

# POLICY MONITORING REPORT

## Prevention of Online Harassment and Related issues in The digital space

Mitrovica Case

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# **Prevention of Online Harassment and Related Issues in the Digital Space**

Mitrovica Municipality - Case Example



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## Introduction

Cyberbullying and other issues related to the digital space are growing problems that negatively affect the emotional and social well-being of students, especially in the Municipality of South Mitrovica, where ethnic diversity and access to technology can create additional challenges.

The lack of effective policies to prevent and address these phenomena can lead to increased tensions, isolation of students and long-term consequences in their development. Creating a safe learning environment, both physical and online, is essential to protect students and promote a healthy society.

This monitoring has two main purposes:

- To analyze whether the existing policies for the prevention of online bullying and other digital issues are clear and implemented in practice in the Municipality of South Mitrovica, focusing on the impact on students from different communities.
- To provide concrete recommendations for strengthening mechanisms against online bullying, raising awareness and improving digital security in schools.

The findings of this monitoring will help schools, the Municipal Directorate of Education (DE), policy makers and stakeholders to take more effective steps to create a safe and supportive educational environment in the digital space for all students.

## **Analysis of Existing Laws and Policies**

For the analysis of the current situation, the following documents will be taken into account:

- Law on Pre-University Education in Kosovo (to evaluate measures for the safety of students);
- Law No. 03/L-047 on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities and Their Members in the Republic of Kosovo (to analyze protection from online discrimination);
- Education Strategy 2022-2026 (with a focus on objectives for digital security and inclusion);
- Law No. 06/L-082 on the Protection of Personal Data (to assess students' online privacy and security);
- Statistics in Education (2022-2023 and 2023-2024) (to analyze reports of online bullying incidents);
- Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo (articles on fundamental rights and protection from discrimination).
- Administrative Instruction No. 6/2014 of MEST, Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Measures for High School Students
- National Cyber Security Strategy 2023-2027
- Other studies from local and international organizations

## Results

Existing policies in Kosovo do not provide clear and specific mechanisms for preventing and reporting online bullying in schools. The Law on Pre-University Education focuses on protecting students from offensive words and actions, but does not explicitly mention online bullying.

Similarly, the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Communities addresses discrimination, but does not directly include issues of cyberbullying. However, the Education Strategy 2022-2026 aims to integrate elements of digital safety and awareness-raising about online bullying, but there are still no detailed measures for reporting mechanisms. In this context, there is still a gap in the legal framework to provide clear rules on this issue.

Currently, there is no clear and comprehensive program dedicated to educating students and staff on digital safety and the consequences of cyberbullying.

However, the National Cyber Security Strategy 2023-2027 includes measures to build capacities in cyber security by developing basic online security courses for high school students. These trainings can help address the phenomenon of online bullying, but do not include a specific program for cyberbullying at the pre-university level, or something has yet to be done in this direction.

The privacy and security of student data is overseen by the Information and Privacy Agency, which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of laws on the protection of personal data and access to public documents. Law No. 06/L-082 on Personal Data Protection guarantees the protection of students' personal data and prohibits their misuse by educational institutions. However, there are no specific guidelines on how schools should handle student data in the context of using technology for learning. Moreover, the National Strategy for Cyber Security 2023-2027 envisages building capacities for digital security, but there are still no clear mechanisms to protect students' privacy when using digital platforms in education.

