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From Policy to Practice: Implementing Child Protection Measures to Prevent and Address Bullying in a Vocational High School

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Abstract

This study examines how child protection measures are implemented to prevent and address bullying in a vocational high school and identifies the institutional and social barriers that affect their effectiveness. Using an empirical legal research design with a qualitative case study approach, the study collected data through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving teachers and students. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings indicate that child protection measures are implemented through anti-bullying socialization, teacher and homeroom teacher supervision, school rules and disciplinary measures, counseling and assistance, character development, parental involvement, and preventive and rehabilitative approaches. However, implementation remains constrained by low student awareness, the normalization of bullying as joking, limited supervision and counseling resources, and students' reluctance to report incidents because of fear of peer reactions and social pressure. Theoretically, the study contributes to understanding child protection implementation as a process through which legal norms are translated into preventive, responsive, and rehabilitative practices within the school environment. Practically, the findings highlight the need to strengthen child-friendly reporting mechanisms, character education, school supervision, counseling services, and collaboration between schools and families to establish a safe, inclusive, and violence-free educational environment.

Keywords: Bullying prevention, child protection, child protection measures, policy implementation, vocational high school.

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INTRODUCTION

Children must be placed at the center of protection in educational policy because they possess fundamental rights to life, growth, development, dignity, and protection from violence and discrimination. In the school context, these rights are particularly important because educational institutions are not merely spaces for knowledge transfer but also environments for character development, social interaction, and students' sense of safety. Bullying therefore cannot be regarded merely as a conflict between students, but as a child protection concern that may undermine children's dignity, well-being, and right to a safe educational environment. Recent research indicates that a positive school climate is associated with lower bullying victimization, whereas an unsafe school environment may increase students' vulnerability to bullying.[1] These conditions require schools to develop protection systems that combine preventive, responsive, and restorative measures.

Globally, bullying remains a widespread and complex problem among children and adolescents.[2] A recent meta-analysis covering 116 studies with more than 603,000 participants found that approximately one-quarter of children and adolescents were victims of bullying, while about one-sixth were involved as both perpetrators and victims.[3] Bullying can occur in physical, verbal, relational, psychological, and digital forms, reflecting the increasingly complex nature of harmful peer interactions within and beyond school environments.[4] Its consequences extend beyond immediate peer conflict and may affect students' psychological well-being and educational participation, including increased stress, anxiety, depression, and difficulties in academic achievement and school engagement.[5] Thus, bullying should be understood not only as a behavioral or disciplinary problem but also as a child protection, mental health, and educational governance concern.

The complexity of bullying also indicates that its prevention cannot depend solely on punishment directed at individual perpetrators. Research has demonstrated that school climate,

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[1] Zhanfeng Zhao et al., "School Climate and Bullying Victimization among Adolescents: A Moderated Mediation Model," *Children and Youth Services Review* 131 (December 2021): 106218, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2021.106218.

[2] Clarabella Sabrina Harsono and Nining Febriyana, "Understanding and Addressing Bullying in Children and Adolescents," *Journal of the Korean Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 37, no. 1 (January 2026): 51–62, https://doi.org/10.5765/jkacap.250040.

[3] Tutu April Ariani et al., "Global Prevalence and Psychological Impact of Bullying among Children and Adolescents: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Affective Disorders* 385 (September 2025): 119446, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2025.119446.

[4] Harsono and Febriyana, "Understanding and Addressing Bullying in Children and Adolescents"; Linhui Liu et al., "The Effects of School Bullying Victimization on the Development of Adolescent Depression across Genders: A Hierarchical Linear Model Analysis," *BMC Public Health* 26, no. 1 (March 2026): 1455, https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-026-27128-3.

[5] Ariani et al., "Global Prevalence and Psychological Impact of Bullying among Children and Adolescents"; Xin Chen, Lirong Wang, and Yiji Wang, "Experiences of Bullying and Victimization and Adolescents' Life Satisfaction: A Meta-Analysis," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 76 (May 2024): 101930, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2024.101930; Yanghua Huang and Harold Chui, "Bullying Victimization and School Engagement: The Role of Subjective Well-Being," *Asia Pacific Education Review*, ahead of print, August 6, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-025-10078-7; Syahruddin Mahmud et al., "The Consequences of Bullying: Analyzing Its Effects on Student Achievement and Psychological Well-Being," *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 19, no. 2 (March 2025): 1065, https://doi.org/10.35931/aq.v19i2.4833.

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classroom relationships, social support, teacher supervision, and bystander responses influence students' vulnerability to bullying and their willingness to protect victims.[6] Similarly, systematic reviews and meta-analyses indicate that comprehensive school-based programs can reduce bullying, strengthen prosocial behavior, improve school climate, and support students' emotional well-being, although their effectiveness varies according to program design and implementation context.[7] The evidence therefore suggests that effective bullying prevention depends not only on the availability of interventions but also on the capacity of schools to translate child protection principles into consistent institutional practices.

At the international level, school bullying can be situated within a broader children's rights and human rights framework. Research from a children's rights perspective emphasizes that schools have a responsibility to function as safe educational environments in which children can exercise their rights without exposure to bullying, while rights-based approaches to school policy stress the need for educational rules and practices to respect children's dignity and other protected rights.[8] This international rights-based perspective provides an important normative basis for examining how child protection obligations are translated into concrete preventive and responsive measures within national education systems.

In the Indonesian context, child protection in schools has a strong legal foundation. Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection affirms children's right to protection from violence and discrimination and establishes state obligations to protect children from harmful treatment. This legal framework is further operationalized through Ministerial Regulation No. 46 of 2023 concerning the prevention and handling of violence in educational institutions, which covers students, educators, school personnel, parents, school committees, and the wider community.

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[6] K. T. A. Sandeeshwara Kasturiratna et al., "Umbrella Review of Meta-Analyses on the Risk Factors, Protective Factors, Consequences and Interventions of Cyberbullying Victimization," *Nature Human Behaviour* 9, no. 1 (November 2024): 101–32, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-024-02011-6; Sen Li et al., "School Climate and Cyberbullying Victimization: A Meta-Analysis," *Children and Youth Services Review* 169 (February 2025): 108064, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.108064; Tracy Evian Waasdorp et al., "School Climate and Bullying Bystander Responses in Middle and High School," *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 80 (May 2022): 101412, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2022.101412; Zhao et al., "School Climate and Bullying Victimization among Adolescents."

