CHAPTER «TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT: STRATEGIC CONTEXT»

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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR REDUCING BULLYING AND SOCIAL ISOLATION OF STUDENTS IN POLISH SCHOOLS

Summary

The paper summarizes the content of inclusive education and substantiates its role in reducing bullying and social isolation of students at school. Inclusion is defined as a systematic organization of learning and upbringing that combines the accessibility of the environment, the full participation of each child in joint activities, and consistent support from teachers and specialists. It is shown that bullying is repetitive and relies on inequality of power, group reinforcement, and the silence of witnesses, while social isolation can continue without obvious conflicts, manifesting itself through ignoring, non-inclusion in group work, stigmatization, and alienation in digital communication. It is proven that inclusive practices reduce the risks of these phenomena when the school systematically forms norms of mutual respect, organizes collaborative learning, uses flexible methods of presenting material, and creates safe procedures for seeking help. The importance of early detection of isolation through observation of student participation and support for those who are constantly left out of the community is emphasized. Particular attention is paid to the specifics of Polish schools, where mainstream, integration and special forms of education coexist, and student support is often based on the recommendations of psychological and pedagogical counseling and the team work of the institution. The importance of staffing is emphasized, in particular the participation of psychologists and special educators who help plan support, work with group dynamics and accompany children in crisis situations. The role of institutional procedures for the protection of minors in establishing rules for notification, response and prevention, including safe use of the Internet, is noted. The conclusion is summarized that inclusive education is a preventive system that simultaneously reduces opportunities for

humiliation and creates conditions for belonging, academic success and psychological safety for all students.

Introduction

Modern schools are increasingly becoming a meeting place for very different children, in terms of abilities, learning pace, language experience, health status, family circumstances, cultural habits and emotional sensitivity. At the same time, there is a growing need not only for high-quality learning, but also for creating a safe environment where every student has the right to dignity, respect and participation in the common life of the class. That is why inclusive education as a tool for reducing bullying and social isolation is becoming particularly relevant, because it is aimed at ensuring that differences do not turn into an excuse for humiliation. Bullying, as systematic persecution, and social isolation, as an imperceptible but long-term removal of a child from the team, destroy the sense of belonging, undermine educational motivation, worsen the psychological state and can have consequences that go far beyond the school years. In such a situation, inclusion is important not only for children with special educational needs, it is the basis of a fair and humane school for all. The importance of the topic is enhanced by the fact that bullying and social isolation are often disguised as supposedly ordinary children's conflicts, jokes or temporary hostility. In fact, these are phenomena that feed on inequality of power, group dynamics and a culture of silence, when witnesses are afraid to intervene, and teachers do not always have the tools for early recognition. Children who are different from the majority, have difficulties in communication, unusual behavior, a different accent, dress differently due to material circumstances, or simply do not fit into the informal rules of the group, or simply do not fit into the informal rules of the group, become especially vulnerable. Social isolation may not be accompanied by direct insults, but is manifested in non-inclusion in games, ignoring, refusal to work in pairs, invisible barriers during group tasks. Therefore, considering inclusive education as a prevention mechanism is extremely significant, because it shifts the focus from responding to incidents that have already occurred to creating an environment where it becomes more difficult to humiliate and reject the other, and acceptance and support become the norm.

Inclusive education has the potential to systematically reduce the risks of bullying by changing the culture of the classroom and school itself. It is about everyday practice where diversity is not a problem, but a natural characteristic of the group, which is taken into account in teaching, communication and the organization of space. When students are taught from an early age that everyone can have their own pace, their own strengths and different ways of expressing themselves, then there is less reason for labels and devaluation. Inclusive approaches support transparent rules of mutual respect, the development of