## Recommendations for Schools

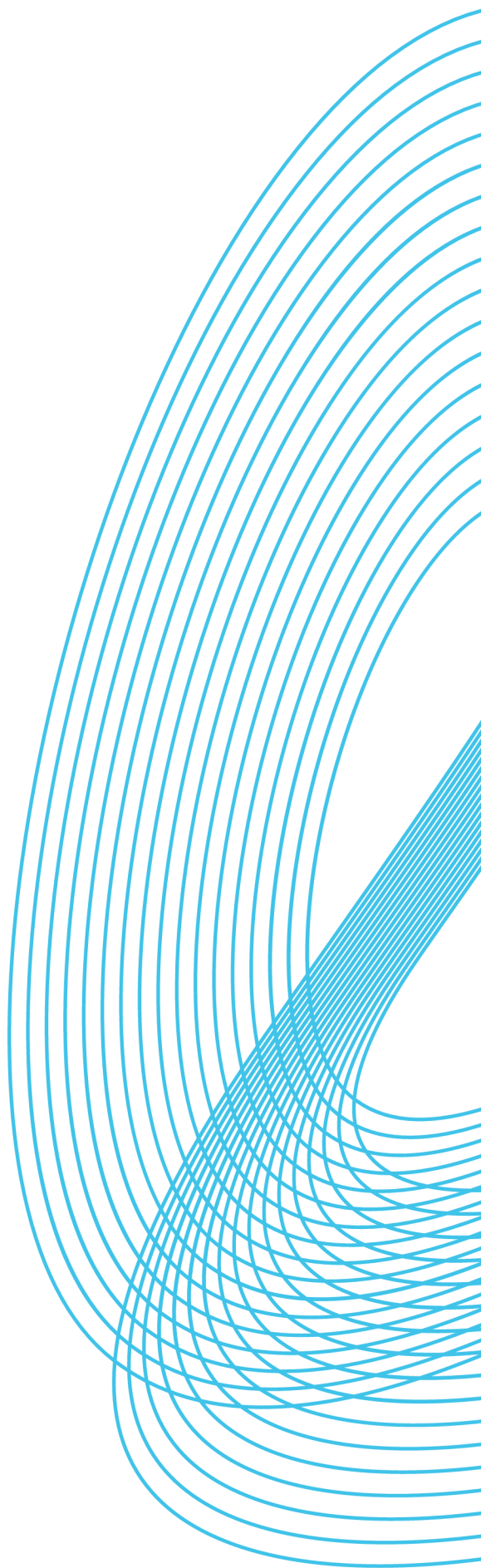
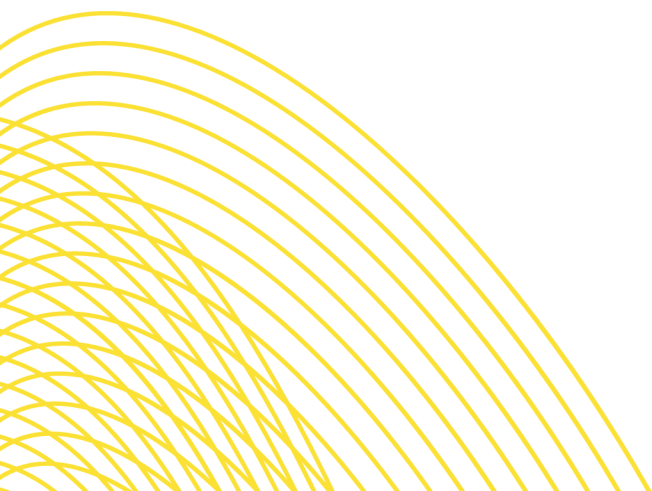
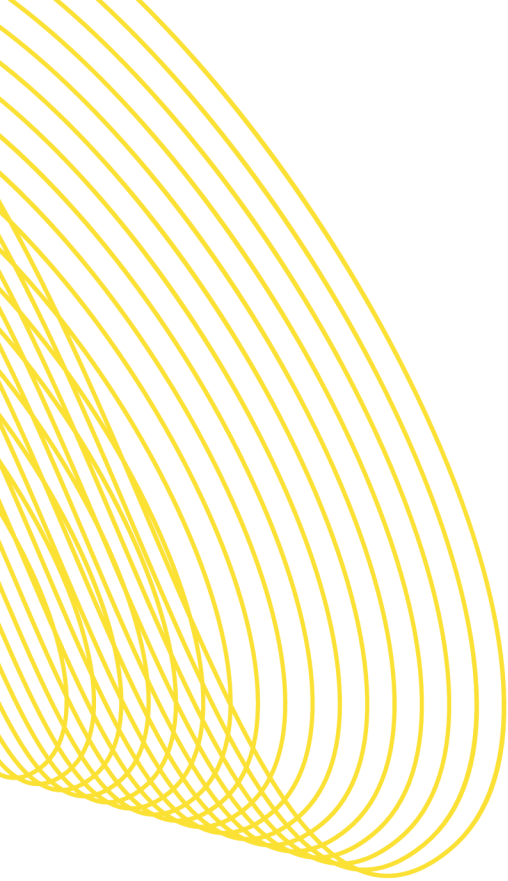
- **Develop school policies for the prevention and reporting of online bullying:** Schools should create and implement clear guidelines for the prevention and reporting of cyberbullying cases, including disciplinary measures and psychological support for victims.
- **Trainings for teachers and students on digital safety:** Organization of regular sessions for awareness on Internet safety, protection of personal data and the consequences of online bullying.
- **Strengthening reporting and privacy protection mechanisms:** Creating anonymous channels for reporting cases of online bullying and ensuring that student data is handled in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Law.
- **Involving parents for a safe learning environment:** Implementing security filters on school networks, ensuring that online platforms used in learning respect privacy standards, and organizing meetings and training for parents on internet safety and children's online behavior.

This will help raise awareness and monitor children's behavior in digital spaces.

## Recommendations for Directorate of Education

- **Develop and implement a clear strategy for preventing cyberbullying:** MED should guide schools in developing anti-bullying policies, including standardized approaches for handling cases. Update school regulations to clearly include provisions against online bullying and ensure that all schools implement a unified protocol for handling cases of online bullying.
- **Engage psychologists and provide mandatory training for educational staff on digital safety:** Most secondary schools in Mitrovica lack school psychologists – a crucial gap that directly impacts the emotional and psychological well-being of students. Organize training programs for teachers and school administrators on internet safety, legal regulations, and data protection practices.
- **Supervision and enforcement of privacy standards in schools:** DE should ensure that schools implement the Law on Personal Data Protection and respect the guidelines of the Information and Privacy Agency for the protection of student data.
- **Creation of a municipal platform for reporting and addressing cases of online bullying:** Development of an effective mechanism for reporting cases of online bullying, where students, parents and teachers can present their concerns safely and anonymously.





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