[7] Nahla Al Ali, Islam Omar Qasem, and Tariq Aldwaikat, "Examining the Impact of a School-Based Bullying Education Program on Students' Knowledge of Bullying, Bullying Behavior, and Self-Esteem," *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 30, no. 1 (December 2025): 2454997, https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2025.2454997; Hannah Gaffney, Maria M. Ttofi, and David P. Farrington, "Effectiveness of School-based Programs to Reduce Bullying Perpetration and Victimization: An Updated Systematic Review and Meta-analysis," *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 17, no. 2 (June 2021): e1143, https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1143; Roshini Balasooriya Lekamge et al., "Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Effectiveness of Whole-School Interventions Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Risk Behaviours in Adolescence," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 54, no. 2 (February 2025): 271–89, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-025-02135-6; Alba González Moreno and María Del Mar Molero Jurado, "Intervention Programs for the Prevention of Bullying and the Promotion of Prosocial Behaviors in Adolescence: A Systematic Review," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 10 (2024): 100954, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100954.

[8] Amy Hanna, "The Administration of School Discipline in a Manner Consistent With Children's Human Rights: A Rights-Based Analysis of School Codes of Behaviour in Ireland for Autistic Students," *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 17, no. 3 (July 2025): huaf015, https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huaf015; Chrystalla Kaloyirou and Sou Kuan Vong, "Re-conceptualisation of School Bullying from a Children's Rights' Perspective: The Illustrative Case of the Cypriot Educational Context," *Children & Society* 36, no. 5 (September 2022): 899–915, https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12546.

The regulation encompasses physical and psychological violence, bullying, discrimination, intolerance, and technology-based violence and provides mechanisms for prevention, reporting, case handling, recovery, and the establishment of the TPPK. These provisions indicate that Indonesia has established a comprehensive normative framework for protecting students from violence and bullying in educational settings.

Nevertheless, the existence of legal norms does not automatically ensure their effective implementation. Child protection in educational institutions requires schools to translate legal obligations into preventive, responsive, and rehabilitative practices that can be implemented consistently in students' everyday educational experiences. From the perspective of legal effectiveness, Soerjono Soekanto explains that the effectiveness of law is influenced by legal substance, law enforcement, supporting facilities, community participation, and legal culture. Friedman's legal system theory similarly emphasizes the interaction among legal structure, legal substance, and legal culture in determining whether legal norms function effectively in society. These perspectives indicate that the assessment of child protection should extend beyond the existence of regulations to examine how legal provisions operate within educational practice.

This situation reflects the distinction between law in books and law in action. Article 54 of Law No. 35 of 2014 establishes a legal mandate for protecting children from violence within educational settings, but the translation of this mandate into everyday school practices may encounter institutional, cultural, and operational challenges. Consequently, the effectiveness of child protection cannot be assessed solely from the existence of legal rules; it must also be examined through the extent to which these rules are translated into concrete policies, reporting mechanisms, supervision, assistance, and responses to bullying incidents.

In practice, schools may face barriers including students' reluctance to report incidents, the perception that bullying is merely a joke, limited counseling and supervisory resources, and inconsistent institutional capacity to respond to violence. Previous research indicates that school climate, peer dynamics, adult support, and bystander responses can influence how students respond to bullying and whether victims receive protection.[9] The growing presence of digital interaction further complicates school protection because harmful peer behavior may extend beyond the physical school environment. Accordingly, effective child protection requires not only formal regulations but also an institutional ecosystem capable of prevention, early identification, reporting, response, and recovery.

Vocational high schools provide a relevant context for examining this implementation problem because student interactions occur across diverse educational environments, including classrooms, workshops, laboratories, extracurricular activities, and other informal spaces. Such environments require schools to integrate legal protection with pedagogical approaches involving prevention, supervision, guidance, character development, and recovery. Child protection in vocational education therefore extends beyond responding to individual incidents and involves the capacity of schools to establish institutional practices and social norms that support safe and respectful interactions among students. In this context, examining child

[9] Kasturiratna et al., "Umbrella Review of Meta-Analyses on the Risk Factors, Protective Factors, Consequences and Interventions of Cyberbullying Victimization"; Li et al., "School Climate and Cyberbullying Victimization"; Waasdorp et al., "School Climate and Bullying Bystander Responses in Middle and High School."

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protection practices at SMK BOASH 2 provides an empirical basis for understanding how child protection norms are implemented within an actual vocational educational setting.

Compared with existing studies, previous research has predominantly examined the prevalence of bullying, ecological risk factors, psychological consequences, school climate, and the effectiveness of anti-bullying interventions. These studies have made substantial contributions to understanding bullying as a social, psychological, and educational problem. However, comparatively limited attention has been given to how child protection laws are translated into institutional practices within schools, particularly vocational high schools. More specifically, there remains limited empirical understanding of how legal obligations concerning child protection are reflected in school policies, reporting mechanisms, supervision practices, student guidance, and responses to bullying incidents.[10]

The research gap therefore concerns the implementation dimension of child protection: how legal norms that formally guarantee children's protection from violence are interpreted, operationalized, and experienced within the school environment. Existing studies generally examine bullying as a phenomenon to be measured, explained, or prevented through psychological, social, or educational interventions. This study instead focuses on the relationship between child protection norms and their institutional implementation, thereby connecting legal analysis with empirical educational practice. The vocational high school context is particularly relevant because it provides a diverse social and learning environment in which prevention, supervision, reporting, guidance, and recovery mechanisms must operate simultaneously.

The novelty of this study lies in examining child protection implementation as a process of translating legal norms into concrete institutional practices for preventing and addressing bullying in vocational education. Rather than focusing primarily on the prevalence or psychological consequences of bullying, this study analyzes how child protection measures are implemented through school policies, preventive activities, supervision, reporting and response mechanisms, student guidance, and coordination with relevant stakeholders. By integrating legal implementation analysis with empirical evidence from school practice, the study contributes to a more contextual understanding of how child protection norms function at the institutional level and what factors may support or constrain their effectiveness.

Based on this context, this study aims to examine the implementation of child protection measures to prevent and address bullying in a vocational high school and to identify the institutional, cultural, and operational challenges affecting their implementation. Scientifically, the study seeks to explain how child protection norms are translated into school policies and practices and how these practices contribute to the creation of a safe, comfortable, and dignified learning environment. Practically, the findings are expected to provide a basis for strengthening child-friendly reporting mechanisms, school supervision, counseling and student guidance, character education, parental involvement, and collaboration among members of the school community. Accordingly, the study positions bullying not merely as a behavioral problem but as

[10] Ariani et al., "Global Prevalence and Psychological Impact of Bullying among Children and Adolescents"; Ann H. Farrell et al., "Ecological Factors and Adolescent Bullying Involvement: A Systematic Review," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 87 (March 2026): 102123, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2025.102123; Moreno and Jurado, "Intervention Programs for the Prevention of Bullying and the Promotion of Prosocial Behaviors in Adolescence."

an issue of child protection governance that requires integrated legal, institutional, and educational responses.