empathy, the ability to negotiate and safely talk through difficult situations. They also create conditions for positive contact when children have common goals, work in mixed groups, take turns taking responsibility and see each other not through stereotypes, but through real interaction. In such an environment, social isolation is reduced, because the school consciously organizes everyone's participation, and does not leave inclusion to chance or popularity. The relevance of inclusive education as a tool for combating bullying is also due to the fact that prevention cannot be limited to punishments or formal conversations after a conflict. Rules are needed, but the atmosphere in which these rules live is crucial. Inclusion involves training teachers to work with different needs, forming team interaction in the school, partnering with parents, and consistently applying supportive practices that help children learn self-regulation and respect for the boundaries of others. It is also important that an inclusive school is better able to see invisible students, those who are silent, do not complain, avoid interruptions, sit separately, and agree to the role of «superfluous». When a school has mechanisms for observation, support, and early intervention, the risk of long-term rejection is reduced. In other words, inclusion works as a preventive system that strengthens psychosocial safety and prevents the problem from accumulating to a critical level.

Chapter 1. The essence and content of inclusive education and its role in combating bullying and social isolation

Inclusive education in the modern sense is not a separate program for «special» students, but a way of organizing school life, in which each child has a real opportunity to learn together with peers, participate in joint activities and feel like a full member of the team. Its essence lies in the transition from the logic of «the child must adapt to school» to the logic of «the school must be flexible enough so that different children can study successfully in it». At the heart of such an approach is not a diagnosis or a label, but educational needs, strengths, the pace of mastering the material, individual ways of perceiving information, as well as the need for safety, acceptance and suport [1-2]. It is this change of perspective that is key to combating bullying and social isolation, because it gradually removes from the classroom culture the idea of «normality as a single standard», which often becomes a ground for ridicule, rejection and humiliation. The content of inclusive education consists of interrelated elements that cover both the educational process, educational work, and organizational decisions of the school. First, it is accessibility, that is, the removal of barriers that prevent a child from being present and active. Barriers can be physical, such as the inaccessibility of space, informational, when the material is presented in only one way and it does not suit some students, communicative, when conditions are not created for different ways of interaction, as well as social barriers in the form of prejudices and stereotypes.

Second, it is participation, that is, not a formal stay in the classroom, but inclusion in joint tasks, discussions, projects, games, school events. Third, it is support, which includes pedagogical adaptations, psychological support, cooperation between specialists and teachers, as well as partnership with families. All this works as a single system. If the class has access to the material, but the child is not accepted by peers, then inclusion remains incomplete [3-4]. If a child is accepted but the learning is structured in such a way that they constantly feel like they are failing, the risks of isolation also increase. Therefore, the content of inclusive education is always broader than teaching methods, it covers the culture of relationships, rules, daily classroom rituals, ways of resolving conflicts and supporting emotional well-being (Table 1).

An important component of the essence of inclusive education is how it understands diversity. The difference between children is not seen as a deviation that needs to be hidden or corrected, but rather it is perceived as a normal characteristic of any group. When such a position is formed in the classroom, then the need to «protect» one's identity by humiliating the other, which is often the basis of bullying, is reduced [5-6]. Bullying often arises as an attempt by a group to build a hierarchy, to find the «culprit» for tension, to consolidate rules of belonging, where «one's own» is the one who meets unspoken standards, and «alien» is the one who is different. Inclusive education changes the conditions for such a hierarchy. It makes difference visible, explained and acceptable, and also prescribes clear rules of respect that are supported by adults not episodically, but daily. In such an environment, bullying becomes not a «two-child affair,» but a problem of collective culture, which is dealt with through normalization of behavior, restoration of relationships, and formation of responsibility of witnesses. If we talk about social isolation, then inclusive education counteracts it on two levels. At the structural level, it creates situations where each student has a role and where interaction does not depend on popularity. This is achieved through cooperative learning, work in small groups, role rotation, pair tasks with thoughtful selection of pairs, joint projects where different contributions are valued. At the relationship level, inclusion develops socio-emotional skills, including empathy, the ability to ask for help and offer support, the ability to see the boundaries of the other, the ability to restore relationships after a conflict. Isolation is often based on small daily signals, on ignoring, on not being included in the conversation, on «you yourself» during a break. An inclusive classroom makes such signals visible to the teacher and the group, and also provides safe intervention mechanisms so that the student is not left alone with the experience of rejection [7-11].

