

POLICY MONITORING REPORT

Prevention of Conflicts Among Students in Pre-university Education

Municipality of Dardana

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Prevention of Conflicts Among Students in Pre-university Education

Dardana Municipality - Case Example



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Introduction

The school is obliged to guarantee students complete safety and an environment suitable for learning and development. However, the fulfillment of this obligation is often jeopardized by various factors, such as conflicts among students of the same school, tensions with students of other schools, or even interventions by hooligans or adults outside the education system. This common phenomenon can negatively affect the educational process and the overall well-being of students. Schools are the place where students form their social identity, and if there are no appropriate mechanisms for preventing and managing conflicts, there can be numerous consequences such as reduced motivation to learn, social exclusion, increased violence, and impacts on students' mental health.

This report aims to monitor the level of implementation of existing policies for conflict prevention in the schools of the Municipality of Kamenica. It provides an overview of the current situation, analyzes gaps and good practices, and presents recommendations for improvement.

Methodology

The monitoring was carried out using a combined approach that included document research and interviews with key stakeholders. The methods used include:

Official document research (Desk Research) - To understand the legal and strategic framework for conflict prevention, the main documents analyzed included:

- Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo
- Regulation QRK-No. 21/2013 on the Prevention of Violence in Educational Institutions
- Handbook for the Prevention of Negative Phenomena in High Schools
- Education Strategy 2022–2026
- Education Statistics (2022–2023 and 2023–2024)
- Handbook for the Prevention of Negative Phenomena in High Schools (duplicate reference)
- Law No. 06/L-084 on Child Protection
- Administrative Instruction No. 6/2014 – Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Measures for High School Students
- Action Plan for Safety in Schools 2023–26 (Municipality of Prishtina)

Interviews with key stakeholders - Structured interviews were conducted with:

- Students, to gather their perceptions of conflicts at school and how these are addressed.
- School principals, to understand current policies and the challenges faced in implementing them.
- Teachers and school psychologists, to analyze their experiences in managing conflicts and supporting students.
- Officials from the Municipal Directorate of Education (DE), to assess the policies and the institutional support provided.

Analysis of Existing Policies and Implementation in Practice

Kosovo's policies and strategic documents contain somewhat clear guidelines for the prevention of conflicts and violence in schools. However, there are shortcomings and, in practice, their implementation is limited due to a lack of necessary resources and a lack of training for school staff.

Regulation QRK-No. 21/2013: This document aims to prevent and address violence in pre-university educational institutions in Kosovo by creating a system of internal and external protective networks in cooperation with the school, Municipal Directorates of Education (DE), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), Centers for Social Welfare (CSW), the Kosovo Police, and health institutions. In practice, this cooperation often fails to materialize, causing cases of violence not to be properly addressed. Additionally, the regulation does not clearly specify what punitive measures will be taken against students or staff who cause violence at school.

Handbook for the Prevention of Negative Phenomena in Schools: This handbook is a practical guide for teachers, but its use remains limited due to a lack of knowledge about its content and the lack of regular training for teachers to incorporate it into the teaching process.

Education Strategy 2022–2026: The Education Strategy 2022–2026 aims to ensure safe, healthy, and suitable school environments, including infrastructure, adequate equipment, recreational and laboratory spaces, as well as mechanisms for the promotion of health and safety. It emphasizes the need for preventive measures against violence, bullying, extremism, and for health education, but these activities are rarely organized within schools and are usually carried out by NGOs or external actors. This strategy also does not include detailed measures for preventing conflicts among students.

Administrative Instruction No. 6/2014: This administrative instruction requires schools to have clear regulations on student behavior, including respect toward teachers, other students, and school property. However, most schools have not drafted such a regulation.

Law No. 06/L-084 on Child Protection: Law 06/L-084 on Child Protection establishes, among other things, the foundations for the education and protection of children in the school system, including the review of curricula and teaching materials to avoid negative stereotypes, prejudices, and harmful practices. While the law calls for the harmonization of textbooks, this process is often delayed and there are no clear mechanisms for regular monitoring. Some teaching materials still contain gender, ethnic, and cultural prejudices, contributing to discrimination and hatred. There are not enough programs to build teachers' capacities in child protection and inclusive approaches to education.