METHOD

This study employs an empirical legal research design using a case study approach to examine the implementation of Article 54 of Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection in the prevention and handling of bullying at SMK BOASH 2, Bogor Regency, West Java. Qualitative data collection and analysis techniques were employed to explore the experiences, perceptions, and practices of teachers and students regarding the implementation of child protection measures within the school environment.[11] Meanwhile, the case study approach was chosen because the research focuses intensively on a specific subject in order to obtain an empirical understanding of the forms of bullying, response mechanisms, and challenges in protecting children in the school environment.[12]

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with teachers and students at SMK BOASH 2. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement and experiences related to bullying prevention, handling mechanisms, and child protection practices within the school environment. Secondary data was obtained through a literature review of laws and regulations, reputable scientific journals, books, school documents, and literature relevant to bullying and child protection. Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. Observations were conducted to examine student interactions, school supervision practices, implementation of school regulations, and school activities related to bullying prevention and child protection. Data triangulation was employed by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to enhance the credibility of the research data.[13]

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction is performed by selecting and grouping data relevant to the research focus, while data presentation is conducted descriptively to facilitate the interpretation of research findings. Conclusions are then drawn in stages based on the interpretation of the analyzed data. In analyzing legal issues, this study employs an integrated normative and empirical approach, specifically by comparing child protection laws with their implementation practices in school settings. This approach is used to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of Article 54 of Law No. 35 of 2014 in the prevention and handling of bullying, as well as to identify the challenges faced by schools in creating a safe and violence-free educational environment.[14]

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[11] John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, Fifth edition (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 2023).
[12] Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, Sixth edition (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018).
[13] Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, Fourth edition, International student edition (Los Angeles London New Delhi Singapore Washington DC Melbourne: SAGE, 2020).
[14] Soerjono Soekanto and Sri Mamudji, *Penelitian Hukum Normatif: Suatu Tinjauan Singkat*, Ed. 1 Cet. 12 (Raja Grafindo Persada, 2010).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Article 54 of Law Number 35 of 2014 in Preventing and Handling Bullying at SMK BOASH 2

The findings indicate that the implementation of Article 54 of Law Number 35 of 2014 on Child Protection at SMK BOASH 2 is reflected in a range of preventive, responsive, disciplinary, and supportive practices. These practices include anti-bullying education, teacher supervision, intervention when bullying is identified, disciplinary sanctions, counseling and assistance for victims and perpetrators, character development, and parental involvement. The findings were derived from interviews with students and teachers and analyzed through the coding process. Rather than relying solely on the existence of formal regulations, the implementation of child protection can be observed through the concrete actions undertaken by teachers and the responses experienced and perceived by students.

The interview findings show that students recognize bullying as behavior that can involve verbal, physical, and psychological harm. One student described bullying as an improper act carried out by hurting another person verbally or physically, including insulting, humiliating, intentionally oppressing, and repeatedly threatening others (SNA). Another student reported having witnessed bullying at school, particularly in the form of *"taunts or insults directed at the weak"* (S). These statements provide direct empirical evidence that verbal and psychological forms of bullying are present within students' social interactions. The findings also indicate that students possess an understanding of bullying that extends beyond physical aggression to include humiliating and degrading behavior.

Students' perceptions of safety, however, were not entirely consistent. One student stated that they felt relatively safe at school but still needed to remain vigilant because bullying could occur and emphasized that students should respect one another to maintain a safe and comfortable school environment (S). In contrast, another student expressed the view that the school had not provided sufficient protection because bullying continued to occur, even when it did not take a physical form, and argued that the school needed to become more aware of bullying (ZRS). The different perceptions indicate that the implementation of child protection cannot be evaluated solely on the basis of school regulations or formal preventive programs. Students' experiences and perceptions of safety are also important indicators of how protection is actually experienced within the school environment.

The teachers' accounts provide further evidence of preventive implementation. One teacher explained that prevention is conducted through preventive, educational, and exemplary approaches, emphasizing religious values and the protection of children's rights. The teacher specifically described the importance of teaching students to respect one another despite differences in opinion and of providing exemplary behavior based on Islamic teachings (AP). This finding demonstrates that anti-bullying prevention is incorporated into broader educational and character-building practices. The approach is therefore not limited to identifying violations after they occur but also seeks to shape students' attitudes and social behavior before bullying incidents arise.

The school also applies disciplinary measures when bullying behavior is identified. A teacher explained that the school has an anti-bullying policy and applies violation points to students who insult or demean others (AP). This practice is supported by a student who stated that teachers generally respond to bullying by reprimanding, taking action, and imposing sanctions on the students involved (SZ). Another student considered the teachers to be sufficiently firm and fair, stating that, based on their experience, students who bully others receive sanctions corresponding to their behavior (AY). These interview accounts provide concrete evidence that disciplinary mechanisms constitute one component of the school's implementation of child protection.

Nevertheless, the findings demonstrate that the school's response does not rely exclusively on punishment. Teachers also employ investigative, counseling, and supportive approaches when responding to bullying cases. One teacher explained that the response involves intensive engagement with the victim, investigation of the case, identification of the perpetrator, and continuous observation of the background and reasons for the perpetrator's behavior (MS). Another teacher emphasized that victims should receive protection and assistance through a humanistic and empathetic approach, including listening to their complaints without judgment, providing reassurance, and strengthening their psychological condition (AP). These findings indicate that child protection at SMK BOASH 2 involves both behavioral correction and efforts to safeguard the psychological well-being of students affected by bullying.

The student interviews further support the existence of counseling and parental involvement as part of the school's response. One student stated that teachers provide assistance or counseling and involve parents in resolving bullying cases (RDA). The same student also indicated that they were willing to report bullying because such behavior affects the mental condition of the victim and reporting is necessary to ensure physical and psychological safety (RDA). This finding is important because it demonstrates that at least some students perceive reporting as a legitimate mechanism for protecting victims rather than simply as a disciplinary action against perpetrators.

Parental involvement was also identified by teachers as an important component of child protection. One teacher emphasized that parents have an important and strategic role because character development is not solely the responsibility of teachers but must also be supported by parents at home (AP). This finding demonstrates that the school recognizes child protection as a shared responsibility between educational institutions and families. Parental involvement is therefore positioned as part of the broader process of guiding student behavior and supporting changes in students' social and moral development.

Despite these measures, the findings reveal that the implementation of child protection remains subject to limitations. The students' accounts indicate that not all students experience the school environment in the same way. One student stated that they felt uncomfortable because bullying could continue if no one was willing to speak up to the homeroom teacher or school authorities and explained that such behavior disturbed them both inside and outside the classroom (BA). This statement provides direct empirical evidence concerning the importance of students' willingness to communicate bullying incidents to school authorities. It also suggests that the existence of preventive and disciplinary mechanisms does not necessarily ensure that all incidents will be reported or identified promptly.