Table 1

Main social aspects of the modern understanding of inclusive education

Belonging and participation	Respect and dignity	Shared responsibility
Inclusive education treats participation as a right, not a reward. Students are actively included in tasks, discussions, and class roles, so they are seen and needed. Participation is planned, not left to chance, which prevents chronic exclusion	Every student is approached as a full person, not a label or a problem to «fix». Language rules reduce humiliation, sarcasm, and nicknames that harm identity. Dignity is protected during feedback and discipline, so support never becomes public shaming	Responsibility is distributed across the whole school, not placed only on one teacher or on the targeted child. Teachers, specialists, and leadership share information and act consistently. Peers are taught safe ways to respond, support, and report, so silence is not treated as neutrality
Learning design offers multiple ways to access content and to show understanding, which reduces repeated failure and shame. When students can succeed in different ways, there are fewer «easy targets» for ridicule. Shared activities create real contact across differences, which weakens stereotypes	Respect is reinforced through predictable routines and fair boundaries. Students know what will happen when harm occurs, and they also know how they will be supported. This predictability lowers anxiety, lowers aggression, and makes help seeking feel legitimate	The school watches both academic progress and social inclusion. Staff notice who is always alone, who is never chosen, and who becomes invisible. Families are treated as partners, so home and school send consistent messages about dignity, safety, and accountability
Participation includes social access in breaks, clubs, projects, and informal moments, not only lesson attendance. The aim is a real sense of membership, where students feel that they matter to others. This directly protects mental well being and long term engagement with school	Dignity also means private and supportive accommodations, so a student is not singled out in front of peers. When accommodations are normalised and explained respectfully, classmates are less likely to interpret support as unfair advantage, and resentment decreases	Shared responsibility includes training and resources, so adults have practical tools rather than only good intentions. It also includes data informed reflection, for example reviewing repeated incidents, mapping social connections, and adjusting routines that unintentionally exclude

Source: formed by the author

The essence of inclusive education can be specified through its basic principles, which are also principles for the prevention of bullying and isolation. Such principles include equal dignity, recognition of the right to be different, a focus on strengths, cooperation instead of competition, and proactivity, when the school does not wait for a problem to arise, but creates

conditions that reduce the likelihood of its occurrence. In practice, this means that classroom rules are formulated in a positive way, maintained consistently and without double standards, and difficult situations are viewed as teaching moments, not as a reason for stigmatization. For example, when a child has difficulties with self-control, an inclusive approach does not boil down to public punishment, which provokes ridicule, but involves teaching alternative behaviors, creating clear boundaries, and providing support that reduces tension in the group. Then other students stop perceiving this child as a «problem» and see that adults are managing the situation fairly and without humiliation (Table 2).

<div align="right">Table 2</div>

Key features of social isolation of students in schools

Key characteristic	How it appears in school life, and why it matters
Quiet, «invisible» exclusion	A student is rarely chosen for pairs or groups, sits alone during breaks, is ignored in informal conversations, and receives minimal peer feedback. This is often missed by adults because it produces fewer disruptions than open conflict. Over time, the student's sense of belonging drops, classroom participation becomes risky, and avoidance grows, which can later look like low motivation rather than social harm
Cumulative and repetitive pattern	Isolation usually builds through small repeated actions, not one dramatic incident. Examples include being left out of shared projects, not being included in class chats, being "forgotten" during games, or being consistently assigned passive roles. Because the pattern repeats, the student learns that reaching out will not work, so social withdrawal becomes a protective habit that reinforces the isolation
Social stigma and labeling	Peers may attach a label such as «weird» «slow», «annoying», or «too quiet», which then shapes how others interpret everything the student does. Even neutral behaviour can be read negatively, and the student becomes a convenient target for jokes or dismissive comments. Stigma increases the power imbalance and makes it harder for classmates to change their attitude without losing status in the group
Strong academic and emotional spillover	Isolation affects learning through reduced group practice, fewer chances to ask questions, and less informal help from peers. Emotionally it can lead to anxiety, shame, loneliness, irritability, and somatic complaints. In some cases it increases vulnerability to bullying, because an isolated student has fewer allies, fewer witnesses willing to defend them, and lower confidence to report harm