The monitoring revealed that:

- In most schools, minor incidents among students are not officially reported and are not addressed through formal mechanisms.
- Teachers and school staff often lack sufficient knowledge of mediation and conflict management techniques.
- Psychologists and counselors are overburdened and cannot provide ongoing support to all students in need.
- Students reported that they often feel unprotected or misunderstood by school authorities when they report conflicts or violence.
- There is a lack of clear regulations and disciplinary committees that directly address the prevention and management of violence in schools.
- Current laws and documents do not thoroughly address key issues such as school fencing, security camera installation, emergency exits, ramps, and accommodations for persons with disabilities.
- In schools in Kamenica, police officers often patrol near the schools to intervene quickly in cases of violence or other incidents. However, according to students, they often recognize these officers even when they are in plain clothes and consequently behave more cautiously in their presence. This indicates that police presence can have a deterrent effect, but it also suggests the need for additional supervision and intervention strategies to address violence more effectively.

Recommendations from the Monitoring of Education Policies

Based on the key findings of the monitoring, the following steps are recommended to improve the implementation of policies in schools:

Strengthening disciplinary and safety mechanisms in schools

- Drafting and implementing internal school regulations in accordance with the Administrative Instruction on the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Measures.
- Establishing and operationalizing Disciplinary Committees in every school to address cases of disciplinary violations and violence in a fair and efficient manner.
- Training teachers and school staff in conflict management and the prevention of student violence.
- Developing strategies and action plans (for example, the Action Plan for Safety in Schools 2023–26 from the Municipality of Prishtina).

Empowering School Governing Councils and the decision-making chain

- Ensuring the effective functioning of School Governing Councils by including representatives of parents, students, and the community.
- Increasing transparency in decision-making processes through regular meetings and public reports on school management.
- Implementing strict oversight by educational authorities to ensure that the rules and decisions made by the School Governing Council are carried out.