Doi: 10.59631/slr.v4i2.518

The teachers identified a similar challenge from an institutional and cultural perspective. One teacher stated that the greatest obstacle was not the lack of regulations but *"a lack of courage to acknowledge that bullying exists and is a serious problem"* (MAT). This finding suggests that one of the challenges in implementing child protection is the recognition of bullying as a serious issue rather than treating it as ordinary peer interaction. When behaviors such as teasing, insulting, or humiliating others are normalized, students may be less likely to identify such conduct as bullying and may be less likely to seek assistance from teachers or school authorities.

The findings therefore demonstrate that the implementation of Article 54 at SMK BOASH 2 consists of several interconnected dimensions. The preventive dimension is reflected in anti-bullying education, character development, religious and moral guidance, and teacher supervision. The responsive dimension is reflected in teacher intervention, investigation, and identification of bullying cases. The disciplinary dimension is reflected in reprimands, sanctions, and the school's violation-point system. The protective and supportive dimensions are reflected in counseling, emotional assistance, protection of victims, and parental involvement. These practices provide empirical evidence that Article 54 is translated into concrete actions within the school environment rather than remaining solely as a formal legal provision.

From a legal perspective, these findings correspond to the mandate of Article 54 of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning the protection of children within educational settings from violence. The implementation observed at SMK BOASH 2 demonstrates that the protection obligation is addressed through prevention, intervention, disciplinary responses, psychological assistance, and cooperation with parents.[15] The findings also demonstrate that legal implementation in an educational institution involves institutional practices that extend beyond formal compliance with regulations.

These findings are consistent with Zhao et al. (2021), who found that a positive school climate is associated with lower levels of bullying victimization.[16] The present findings support this perspective because students emphasized the importance of mutual respect and a safe school environment, while another student indicated that continued bullying created discomfort within the school. The findings are also consistent with Gaffney et al. (2021), whose research demonstrates the importance of comprehensive school-based approaches to bullying prevention.[17] At SMK BOASH 2, prevention is similarly not limited to punishment but involves education, supervision, counseling, character development, and parental involvement.

The findings further extend previous research by placing these practices within the framework of legal implementation. Much of the existing literature has examined bullying from the perspectives of prevalence, psychological consequences, school climate, or the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs. This study instead examines how a statutory child protection obligation

[15] Undang-Undang (UU) Nomor 35 Tahun 2014 Tentang Perubahan Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 23 Tahun 2002 Tentang Perlindungan Anak, Pub. L. No. 35 (2014), https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/38723/uu-no-35-tahun-2014.
[16] Zhao et al., "School Climate and Bullying Victimization among Adolescents."
[17] Gaffney, Ttofi, and Farrington, "Effectiveness of School-based Programs to Reduce Bullying Perpetration and Victimization."

is translated into concrete practices within a vocational school. The empirical evidence demonstrates that Article 54 is implemented through identifiable institutional mechanisms, while also revealing an implementation gap associated with students' perceptions of safety, the recognition of bullying, and the willingness of students to speak up.

Accordingly, the implementation of Article 54 of Law Number 35 of 2014 at SMK BOASH 2 can be understood as an ongoing process that combines preventive, disciplinary, responsive, and supportive measures. The school has established several mechanisms for preventing and responding to bullying, but the findings indicate that their effectiveness depends on more than the existence of regulations. Teacher responsiveness, students' awareness, students' willingness to report, parental involvement, and the development of a school culture that does not normalize bullying remain important conditions for effective child protection. The findings therefore demonstrate a distinction between the formal existence of legal protection and its practical realization in everyday school life.

Implementation of Child Protection Measures Against Bullying at SMK BOASH 2

The implementation of child protection measures against bullying at SMK BOASH 2 can be identified through preventive, responsive, supportive, and disciplinary practices carried out by teachers and other school personnel. The interview data indicate that the school does not rely exclusively on punishment but combines preventive education, teacher intervention, counseling, parental involvement, and disciplinary measures in responding to bullying. This pattern is reflected in the statements of both students and teachers concerning how bullying is understood, prevented, reported, and handled within the school environment.

The first dimension identified from the interview data is the school's effort to build students' understanding of bullying and its consequences. Students demonstrated an understanding that bullying may involve verbal, physical, and psychological forms of violence. One student explained that bullying involves *"unethical behavior"* carried out by hurting, humiliating, threatening, or oppressing another person repeatedly. Another student reported having witnessed bullying at school, particularly in the form of *"taunts or insults directed at the weak."* These statements indicate that students have some awareness that bullying is not limited to physical violence but may also occur through verbal and psychological behavior.

The teachers' responses further reinforce this finding. One teacher explained that bullying constitutes a violation of children's rights because it deprives children of their basic right to grow, learn, and develop in a safe and dignified environment. Another teacher stated that prevention is conducted through preventive, educational, and exemplary approaches, particularly by teaching students to respect one another despite differences in opinions and by emphasizing moral and religious values. This indicates that anti-bullying education at SMK BOASH 2 is connected not only with disciplinary rules but also with the development of students' social and moral awareness.

This finding is consistent with recent international research emphasizing the importance of coordinated school-level practices in preventing bullying. Research on teachers' use of anti-bullying components demonstrates that teacher practices at both classroom and individual levels

Doi: 10.59631/slr.v4i2.518

constitute important elements of school-based bullying prevention.[18] Similarly, research on school staff communication indicates that communication among school personnel is associated with the quality of student relationships and students' experiences of bullying, victimization, and bully-victim involvement.[19] Therefore, the preventive practices identified at SMK BOASH 2 can be understood as part of a broader school-based protection mechanism in which teachers have an important role in shaping students' interpersonal relationships.

The second dimension concerns the school's response when bullying is identified. The interview findings demonstrate that teachers do not immediately rely on punitive measures. One teacher stated that when a bullying case is discovered, the first steps involve approaching the victim intensively, investigating the incident, identifying the perpetrator, and continuously observing the perpetrator's background and reasons for engaging in bullying. This approach demonstrates that case handling involves an attempt to understand the circumstances surrounding the behavior rather than simply imposing punishment.

A similar pattern is reflected in the students' responses. One student stated that when bullying occurs, teachers generally *"reprimand, take action against, and impose sanctions."* Another student explained that teachers provide counseling and involve parents when handling bullying cases. These statements indicate that the school response contains both disciplinary and supportive components. The disciplinary component functions to establish behavioral boundaries, whereas counseling and parental involvement provide a mechanism for addressing the underlying behavioral and social dimensions of the case.

The combination of preventive and responsive measures is important because school-based anti-bullying interventions are generally more effective when they involve multiple components rather than relying on a single disciplinary mechanism. A large meta-analytical review found that school-based anti-bullying programs can reduce both bullying perpetration and victimization, while subsequent research has emphasized the importance of identifying effective components across school, classroom, teacher, parent, peer, and individual levels.[20] The findings at SMK BOASH 2 therefore suggest that the school's approach is consistent with a multi-component model of bullying prevention, although the implementation remains dependent on the consistency and capacity of the school personnel involved.