Source: formred by the author

It is worth emphasizing that inclusive education is effective precisely as a systemic approach. It works not only through kindness or appeals to «do not offend», but through the structure of the lesson, the language of interaction and the organization of the environment. If learning is based on a universal learning

design, when the material is presented in different ways, students can demonstrate knowledge in different ways, and motivation is supported by various incentives, then there are fewer situations when someone constantly «does not have time» and becomes a target for ridicule. If the classroom has predictable rules, clear routines and the opportunity to get help without shame, then anxiety decreases, and with it aggression as a way of self-affirmation decreases. If students regularly work in mixed groups and have experience of successful cooperation with different classmates, then the risk of forming closed «cliques», which often become centers of exclusion of others, is reduced. The role of inclusive education in combating bullying can also be explained by changing the roles of participants in school life. In the traditional model, bullying is often seen as a conflict between the aggressor and the victim, but research on school behavior shows that the roles of witnesses, reinforcers, passive observers, and those who can support are also important. An inclusive approach works with the whole team, forming the responsibility of everyone. It teaches that «not interfering» also means supporting injustice, but the intervention must be safe and controlled, for example, by turning to an adult, supporting the victim, stopping abusive language, refusing to laugh at the humiliation. This requires agreements and training, because children do not always know how to act. When a school introduces restorative practices, where after an incident, attention is paid to restoring safety, acknowledging the harm, taking responsibility, and returning to cooperation, then repeated incidents are reduced, and students gain social experience in solving problems without violence. In combating social isolation, the role of inclusive education is manifested in the fact that it reduces the «invisibility» of the student. Isolated children often do not violate discipline, do not argue, do not complain, which is why adults may not notice how long their rejection lasts. An inclusive approach involves regular monitoring of the participation of each student, analysis of social connections in the classroom, attention to who sits with whom, who works with whom, who is not written to in joint chats, who is not invited to groups. This is not control for the sake of control, but concern for safety and belonging, because belonging is a basic condition for learning. A school that thinks inclusively does not shift responsibility onto the child in the style of «go make friends yourself», it creates managed opportunities for friendship, cooperation, mutual assistance, where success is available and shame is minimized.

Chapter 2. Peculiarities of inclusive education, bullying, social isolation in Polish schools

Inclusive education in Polish schools may be one of the most effective approaches to reducing bullying and social isolation, because it changes the very logic of the school environment, from selection and "adaptation of the

weak" to the principle of shared responsibility for ensuring that every child feels needed, visible, and protected. Bullying usually arises where difference becomes a pretext for hierarchy, where "otherness" is read as weakness or as a violation of an unspoken norm, and social isolation grows where a child does not have stable contacts, is not included in group roles, or does not receive support from adults in moments when he or she feels shame, fear, or confusion. In the Polish context, this may apply not only to children with special educational needs, but also to students with a migration background, children from poorer families, children who differ in appearance, speech, behavior, or have a different learning pace. Inclusive education works as a preventative measure because it sets different rules of belonging, in which each student is seen as part of a community, and diversity becomes the norm, not a reason for stigma. When schools consistently teach that different needs are a normal part of the classroom, students are less likely to seek out "targets," and adults are more likely to notice early signs of exclusion, such as when a child is excluded from a group, ignored in chats, their responses are discounted, or their "differentness" is systematically emphasized. The first mechanism through which inclusive education reduces bullying is by creating a classroom culture where respect is not a slogan on the wall but a daily practice supported by rules, the teacher's language, adult responses, and the way learning is organized. If the teacher demonstrates that mistakes are part of learning, that questions are not ridiculed, that the pace of work can vary, and that helping each other is expected behavior, then the "status market" in the classroom, in which the strong rise by putting others down, is weakened. It is very important that in Polish schools inclusive approaches are not limited to the formal presence of a specialist or individual support for an individual student, because bullying is often a group phenomenon, it includes observers, silent supporters, and those who are afraid to be next. Inclusive education offers work with the whole class, in particular through systematic teaching of empathy, communication skills, the ability to recognize boundaries, negotiate, ask for help, support the weaker without humiliation. When such skills become part of the educational process, social tension decreases, and it is easier for students to move from competition to cooperation. It is also important that the school shows diversity in the content of the education, in examples, in books, in tasks, in school events, because the visibility of different stories reduces the feeling that only one type of child is "normal" and the rest have to «fix themselves» in order to be accepted.