Improving the curriculum and education on child protection

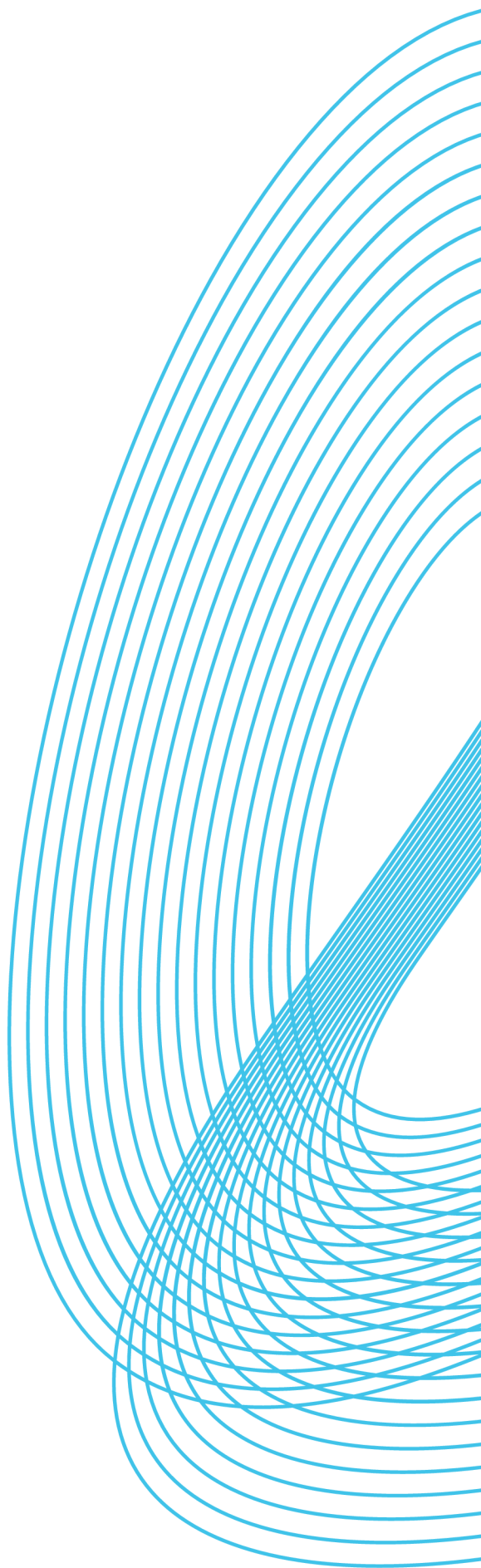
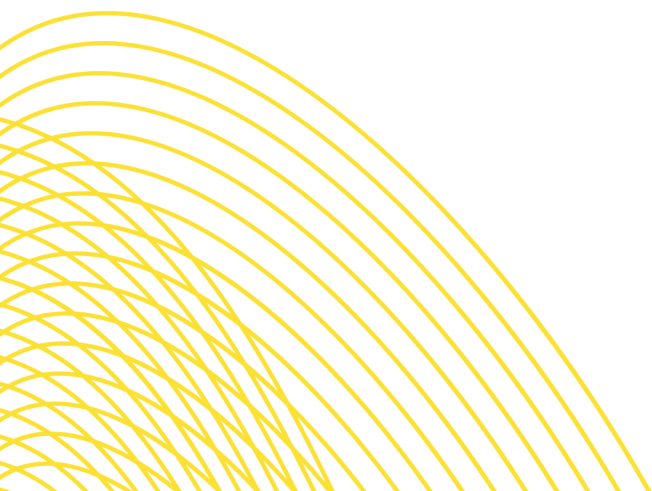
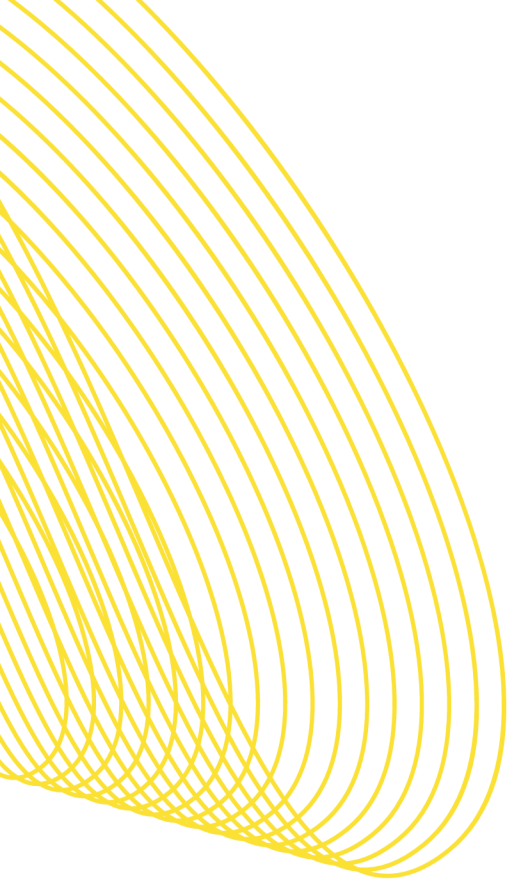
- Reviewing school textbooks to eliminate language that could incite division, discrimination, or stereotypes.
- Integrating topics on child protection, safety, and ethical behavior into teaching, including education on human rights, prevention of bullying, and physical conflicts.
- Providing training for parents and teachers on non-violent forms of discipline and techniques for managing student behavior.

Strengthening inter-institutional cooperation for student safety and well-being

- Creating a clear cooperation framework between the school and relevant institutions such as the Municipal Directorate of Education, the Center for Social Welfare, the Police, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Health, and other specialized organizations.
- Appointing a dedicated person within the Center for Social Welfare who will deal exclusively with student issues and problematic cases in schools, ensuring a swift and effective response.

Improving the monitoring system in schools

- Even though security cameras are installed in most schools, they often do not cover all areas of the campus, leaving some spaces unmonitored where incidents can occur. Furthermore, the quality of the footage is often poor, making it difficult to identify students involved in problematic incidents. It is recommended to invest in higher-quality equipment and to review camera placement to ensure all critical areas of the school are covered.



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