The third dimension concerns the protection and assistance provided to victims. The interview data indicate that teachers attempt to provide protection through a humanistic and empathetic approach. One teacher stated that victims should receive protection and assistance by listening

[18] Dziuginta Baraldsnes and Simona Carla Silvia Caravita, "The Relations of Teacher Use of Anti-Bullying Components at Classroom and Individual Levels with Teacher and School Characteristics," *International Journal of Bullying Prevention* 8, no. 1 (March 2026): 20–34, https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-024-00284-z.

[19] Saskia M. Fischer, Peter J. R. Macaulay, and Ludwig Bilz, "Staff Communication at School and Student–Student Relationship Quality in the Classroom: Direct and Indirect Effects on Students' Experiences as Bullies, Bullied, and Bully-Victims," *International Journal of Bullying Prevention* 8, no. 1 (March 2026): 35–53, https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-024-00283-0.

[20] Hannah Gaffney, Maria M. Ttofi, and David P. Farrington, "Evaluating the Effectiveness of School-Bullying Prevention Programs: An Updated Meta-Analytical Review," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 45 (March 2019): 111–33, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.07.001.

to their complaints without judgment, calming them, and strengthening their psychological condition. Another response identified counseling, additional protection or supervision, and emotional support from teachers, parents, and peers as forms of assistance that can be provided to victims.

These findings demonstrate that protection at SMK BOASH 2 is not conceptualized solely as physical protection. It also includes psychological and emotional support. This is particularly important because one student stated that bullying could continue when students are unwilling to "speak up" to the homeroom teacher or school authorities. The student further described feeling uncomfortable because bullying could disturb students both inside and outside the classroom. This statement provides empirical evidence that students' perceptions of safety are closely related to the availability of adults who are willing to listen and intervene.

Recent international research supports the importance of supportive relationships and coordinated school practices in addressing bullying. Studies have shown that student–student relationship quality and communication among school staff are relevant to students' experiences of bullying and victimization.[21] Research on prosocial responses to social exclusion also demonstrates that students may respond in different ways, including reporting incidents to school personnel, indicating the importance of creating an environment in which students perceive reporting and intervention as legitimate and safe responses.[22]

The fourth dimension is the involvement of parents in the protection process. The interview data show that parental involvement is considered an important component of bullying case management. One teacher explained that parents have an important and strategic role because character development cannot be the sole responsibility of teachers; it also requires consistent guidance at home. Student responses similarly indicated that parents may be involved when bullying cases are handled by the school.

Parental involvement is significant because bullying is not confined to interactions occurring exclusively within the classroom. The school therefore needs cooperation between teachers, parents, and students to ensure that information about students' behavior and psychological condition can be communicated across educational and family environments. The international literature also increasingly emphasizes the multi-level nature of bullying prevention, including school, family, peer, and individual factors.[23] This supports the finding that child protection against bullying requires cooperation among actors rather than placing responsibility exclusively on individual teachers.

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[21] Fischer, Macaulay, and Bilz, "Staff Communication at School and Student–Student Relationship Quality in the Classroom."

[22] Mareike Brehmer and Jennifer Meyer, "Confronting the Bullies, Comforting the Victim, or Reporting to University Staff? Prosocial Intentions Towards Social Exclusion in University Students," *International Journal of Bullying Prevention* 7, no. 4 (December 2025): 595–609, https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-024-00248-3.

[23] Jessica Quintero-Jurado et al., "Individual, Family, School, and Neighborhood Contributors to Roles of Bystanders in Cyberbullying Situations," *International Journal of Bullying Prevention*, ahead of print, July 14, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-025-00311-7.

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The fifth dimension concerns disciplinary mechanisms. The interview data indicate that SMK BOASH 2 applies school rules and sanctions to students who engage in bullying. One teacher explained that the school has a violation-point system for students who insult or demean others. A student also stated that teachers "*reprimand, take action against, and impose sanctions,*" while another student perceived teachers as sufficiently firm and fair because students who engage in bullying receive consequences corresponding to their behavior.

The existence of disciplinary measures demonstrates that the school recognizes bullying as behavior requiring institutional intervention. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that sanctions are not implemented independently from counseling and guidance. This is important because the objective of child protection is not merely to impose consequences on perpetrators but also to prevent recurrence and support the development of healthier student relationships. Research on teachers' responses to bullying similarly indicates that teacher intervention is influenced by how bullying is perceived and by the broader social and institutional context of the school.[24]

Based on the legal perspective, these practices can be interpreted as concrete manifestations of the obligation to protect children from violence in educational settings. Article 54 of Law No. 35 of 2014 requires protection of children within educational institutions from violence, while Ministerial Regulation No. 46 of 2023 provides a more specific framework concerning the prevention and handling of violence in educational environments. Within this framework, preventive education, identification of incidents, intervention, counseling, parental involvement, and recovery can be understood as interconnected elements of child protection rather than separate activities.

The empirical findings, however, also reveal that the implementation of protection is not entirely free from limitations. Although one student stated that they were willing to report bullying because such behavior should not exist in the school environment, another student expressed discomfort and emphasized that bullying could continue when students do not have the courage to speak up. These two responses demonstrate that students' willingness to report is not uniform. Consequently, the existence of a formal reporting mechanism does not necessarily mean that all students will use it.

This finding is important for interpreting the effectiveness of child protection measures at SMK BOASH 2. Protection should not be assessed only from the existence of rules, sanctions, or counseling services, but also from students' perceptions of whether the school is sufficiently safe and responsive for reporting. A school may have formal mechanisms while students remain hesitant to disclose incidents because of fear, embarrassment, peer pressure, or uncertainty about the consequences of reporting. Recent research on school anti-bullying practices emphasizes the

[24] Anke Görzig et al., "Teachers' Responses to Identity-Based Bullying: Social Inequality, Identity, and Diversity at Teacher and School Level," *International Journal of Bullying Prevention* 8, no. 1 (March 2026): 83–102, https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-024-00281-2; Daria Khanolainen et al., "An International Investigation of Variability in Teacher Perceptions of Bias-Based Bullying and Their Likelihood of Intervening," *International Journal of Bullying Prevention* 8, no. 1 (March 2026): 64–82, https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-025-00285-6.

importance of shared practices among school staff and coordinated responses in establishing an effective school-level prevention system.[25]

The findings can therefore be summarized into four interconnected dimensions of child protection implementation at SMK BOASH 2: (1) preventive education and character development, (2) teacher intervention and disciplinary response, (3) psychological assistance and protection for victims, and (4) parental and school-community involvement. These dimensions demonstrate that the implementation of child protection is not limited to responding to bullying after an incident has occurred. It also includes efforts to construct a school environment in which students understand bullying, teachers intervene, victims receive support, perpetrators receive guidance and sanctions, and parents participate in the resolution process.

