærum municipality