The second mechanism is to change the organization of learning and student interaction, because isolation often arises not from a child's "bad character," but from the fact that he or she systematically does not have a chance to get involved, show his or her strengths, and gain social recognition. Inclusive practices, such as cooperative learning, working in small groups with clear roles, mutual learning, and peer mentoring, create situations in which everyone

has a function, and in which success depends on whether one can agree, listen, and support. This is where the risk of someone "dropping out of class" is reduced, because social connections are formed not by chance during breaks, but through regular, safe contacts in educational tasks. It is also very important for the teacher to consciously manage group dynamics, change the composition of groups, prevent the permanent consolidation of the roles of "leader," "loser," "strange," "silent," and notice those who are constantly left without partners. In Polish schools, where there is a strong role for the class teacher, inclusive education can add systematic weekly practices of group conversation, in which the rules of coexistence, conflicts, feelings, needs are discussed, and this is done in a way that does not look for the "guilty", but seeks to restore trust. If the class learns to talk about discomfort in a timely manner, then bullying has less chance of developing into chronic harassment, and isolation does not become a habitual state in which the child thinks that he "just doesn't fit in" and therefore must remain silent. Bullying rarely starts with a major incident, more often it grows out of small humiliations, jokes, exclusion, spreading rumors, and when adults react selectively or only punish, without restoring relationships, the situation usually either hides or repeats itself. Inclusive education emphasizes safe channels of communication, clear procedures, support for victims, and working with aggressors as students who need to correct their behavior and learn responsibility, not just punishment. In such a model, the school does not shift everything to the parents, and does not leave the teacher alone, it involves psychological and pedagogical support, works with the class as a group, and pays attention to witnesses, who are taught not to reinforce violence by silence. It is especially important that an inclusive approach helps to understand the causes of social isolation, such as anxiety, communication difficulties, sensory vulnerability, language barriers, and then support becomes specific, it can be adaptation of tasks, changed organization of space, training in social skills, support in difficult situations, creating «safe adults» to whom the student can approach without fear. When a child feels that the school sees their needs and responds predictably, they become less isolated and less at risk of becoming a target, because the attackers lose their sense of impunity and the class receives a clear signal that humiliation is not the norm.

In Polish schools, inclusive education is developed within a model where different learning trajectories coexist, a general school, a school with integration departments and a special school. In practice, this means that a child with special educational needs can study together with peers in a regular class, in an integration class with additional resources, or in a special environment, if such a form is recommended by specialists and chosen by the family. Such multivariability creates real opportunities, but at the same time forms a challenge for the prevention of bullying and isolation, because the transition between forms of education, different levels of resources in schools, as well as