Table 1. *Implementation of Child Protection Measures Against Bullying at SMK BOASH 2*

No.	Form of Implementation	Empirical Evidence from Interviews	Interpretation
1	Anti-Bullying Education	Students understand bullying as verbal, physical, and psychological behavior. Teachers provide preventive and educational guidance.	The school develops students' awareness of bullying and its consequences.
2	Teacher Intervention	Teachers approach victims, investigate incidents, identify perpetrators, and observe the background of perpetrators.	Teachers function as the first institutional response to reported or identified cases.
3	School Rules and Sanctions	Teachers reported the use of violation points, reprimands, disciplinary action, and sanctions.	Formal school rules provide behavioral boundaries and institutional consequences.
4	Counseling and Psychological Support	Teachers provide empathetic assistance, listen to victims, strengthen their psychological condition, and provide counseling.	Protection includes psychological and emotional dimensions, not only physical safety.
5	Character Development	Teachers emphasize respect, empathy, moral values, religious values, and exemplary behavior.	Prevention is connected to the development of students' social and moral character.

[25] Miia Sainio et al., "What Explains the Perception of Having Shared Practices Among School Staff for Anti-Bullying Work?," *International Journal of Bullying Prevention* 8, no. 1 (March 2026): 7–19, https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-024-00271-4.

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No.	Form of Implementation	Empirical Evidence from Interviews	Interpretation
6	Parental Involvement	Teachers emphasize that parents have an important role in student character development and may be involved in case handling.	Child protection requires cooperation between school and family.
7	Student Reporting and Participation	Some students stated that they were willing to report bullying, while others expressed discomfort and emphasized the need to encourage students to speak up.	The effectiveness of protection depends partly on students' trust and willingness to report.

Table 1 demonstrates that the implementation of child protection at SMK BOASH 2 involves multiple interconnected mechanisms. The strongest evidence obtained from the interviews concerns the combination of preventive education, teacher intervention, disciplinary measures, counseling, and parental involvement. The findings therefore do not support an interpretation that the school relies exclusively on punitive measures. Rather, the school combines disciplinary action with educational and supportive strategies.

The interview data also indicate that the implementation of protection is strongly dependent on the role of teachers. Teachers are positioned as educators, supervisors, initial responders, counselors, and mediators between students and parents. This finding is consistent with international research showing that teacher practices constitute an important component of school-based anti-bullying work.[26] At the same time, research on school staff communication suggests that the effectiveness of anti-bullying work is also related to communication and shared practices among school personnel.[27]

Another important finding concerns the distinction between formal protection and experienced protection. Formal protection is reflected in school rules, sanctions, counseling, and procedures for responding to bullying. Experienced protection, however, depends on whether students actually feel safe enough to report incidents and believe that teachers will respond appropriately. The contrasting student responses in this study—one student expressing willingness to report and another describing discomfort and the need to speak up—show that these two dimensions do not necessarily operate at the same level.

[26] Baraldsnes and Caravita, "The Relations of Teacher Use of Anti-Bullying Components at Classroom and Individual Levels with Teacher and School Characteristics."

[27] Fischer, Macaulay, and Bilz, "Staff Communication at School and Student–Student Relationship Quality in the Classroom"; Sainio et al., "What Explains the Perception of Having Shared Practices Among School Staff for Anti-Bullying Work?"

From this perspective, the implementation of Article 54 should not be evaluated solely through the presence of regulations and institutional procedures. It should also be examined through the experiences of students who are the direct beneficiaries of child protection. The empirical findings at SMK BOASH 2 show that the school has established several mechanisms consistent with child protection principles, but the effectiveness of these mechanisms is closely connected to student participation, teacher responsiveness, parental cooperation, and the development of a school culture that makes reporting and seeking assistance socially acceptable.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that child protection against bullying at SMK BOASH 2 is implemented through a multi-dimensional protection mechanism involving prevention, intervention, discipline, psychological assistance, character development, and family participation. This finding strengthens the legal perspective of the study because Article 54 is not interpreted merely as a prohibition against violence but as a basis for examining how schools translate the obligation to protect children into concrete institutional practices. The implementation at SMK BOASH 2 therefore illustrates that the effectiveness of child protection depends not only on the existence of legal norms but also on how those norms are operationalized through everyday interactions between students, teachers, school authorities, and parents.

Challenges in Implementing Child Protection Measures Against Bullying at SMK BOASH 2

Based on the research findings, the implementation of child protection measures against bullying at SMK BOASH 2 has been supported by school rules, teacher supervision, student guidance, counseling, and parental involvement. However, the findings also indicate that the implementation of these measures continues to face several challenges. The challenges identified from interviews with teachers and students include the normalization of bullying as a form of joking, students' limited awareness of the seriousness of bullying, reluctance to speak up when bullying occurs, and the limitations of continuous supervision in all areas of the school. These findings indicate that the existence of formal school rules does not automatically ensure that all students understand, recognize, and report bullying behavior.

One of the most significant challenges identified in this study is the tendency to perceive verbal bullying as ordinary joking or teasing. This issue is important because several forms of bullying identified by students involve verbal expressions such as mocking, insulting, and humiliating peers. A student informant explained that bullying at school was commonly observed *"in the form of teasing or insults toward those who are considered weak."* This finding indicates that bullying may occur through everyday peer interactions and may not always be immediately recognized as a violation requiring intervention. The normalization of such behavior can make it difficult for students to distinguish between ordinary peer interaction and behavior that causes psychological harm.

The teachers' interviews further confirm that the problem is not primarily the absence of rules but the difficulty of recognizing bullying as a serious problem. One teacher stated that, *"The biggest obstacle is not the lack of regulations, but the lack of courage to acknowledge that bullying exists and is a serious problem."* This statement demonstrates that the implementation challenge is partly cultural. School regulations may prohibit bullying, but their effectiveness depends on whether students and other members of the school community recognize bullying, understand its

Doi: 10.59631/slr.v4i2.518

consequences, and are willing to respond to it. Therefore, the implementation of child protection requires continuous awareness-building rather than relying solely on disciplinary provisions.

Another challenge concerns students' willingness to speak up when bullying occurs. The interviews demonstrate that students do not have identical experiences or perceptions regarding their sense of safety and their willingness to report. One student stated that they were willing to report bullying because *"bullying is not appropriate to exist in the school environment."* This finding demonstrates the existence of students who already possess sufficient awareness of their right to a safe educational environment. However, another student expressed discomfort with the situation and emphasized that the problem could continue *"if no one dares to speak up to the homeroom teacher or the school."* This finding is important because it shows that awareness of bullying does not necessarily translate into reporting behavior. The willingness of students to speak up is therefore an important component of the effectiveness of the school's child protection mechanism.