differences in staff training can affect whether a child feels included and protected. An important procedural basis is the system of psychological and pedagogical counseling, which, through counseling institutions, issues documents describing the child's needs and recommendations for the school. In Polish practice, the key is an official conclusion on the need for special education, after which the school must organize support, adapt the learning process, and prepare an individual educational document describing the goals, forms of work, and necessary classes for a particular student. It is this formalization that has a direct connection with combating bullying, as it reduces the randomness and chaos of support, and also prevents the problem from being reduced to the phrase that the child simply needs to try harder. Ministerial materials for schools emphasize that the education of students with disabilities can take place together with the class, as well as individually or in a small group, and that a team of teachers and specialists at the school works on the support program. Special attention in the Polish system is paid to staffing. In particular, standards for the mandatory presence of specialists, a psychologist and a special education teacher, as well as other specialists depending on the number of students, were gradually introduced in schools. The idea behind such standards is simple: preventing violence and isolation cannot be based solely on the enthusiasm of the class teacher; it requires people who have the time and competence to work with crises, group dynamics, and individual needs of children. The official explanation of government structures regarding the standards for the employment of specialists directly describes the minimum shares of psychologist and special education teacher positions in the team of specialists at the school (Table 3).

A very notable step for Polish schools in recent years has been the introduction of standards for the protection of minors, which oblige institutions working with children to have specific rules and procedures for responding to suspected abuse, including peer violence, as well as rules for using electronic devices with Internet access. This is especially important in the context of bullying and isolation, because the school receives not only a general moral requirement to care for children, but also a clear institutional framework that must be written down, who receives reports, how incidents are documented, how support is provided, how staff are trained. In Polish public discourse, the concept of peer violence is widely used alongside the concept of bullying, and this is not just a play on words. Research and materials from Polish organizations emphasize the difference between broader aggression and bullying as repeated harassment under conditions of inequality of power. For schools, this means that not every argument is bullying, but bullying almost always has a cumulative effect, and that is why it is strongly associated with social isolation.

Table 3
Peculiarities of combating bullying and social isolation in Polish schools

Feature in the Polish school context	How it supports prevention of bullying and isolation
Team based student support inside the school	Prevention improves when teachers coordinate with a school psychologist, special education staff, and counsellors, so the student is not treated as a "single teacher problem." A coordinated plan can combine learning adjustments, social skill support, and family communication. This reduces situations where a student is repeatedly exposed to failure or public embarrassment, which often triggers mockery and exclusion
Formal child protection and reporting procedures	Clear procedures, named roles, and predictable steps for receiving reports make it easier for students and parents to seek help without fear of being dismissed. When rules are known and consistently applied, classmates learn that humiliation and exclusion are not tolerated as "normal school life." Procedures also help document repeated patterns, which is crucial because bullying is often systematic rather than one time.
Classroom organisation designed for inclusion	Structured group work, rotating roles, planned pairing, and cooperative tasks reduce the chance that popularity alone determines who participates. Teachers can intentionally create learning situations where different strengths matter, such as explanation, organisation, creative thinking, or careful checking. This decreases social hierarchy pressure and makes it harder for cliques to control access to participation
Early detection and restorative response culture	Schools can reduce harm by watching for signals, repeated absences, fear of breaks, sudden silence, constant loneliness, or conflicts in messaging apps. A restorative response focuses on stopping harm, recognising impact, rebuilding safety, and setting clear boundaries, rather than only punishing. This approach can reduce repeat incidents and helps reintegrate students who have been pushed to the margins of the class community

Source: formed by the author

A child may not be hit or insulted out loud, but they may be systematically excluded, ignored, ridiculed with hints, created situations of shame, and group chats used as a tool of pressure. Such forms are particularly dangerous because they are more difficult for adults to notice and more difficult for students to prove. The results of a large-scale Polish study of bullying in post-primary schools, which was conducted at the end of the winter semester of the 2024 and 2025 academic years among students from almost a hundred schools, are indicative. The study covered 18,950 students from 96 schools and used measurements of the frequency of various forms of harassment, including ridicule, exclusion, physical aggression and destruction of property. According to these data, 3.8 percent of students fall into the group of those who experience