The reluctance to speak up also has implications for the identification and handling of bullying cases. When students do not report incidents or do not consider certain behaviors to constitute bullying, school authorities may not receive sufficient information to intervene promptly. This situation creates a gap between the formal protection mechanism established by the school and its practical implementation. The problem is therefore not simply whether the school has a policy, but whether students trust the mechanism, understand when it should be used, and feel sufficiently secure to communicate their experiences.

The findings also reveal that school supervision remains an important challenge. Teachers reported that prevention is conducted through supervision, education, guidance, and exemplary behavior. However, supervision cannot be separated from the characteristics of student interaction, which occurs not only during formal classroom activities but also during breaks and other less structured situations. Consequently, the school needs to ensure that supervision is accompanied by student participation and a reporting mechanism so that protection does not depend exclusively on teachers' direct observation. This is particularly important because bullying may occur through subtle verbal or relational behavior that is not always visible to adults.

From an institutional perspective, the findings show that SMK BOASH 2 has attempted to respond to bullying through a combination of preventive and corrective measures. Teachers reported that when a case is identified, they approach the victim, investigate the circumstances, identify the perpetrator, and seek to understand the background of the behavior. The school also applies disciplinary measures and involves parents when necessary. One teacher explained that parents have an important and strategic role because character development is not solely the responsibility of teachers but also requires continued guidance at home. This finding demonstrates that child protection is implemented through cooperation between the school and family rather than through school intervention alone.

The challenges identified in this study are consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of social support, school climate, and effective reporting mechanisms in preventing and responding to bullying. Waasdorp et al. (2022) demonstrate the importance of supportive

school environments and effective responses to bullying, while Li et al. (2025) highlight the relationship between school climate and students' experiences of peer violence.[28] These findings provide an important comparative perspective for the present study. However, the present research adds a legal-implementation dimension by showing that the effectiveness of child protection at the school level depends not only on the existence of formal regulations but also on the extent to which those regulations are understood and practiced by members of the school community.

From the perspective of Article 54 of Law No. 35 of 2014, these findings demonstrate that legal protection against violence in educational institutions requires implementation mechanisms that are accessible and responsive to students. The legal obligation to protect children cannot be fulfilled solely through the formulation of school rules or the imposition of sanctions after an incident occurs. Protection must also include prevention, early identification, reporting, assistance, and coordinated responses involving teachers, school management, students, and parents. The findings at SMK BOASH 2 therefore suggest that strengthening child protection requires a shift from a predominantly reactive approach toward a more participatory protection culture.

The challenges identified in this study can therefore be grouped into four interrelated dimensions: (1) cultural challenges, particularly the normalization of verbal bullying as joking; (2) awareness challenges, involving students' varying ability to recognize bullying and its consequences; (3) reporting challenges, particularly the need to encourage students to speak up when they experience or witness bullying; and (4) institutional challenges, particularly the limitations of continuous supervision over student interactions. These dimensions are interconnected. Weak awareness can contribute to the normalization of bullying, normalization can reduce reporting, and limited reporting can make institutional intervention less effective.

Thus, the findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of child protection measures at SMK BOASH 2 cannot be assessed merely from the existence of regulations or disciplinary sanctions. The more substantive issue is whether the school has succeeded in developing a culture in which bullying is recognized as a violation of students' rights, students feel safe to report incidents, teachers respond appropriately, and parents participate in the protection process. The implementation of Article 54 therefore requires not only legal compliance but also the development of a school environment that supports awareness, reporting, supervision, and collective responsibility for protecting children from violence.

Practical Measures to Strengthen Child Protection Against Bullying at SMK BOASH 2

Based on the research findings, strengthening child protection against bullying at SMK BOASH 2 requires measures that move beyond disciplinary enforcement toward prevention, student guidance, reporting, parental involvement, and the development of a supportive school culture. The findings indicate that the school already applies preventive and corrective measures, including student guidance, teacher supervision, counseling, disciplinary sanctions, and

[28] Li et al., "School Climate and Cyberbullying Victimization"; Waasdorp et al., "School Climate and Bullying Bystander Responses in Middle and High School."

Doi: 10.59631/slr.v4i2.518

communication with parents. However, the challenges identified in the previous section demonstrate that these measures need to be strengthened through a more systematic and participatory approach.

One important measure is the strengthening of character education and continuous anti-bullying education. The interviews indicate that teachers perceive prevention as requiring education, exemplary behavior, and the cultivation of values that encourage students to respect one another. One teacher explained that preventive efforts should be conducted through *"preventive, educative, and exemplary"* approaches, emphasizing mutual respect despite differences in opinion and the cultivation of moral values. This finding indicates that bullying prevention should not be treated as an occasional school campaign but should become part of students' everyday educational experience.

The importance of continuous character development is also reflected in the students' expectations. One student expressed the hope that the school would create an *"inclusive, supportive, and safe"* school culture in which students, teachers, and parents actively prevent bullying, respect differences, and have the courage to speak up. This finding demonstrates that students themselves recognize that a safe school environment requires collective participation. Therefore, anti-bullying education should be integrated into classroom interactions, student guidance, character development activities, and everyday relationships among members of the school community.

A second measure concerns strengthening the reporting mechanism. The findings indicate that students' willingness to speak up is an important factor in identifying bullying incidents. Although one student stated that they were willing to report bullying because such behavior should not exist in the school environment, another student emphasized that bullying may continue when no one is willing to speak up to the homeroom teacher or school authorities. This difference demonstrates that the school needs to ensure that reporting mechanisms are not only formally available but also trusted and easily accessible to students.

The school can therefore strengthen its reporting mechanism by providing clear procedures for reporting bullying, ensuring confidentiality, and establishing responsible personnel who can receive and follow up on reports. The purpose is not merely to increase the number of reports but to create a sense of security among students when communicating their experiences. A reporting system that is accessible and trusted can help reduce the gap between bullying incidents that occur and cases that are actually identified by the school. This is particularly important because the findings show that some bullying behavior is normalized as joking or teasing, which may prevent students from recognizing that the behavior should be reported.

A third measure is strengthening the role of teachers and homeroom teachers in early identification and intervention. The findings show that teachers already perform several functions in responding to bullying, including approaching victims, investigating incidents, identifying perpetrators, providing guidance, and applying sanctions when necessary. One teacher explained that when a bullying case is identified, the teacher approaches the victim intensively, investigates the case, identifies the perpetrator, and continuously observes the background of the perpetrator's behavior. This indicates that teacher intervention is not limited

to imposing punishment but also involves understanding the circumstances surrounding the behavior.

This approach should be strengthened through systematic monitoring of student interactions, particularly in situations where bullying may not be immediately visible. Teachers need to be able to identify verbal, psychological, and relational forms of bullying and distinguish them from ordinary peer interaction. Early identification is important because preventive intervention can be undertaken before the behavior develops into more serious or repeated violence. In this respect, teacher supervision should be accompanied by communication with students so that students understand that teachers are available to provide protection and assistance.