bullying frequently, explaining that at the class level this can mean an average of one systematically harassed student in each class. This finding is very important for school policy, because averages can create the illusion that the problem is small, but behind these averages lies a group of children with regular experiences of humiliation and fear. In Polish schools, social isolation often appears as a background, not an event. That is why it can last for months without becoming a topic of conversation at pedagogical councils. In the aforementioned Polish study, along with bullying indicators, the subjective feeling of loneliness was analyzed. For inclusive education, this is a direct signal that it is inappropriate to reduce work against violence only to a reaction to conflicts, a permanent inclusion policy is needed, where the participation of each student is visible and planned. In the Polish context, inclusive education can be effective when it is not limited to the formal placement of a child in a classroom, but is reinforced by resources and practices. This is even evident in the way the role of the school support team is described, teachers and specialists together plan the educational process according to the needs of the student, and the school can organize classes both in the classroom and in smaller formats. It is also important that the state introduces standards for staffing specialists, psychologists and special education teachers, because without this, inclusion risks becoming a declaration.

If teachers receive training in diversity, trauma-informed approach, nonviolent communication, and conflict de-escalation, they are more likely to respond not emotionally and formally, but professionally and consistently. This is especially relevant for Polish schools, because the teacher's workload is high, and without support from management, inclusion can turn into additional pressure, which, paradoxically, reduces the quality of responses to bullying. Therefore, inclusive education as a tool for reducing violence requires conditions in which school management realistically plans support, allocates time for team meetings, ensures cooperation between specialists, organizes staff training, and creates an atmosphere where reporting bullying is not perceived as a "shame on the school" but as an excuse to improve the security system. It is also important to include parents, explaining to them that an inclusive environment protects all children, not just those with obvious difficulties, because the skills of coexistence, respect, and mutual assistance reduce the risk of aggression in any group. In conclusion, inclusive education in Polish schools can actually reduce bullying and social isolation if it is understood as a strategy for building a community in which every student has the right to dignity, the right to support, and the right to be part of the class, and not as a formal idea that is mentioned only when something painful has already happened. Inclusive education in Polish schools, if it is built as a daily practice, rather than as a formal declaration, can significantly reduce bullying and social isolation because it changes the way the school defines the norm, success, and

belonging to the collective. Bullying rarely comes out of nowhere; it is almost always based on the idea that someone is less valuable, less entitled to respect, or less worthy of being heard, and this idea is supported by subtle cues, intonations, jokes, comparisons, the selection of "better" and «worse», as well as the way adults comment on mistakes, appearance, background, pronunciation, clothing, pace of work, behavior. Social isolation is often a silent form of violence that looks like "just not being friends", but in reality means that the child is not noticed, not invited, not included in groups, or he himself avoids contact for fear of being ridiculed, and over time this creates a feeling that his existence in the classroom is superfluous. Inclusive education works against this mechanism, because it makes diversity expected, it teaches children and adults to see needs without turning them into a label, and it reduces the "social permissions" for humiliation, because humiliation ceases to be a way to gain status. In Polish schools, this is especially important, because a class is often a stable group for years, which means that early conflicts or early "stigmas" can last a very long time if they are not noticed and transformed into new, healthy rules of coexistence. An inclusive approach gives the school a different perspective, it forces you to look not only at the behavior of a particular student, but also at the structure of the group, at who has a voice, who is always silent, who is always in charge, who becomes the object of jokes, who sits alone at breaks, who does not have a partner to work with, and it is this perspective that allows you to stop bullying at an early stage, even before it becomes part of the "normal life" of the class. A key tool of inclusive education in reducing bullying is the purposeful formation of a culture of safety and respect at the level of the lesson, at the level of classroom rules, and at the level of daily reactions of adults, and reactions not only to overt aggression, but also to micro-humiliation. When the teacher consistently shows that a mistake is a learning resource, that questions are not ridiculed, that different work paces are normal, that helping a classmate is a sign of maturity, not weakness, then the motivation to humiliate others weakens in the classroom, because there is less "reward" in the form of laughter and attention. It is important that inclusive pedagogy supports different ways of student participation, some can respond orally, some in writing, some through short remarks, some through pair work, and this reduces situations of public shame, which often become a trigger for bullying, when a child "made a mistake in front of everyone", and the group fixes this as an excuse for further humiliation. The organization of the classroom has an equally strong effect when the teacher does not leave the hierarchy of "popular versus unpopular" unchecked, but works with dynamics, changes pairs and groups, maintains mutual respect, and creates moments where everyone can show their strengths, not only academic, but also social, creative, organizational, technical. In this approach, the role of "power charisma" is reduced, when status is gained through dominance, and instead

the value of behavior that supports teamwork is increased. It is especially important that the teacher does not reinforce bullying unconsciously, for example through sarcasm, through public comparisons, through comments about "lazy" or "inattentive", through shame for emotions, because it is the adult who sets the limits of what is permissible. Inclusive education offers a different model, an adult does not just "transmit knowledge", he moderates human relationships, which means that he teaches the class to talk about needs, about boundaries, about conflicts, without humiliation and without devaluing, and then even difficult situations become educational, not traumatic.

Conclusions

Inclusive education in school appears as a systemic approach that changes the very logic of the educational process. It shifts responsibility from the child, who supposedly has to adapt on his own, to the school, which must be flexible, accessible and attentive to different needs. In such a model, the key is not formal declarations of equality, but the daily practice of inclusion, when every student has the right to be present, active and visible in the team. It is this visibility and sense of belonging that are the basic conditions of security, because bullying and social isolation are most often fueled by the feeling that someone is «not like that» and therefore can be humiliated or excluded without consequences. It was emphasized that bullying and social isolation are not only individual problems of individual children, they largely reflect the culture of the group and the rules that operate imperceptibly in the classroom. Bullying is often based on inequality of power, group support for the aggressor and the silence of witnesses. Social isolation can exist without loud conflicts, manifesting itself through ignoring, not being included in group tasks, lack of partners during breaks, isolation in digital chats. Inclusive education counteracts these phenomena by forming norms of mutual respect, developing empathy and responsibility, and by organizing learning so that cooperation becomes a habitual way of interacting, and difference does not turn into a basis for stigmatization. An important conclusion is the understanding that the effectiveness of inclusive education depends on filling it with specific mechanisms. These are the accessibility of educational material and environment, adaptation and support, school teamwork, as well as constant attention to the inclusion of each student, and not only to his grades. When a child has the opportunity to successfully express himself in different ways, there are fewer situations of shame and repeated failure, which often become a target for ridicule. When there are clear rules of communication and a consistent response from adults, the space for «legalizing» humiliation as a norm decreases. When schools teach safe bystander intervention and support for victims, the mechanism of collective reinforcement of bullying is broken and isolation ceases to be invisible.

A special emphasis is placed on the Polish context, where inclusive education is implemented in conditions of coexistence of different forms of education and different levels of resources between schools. This creates both opportunities and risks, as transitions, differences in support, staffing constraints and uneven training of staff can increase the vulnerability of individual students. At the same time, it is important that Polish schools are increasingly focusing on procedural certainty, the presence of specialists, formalized child protection rules, as well as on combining prevention with response. Such a framework can strengthen inclusion as a safety tool if schools do not reduce it to documents, but translate it into daily actions, into the way of organizing the classroom, into the style of communication and into real routes to receive help. The general conclusion is that inclusive education is one of the most powerful tools for reducing bullying and social isolation precisely because it works at the level of causes, not just consequences. It changes the culture of relationships, makes the participation of each student normal and expected, and support understandable and accessible. However, inclusion only gives results when there are coordinated actions of teachers, psychological services and administration, when the rules of respect are consistently maintained, when teachers have tools for organizing cooperation and early detection of isolation, and the school interacts with parents as partners. As a result, it is such a school that creates an environment where a child is not forced to «endure» the team, but can safely learn, make friends, develop and feel that he belongs here.

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