A fourth measure concerns strengthening counseling and assistance for both victims and perpetrators. The findings demonstrate that the school has adopted a humanistic and empathetic approach toward victims. One teacher stated that victims should receive protection and assistance through a humanistic and empathetic approach, including listening to students' complaints without judgment, calming them, and strengthening their mental condition. This finding indicates that child protection should not stop when disciplinary action has been imposed on the perpetrator. Victims require emotional support and a sense of security so that bullying does not negatively affect their participation in the educational process.

At the same time, perpetrators also require appropriate guidance. The findings show that teachers seek to understand the background of students who engage in bullying rather than treating punishment as the only response. This approach is important because disciplinary sanctions should be accompanied by behavioral guidance so that students understand the consequences of their actions and develop more appropriate patterns of social interaction. Previous research has also emphasized the importance of comprehensive school-based approaches that combine supervision, social support, and educational intervention in addressing bullying.[29]

A fifth measure is strengthening parental involvement. The interviews demonstrate that teachers consider parents to have an important and strategic role in student character development. One teacher explained that character development is not solely the responsibility of teachers at school but must also involve parents at home so that students receive consistent guidance. This finding suggests that child protection requires continuity between the school and family environments. Communication between teachers and parents should therefore not only occur after a bullying incident has taken place but should also be used as a preventive mechanism for discussing student behavior, social relationships, and the development of responsible conduct.

From a legal perspective, these measures are consistent with the obligation to protect children from violence in educational environments under Article 54 of Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection. The implementation of child protection should prioritize the safety and development of children and should involve preventive and responsive measures. The restorative dimension

[29] Gaffney, Ttofi, and Farrington, "Effectiveness of School-based Programs to Reduce Bullying Perpetration and Victimization."

Doi: 10.59631/slr.v4i2.518

is also relevant because bullying cases involve children who require educational and developmental responses rather than disciplinary treatment alone. Recent studies have emphasized the importance of restorative and educational approaches in addressing student conflict and violence, particularly through dialogue, responsibility, relationship restoration, and character development.[30]

The application of a restorative approach at SMK BOASH 2 is supported by the findings that teachers do not rely exclusively on punishment. The school combines disciplinary measures with counseling, behavioral guidance, parental involvement, and efforts to understand the background of the students involved. Such an approach provides an opportunity for victims to receive protection while also encouraging perpetrators to recognize the consequences of their behavior. In this context, restorative practices should not be understood as replacing disciplinary rules but as complementing them with educational and relational interventions.

The findings also correspond with Gaffney et al. (2021), who emphasize that comprehensive school-based anti-bullying interventions are more effective when they involve multiple components rather than relying on a single intervention.[31] The present findings similarly demonstrate that child protection at SMK BOASH 2 involves several interconnected elements, including teacher supervision, character education, counseling, parental involvement, disciplinary measures, and student participation. The significance of these findings lies in demonstrating that the implementation of child protection is a multidimensional process rather than a single institutional response.

Accordingly, the practical strengthening of child protection against bullying at SMK BOASH 2 can be directed toward five interconnected priorities: (1) strengthening continuous anti-bullying and character education; (2) developing a trusted and accessible reporting mechanism; (3) strengthening teacher and homeroom teacher supervision and early identification; (4) expanding counseling, assistance, and restorative responses for victims and perpetrators; and (5) strengthening cooperation between schools and parents. These measures are directly derived from the challenges and empirical findings identified in this study.

The practical implication of these findings is that the implementation of Article 54 of Law No. 35 of 2014 should be understood not merely as the school's obligation to prohibit and sanction violence, but as an obligation to establish an educational environment in which children are protected through prevention, identification, reporting, assistance, and recovery. The experience of SMK BOASH 2 demonstrates that legal protection becomes more meaningful when translated into everyday school practices involving teachers, students, parents, and school management.

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[30] Sri Lestari and Sumarno, "Teachers Strategies in Handling Bullying Cases in Elementary Schools: A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal for Lesson and Learning Studies* 9, no. 1 (April 2026): 64–78, https://doi.org/10.23887/jlls.v9i1.108371; Khafidhotun Nasikhah, Singgih Aji Purnomo, and Sri Rahmawati, "Sexual Violence, Bullying, and Recovery Management in an Islamic Educational Environment: Challenges in the Era of Disruption," *Proceeding of International Conference on Education, Society and Humanity* 4, no. 1 (July 2026): 113–48.

[31] Gaffney, Ttofi, and Farrington, "Effectiveness of School-based Programs to Reduce Bullying Perpetration and Victimization."

Therefore, strengthening child protection requires the integration of legal compliance with educational practices that promote empathy, respect, participation, and a collective commitment to preventing violence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the implementation of Article 54 of Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection at SMK BOASH 2 has been carried out through a combination of preventive, disciplinary, supportive, and rehabilitative measures, including the dissemination of anti-bullying information, teacher and homeroom teacher supervision, the implementation of school rules and sanctions, counseling and assistance, character development, parental involvement, and efforts to restore students' social relationships. Nevertheless, the implementation has not yet been fully optimal, as verbal and psychological bullying continues to occur and is influenced by limited student awareness, the normalization of bullying as joking, difficulties in monitoring all student interactions, and reluctance among some students to report incidents. These findings theoretically demonstrate that the implementation of child protection in educational institutions cannot be understood solely as the enforcement of legal norms, but must also be examined through the interaction between legal obligations, school culture, social relationships, reporting mechanisms, and educational practices. Practically, the findings indicate that effective implementation of Article 54 requires schools to strengthen preventive and rehabilitative mechanisms alongside disciplinary measures, particularly through continuous character education, child-friendly and confidential reporting systems, psychological support, teacher supervision, parental involvement, and coordinated participation of the school community. Thus, the implementation of child protection should be oriented not merely toward responding to reported violations but toward establishing a sustainable school environment that protects students' physical and psychological well-being and upholds their rights.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the research was conducted as a case study at SMK BOASH 2, meaning that the findings are closely related to the institutional, social, and educational context of the school and cannot be generalized directly to all vocational schools or educational institutions. Second, the study primarily relied on qualitative data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation, so the findings reflect the experiences, perceptions, and practices identified within the research setting. Third, the study focuses specifically on the implementation of Article 54 of Law No. 35 of 2014 in relation to bullying and therefore does not comprehensively examine all dimensions of child protection in educational institutions. Future research should examine the implementation of child protection in multiple schools and regions to enable comparative analysis and strengthen the broader applicability of the findings. Further studies may also employ mixed-methods or longitudinal approaches to examine changes in bullying prevention, reporting behavior, school climate, and the effectiveness of child protection mechanisms over time. For policy and practice, schools and relevant education authorities should strengthen integrated child protection systems by improving reporting and response mechanisms, developing teacher capacity, strengthening parental participation, and ensuring that prevention, intervention, and recovery measures are implemented consistently and in accordance with the best interests of the child.

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